

***Thesis Title: Power and Identity in the Qing Empire: A Study of the Political and Economic Life of the Elites through Confiscation Inventories 1700-1912, Chapter 4
Material Culture & Identity in the Households of the Manchu and Mongol Bannermen***

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ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 4

This chapter examines the question of cultural distinctiveness and assimilation in Qing China through the material culture of the households of the Manchu and bannermen. It exploits the confiscation inventories of 17 Mongolian and 77 Manchu families, reported in memorials housed in various East Asia archives, to reveal the material identity of the ruling elites in Qing. The cultural identity of the Manchu bannermen is central to our understanding of the nature of the rule of Qing regime: they were the conquering elites, but were they assimilated into Han Chinese society? The literature on Qing banner identity focusses predominantly on investigating textual evidence. Yet material culture is one of the hallmarks of identity. People, whether literate or illiterate, use material culture as a power channel to express themselves. This chapter combines a quantitative analysis of the inventories with research on the cultural resonances of the goods and argues that the bannermen kept a set of distinctive northern consumption habits that sustained their separate political identity as military men. They were not fully assimilated into the Han culture. The previous chapter argued that the Han elites were antiquarians who materialized their imagined past, drawing from classical Chinese texts to create their own cosmos. In a sharp contrast, the Manchu and Mongol bannermen decorated their houses with martial objects, carvings with motifs that linked them to their ancestral ways of living or the imperial power, and ritual goods related to Buddhism and ancestral worship and shamanism.

Chapter 4 Material Culture and Identity in the households of the Mongol and Manchu Bannermen

The bannerman were members of a Tungusic military organization established by Nurhaci, the founder of the Qing empire.¹ They fulfilled a range of "governmental, administrative, economic, and social functions."² Military aristocrats existed in China from antiquity to Ming, but the Qing government controlled and manipulated the identities of bannermen for governance and state-building.³ They imposed a series of regulations and cultural projects on them that held them apart from the rest of the population.⁴ The state provided benefits to them and constrained other aspects of their life. This organization and identity of the banner Manchus sit at the centre of the debate on whether the Qing was a foreign conquest empire or a Hanified regime. This chapter discusses the household decorations found in confiscation inventories of the Manchu and Mongol banner elites and use them to unveil their material identity.

The families examined below possessed to two identities distinguished by law: one political, as the bannermen, and the other cultural, as Manchu, Mongol, and Han. Their political entitlements provided bannermen with benefits. They received monthly salaries, priority for government posts, lenient civil service examination quotas, and entitlements to a welfare system that promised to take care of their families if they passed away when serving the government.⁵ As a result, they occupied a majority of the high official posts and were overrepresented in all tiers of governance, even though they never exceeded 3% of the total population.⁶ Manchus supplied 57% of governor generals and 48.8% of governors.⁷ At lower

¹ Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif., Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 2001); Du Jiayi, *Qingdai Baqi Guanxi yu Xingzheng 清代八旗官制与行政* (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社, 2015); Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus [and] Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861 - 1928*, Studies on Ethnic Groups in China (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Kicengge, *Daichin gurun to sono jidai: Teikoku no keisei to hakki shakai (ダイチン・グルンとその時代: 帝国の形成と八旗社会, The Great Qing Empire: founding of the empire and the eight banner society)* (Nagoya (名古屋): Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai (名古屋大学出版会), 2009).

² Mark Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, eds. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 29.

³ Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*.

⁴ Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*.

⁵ Chen Jiahua, "Baqi Bingxiang De Shixi" (八旗兵饷的世袭, A study of the Eight Banner Benefits), *Minzu yanjiu* (1985.5): 63; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 63, 192.

⁶ Mark C. Elliott, Cameron Campbell, and James Lee, 'A Demographic Estimate of the Population of the Qing Eight Banners', *Études Chinoises: Bulletin de l'Association Française D'études Chinoises* 35, no. 1 (2016): 26.

⁷ Chen Wenshi, "Qingdai Manren Zhengzhi Canyu (清代满人政治参与 The eight banner participation in governance)," *Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo Jikan* 48 (1977): 551-53.

ranks, they provided 28-29% of financial commissioners and judges, 21% of prefects, and 6% of magistrates.⁸

The privileges associated with the status of a bannermen were hereditary to a certain degree. If bannermen committed serious crimes or behaviours that tarnished the idealized banner characters, the government would remove them from the registry. They would become commoners.⁹ The state enacted segregation policies to manage bannermen. Many of them were stationed in garrisons, walled cities within cities.¹⁰ There were four garrison networks established throughout the empire at peak during the late Qianlong period.¹¹

The second identity that the bannermen were subjected to was their cultural identity. This system started with the Manchu banners themselves. As the regime expanded, this was split into two along roughly cultural lines, the Manchus and the Mongols in 1635, with the Qing adding Mongol banners when their population reached ten thousand.¹² Finally, the government consolidated the Han banners on the eve of further invasions of the Ming state in 1634, after the Han military showed their masterfulness in using heavy artillery. The Han banners earned the name of "heavy troops" (Manchu: *ujen cooha*).¹³

It should be noted that the cultural categories of the banner organization were both social and political constructions. The early clans that surrendered to Nurhaci were not culturally homogenous.¹⁴ Most of the clans did not call themselves Manchus.¹⁵ They spoke different Tungusic dialects or languages belonging to Turkic or Mongolic.¹⁶ There were also small groups of Koreans, Russians, and other cultural groups that joined the banners.¹⁷ They were allocated to one of the three proto-ethnic branches. The Qing emperors developed cultural

⁸ Chen Wenshi, "Qingdai Manren Zhengzhi Canyu," 551-53.

⁹ Qingqi Zhu, *Xingan Huilan Sanbian (刑案汇览三编, Overview of Criminal Cases)*(Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2004), 694, 1994.

¹⁰ Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han*, 38.

¹¹ Ma, *Baqi zhidu*, 32-33; Rhoads, *Manchus & Han*, 34, citing China, Baqi Dutong Yamen Archives, No 4, "Qiwu," Shandong governor Zhang to the lieutenant-general of the Hanjun Bodered Red Banner, communication, GX 13/3/15.

¹² Mark Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," *Empire at the Margins*, 41.

¹³ Mark Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," *Empire at the Margins*, 42.

¹⁴ Yiming Tan and Yongxu Yang, "Congbaqi Jiapu Kan Manzu de Minzu Goucheng (从八旗家谱看满族的民族构成 On the Constitution of Manchu Minority from the Genealogy of Eight Banners)," *Journal of Jilin Normal University Humanities and Social Science Edition*, no. 4 (2008): 80-82.

¹⁵ Tan and Yang, *Congbaqi jiapu kan minzu de minzu goucheng*, 80-82

¹⁶ Tan and Yang, *Congbaqi jiapu kan minzu de minzu goucheng*, 80-82

¹⁷ Tan and Yang, *Congbaqi jiapu kan minzu de minzu goucheng*, 80-82

projects to modify the Mongol and Manchu banners into distinct and idealized proto-ethnic groups.

The Manchus was a political identity named by Hong Taiji. It constituted Jurchen descendants and other northern tribes such as the Yehe clan, who spoke different languages.¹⁸ Hong Taiji ordered the establishment of written Manchu by borrowing the Mongolian alphabet. The emperors put a significant emphasis on martial spirit and the Manchu language as fundamental traits of the Manchus (国语骑射).¹⁹ They established schools to teach Manchu. They required them to be frugal, eat less meat and wear plain clothes, even though Manchus historically ate meat.²⁰ The Qianlong emperor also modified their rituals and funerary practices, making them less "eccentric" and "barbaric" in the eyes of Han people.²¹ The emperors before Jiaqing required Manchus to carry their deceased to Beijing and bury them, although their ancestors also practiced cremation.²²

The imperial household created a series of educational and religious programs for Mongols and Han people as well.²³ The emperors initiated large cultural projects, building dictionaries and library projects.²⁴ By the 1700s, the period when this study starts, the Han, Manchu, and Mongol bannermen should, in theory, have lived according to the laws and regulations imposed by the emperors, who wanted them to behave in a certain way and conform to idealized cultural patterns.

This complex development has led scholars to form multiple explanations about the nature of the Qing empire. The Manchu and the Mongols did not fit Frank Dikötter's discourse on race in China. For example, scholars of race tend to examine how humankind has been divided based on genetic and biological features and by lines blood and descent that cannot be altered by education, ritual, or other ameliorating practices.²⁵ But the Qing government deliberately constructed identities for political purposes. This phenomenon of creating an

¹⁸ Mark Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," *Empire at the Margins*, 33.

¹⁹ Wang Zhonghan, "Guoyuqishe yu manzu de fazhan ('国语骑射'与满族的发展' The relationship between learning the national language and martial art and the development of *Manchu ethnic group*)," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* (故宫博物院院刊), no. 02 (1982): 19–25.

²⁰ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 8.

²¹ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 187.

²² Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 164, 167.

²³ Crossley, "Making Mongols," *Empire at the Margins*, 76.

²⁴ Chunwei Wang, "Sikuquanshu Yu Qingdai Guojia Yishi Xingtai Kaolun (四库全书与清代国家意识形态考论 On the Four Treasuries and the National Ideology of Qing Dynasty)," *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies* 4 (July 2021): 89–95.

²⁵ Frank Dikötter, "Racial Identities in China: Context and Meaning," *China Quarterly* 0, no. 138 (June 1994): 404–12.

imagined identity after they had won the political dominance of a region happened earlier in history. Genghis Khan (1158-1227) decided to call his Turkic subordinates and followers Mongols.²⁶ The mameluke, earlier a name to indicate slave soldiers in the Muslim world, succeeded in establishing the Mamluk dynasty and ruled Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517.²⁷ Europeans who lived in America chose to call themselves Americans after the overthrow of British control in 1776.²⁸

Even among multicultural empires, the Qing government was not the only one that attempted to alter its diverse peoples into more clearly defined groups. For example, when the Habsburg Hungarian Empire promulgated a new constitution in 1867, it expected people to group themselves into ethnic groups for gaining resources.²⁹ But the people who lived in Bohemian lands spoke multiple languages and practised diverse cultures and customs.³⁰ The question of "who is who" puzzled the supreme court of the empire until the end of its existence.³¹ The Qing emperors took a more unilateral approach when assigning groups into the three proto-ethnic banner branches. They expected people in different banners to act in accordance with their assigned identity. Did these categories imposed by the Qing government affect the bannermen? And after all, why did this matter?

The bannermen were the core elite that ruled the Qing empire. Their identity determined whether we should understand the nature of the empire as being Manchu or Han Chinese, or a mix. It influences the perception of the Chinese region as ruled by a continuous succession of Han dynasties or by other distinct groups. One standard analysis of this - the Han absorption or assimilation theory - traces its roots to the Boas School in anthropology. In 1935, Ralph Linton proposed that if two cultures clash, one of the cultures would be either absorbed or acculturated. He believed that "the type of contact which makes acculturation possible is more

²⁶ Charles Bawden, C. "Genghis Khan." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 14, 2021.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Genghis-Khan>.

²⁷ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mamluk". Encyclopedia Britannica, 7 Apr. 2020,
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mamluk>. Accessed 6 September 2021.

²⁸ James T. Harris, Unit, Economist Intelligence , John Naisbitt, Thea K. Flaum, Bernard A. Weisberger, J.R. Pole, Edward Pessen, Wilfred Owen, Willard M. Wallace, Paul H. Oehser, Reed C. Rollins, Richard R. Beeman, Oscar O. Winther, Arthur S. Link, Harold Whitman Bradley, Frank Freidel, Warren W. Hassler, William L. O'Neill , David Herbert Donald, Edgar Eugene Robinson, Wilbur Zelinsky, Karl Patterson Schmidt, Peirce F. Lewis , Oscar Handlin, and Adam Gopnik, "United States," Encyclopedia Britannica, 5 Sep. 2021,
<https://www.britannica.com/place/United-States>. Accessed 6 September 2021

²⁹ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³⁰ King, *Budweiser into Czechs and Germans*.

³¹ Tara Zahra, "'Each Nation Only Cares for Its Own': Empire, Nation, and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1918", *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1378–1402.

likely to arise through conquest and the settlement of the conquering groups among the vanquished."³² Stevan Harrell theorizes this phenomenon, naming it "civilizing projects", whether Christian projects, Confucian projects, and communist projects.³³ He modifies the Boasian proposition, portraying these projects as an unequal dialogue between a central civilization and a periphery civilization. Huang Pei and Wang Rongzu believe in the complete success of Confucian projects: they argue that the Manchus were inevitably acculturated into the Han culture.³⁴

Karl A. Wittfogel, another school of opinion has disagreed strongly with the Boas school's conclusion about assimilation. Wittfogel argued that dualism in governance existed in the conquest dynasties of the Liao Khitans, the Jin Jurchens, the Yuan Mongols and the Qing Manchus. Their ruling strategies contain political dualism – a difference in power between the conquering elites and the rest - and cultural dualism, with rules based on the cultures of different areas.³⁵ The later generation of Qing historians, including John Fairbank, Mark Elliot and Yao Dali, think in line with this theory and claim that the Manchus kept their identity, language, and ways of living. In short, they kept their Manchu way.³⁶

However, Pamela Crossley and Jonathan Lipman see the situation to be more uncertain. The Qing was a multi-national and complex empire.³⁷ Before the modern ideology of race and nation was imported to China, the boundaries between peoples were often fluid.³⁸ This vagueness to boundaries can be found in P.R.China's government attempt to assign ethnicity. Taking the Muslim peoples as an example, they are assigned into ten ethnic groups. The first ethnic group, the Hui, refers to Muslims or atheists of Muslim parentage, who speak native

³² Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man: An Introduction*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), 335.

³³ Stevan Harrell, *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, Studies on Ethnic Groups in China (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 18.

³⁴ Pei Huang, *Reorienting the Manchus: A Study of Sinicization, 1583-1795* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Rongzu Wang, ed., *Qingdiguo Xingzhi de Zai Shangque, Huiying Xin Qingshi (清帝国性质的再商榷, 回应新清史 A Rediscussion of the Nature of Qing Empire, Responding to New Qing History)* (Taiwan: Zhongyang daxue chubanzhongxing Yuanliu Chuban 中央大学出版社, 远流出版, 2014).

³⁵ Karl August Wittfogel, *History of Chinese Society: Liao, 907-1125* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society: distributed by the Macmillan Co, New York, 1949).

³⁶ Dali Yao and Jing Sun, "Manzhou Ruhe Yanbian Wei Minzu, Lun Qing Zhongye Qian Manzhou Rentong de Lishi “满洲”如何演变为民族——论清中叶前“满洲”认同的历史变迁 How Manchu Became a Nation, Historical Evolvement of Manchu Identity before Mid Qing Dynasty," *Journal of Social Sciences*, no. 7 (2006): 5–28; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*.

³⁷ Jonathan Neaman Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China)* (University of Washington Press, 1997); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990).

³⁸ Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*.

Chinese, Tibetan, Utsat and Bai and other languages.³⁹ Conversely, Bonan, Kazakh, Tajik, Tartar, Dongxiang, Kirghiz, Salar, Uygur, and Uzbek refer to Muslims who live in China in different areas and also speak distinct languages.⁴⁰

One of the central expressions of ethnic identity is the use of specific forms of material culture associated with particular groups. Interestingly, Qing historians always mention them, but without comprehensively investigating them. Huang Pei claims that the Manchu bannerman assimilated into Han culture because they moved from carrying "the faduy a rustic Jurchen bag for hunters and warriors to carry food, to the hebao, a small and elegant Chinese pouch of an aesthetic nature."⁴¹ He does not examine other aspects of the material culture of the Manchu and Mongol bannermen. Hu Xueyan judges Manchu assimilation based on the Qianlong emperor and later emperors. They indulged in the Han material and literary culture, thus she concludes that they were assimilated to the Han.⁴² She neglects the political intention of this act, however: they were the rulers of a multicultural empire and so needed to carefully manage a balance of representations of different material cultures in the court.⁴³

Mark Elliott provides a more substantial treatment of the material culture of bannermen. He uses a foreigner's account to describe the banner houses: "the decoration of the rooms... displays of military prowess figure in alternate succession upon the walls. As their business is fighting, bows and arrows, matchlocks and gingalls [a kind of heavy musket], powder and other warlike materials are blended with the furniture of the dwellings and meet the visitor at every turn."⁴⁴ Manchu women also owned distinct pieces of jewellery and accessories. They wore three earrings on each ear and tied their hair in a distinctive style, very different from Han women.⁴⁵

This chapter moves our understanding of the identity and assimilation of the bannermen forwards by developing a more comprehensive understanding of their material culture. I do this by examining the confiscation inventories of 17 Mongolian and 77 Manchu bannermen,

³⁹ Jonathan N. Lipman, "Hui-Hui: An Ethnohistory of the Chinese-Speaking Muslims," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 1 (1987): 112.

⁴⁰ Lipman, Hui-Hui: an Ethnohistory of the Chinese-Speaking Muslims, 112.

⁴¹ Pei Huang, *A Study of Sinicization*, 16.

⁴² Xueyan Hu, "Shizhi qianlongchao de manzu hanhua jingcheng (时至乾隆朝的满族汉化进程 the development of manchu becomes Han)," *Hulun Beier Xueyuan Xuebao 呼伦贝尔学院学报* 17, no. 05 (2009): 42-45.

⁴³ Philippe Forêt, *Mapping Chengde the Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

⁴⁴ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 115.

⁴⁵ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 230.

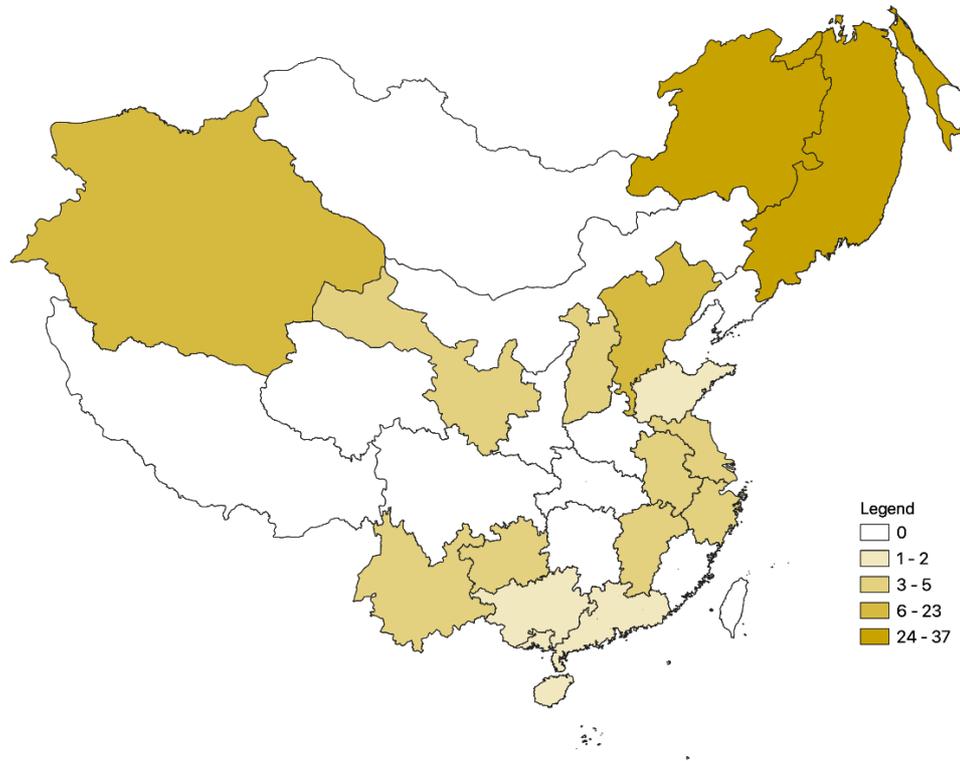
documents housed in the No.1 historical archive, Taipei palace museum, Sichuan Ba county archive, and Liaoning provincial archive (Table A). All Mongolian bannermen and 21 Manchu bannermen confiscated before 1800 and 18 in the 19th century came from the inner provinces. The rest of the bannermen were based in Xinjiang or northern Manchurian provinces when they were confiscated, 17 before and 21 after 1800. The lack of a Mongol banner inventory after 1800 could be caused by accidents that happened to the imperial edicts in the 20th century or because the first archive has not yet catalogued them. The maps below show the locations of the confiscated bannermen.

Table A. Status & Distribution of Confiscated Manchu and Mongol Bannermen

Time	Area	Proto ethnicity	Wealth	No. Families
1700s	Border	Manchu	<10,000	7
			>10,000	10
	Inner Province	Manchu	<10,000	5
			>10,000	16
	Inner Province	Mongol	<10,000	6
			>10,000	11
1800s	Border	Manchu	<10,000	7
			>10,000	14
	Inner Province	Manchu	<10,000	6
			>10,000	12

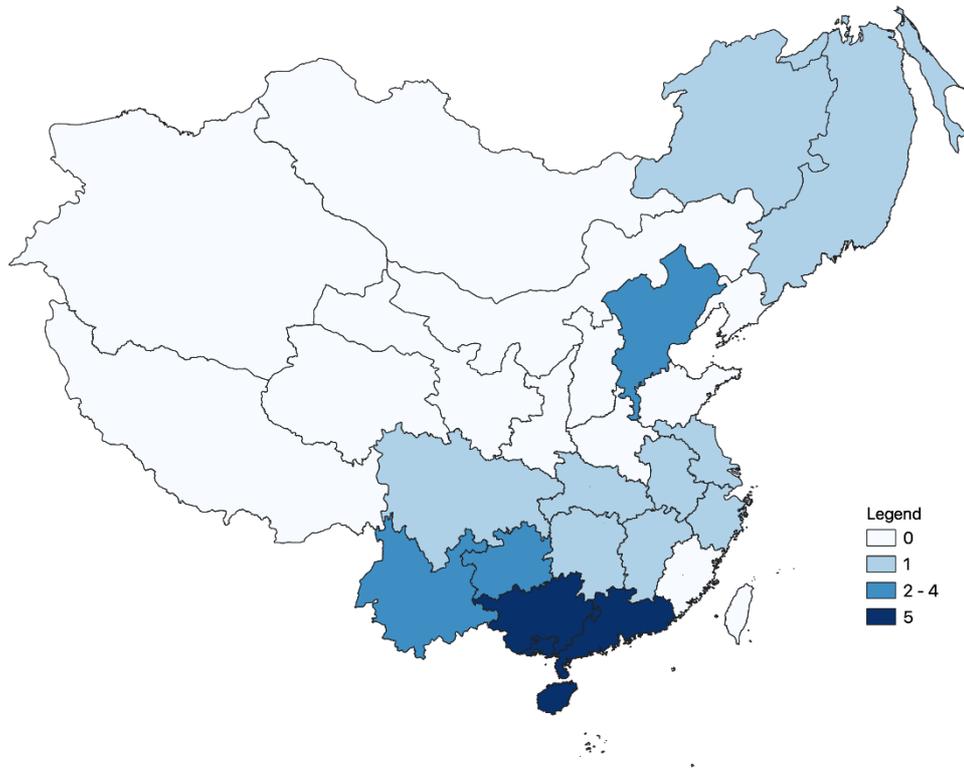
Source: Appendix 1, attached at the end of the thesis not in the writing sample, contains 50 pages of detailed information regarding 632 memorials.

Map 1. Geographic Distribution of Confiscated Manchu Bannermen



Source: Constructed by the author based on Appendix 1 and CHGIS map data set of Qing 1820

Map 2. Geographic Distribution of Confiscated Mongol Bannermen



Source: Constructed by the author based on Appendix 1 and CHGIS map data set of Qing 1820

The inventory lists were reported in memorials of two types as shown in illustration 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. They both list detailed items, one with valuations and the other without. I used 2,600 entries with price information in *Kuping Wenyin* and the taxation currency found in the inventories to approximate the value of the remaining 17,400 entries in the inventories in order to estimate the total wealth of a family. The minimum wealth of the families we observe in the sample was 20 silver taels, the maximum was 2 million silver taels, the median was 15,000 silver taels. The inventories in total listed goods worth approximately 348 million silver taels. Based on the middle-income bracket method (see chapter 2), the families are divided into two wealth groups, below or above 10,000 silver taels. The families investigated in this study were extremely wealthy, had relatively few financial constraints, and thus had consumption choices to express themselves.

Illustration 3.2.1 Inventory List with Price and Quantity

零星綢布小衣二十五件估銀四兩
 綢布被褥毯氈片共四十件估銀三十四兩
 五分
 黃白銅器重七十三斤估銀三十二兩七錢二分
 錫器重三十九斤估銀三兩九錢
 門簾纓帶靴襪硯畫牙磁器皿箱櫃匣盒一切
 什物二百四十一件估銀二十九兩八錢三分
 人參十兩一錢估銀六百九十一兩
 馬一匹估銀六兩
 以上共估銀一千二百八十六兩六錢八分
 一起出劉燠銀二百七十一兩五錢七分
 又一起出換錢十六千四百文合銀十六兩四錢
 共銀二百八十七兩九錢七分
 一起出呂士法銀二十兩
 一起出呂士法交存王謨緞舖京平九五色銀

Source: Taipei Palace Museum Archive

Illustration 3.2.2 Inventory List with Quantity only

緞衫襪一雙
 布一疋
 零布一塊
 布衣片一件
 破灰色布衣片一件
 塔羅布一塊
 破藍布小褂一件
 大小布枕頭八箇
 破紅細棉被一床
 破布棉褥一床
 黃綾包袱二箇
 錢搭襪一箇
 青細搭包一條
 宮綉護膝一雙
 白銅盆四箇
 黃銅盆大小三箇
 銅鍋一口
 銅火鍋一箇

Source: Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dang'an Guan, *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Danzan Xuanbian* Vol. 1 - 4 (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1994).

Unlike the probate lists found in Europe, the Qing lists provide extensive details on the goods confiscated. The entry for a piece of silk garment contains information on colour, pattern, make, and style. The confiscators recorded the specific kilns that made luxury porcelain and its colour pattern. I have stratified the inventories into 200 types of raw materials used to manufacture goods and 551 kinds of good⁴⁶ based on three sources: a Chinese commercial

⁴⁶ Stata Method: Regular expression. The official Stata FAQ on regular expressions: <http://www.stata.com/support/faqs/data/regex.html>; UCLA's Academic Technology Services' page on regular expressions: <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/faq/regex.html>

guide written by Samuel Wells Williams in 1863, a Russian-Shanghai-Chinese dictionary compiled for traders in the 1800s, and the digital database Erudition, which provides a searchable service based on 10,000-12,500 volumes of primary sources published since antiquity.⁴⁷ The three sources represent the merchant and literati knowledge network of the three most active groups that dealt with goods: the Russians, English, and Chinese. The sources help to provide a fuller picture when a disparity arises among the sources.

The inventories reveal that the Mongol and Manchu bannermen, in general, kept distinct consumption habits. They preferred hardwood, jade, cotton textiles, hunting related goods, and metalware. A few of them, however, were heavily impacted by Han elite material culture. This was particularly the case for those bannermen who held the *jinshi* degree and were extremely wealthy high officials above the third tier. In thinking about the degree of acculturation that we observe among bannermen, education, wealth, and power mattered.

The bannermen who lived after 1800 bowed slightly to Han material culture, but it did not prevent them from owning northern goods still. They held items from both worlds, possessed porcelain and metalware, silk and cotton textiles. After 1800, the bannerman did not need to march to the borders and help the Qing government conquer external regions. They increasingly needed to work with local gentry, who were all Han. The weakening of the central government, especially in financial terms—replacing generous pensions and material benefits with loans and never adjusting salaries according to inflation after the 1650s—fostered this need. Eventually, in the 1850s, the government ordered inner provincial bannermen to settle in their garrisons, so they became permanent residents among the Han people. This change in position was reflected in their material culture.

Although the Manchu bannermen confiscated after 1800 appreciated and possessed Han cultural goods, they remained distinct from their Han counterparts. In particular, they held much less diverse types of Han literary goods. Most of them did not own Chinese language carvings and figures or complete sets of histories and Confucian classics. Even the versatile book owner Gaopu, the nephew of Qianlong's concubine, a Manchu of the bordered yellow banner (originally of a Han banner but later elevated to this banner), primarily possessed books written by Qing authors or histories and dictionaries published in Qing times. That is, he

⁴⁷ Samuel Well Williams, *The Chinese Commercial Guide, Containing Treaties, Tariffs, Regulations, Tables* (Andesite Press, 2015); *Словари кяхтинского пиджина (Dictionary of Pidgin in Kiakhta 恰克圖洋涇浜語詞典)* (Moscow: Восточная литература Oriental Literature, 2017); Erudition, *Zhongguo jiben guji ku* (中国基本古籍库 the collection of ancient texts database) (China: Erudition, 2016).

engaged with Qing culture, but Manchu and Mongol bannermen did not fully assimilate into Han culture. Instead, they kept their northern consumption habits and created their own version of banner culture.

The rest of this chapter is organized into three parts. The first analyses the possession and distribution of specific types of goods: furniture, utensils, martial decorations, carvings, figures, and books and paintings. The second examines the general trends of the raw materials used to manufacture these goods. The third investigates the detailed inventories of civil examination degree holders.

Section 4.1. General Trends - Household Decorations

Home is a semi-private and semi-public space. Homeowners decorate the space both for their family members and for guests. Here I discuss the various types of household decoration to piece together a plausible “typical” picture of household material culture, including the differences between wealthy and relatively less privileged houses, and between Manchu and Mongol bannermen. We begin with examining large pieces of furniture, and then utensils and decorations and books and paintings.

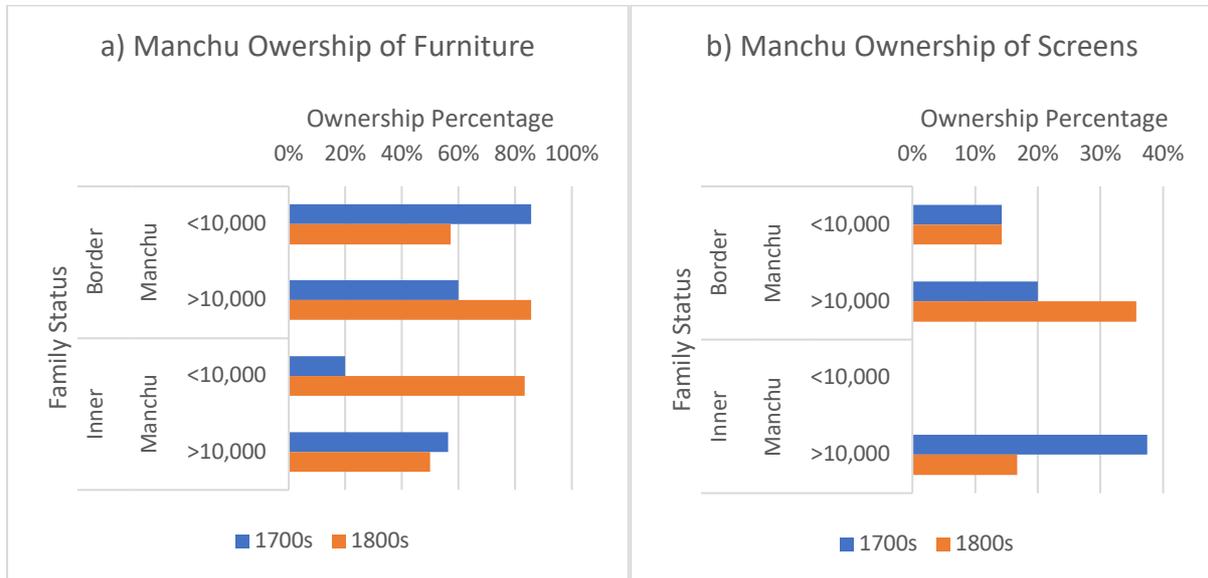
Furniture

Stepping into the house of a bannerman, one would immediately be able to differentiate between a house of the Qing elite and those of other East Asian cultures. Like Han elites, the bannermen enjoyed chair level living, while Japanese and Korean domestic furnishings remained at ground level living. Chair level living was not a novelty to northern cultures. *Houhanshu* (后汉书) notes that it was the Xiongnu people (a northern nomadic group) who first introduced chairs to the Emperor Ling of Han (156-189).⁴⁸ In the inventories, over 70% of the Borderland Manchus owned tables, chairs, beds, and shelves regardless of the time of confiscation (table 4.1.1). Less than 50% of the inner provincial Manchus and Mongols confiscated before 1800 possessed them. After a policy shift toward the greater permanence of appointments, ownership levels increased to 80%. The Qing institutional policy and job requirements of bannermen impacted their ownership of furniture because it defined when they could settle down without the need of constantly move to other places to fight wars. For Mongol bannermen, about 47% of the inner Mongol banners owned furniture, but the inventories did

⁴⁸ Fan ye, *Hou Hanshu Wuyingdian ben* (后汉书武英殿本 Late Han History Wuying dian edition) (Beijing: Tongwenju 同文局, 1874), juan 11, 174.

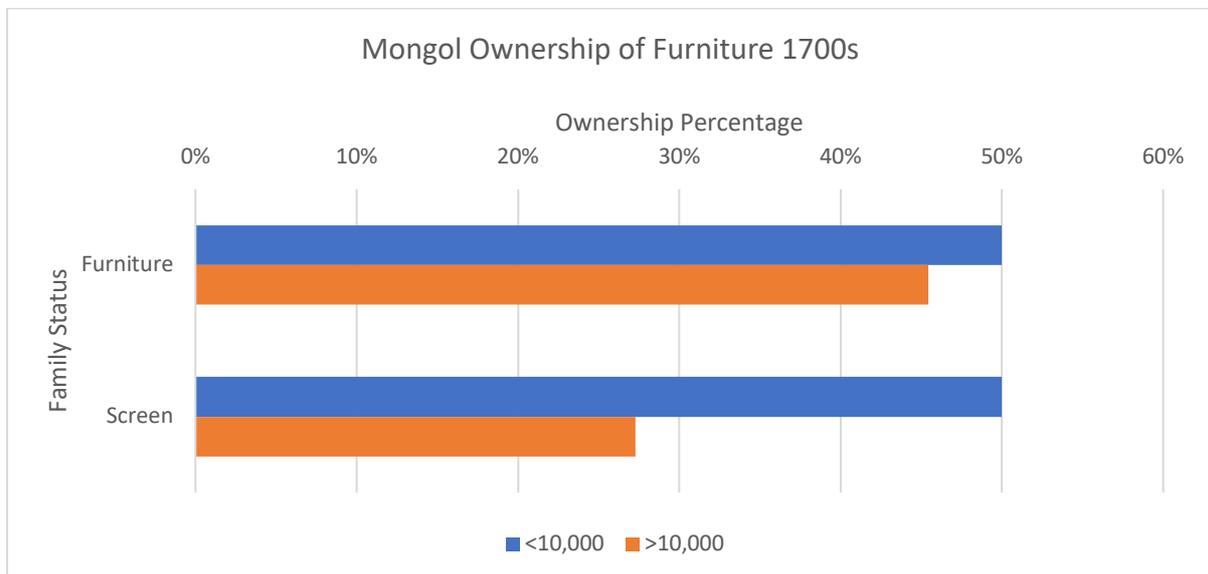
not include borderland Mongols (table 4.1.2). It is arbitrary to determine whether the Mongols overall shared a similar preference of furniture with the Manchus and the Han.

Table 4.1.1 Manchu Bannermen Ownership of Furniture



Source: Appendix 1

Table 4.1.2 Mongol Bannermen Ownership of Furnitures



Source: Appendix 1

The large differences we can see here between borderland Manchus and inner provincial Manchus were possibly caused by the types of pensions that the government granted to them. Unlike borderland and capital bannermen, few garrison bannermen ever received land

grants.⁴⁹ The banner policy also forbade garrison banners to live outside garrisons or find a job outside the government, indirectly causing them to be unable to purchase a permanent house. This had a significant impact on the ownership of furniture, especially before 1800. Inner provincial Manchus had very little incentive before 1800 to purchase furniture, for they needed to move and serve the state.

The higher levels of ownership of furniture among Manchu bannermen and their increased ownership after policy changes in the 1800s indicate that the elite Manchus preferred chair level living. The scholarly debate on the timing of chair level transition focuses on whether the Chinese transformed in latter Han, or Tang, or Song or late Ming and early Qing. This evidence shows that the transformation to chair level living was complete at least in the Qing and became a universal trait shared among Han and Manchu elites. The European impression that the "Chinese" had moved to chair level living in Qing was quite accurate.⁵⁰

The first impressions a visitor would gain when entering a bannerman's house would allow them to immediately perceive that it did not belong to one of the Han elites. Painted screens, a symbol of power in classical Chinese tradition, were present but on a much smaller scale.⁵¹ A large majority of Han Chinese officials owned these pieces while less than a third of inner provincial Manchus and Mongol bannermen possessed them. Only three inner provincial Manchu families and one Mongol family confiscated before 1800 and six Manchu families after 1800 had screens in their houses. The other 70% of banner families did not own them. The Manchu and Mongol banners tended to possess fewer goods such as screens that were clearly Han cultural items.

Ceremonial Utensils

In the inner quarters of the banner houses, a visitor would find ceremonial utensils for daily and ritual uses. During the Qing period, Manchu bannermen increased their ownership of tea and wine ceremonial utensils. These utensils were not regular bowls that would be used for everyday drinking, but rather teapots and teacups and varieties of ceremonial wine pots. The share of bannermen who owned tea utensils expanded from less than 10% to 30 to 40% in the 1800s, while the share of less affluent inner provincial Manchus increased from zero to 67%.

⁴⁹ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 233.

⁵⁰ Nicolas Trigault, *Xiru ermuzi* (西儒耳目资) (Beijing: Guojia rushuguan chubanshe, 2011), accessed August 11th, 2021, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=1537&remap=gb>

⁵¹ Sima Qian, *Shiji Wuyingdian ban ben* (史记武英殿版本), (Beijing: Tongwenju 同文局, 1874), juan 77, 52

The level of ownership of tea utensils remained the same among the affluent inner provincial Manchus. Only one banner family owned ceremonial wine utensils before 1800. The share increased to about 20 per cent in the 1800s. Mongol banner families were indifferent to these goods, by contrast, and only two families owned them.

Tea drinking originated from the central plains and became a part of the borderland diet from the 13th century.⁵² The Mongolian empire facilitated extensive trade routes in Asia and made tea a much more widely available commodity. The borderland communities would add milk and other ingredients to it, while tea drinkers in China proper preferred plain tea.⁵³ The inventories do not tell us about the ways that the bannermen used these utensils. Just as Europeans would use Chinese porcelain to serve their domestic meals, the increase in ownership of these goods did not necessarily indicate that after acquiring the ceremonial utensils, the bannermen decided to prepare tea in the Chinese way. However, it indicated at least that the appreciation of these ceremonial utensils increased over time.

Another feature distinguishing the Manchu and Mongol bannermen's houses from the Han was their ownership of ritual utensils. Bannermen, in general, showed little interest in Han literati luxury goods, such as Zhangzhou ritual vessels and Chinese musical instruments. The levels of ownership across wealth tiers, location, and proto-ethnic branches remained low, less than 30%. No confiscated banner families possessed ritual goods related to Taoism.

Mongolian and other Northern peoples practised Buddhism to a certain degree. It was one of the Mongolian clans' core religious practices because of their increasing entanglements with Tibet since the era of Genghis Khan in the 12th century. The Mongols conquered Tibet multiple times, first in 1240 to 1354, and thereafter indirectly influenced Tibetan politics, aiding the establishment of the Dalai Lama lineage in the 15th century.⁵⁴ The Manchu emperor used Tibetan Buddhism as a political tool to engage with Mongolian and Tibetan authorities. In one of the letters sent by Mongolian tribal leaders Bodisung and Güyeng to Hong Taiji around 1628 to 1631, the first sentence of the document began with the mantra, "Om mani

⁵² Bamana Gaby, "Tea Practices in Mongolia, A Field of Female Power and Gendered Meanings," *Asian Ethnology* 74, no. 1 (2015): 193–214.

⁵³ James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

⁵⁴ Stephen G. Haw, "The Mongol Conquest of Tibet," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no. 1 (2014): 37–49; Andreas Siegl, 'Damu Emke Dabala – "There Can Only Be One": Tibetan-Mongol-Qing Discussions Concerning the Succession of the 5th Dalai Lama,' *Central Asiatic Journal* 58, no. 1–2 (2015): 181–87; Paul Hyer, 'The Dalai Lamas and the Mongols', *The Tibet Journal* 6, no. 4 (1981): 3–12.

padme hum."⁵⁵ According to the first Buddhist document that notes this phrase, *Karandavyuha Sutra*, this phrase represents all Buddhist teachings in a condensed form. It is one of the principal mantras in Buddhism.⁵⁶ In essence, the Tibetans addressed the Manchu emperor as one of the Bodhisattvas.⁵⁷

The inventories do not differentiate Han Buddhist statues from Tibetan Buddhist statues. They do, however, show that Buddhist statues of whatever kind were much more preferred by the richer bannermen, those whose household possessions exceeded 10,000 silver taels in value. About 45% of Mongol bannermen and 30% of Manchu bannermen owned Buddhist statues compare to less than 30% of the Han elites.

Shamanism was the indigenous religion of the Manchus. It was practised at both imperial and garrison level according to *the Imperial Eight Banner Gazetteer* (钦定八旗通志) and *Imperial Manchu Worshipping God and Heaven Book* (*Hesei Toktobuha Manjusai Wecere Metere Kooli Bithe*). Both books provide detailed descriptions of the ritual utensils used for the ceremonies. Mark Elliott argues that the *Hesei Bithe* standardized Manchu shamanism while Di Cosmo and Xiaoli Jiang disagree with him based on Qianlong memorials that stated explicitly that this book should be used as a guide to the imperial ceremonies.⁵⁸ That said, when comparing the *Hesei Bithe* and the *Eight Banner Gazetteer*, the ritual utensils recorded were highly similar, even down to the detail of the style and colour of the utensils. Both referenced swords, three-string and four-string plucked instruments, copper incense burners, flower pattern decorated porcelain bowls, and silver cups. The inventories show that the overall ownership of ritual related utensils doubled after 1800. Since these utensils could have other functions besides rituals, and inventories did not always detail their usage, the increase meant that the bannermen preferred to own more special utensils in the 19th century.

⁵⁵ Nicola Di Cosmo and Dalizhabu Bao, *Manchu-Mongol Relations on the Eve of the Qing Conquest: A Documentary History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 80.

⁵⁶ Alexandra Studholme, *The origins of Om Manipademe hum: A study of the Karandavyuha Sutra* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 72; Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mantra." Encyclopaedia Britannica, June 21, 2013. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mantra>.

⁵⁷ James Hevia, "Lama, Emperors, and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16, No. 2 (1993): 244.

⁵⁸ Nicola Di Cosmo, "Manchu Shamanic Ceremonies at the Qing Court," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph Peter McDermott (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 380; Xiaoli Jiang, "Did the Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rites for Sacrifices to the Spirits and to Heaven Standardize Manchu Shamanism?" *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 9, no. 12 (2018): 7.

Carvings and figures

Besides ritual utensils, a visitor could also find carvings and figures on tables or hanging on the walls. These decorations further illustrated the northern taste that the Manchu and Mongol banners forged and the impact of changing policies pre- and post- 1800. During that time, bannermen doubled their ownership of decorations from about 30 per cent of the families on average to more than 60 per cent. The Manchu and Mongol bannermen owned fewer varieties of auspicious decorations with motifs that originated from Chinese classics and history. Whereas Han officials owned statues of 17 types of beasts derived from *Shanhai jing* (《山海经》), a book of mythical creatures, or from Chinese historical writings,⁵⁹ the banner families owned carvings of only 4 types of beasts in total. Several Han officials owned statues of a famous historical figure, Dong Fangshuo, born in the Western Han dynasty, an official later deified as an immortal, but no bannermen did. Bannermen also preferred carvings of different types of animals. They possessed representations of bats, cicadas, geese, rabbits, shrimps, and squirrels, while the Han people owned auspicious animals according to the Chinese traditions.

Compared to the much more diverse types of mythical beasts that the Han elites favoured, the bannermen owned carvings of just four mythical beasts: Chi (螭), Hou (狻), dragon (龙), and phoenix (凤). The first three were related to dragons, symbols of imperial power.⁶⁰ Chi is one of the nine sons of the dragon. Hou is a strong violent beast, capable of fighting multiple dragons at the same time. Phoenix, in both Manchu and Han contexts, has auspicious meanings. One of the mountain peaks near Changbai mountain was named phoenix peak.⁶¹ The bannermen only owned beasts that related to imperial power or those ones that they were familiar with: they selectively choose the motifs that they preferred instead of assimilating to the full variety of Han tastes.

The animal figures that the bannermen possessed reveal their nostalgic attachment to their ancestral way of life as hunters and pastoral clans of the north. They owned images of the animals they usually hunted in the wild: rabbits, deer, birds, geese, squirrels. They also owned

⁵⁹ Detailed discussion on Han ownership see chapter 3

⁶⁰ Lu Rong, *Shu Yuan Zaji* (菽园杂记) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 16; Li Xu, *Jiean laoren manbi* (戒庵老人漫笔) (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 113; Li Dongyang, *Huailu tangji* (怀麓堂集) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1250.

⁶¹ *Qingtaizu wuhuangdi shilu* (清太祖武英殿实录 *The veritable record of Hong Taiji*), Juan 2, 151, accessed August 12th 2021, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=830353&searchu=%E5%87%A4%E5%87%B0&remap=gb>

horses and sheep figures, animals they raised. The Han elites did not choose to own most of these. The bannermen decorated their houses in a way that accorded with and emphasised their ancestral way of life: they did not imitate Han elite material culture, but created their own that conveyed a distinctive identity rooted in traditional religious practice and lived experience in the north.

Martial Objects

British observers visiting the Qing noted that the bannermen used martial items to decorate their homes,⁶² and indeed, visitors to their houses would see bows, swords, and arrows. The central government required bannermen to practice riding and shooting with bow and arrows. This martial exercise was designed to distinguish the bannermen more clearly from Han civilians. The confiscated bannermen possessed them, but these weapons appear primarily in the more affluent banner cohorts. About one third of the richer Manchu banners owned armour, arrows, bow, and swords regardless of their place and time of confiscation. It seemed possible that these weapons became decorative items after 1800: only families confiscated before 1800 owned carrying bags for their weapons. A few families also owned crossbows and guns. Comparing ownership of these weapons to the levels of ownership among confiscated Han, less than 5% of whom possessed martial items, this level of ownership was high: it would be six times more likely for a visitor to find a bow and arrows in a bannerman's house than in the house of a Han elite.

The other significant difference between the Han and the Manchus was their ownership of horses. The Han Chinese predominantly used horses for war, unlike in 19th century Europe and America, where horses were also used for farming. Horses, in the eyes of the Qing government, were strictly war goods. They forbade non-government related Han people in the central plain to raise horses and issued restrictions multiple times in 1648, 1664, and 1730; they also incorporated this restriction into the *Great Qing Legal Code*.⁶³ This restriction was reflected in the inventories. Powerful officials and elites in Qing possessed horses, but fewer than one in five of the Han elites did. Yet over four out of five border Manchus confiscated before 1800, and inner provincial Manchus confiscated after 1800 owned horses. The majority of all confiscated bannermen owned horses. The imperial strategy of maintaining banner

⁶² Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 115.

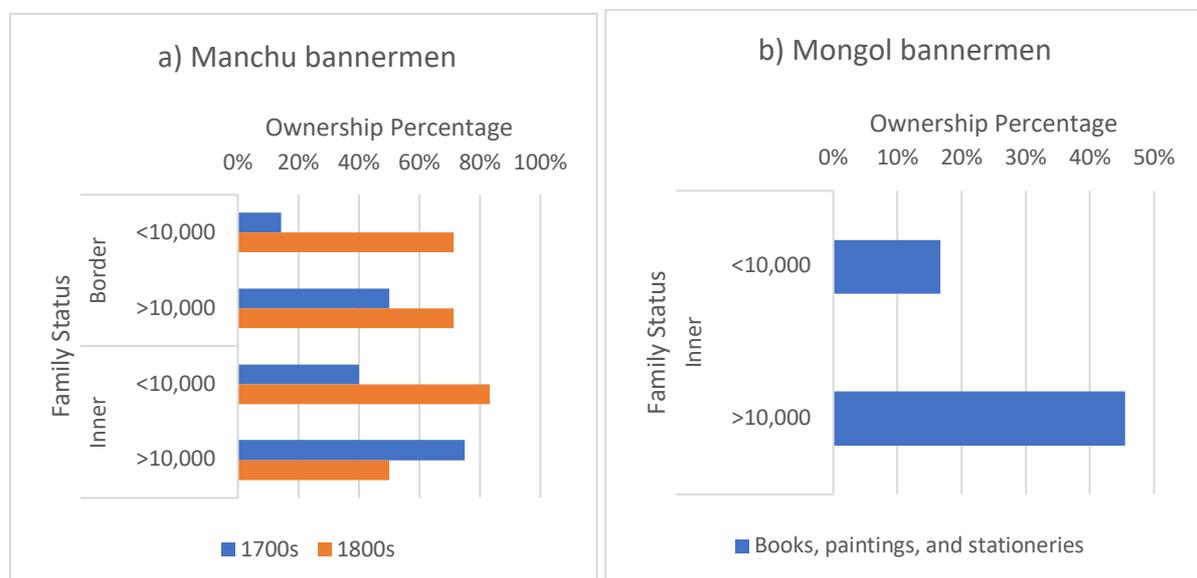
⁶³ Xie Chengxia, *Zhongguo Yangmashi (中国养马史, the history of raising horses in China)* (Beijing: Nongye chubanshe, 1991), 231.

identity by requiring riding and weapons practice clearly shaped the material possession of the bannermen, and they differed from the Han.

Books, paintings, and stationery.

Allowing them to settle permanently, encouraged bannermen to acquire more delicate and heavy objects, including books, paintings, and stationery. Although after 1800 the share of Mongol and Manchu bannermen who owned these items increased from 20% to 40% on average, they predominantly participated in what we might think of as Qing culture, not Han culture (table 4.1.3). They did not possess as many Chinese language books and book collections as the Han elites. Only two non-civil degree bannermen possessed any of the renowned Han paintings, and very few owned books on Daoism, history, art, and primary accounts (Biji Xiaoshuo 笔记小说). The Manchu bannermen living in inner provinces after 1800 collected diverse luxurious stationery items: *duan* inkstones (renowned elegant inkstone since the Tang period) and hardwood, luxury porcelain, silver, jade, and ivory implements. Like Han people, they also used brush pen and ink to communicate and explore various art types.

Table 4.1.3 Manchu and Mongol Bannermen Ownership of Books, Paintings, and Stationeries



Source: Appendix 1

However, unlike their Han peers, Manchu bannermen showed little interest in the diverse types of Chinese calligraphy art. Only two banner households, perhaps by coincidence both from the bordered white banner, owned them. Han Xiyu (韩锡玉), a tier 5 official (Zhifu

知府) confiscated in January 1763, owned the Qiu Ying version of the famous painting *Qingming Shanghetu* (清明上河图). In the full set of confiscations, four families acquired five of Qiu Ying's works: the other three were Han. Shengbao (胜保), confiscated one hundred years later in 1862, a 1st tier military general, acquired artworks by Dong Qichang (1555-1636), and Wen Zhengming (1470-1559).⁶⁴ The inventories show that five Han families collected Dong's art pieces. The Qing elites expressed a profound interest in collecting Ming artworks, however the intensity of their engagement varied between Han and Mongol and Manchu banner.

Within the inventories that provided detailed lists of books, one or two non-scholar families owned a full set of Confucian classics (四书五经) and a more comprehensive range of Chinese works. The banner families' book lists were significantly shorter than those of the Han scholar-officials. The inventories documented Gaopu's book inventory in detail. Gaopu (高朴), a Manchu of the bordered yellow banner, was not originally a Manchu, for his family had belonged to the bond-servant Han banner. His grandfather, a first-tier official, had a successful career in government and married his daughter to the Qianlong emperor. Qianlong grew fond of her and elevated the entire family to the Manchu bordered yellow banner, the most prestigious. Gaopu, holding a 2.5 tier official position in Xinjiang, illegally asked the locals to mine jade and transported it to Suzhou, so Qianlong confiscated him in 1778. He possessed the most diverse types of books among the banner families. He collected more than 38 book series, of which two were first published in Song times, two in the Yuan, four in the Ming and twenty-six in Qing.⁶⁵

Gaopu predominantly engaged with the literary culture of his contemporaries rather than with the distant Chinese past. Most of the primary accounts and poetry collections he possessed were written during the Qing. He owned collections of poems by Zhu Yan (朱琰, 1766 *jinshi*) – *Liting shiji* (笠亭诗集); Li Huanan (1772 *jinshi*) – *Li Shiting shiji* (李石亭诗记); and Sheng Deqian (沈德潜 1739 *jinshi*) – *Guochaoshi biezaiji* (国朝诗别裁记), all recent publications. He also possessed memoirs and notes and novels written by his contemporaries: Wang Shizheng (王士禛 1658 *jinshi*) and Sun Zhu (孙洙 1744 *juren*).

⁶⁴ Inventory of Han Xiyu, No.1 Historical Archive: 05-0206-022; Inventory of Shengbao, No.1 Historical Archive: 03-4604-053.

⁶⁵ Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan, *Qianlongchao chengban tanwu dangan xuanbian* (乾隆朝惩办贪污档案选编) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1994), Vol 1, 391-397.

Some of the earlier books in Gaopu's collection were written during the Ming-Qing transition by scholars who surrendered to Qing and served the Manchu cause. *Xitang Quanjii* (西堂全集) was a primary account written by Youtong (尤侗 1646 *gongsheng*), who was born in late Ming (1618). He entered officialdom in 1679 and was one of the editors of the Qing government-commissioned chronicles of Ming. He lived until the age of 84 and became one of the celebrated elders of his hometown. When the Kangxi Emperor visited the Jiangnan area, Youtong—then in his seventies—composed a poem to celebrate the emperor's birthday. Kangxi was delighted and wrote a Chinese calligraphy door decoration, "He Qi Tang 鹤栖堂" as a return gift.⁶⁶ Gaopu did not possess any books written by Ming rebels, just those produced by Qing loyalists.

Gaopu owned only Qing editions of dictionaries and Confucian works. He possessed the Qing royal commission edition of the Confucian classics composed by Ying Jiaquan (尹嘉銓), a Han scholar-official. This book became one of the censored books in 1782, four years after Gaopu was confiscated. The Qianlong emperor disliked the author's "unruly" conversations with him and decided to confiscate him as well.⁶⁷ Prior to that, this book had gained official recognition from the Qing. He also owned Xinglu Shengdian (幸鲁盛典), a book documenting the Kangxi imperial tour to Confucian's family mansion in Shandong, where the 67th generation of Confucian descendants lived. It portrays a highly political event of the Manchus, paying respect to the Confucian culture. Gaopu also possessed the dictionary Qing wen jian (清文鉴). This dictionary enlisted five official languages—Manchu, Chinese, Mongol, Tibetan, and Uyghur - one of the Yongzheng era attempts to create multicultural personas.

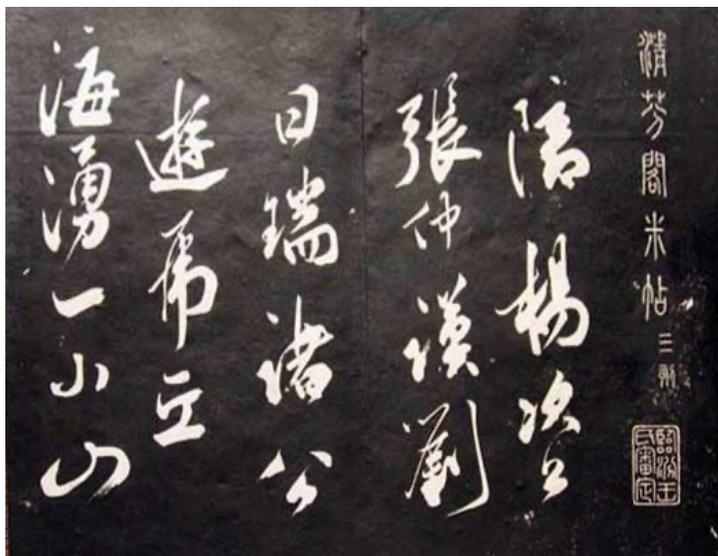
Besides Qing era's books, Gaopu was well-versed in China's history and the Qing commentaries on histories. He possessed both Zizhi tongjian (资治通鉴) and Tongjian zhiyao (通鉴摭要). The former series was composed by Sima Guang in Song on the history from 403BC to 959AC. The latter series was composed by Yao Peiqian (姚培谦) and Zhang Jingxing (张景星 1745 Jinshi), commenting on Zizhi Tongjian. Gaopu read primary sources and the state-recognized secondary sources on history.

⁶⁶ Zhu Yizun, *Baoshutingji* (曝书亭集), digitized by ctext, accessed August 12th 2021, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=269985>

⁶⁷ Lu Xun, *Qiejieting zawen* (且介亭杂文) (Beijing: Yilin chubanshe 2013), 39

As a family relative of the imperial house, Gaopu also acquired knowledge of past material cultures. We can understand Gaopu's possessions as tools that would have helped him advance his position within the court. He possessed Bogutu (博古图), a book that presents a series of graphs and commentary on past conspicuous and luxurious items. He also owned Qing fengge mitie (清芬阁米帖), a calligraphy ink scrub collection of Mifu, Qianlong's beloved Song calligrapher (illustration 4.2). Ink rubbings were used both for appreciating and practising calligraphy. Gaopu might have practised Mifu's calligraphy style using this ink rubbing so that when he wrote memorials to Qianlong, the emperor might gain a good impression of him from his handwriting.

Illustration 4.2 A page in Qing fengge mitie (清芬阁米帖)



Source: Mifu, Beijing gugongcang mingqing ketie (北京故宫藏明清刻帖) (Beijing: Zijingchengchubanshe 紫禁城出版社 2010)

Gaopu used to be one of the role models of Han bannermen, who only read works of other loyal Han servants of the Qing and understood the Qing political rhetoric on Han governance. His book holdings differed from those of the Han officials who owned many more books on Chinese past literature and culture than he did (see chapter 3). Given his unique political and cultural stance among the Qing imperial family and bureaucracy, he carefully walked the line of politics in his collection. But we should recognize that he is exceptional in his engagement with literature: other bannermen possessed even fewer types of books than Gaopu.

The four people examined above were the only ones who possessed renowned art pieces and government-approved Han culture texts. The majority of the confiscated bannermen did not fully invest themselves in mastering Han Chinese culture and celebrating the art of the past ruling elites like their Han counterparts. Essentially, the bannermen limited their participation in Han culture.

Section 4.2. The Materials used in Household Decorations

The materials that were used to manufacture the decorations and furniture further reveal the differences between the Manchu and Mongol bannermen and the Han elites and the 1800s Qing transition. Most historical studies on inventories and material culture pay little attention to the materials used to make goods. But they reflect cultural tastes in an age before the industrial revolution when the cost of transporting goods was high. The choice between materials found at home or brought from afar reflect one's economic and social connections.

If a visitor paid close attention to the materials used for these household goods, they would find evidence of ingrained northern cultural preferences and choices that reflect proximity to power. The Manchu and Mongol bannermen mostly owned hardwood furniture. They did not choose bamboo. They owned more jade, gold, and metalware than porcelain, even after the 1800s. They preferred cotton, sheepskins, and wool for their furniture covers and bedding instead of silk. The few Manchu collectors, besides owning the materials that the Han elites possessed, also collected utensils made from manas jade and eastern pearls, goods that were exclusive to the Manchu aristocrats.

The Manchu bannermen favoured Hardwood furniture, rosewood and sandalwood especially. Most of the forests in China grew softwood, such as fir and bamboo. Hardwood could be grown in Canton, but the population density there during the Qing forbade this development. Merchants needed to import hardwood from south Asia.⁶⁸ Owning hardwood furniture symbolized wealth and power. Genghis Khan was the first emperor to build a palace using sandalwood.⁶⁹ Hardwood became the later emperor's first choice of wood for furniture.⁷⁰ The average rate of ownership of Hardwood furniture for the Mongol banners ranged between 30 to 60 per cent, higher than the average of the Han elites. The 1800 transition affected the

⁶⁸ Tian Jiaqing, *Classic Chinese furniture of the Qing Dynasty*, translated by Lark E Mason, Jr, and Juliet Yung-yi chou, edited by Susan pares (London: Philip wilson 1996), introduction.

⁶⁹ *Yuanshi Wuyingdian ban* (元史武英殿版 *The history of Yuan Wuyingdian version*) (Beijing: Tongwenju 同文局, 1874), Juan 31.

⁷⁰ Tian Jiaqing, *Classic Chinese furniture of the Qing Dynasty*, translated by Lark E Mason, Jr, and Juliet Yung-yi chou, edited by Susan pares (London: Philip wilson 1996).

ownership. The border bannermen and inner provincial bannermen who were confiscated after the 1800s possessed about 20 per cent more hardwood furniture than the inner provincial banner before the 1700s. The inner provincial Mongol bannermen were indifferent to this development; three out of seventeen owned hardwood furniture.

The second favourite material for furniture among the bannermen was lacquerware: 26 out of 94 families, 27% per cent of the Manchu and Mongol banners possessed them. Bamboo furniture, however, was only rarely found in their houses: 18 out of 94, 20% of the families owned this. They did not favour goods that had a Han material cultural resonance. One or two families possessed engraved furniture materials including jade, bamboo, enamel, copper, iron, and marbles. Many more Han elites owned engraved furniture.

The textiles used in furniture displayed in Manchu and Mongol bannermen's houses also differed from the Han. About 30 to 60 per cent of the Manchu and Mongol banners owned cotton and wool, while less than 20 per cent possessed silk. Levels of ownership of cotton textiles increased from 30 per cent on average 50 per cent after the 1800s for both provincial and borderland Manchus. Living in the inner province did not completely alter the material preferences of cotton.

The materials used for decorative carvings and ritual figures revealed that the bannermen preferred jade over all other types of materials. Jade came from mines located in the north of China. It was already a prestigious status good among the northern people long before Manchus became Manchus. In numerous tombs excavated before the 10th century, northern leaders used jade belts and utensils. The banner families had an even stronger preference for jade than the Han elites. Between 30 to 50 per cent of bannermen owned jade. To put this in context, while Jade appeared in the homes of over 60 percent of rich Han scholar-officials, less than 20 per cent of all other Han elite subgroups possessed jade.

Because of their military duties and northern tradition, the banner families owned more daily utensils made from metals such as gold, copper, and tin than porcelain before the 1800s. On average, about 70% of the Manchu and Mongol banner families possessed copperware. Less than 50% of the inner provincial bannermen in the 1700s owned porcelain. However, after the 1800s, the level of ownership of porcelain increased to about 70% as well. This did not impede their preference to metalware, which remained constant.

Very few Manchu and Mongol bannermen collected goods made from rare materials. However, those who did -- six Manchu families and one or two Mongol families -- collected

as many rare materials including elephant tusk, pearls, agate, amber, crystals, jadeite, realgar, tourmaline, turquoise as the Han officials. They also owned larger quantities of imperially controlled rare goods than the Han elites, for instance, manas jade. This jade comes from a specific mine in Xinjiang. It was a royal mine sealed off by Qianlong in 1789.⁷¹ The location was protected so well that it remained lost until the 1970s. Guo Fuxiang, a researcher from the Beijing palace museum, studied manas jade and concluded that it only circulated within the imperial palace.⁷² The confiscation list shows that two Han scholar-officials and four Manchu bannermen possessed it in the 1800s. Owning this type of jade symbolized direct access to royal resources.

The three Manchu families who owned manas jade (Hengqi (恒棨)⁷³, Xiangen (祥恩)⁷⁴, Shengbao (勝宝))⁷⁵ and one Mongol banner Tai Feiyin (台斐音)⁷⁶, were all high officials above third tier. They collected much more manas jade than that of the two Han scholar-officials Yao Xueying (姚学瑛)⁷⁷ and Chen Fuen (陈孚恩)⁷⁸. They owned 26 manas jade utensils, in which 25 of which were kitchenware: cups, bowls, vases and one small Ruyi. The two Han families owned five manas jade table screens and Ruyi pieces. They used this solely for decorative purposes, while the Manchus seemed to prefer to use this for dining ware. The Manchus could have asked the artisan to carve this material into other shapes, but they chose cups and bowls instead. Although these could be objects for display, they also had a practical function, which could be used to entertain guests in a home dinner. In this, the Manchu and Mongol bannermen elevated the display of power to another level.

The bannermen maintained their northern preferences for jade, metalware, and cotton throughout the two hundred years covered by the confiscations. After 1800, more bannermen possessed porcelain, and a few of them also began collecting rare and precious goods. This did not affect their distinct fondness for northern goods. A visitor could see the differences between the Han and the bannerman's house. They all enjoyed chair level living. The affluent families adored hardwood furniture while fewer bannermen used softwood furniture and bamboo

⁷¹ Fuxiang Guo, "Qianlong Gongting Manasibiyu Yanjiu (乾隆宫廷玛纳斯碧玉研究 Qianlong Era Court Green Manas Jade Study)," *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan 故宫博物院院刊*, no. 2 (2015): 8.

⁷² Guo, Qianlong Gongting Manasibiyu Yanjiu, 6–31.

⁷³ Inventory of Hengqi, No.1 Historical Archive: 03-2664-038.

⁷⁴ Inventory of Xiangen, No.1 Historical Archive: 03-4605-024.

⁷⁵ Inventory of Shengbao, No.1 Historical Archive: 03-4604-053.

⁷⁶ Inventory of Tai Feiyin, Taibei Palace Museum Archive: 00003-4153.

⁷⁷ Inventory of Yao Xueying, No.1 Historical Archive: 03-2382-019.

⁷⁸ Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dangan Guan, *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Danzan Xuanbian*, 101.

furniture. All Qing elites preferred jade decorations. The Manchu and Mongol bannermen used metalware for dining while the Han elites used porcelain. They decorated their houses with weapons, carvings with motifs that correlated to their ancestral ways of living or the imperial power, and ritual goods related to Buddhism and ancestral worship and shamanism. Han elites were antiquarians that materialized their imagined past recorded in classical Chinese texts to create their own cosmos.

Section 4.3. Acculturation, the "Confucian Civilizing Project"

The general patterns of ownership apparent in the confiscations make clear the distinction between the material culture of the Manchu and Mongol bannermen and the Han elites. But how far was this maintained? Were some bannermen assimilated into Han culture?

Among the Manchu and Mongol bannermen, a small percentage passed the civil service examination, a test to prove their ability to understand, translate, and interpret Chinese language classics. There were two tracks of civil service examination that a bannermen could take. One was more challenging, available also to the Han people with an acceptance rate at each level of less than 5%.⁷⁹ The other, slightly easier, was designed for Manchu and Mongol bannermen.⁸⁰ It had a more lenient quota and tested them on translations. It used simpler questions on the Chinese classics in comparison to the former track. In the early nineteenth century, one in every fifteen bannermen passed the provincial translation degree and about one in every five passed the metropolitan translation examinations.⁸¹ Both examinations gave similar ranks, with the latter adding the word "translation" (翻译) before the official name. If we suppose that the theory proposed by Stevan Harrell on the "Confucian civilizing project" was true, then those bannermen who mastered Confucian culture should have converged towards the tastes of the Han scholar-officials who were native Chinese language users, mastered the Confucian classics, and passed the harder exam track. In effect, the Manchu and Mongol bannermen who passed these exams should have adopted the same domestic material culture as the Han scholar-officials.

There were five bannermen in the confiscation inventories who had passed either the normal or translation examinations. The Mongol bannermen Fuer Huna (傅尔瑚讷) and

⁷⁹ Shang Yanliu, *Qingdai Keju kaoshi shilu* (清代科举考试述录 *A study of the Qing Era Civil Service Examination*), (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1958), 202-210.

⁸⁰ Raymond W. Chu, *Career Patterns in the Ch'ing Dynasty: The Office of Governor-General* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1984), 49.

⁸¹ Shang Yanliu, *Qingdai Keju kaoshi shilu*, 202-210

Manchu bannermen Huaigu (怀谷) passed translation exams. The former gained the title of translating Jinshi, and the latter gained entry-level Bitheshi. The other three Manchu bannermen passed the harder level civil service examination. Shengbao (胜保) gained the Juren degree, Changling (长麟) and Guodong (国栋) passed the highest Jinshi degree. Their inventories show that mastering Confucian culture did not result in close convergence with Han culture. Two out of the five bannermen did lean towards the Han culture. Those who did either had experience governing Jiangnan or occupied a position above 2.5 tier. To the extent it happened at all, the "Confucian civilizing project" in Qing only affected the top elite level.

Fuer huna, the only Mongol bannermen in the confiscation list who held a translating Jinshi civil service, was a 5th tier county governor of Yunnan province.⁸² He was punished in 1772 because he received a Chaozhu bead necklace from others. Yet he decorated his house with typical Mongol possessions. The luxurious utensils that he possessed included silver cups and dishes. He also owned copper, tin and woodware. He did not use porcelain for everyday utensils but preferred metalware. He owned a few pieces of furniture and utensils worth 22 silver taels. From a material culture perspective, the Confucian hypothesis of cultural assimilation applies poorly for Fuer Huna. He did not own porcelain or silk or renowned Chinese paintings or auspicious carvings preferred by the Han officials.

For the Manchu bannermen, their progression through the civil service examination degree affected the officials. The higher their degree and official position, the more entrenched with Han culture they became. Huaigu held the lowest level translating exam degree, and the bannermen was not even an official yet when he was confiscated in 1795. The luxurious items that he owned had Chinese shapes but in European techniques. He possessed an incense burner decorated with a pink colour overglaze enamel. This type of utensil usually had a copper core or was in porcelain. The enamel overgraze was part of a new colour palette introduced to China from Europe during Kangxi's reign (1654–1722) by Western Jesuits who worked at the palace: it was a fashionable and new technique during his time. Huaigu also possessed a small screen and a table decoration made from glass. The total amount of furniture and ornaments he possessed doubled that of Fuer Huna, but he owned fashionable new foreign goods that were modified into the Qing culture, not traditional Han objects.

⁸² Inventory of Fuer Huna: Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dangan Guan, *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Danzan Xuanbian*, 3472.

Shengbao, a first-tier military general and later a special agent of the state (钦差大臣) who held regular Juren degree, was confiscated in 1862.⁸³ He possessed 315 pieces of household decorations worth about 1205 silver taels. He owned more Han related pieces, including the paintings of Dong Qichang discussed earlier and fancy inkstones such as duan yan. However, in general he displayed more of a Manchu or northern taste. He mainly held metalwares made from tin and copper, in total 44 pieces. He possessed three pieces of jade decoration: a cup, snuff bottle, and mountain water carving that were less associated with the Han literary culture. As a general, he also had a map of Henan province and a portable telescope. He also possessed a few European utensils: a music box, a clock, wine cups, and a fork and knife set. He did not own any porcelain. Instead, he focused on collecting robust decorative objects along with a few Han literary goods. His possessions represented his identity as an affluent military general who studied the Confucian culture, while appreciating both the northern fashions and Han literary culture.

Changling and Guodong both achieved a Han Jinshi degree, the most challenging and highest level of civil examination exam. They served as high officials governing the Jiangnan area, perhaps because they proved their mastery of Han culture with their exam degrees. Changling belonged to the blue banner. He was the military governor of Liangjiang when he was confiscated in 1795, the highest official of Jiangnan.⁸⁴ He had failed to investigate a criminal case and received the punishment of confiscation, and was exiled to Xinjiang. The Jiaqing emperor called him back after Qianlong retired and appointed him again as a first-tier official.

Changling owned an impressive collection of 1,920 pieces of furniture and utensils worth more than 3000 silver taels. The value is an estimation that gives the lowest possible price of his possessions, because pricing for antiques and jade could vary significantly from one to another. Changling's house would have been one of the most luxurious and comfortable private homes in the empire besides the imperial palace and the houses of high imperial lords (brothers and cousins of the emperor). He slept on a rosewood bed, sat on rosewood and sandalwood chairs, and wrote memorials on rosewood and sandalwood tables. His wardrobes were also made from sandalwood, and he used glass mirrors to check his appearance before

⁸³ Inventory of Shengbao: No.1 Historical Archive: 03-4604-053.

⁸⁴ Inventory of Changling: Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dangan Guan, *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Danzan Xuanbian*, 3542-3549.

venturing out. When he wrote calligraphy and read books at night, sandalwood glass lamps (24), glass vase lights (12), and sheep horn lamps (50) lit the house. Fifty screens, large and small, divided his living spaces, excluding table screens. He cared about time and could know the time wherever in the house. Twenty-four clocks that functioned in distinct manners surrounded him. He possessed seven traditional water clocks, thirteen foreign clocks, one mirror with a watch attached to it, and one astronomical clock. He even owned seventeen watches.

Changling's study held the finest writing instruments. He possessed forty calligraphy pens produced in the Shanliang county (湖笔), one of the most renowned pen making counties of Qing. He washed his pen after writing in a washbasin that matched his mood of the day. He owned pen washbasins made from jade, carved with Chinese peony or dragon or Ganoderma lingzhi, and porcelain washbasins produced from the five most famous kilns established during Song or Ming era: Junyao kilns, Longquan kilns, Xuan kilns, Ding kilns, Jun kilns. These five kilns were constantly mentioned in primary accounts and collected by the imperial house. He put his pen in a jade pen holder. Within the pen holder, he also put a jade bodied pen. To match his jade collection, he owned a jade paper holder and a jade inkstone. He, of course, wrote and painted on the finest paper, made of silk, of which he had 44 pieces.

Changling's interest in collecting antiques and luxurious utensils extended far beyond stationary. He collected fifty-six pieces of Shangzhou ritual vessels in the shape of Ding 鼎, Zun 罇, Gu 觚, Gongbi 琕璧, Lu 卣, Qing 馨 made from jade, antique copper, green copper, Han dynasty antique copper, and porcelains made from the five famous kilns. He owned 47 types of jade utensils: auspicious carvings of Han words, animal and nature carvings, daily utensils including flower vases, tea utensils, and snuff bottles. He surrounded himself with both natural scenes of mountain carvings and auspicious figures that originated from Han culture. For instance, he possessed a Pingan Youxiang (平安有象), an elephant-like figure, derived from the exact phrase meaning safe and peace. In addition, he had a pair of mandarin ducks with the auspicious Chinese meaning of a long and happy marriage.⁸⁵ The kitchenware that he acquired included four iron woks and hundreds of utensils made from copper, tin, domestic and foreign porcelain, and jade would serve both guests and for his everyday use.

⁸⁵ Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), chapter 7.

The only differences between a Han scholar-official and Changling was the quantity of complete books series and famous paintings that each possessed. The Han high officials generally possessed complete book series and famous paintings by Confucian scholars of the past, such as Mifu or Dong Qichang. For instance, comparing Changling to Wang Tanwang (see chapter 3), Changling owned no famous paintings while Wang owned the stone rubbing of the Song period.

Guodong, a bordered yellow bannerman, oversaw rice transportation in Zhejiang province and was confiscated in 1782.⁸⁶ He used to be in charge of confiscating Wang Tanwang. In comparison to Changling, Guodong's possessions were much less diverse and luxurious. Although he doubled the total quantity of household decoration in comparison to Changling, possessing 2,097 items, over a majority of them were ordinary everyday utensils made from porcelain (日用瓷器) 986, wood 40, lacquer 155, copper 118, and tin 210. He possessed the plainest furniture, unspecified wood. Like Changling, he also lighted his house with forty-eight glass lamps and divided the living spaces with seventy screens made from various materials, including jade and marble. He had one desk clock and one large full-body glass mirror.

Guodong favoured jade and silver utensils and decorations the most. He owned 71 silver utensils and 147 jade pieces. The jade decorations were in various shapes, including ritual vessels, teapots, cups, vases, carvings, figures, washbasins, animals, and Ruyi. Similar to Changling, he possessed a complete set of jade stationaries. He also collected ritual vessels of four types, all made from jade. The largest three types of jade carvings and figures he possessed were animals, mythical beasts, and 26 pieces of Ruyi. He owned jade horses, fish, cicadas, a chicken, deer, a shrimp, a bat, geese, cranes, and a small dragon. He owned 170 unclassified books and 35 calligraphy and paintings. Most of the time, the unclassified books and paintings held much less monetary value than complete sets of books and renowned artworks. Guodong's possession, although it shared similarity with the Han officials and with Changling, had northern tastes. He owned a large amount of metalware and also a vast range of animal collections.

Both Guodong and Changling were avid collectors of Han literary goods. The differences between a Han Jinshi high official and a Manchu Jinshi high official were slim.

⁸⁶ Inventory of Guodong: Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dangan Guan, *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Danzan Xuanbian*, 2647-2651.

The Manchus owned less diverse book collections, and renowned Chinese paintings and Guodong also kept the northern preferences. But even mastering Han culture did not assimilate everyone fully into the Han elite's taste and material culture. The Mongol translating Jinshi possessed metal and wood utensils, not porcelain. The Manchus shared elements of Han conspicuous consumption, but their homes still diverged from those of Han scholar-officials. They owned a large amount of metalware. The Jinshi officials held more animals and natural carvings. They possessed only two to three pieces of carvings and figures that had a Han word auspicious meaning. The Jinshi banners did not own famous paintings and extensive collections of books. They also had a higher interest in European goods, a new luxury fashion trend of mid and late Qing (see chapter 6 for more detail).

Section 4.4. Conclusion

The bannermen from the north shared a collective geographically rooted and politically influenced cultural memory. They preferred unique types and materials of household goods. A majority of them, regardless of their occupation or wealth or place of confiscation, possessed metalware, jade, and cotton textiles. Depending on the bannermen's place, time, and education, they owned additional possessions that suited their needs. Their ways of living, as a "nomadic" soldier or as a settled official, encouraged them to decorate their house and allocate their assets differently.

The physical and mental walls created by the Qing imperial agenda, the banner garrisons and cultural programs, discouraged the Mongol and Manchu banner from assimilating into the Han culture. They were effective before the 1800s when the Qing state could afford to keep the conquering population affluent and self-sufficient in managing their affairs. Only four Manchu and Mongol banner families owned Han literary goods in this period. The occupation limitation of the bannermen as military personnel before the 1800s also discouraged them from holding delicate and heavy objects. The emperors were conquering distant places with the help of bannermen who needed to move for military campaigns, living a nomadic soldier life.

After 1800, the Qing government withdrew much of their support to the banner population and halted expansionary war efforts, making the bannermen more stationary. This change was reflected in the Manchu bannermens' increased ownership of heavy and delicate goods. They began to participate more in Han literary culture. They needed to work with the local residents more, whether for military or civil affairs. The most powerful military lords in

the post 1850s Qing world were the Han officials. They helped to defend the Qing regime from peasant rebellions by raising Han armies. Yet despite the increasing participation of Manchu officials in Han material culture, they kept their northern traits of preferring metal, jade, and cotton.

The bannermen who held a civil examination degree, although not entirely acculturated, had more tendency to participate in the Han culture. They worked in civil posts, became colleagues of Han scholar-officials. But they owned fewer Han literary goods, including the Chinese language originated auspicious carvings, diverse books, and renowned paintings. The few families that demonstrated more interest in competing with the Han scholar-officials for luxurious household decorations could compete and show off their political status as the conquerors.

Their household decoration provides strong evidence that the core of the Qing elites, the elite Manchu and Mongol bannermen in Qing, were culturally different from the majority Han people. Their household goods show the persistence of northern consumption habits. They used imperial status goods as a way of distinction. The government succeeded in maintaining political and cultural dualism, in short. Acculturation happened to an extent among the top elite group who mastered the Han culture and were governing the Jiangnan area. The rest of the elite Manchu and Mongol bannermen showed little interest in the Han literary culture. The Qing empire should not be categorized as a regime ruled only by the Han. The Manchu way (Ma: Manju Doro) existed side by side with the Han culture.

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