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Neither Chinese Nor Outsiders: Yi and Non-Yi in the Qing Imperial Worldview

ABSTRACT:

This article studies the development during the Qing of the Hua–Yi (“Chinese–foreigner” or “civilized–barbarian”) dichotomy by examining two questions. First, what peoples within and outside the Qing realm could, in the eyes of the state, legitimately be described as Yi? Second, from the perspective of the Qing state, what criteria determined that status? It argues that the Qing state modified the preceding, Ming-era, Hua–Yi binary into a tripartite division by carving out an implicit third status—“non-Yi.” “Non-Yi” applied to Inner Asians, particularly Manchus and Mongols, who were regarded as distinct from Han Chinese but equal in their level of civilization and not subject to the discourse of “transformation” applied to those considered Yi. Studying this “non-Yi” status offers insight into the Qing ideology that justified Manchu rule over a composite state of which China was only one component. The conclusion explores tensions and contradictions apparent when the Qing state tried to repurpose existing Chinese political vocabulary to discuss the equal but distinct status of Inner Asia within the Qing realm.

KEYWORDS:

Qing empire, ideology, Hua–Yi (Chinese–barbarian) dichotomy, Inner Asia

The Qing state wove its ideological pronouncements so intricately that historians are still working to unravel its craftsmanship. In the judgment of some, its Manchu rulers pursued “a policy of systematic sinicization” and became orthodox Confucian monarchs.¹ Others highlight their claim to a special “Manchu Way” that raised them

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¹ Ping-ti Ho, “The Significance of the Ch’ing Period in Chinese History,” *JAS* 26.2 (1967), pp. 189–95.

above their Chinese and Mongol predecessors.² Still others argue that Qing emperors regarded the diverse cultures they ruled as approximately equal and each best treated on its own terms.³ With one eye on the present, yet others see in the Qing a “new definition” of China that incorporated multiple ethnic groups.⁴ The Qing state’s ideology demands close analysis not only because it spoke in several languages, but because its messages in any one language were calibrated to further its purposes on terms that did not fatally alienate its subjects. Here a comparison to the dynasty’s last decades can be both illuminating and misleading. Unsettling challenges from the West and Japan after 1860 slowly generated a new political vocabulary rich in neologisms. In 1644, when China’s Han literati elite faced an equally unknown future, their new Manchu rulers chose to work with existing concepts of Chinese political and cultural vocabulary rather than venturing explicit innovations. Adapting Ming political discourse that took the rejection of alien rule as a core principle, rather than openly attacking it or inventing an alternative, required supreme ideological deftness. The Qing state delicately renovated existing terms, stripping off some inconvenient meanings and implications, and adding others to fit the Qing context. Its success is all the more impressive because traces of these ideological nips and tucks are now so easily overlooked.

To shed light on how Manchu rulers embraced ideologies of Chinese emperorship while maintaining a certain critical distance from this tradition, this paper examines a particularly sensitive instance of such adaptation: the simultaneous use and avoidance of the term Yi 夷. The hierarchical division of the world’s peoples between the two categories Hua 華 (with cognate terms such as Xia 夏, Hua-Xia 華夏, zhu-Xia 諸夏) and Yi (with cognate terms such as Yi-Di 夷狄 and “Yi of the four directions 四夷”) was among the most long-standing and prominent binaries in the Chinese political and cultural worldview. In certain periods of Chinese history, it was believed that Yi outsiders could in principle be “transformed” or civilized by adopting Hua norms; at other times, especially during bitter conflicts with powerful steppe confederacies, Yi were viewed as irredeemable outsiders, permanently different from the Hua.⁵ By the late Ming, when China faced major external threats,

² Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2001), pp. 275–304.

³ For a summary of this approach see Joanna Waley-Cohen, “The New Qing History,” *Radi- cal History Review* 88 (2004), pp. 193–206.

⁴ Gang Zhao, “Reinventing China: Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Modern China* 32.3 (2006), p. 11.

⁵ Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy,”

the Hua–Yi relationship was conceived in particularly antagonistic terms, with the Yi both inferior and threatening.⁶ For most late-Ming Han literati, the belief that Yi could not legitimately rule China had the force of a political commandment.

Thus, for early Manchu rulers, their being Yi in the eyes of their new subjects was perhaps the single greatest ideological challenge to popular acceptance. Adding to the particular sensitivity of this term was the question of how the Hua–Yi dichotomy mapped onto their expanding realm. For the Ming domain this had not posed problems: its geographic boundaries largely fit what was regarded as China, its emperors counted the expulsion of the Mongols and the restoration of the Hua–Yi boundary as one of their founding achievements, and its relatively homogeneous ruling elite generally accepted the Confucian canon as the basis of orthodox political and cultural discourse. Manchu rule invalidated such relatively neat distinctions between an inner Hua and outer Yi. The Qing realm now included territories Ming rulers and officials had never regarded as part of China. Many local elites in these regions did not speak Chinese or profess Confucian values, yet were regarded by the state as loyal and worthy subjects.

In the last decades of the Ming, it seemed axiomatic that Yi Manchus should not be allowed to defile Hua China. Given the toxic potency of this discourse, the Hua–Yi distinction could not be freely discussed in territories conquered by the Manchus. Only Qing rulers, and trusted officials acting with authorization, could safely broach this forbidden topic. Emperors could not force subjects to accept their opinions, but they could guide discourse and set the boundaries of what could be said. This paper therefore considers only imperially-authored and authorized views, as expressed in emperors' own writings, documents passing to and from the throne, and works composed by officials at imperial command.

Earlier studies of the Hua–Yi distinction in the Qing period have approached it from several angles.⁷ Historians of Qing censorship have

in Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, eds., *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 59–102; Lawrence Wang-chi Wong, “Barbarians or Not Barbarians: Translating *Yi* in the Context of Sino-British Relations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in Lawrence Wang-chi Wong, ed., *Towards a History of Translating: In Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the Research Centre for Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Vol. 3* (Hong Kong: Research Centre for Translation, 2013), pp. 293–387.

⁶ Okamoto Sae 岡本さえ, *Shindai kinsho no kenkyū* 清代禁書の研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1996), pp. 160–89.

⁷ The most comprehensive recent study is that of Xiao Minru 蕭敏如, *Cong ‘Hua-Yi’ dao*

noted measures to prevent the Manchus from being termed Yi.⁸ Others have examined the distinction for the light it sheds on the relationship between the Qing empire and “China” as a political and cultural concept.⁹ In this context, the bold revisionist opinions on the Hua–Yi relationship espoused by the Yongzheng emperor have drawn particular attention.¹⁰ Some, most prominently Lydia Liu, have concentrated on the role of the term Yi during the Qing clash with the British empire in the nineteenth century.¹¹ The present article, which concentrates exclusively on the period before 1800, touches to an extent on all three of these topics, but addresses questions somewhat neglected in previous scholarship. First, it examines which peoples within and outside the Qing realm could, in the eyes of the state, legitimately be described as Yi. It then seeks the underlying criteria used to determine Yi status, by examining both debates at court on this topic and related issues of editing classical texts dealing with the issue. Finally, it considers competing modes of rendering the term Yi into Manchu.

In summary form, this article argues that after 1644 the category of Yi bifurcated in official discourse: the term became taboo when used

‘Zhong-Xi’: *Qingdai Chunqiu xue Hua-Yi guan yanjiu* 從‘華夷’到‘中西’，清代‘春秋’學華夷觀研究 (Taipei: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe, 2009). See also Kishimoto Mio 岸本美緒, “‘Zhong-guo’ he ‘Waiguo’: Ming-Qing liangdai lishi wenxian zhong sheji guojia yu duiwai guanxi de yongyu” ‘中國’和‘外國’，明清兩代歷史文獻中涉及國家與對外關係的用語，in Chen Xiyuan 陳熙遠, ed., *Fuan de lishi: Dang’an kaojue yu Qingshi yanjiu* 覆案的歷史，檔案考掘與清史研究 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2013), vol. 2, pp. 357–93; for a review of the concept of Yi in a wider Northeast Asian setting, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2015), pp. 188–224.

⁸ See, for instance, Wu Zhefu 吳哲夫, *Qingdai jinhui shumù yanjiu* 清代禁燬書目研究 (Taipei: Jiixin shuini gongsi wenhua jijin hui, 1969); Okamoto, *Shindai kinsho*, pp. 54–68.

⁹ Yuanchong Wang, “Civilizing the Great Qing: Manchu-Korean Relations and the Reconstruction of the Chinese Empire, 1644–1761,” *Late Imperial China* 38.1 (2017), pp. 113–154; Zhang Yongjiang, “The Libu and Qing Perception, Classification and Administration of Non-Han People,” in Dittmar Schorkowitz and Chia Ning, eds., *Managing Frontiers in Qing China: The Lifanyuan and Libu Revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 116–43.

¹⁰ Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1999), pp. 246–62; idem, “The *Dayi juemi lu* 大義覺迷錄 and the Lost Yongzheng Philosophy of Identity,” *Crossroads* 5 (2012), pp. 63–80; Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2005), pp. 470–76; and Hirano Satoshi 平野聡, *Shinteikoku to Chibetto mondai: Taminzoku togō no seiritsu to gakai* 清帝国とチベット問題，多民族統合の成立と瓦解 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), pp. 71–133. For the background to this case, see Jonathan D. Spence, *Treason by the Book* (New York: Viking, 2001).

¹¹ Lydia H. Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2004), pp. 70–107; Natascha Vittinghoff, “‘British Barbarians’ and ‘Chinese Pigtailed’? Translingual Practice in a Transnational Environment in Nineteenth Century Hong Kong and Shanghai,” *China Review* 4.1 (2004), pp. 27–54; and Fang Weigui, “*Yi*, *Yang*, *Xi*, *Wai* and Other Terms: The Transition from ‘Barbarian’ to ‘Foreigner’ in Nineteenth-Century China,” in Michael Lackner et al., eds., *New Terms for New Ideas: Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 95–123.

for certain groups, notably Manchus and Mongols, but remained permissible when used for others, notably those regarded by Qing rulers as alien outsiders. At first, both Hua and Yi were used sparingly in official discourse. Then, for a brief period at the end of his reign, Yongzheng advanced a new policy, by which all non-Han, including Manchus and Mongols, could be termed Yi. Qianlong quickly resumed the earlier policy, and was far more active and explicit in clarifying the boundary between Yi and non-Yi. Yet Yongzheng's (r. 1723–1735) and Qianlong's (r. 1736–1795) explicit attempts to police the use of the term Yi revealed an unresolved conflict in the Qing state's ideological stance: in some contexts, Yi was described as neutral and non-pejorative; in others, its pejorative connotations were acknowledged, and it was applied to the empire's greatest enemies. Carefully tracing official use of the term Yi demonstrates that the Qing court attempted, with difficulty and some inconsistency, to remake the binary Hua–Yi division of the Ming era into a tripartite classification of the world's peoples that better fit their own ideological needs – Hua, Yi, and non-Yi. This unacknowledged effort to in effect divide the world into Chinese, internal and external Yi outsiders, and non-Yi Inner Asians, reflects the emergence of a new, Qing-specific category of Inner Asian peoples regarded as civilizationally equal to Han Chinese, but permanently distinct and not legitimate targets for cultural change.

Ambiguities in the Qing period make it difficult to translate Yi into English. In 1814, East India Company officials asserted, and Qing authorities denied, that Yi was “expressive of scorn and contempt.”¹² The following year, the dictionary of the Company's translator, Robert Morrison, rendered Yi as “foreigners on [sic] the east; foreigners generally,” noting no pejorative sense.¹³ Yet when in 1822 hong merchants proposed to the English that they refer to themselves as Yi in their future correspondence with Qing authorities, Morrison elaborated that the word “is usually translated *foreigners*, but...conveys, in addition to *not belonging to China* – an idea of inferiority, resembling the word *barbarian* as anciently used by the Greeks.”¹⁴ This interpretation was adopted by the influential historian of Sino-Western relations, John K. Fairbank, who translated Yi as “barbarian...in the Greek sense,” that is, “not purposely insulting, although the Westerners disliked its

¹² Quoted in Wong, “Barbarians or Not Barbarians,” p. 339.

¹³ Robert Morrison, *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language in Three Parts* (Macao: East India Company Press, 1815) 1, p. 586.

¹⁴ Eliza Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison, D.D.* (London: Longman, 1839) 2 (appendix), p. 31. Italics in original.

implications.”¹⁵ Lydia Liu has contended that the word in its Qing context is better captured by “foreigner” than “barbarian,” an interpretation that has found both favor and criticism.¹⁶ Adopting either translation, “barbarian” or “foreigner,” risks prejudicing this inquiry, and so Yi is here left untranslated. It is uniformly capitalized throughout simply for ease of reading; except where specified, it was not used as a proper noun.

PART I: YI AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS
IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT

Before considering Qing policy toward the term Yi itself, this article will first examine how the Qing state applied the term Yi to the peoples it encountered in the administrative context of governing its empire. This is in order to identify patterns of usage that need to be explained. It is convenient to begin with the Qing Veritable Records (*Qing shilu* 清實錄), the official, edited compilation of extracts from memorials to the throne and imperial edicts for each reign; these constitute the single-most comprehensive collection concerning all aspects of imperial administration from all parts of the realm.¹⁷ Determining the scope of the term’s use is fairly straightforward: after eliminating instances where Yi is used in an unrelated sense,¹⁸ a group can be regarded as being officially classified as Yi if its members were either directly termed Yi (for example, “outer Yi 外夷,” “Junghar Yi 準夷”), or the word Yi was used as a modifier when describing them or things associated with them (for example, “Yi bandit 夷賊,” “Yi ship 夷船,” “Yi merchant 夷商”). Such results, it should be stressed, reveal groups to whom it was *permissible* to apply the term Yi in the eyes of the Qing state; since Yi was almost

¹⁵ John K. Fairbank, *Ch’ing Documents: An Introductory Syllabus*, 3d edn. (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1965), p. 33. Lo-shu Fu, a prolific translator of Qing foreign relations documents, stated that he “unwillingly” followed this “standardized translation” despite believing that “[Yi] is a respectful term for highly civilized non-Chinese who live in the East...”: Lo-shu Fu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644–1820)* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966) 1, p. xvi.

¹⁶ Liu, *Clash of Empires*, pp. 31–69; for critiques see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* 4th edn. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), pp. 360–62; Wong, “Barbarians or Not Barbarians,” and Shao-yun Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2019), p. 9.

¹⁷ All statistical conclusions below are based on the searchable online *Qing shilu* maintained by the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, in its *Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliao* 漢籍電子文獻資料庫 (Scripta Sinica).

¹⁸ Yi often occurs in Qing documents in the unrelated sense of “flat, level” and as part of the name Bo Yi, a historical exemplar of loyalty to a fallen dynasty.

never used as a proper name or formal administrative category, it was not *necessary* for any group to be described as Yi.

The Veritable Records show distinct changes in the use of the term over time. In the Shunzhi reign (1644–1661), the term occurred in six entries in 144 *juan* (卷, chapters).¹⁹ It does not occur once in the 300 *juan* prepared for the Kangxi reign (1662–1722). It starts to occur far more frequently in the Yongzheng reign (111 entries in 159 *juan*), and this trend accelerates in the Qianlong period. Because of the great length of the Qianlong-era Veritable Records, I have only analyzed the first 451 *juan*, from a total of 1,500, covering the period up to December 15, 1753. Here the term occurs in 530 entries. These findings suggest, as discussed below, extremely sparing use under Shunzhi, total suppression under Kangxi, a dramatic upsurge in the Yongzheng reign, and even greater frequency of use under Qianlong.²⁰

It appears to have been widely accepted in the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns that the character Yi was taboo in its original form, and it almost never appears in official documents from these reigns. Although it was replaced in the name of the Translators Institute (Si Yi guan 四夷館) by the near-homophone *yi* 譯 (“translate”), which was appropriate in that context, elsewhere it was replaced by the exact homophone *yi* 彝.²¹ In official documents, this substitution can be found at least as early as 1647.²² It is unclear whether homophone substitution emerged organically as a tacit understanding, or was mandated by the state. If mandated, the order commanding its use does not appear to survive.²³ If

¹⁹ For the purpose of this data, my unit of analysis is the number of individual entries in the Veritable Records that employ the term Yi when referring to a person or group of persons (Yi is excluded when used in its other, unrelated senses). Entries are counted equally whether they use the word Yi once or several times. Because I cannot count the total number of individual entries in the Veritable Records of each reign, I used entries-per-*juan* as a rough proxy for frequency.

²⁰ Kishimoto Mio considered only the terms *Yi-Di* and *Waiyi* and found a sharp increase in frequency only in the Qianlong reign. Considering all occurrences of the term shows that the major increase in its frequency lies in the Yongzheng period; Kishimoto, “‘Zhongguo’ he ‘Waiguo,’” pp. 365–67.

²¹ 夷 and 彝 had long been regarded as interchangeable in certain contexts, a fact that would have been known to anyone studying for the official examinations: *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大辭典, vol. 2, p. 1495.

²² Documents in the Neige Daku 內閣大庫 collection at Academia Sinica show that the form 彝陵州 was used as early as SZ4/10 (Oct. 28–Nov. 25, 1647): document 150379–001. The earlier, Ming-era form 夷陵州 was used in SZ3/10 (Nov. 7–Dec. 6, 1646): document 008012–001. However, 番彝 was used in a memorial as early as SZ3/4/3 (May 17, 1646): document 036581–001, whereas 四夷館 is found as late as SZ8/8/22 (Oct. 6, 1651): document 005926–001. I am grateful to Li Ren-Yuan for making these documents available to me. Here and elsewhere, when I have been unable to determine the exact date of a document I have supplied only the lunar year and month; the Western date given corresponds to the lunar month.

²³ Details of efforts in the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns to restrict private printing remain

both the original form of Yi and its homophone substitution are counted together, then it is clear that Yi was in actuality still used in Kangxi-era official documents: the Veritable Records of his reign contain 16 entries in which the homophone is clearly substituted (in phrases such as “outer Yi 外彝” and “Yi ship 彝船”).

One shortcoming of the Veritable Records in this context is their susceptibility to editing, particularly in containing small changes made in order to reflect the norms of the succeeding reign, whose writers were compiling the documents of the previous reign. This can be seen in the case of homophone substitution. The volumes of the Veritable Records for the Yongzheng reign-period contain vanishingly few instances of homophone substitution. However, a review of the original documents, now published in facsimile, suggests that in fact homophone substitution persisted in official documents almost to the end of this reign. One large published collection of memorials places the transition date sometime in the second half of Yongzheng 11 (1733), following Yongzheng’s edict banning the practice.²⁴ Another, dealing with foreign trade, shows that homophone substitution was applied until the autumn of 1735, just before Yongzheng’s death.²⁵ It seems that the editors of the Yongzheng Veritable Records deferred to the emperor’s late but vehement opposition to homophone substitution and restored the original form when transcribing memorials and edicts. Regardless of the form of the character used, reference to the Yi status became more common under Yongzheng.

The majority of occurrences of Yi between 1644 and 1753 referred to groups living in administrative units subject to direct Qing control, in most cases via the *tusi* 土司 system of administration, in which aboriginal groups retained considerable autonomy under their hereditary chieftains supervised by the Qing state. These internal peoples designated Yi lived in a geographic seam running northward from Yunnan

sparse; I have not yet found evidence of an order specifically banning Yi and other characters deemed insulting. See Lynn A. Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619-1683: A Historiographical and Source Guide* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1998), p. 30; Wang Fan-sen, “Political Pressures on the Cultural Sphere in the Ch’ing Period,” in Willard J. Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 9. Part One: The Ch’ing Dynasty to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2016), p. 607.

²⁴ Based on a review of memorials in the collection titled *Gongzhongdang Yongzheng chao zouzhe* 宮中檔雍正朝奏摺 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1979), Yi 彝 is used as late as YZ11/5/16 (June 27, 1733), vol. 21, p. 576), and the original form is found in a memorial of YZ11/11/29 (ibid., vol. 22, p. 386).

²⁵ *Ming Qing gongcang Zhong-Xi shangmao dang’an* 明清宮藏中西商貿檔案, ed. Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’an guan (Beijing: Zhongguo dang’an chubanshe, 2010) vol. 1, p. 491. Document dated YZ13/8/6 (Sept. 21, 1735).

and Guangxi through Guizhou and Sichuan (including Khams) to Qinghai and Gansu. For external groups not subject to Qing direct rule, the range that could potentially be termed Yi was very broad. In practice, however, there were striking differences in the frequency with which the term was applied. The Veritable Records suggest that different external groups had different degrees of Yi-ness. Despite ambiguity in some entries, which leaves the precise numbers given here open to small revision, the pattern is quite clear: in the period under study the term was used to refer to Macao (5 entries), the Liuqiu kingdom (7), Luzon (7), Batavia (3), Sulu (6), the English (1), Korea (1), Siam (1), Catholic missionaries (4), and to maritime foreigners generically (9). In these cases, notably Korea and Siam, but also Macao, Catholic missionaries, and the Liuqiu kingdom, it was permissible to use the term Yi, but in practice quite rare. Korea is the most extreme example. Koreans were regarded as Yi – Qianlong states unequivocally that “Koreans are outer Yi people 朝鮮乃外夷之人”²⁶ – but in practice I have only found two other Veritable Record entries before 1800 that use the term for Koreans, out of hundreds of references to them.²⁷ By contrast, inhabitants of Vietnam, which had a turbulent frontier with the Qing in this period, were described as Yi in 46 entries.

By far the extreme outliers in the frequency with which they are termed Yi, however, were the Junghars. This powerful steppe confederation, whose leaders Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong regarded at various points in their reign as their most implacable enemies, were, from the midpoint of the Yongzheng period until their destruction in the late 1750s, almost invariably termed Yi when mentioned in the Veritable Records. In the volumes studied for this research, the Junghars are described using the term Yi in 220 entries, more than twice as many as all other foreign groups combined. Indeed, in the Yongzheng period, about 30% of all entries referring to Yi (33/111) were to the Junghars. In the first 451 *juan* of the Qianlong period, about 34% of items referring to Yi (180/530) concern the Junghars.

Qianlong repeatedly invoked the Junghars in the 1740s and 1750s as the very definition of a people to whom Yi could appropriately be applied, and this emphasis demands our particular attention. Here again data from the Veritable Records can be misleading. Most official documents concerning the Junghars were written in Manchu only, and such Manchu memorials did not use the term Yi (see below). Thus, reference

²⁶ QSL-QL, *j.* 1011, QL41/6/28 (Aug. 11, 1776).

²⁷ Yuanchong Wang argues in “Civilizing the Great Qing” that there was an attempt to “barbarianize” Korea in the mid-Qianlong period.

to the Junghars as Yi in the Veritable Records occurred because translators followed the convention of terming the Junghars Yi in Chinese. If the convention of calling the Junghars Yi had emerged only in the Qianlong reign, when the Yongzheng Veritable Records were being prepared, then this translation convention would be retrospectively, and misleadingly, inflating the use of the term Yi in the Yongzheng period. For this reason, both the process by which the Junghars came to be regarded as Yi, and the usage of the term Yi in Yongzheng-era Chinese memorials, needs to be carefully scrutinized.

The Junghars were a subgroup among the Oirats, and in the Qing view Oirats were in turn a subgroup among Mongols.²⁸ However, while both southern (Inner) and northern (Khalkha) Mongols were virtually never called Yi in Qing sources, the usage for Oirats is more ambiguous. Early in the Kangxi reign, there is scattered evidence that in some contexts the Oirats could be termed Yi. The introduction to the history of Kangxi's campaign against Galdan notes that the Oirats living west of the Ordos bend were called "bend Yi 套彝," and those living in Qinghai were called "Qinghai Yi 海彝."²⁹ Neither group was then under Qing control, and it appears that these terms for them reflected Ming-era usage. In the second half of the 1670s, Khoshot and other Oirat Mongols fleeing from Galdan threatened the borders of Gansu. The Qing generals who responded to the situation referred to these Oirats as "outer Yi," "Yi people," "refugee Yi 流彝," and other variants (all with homophone substitution).³⁰ All but three references to Oirats as Yi fall before 1680. It would seem, then, that this usage was particular to Gansu and had largely disappeared after the 1670s.

Galdan, one leader among the politically-fragmented Oirats, emerged as Kangxi's most bitter foe. Although Kangxi execrated Galdan, he continued to refer to him and his followers as Oirats, and did not attempt to distinguish them by using the term Yi. The term "Junghar" appears in the Veritable Records for the first time in the summer of 1715, when Kangxi's relations with Tsewang Rabtan descended into open hostility, and somewhat after that date in the *Pingding Zhungaer*

²⁸ Pamela K. Crossley, "Making Mongols," in Pamela K. Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2006), p. 74; Joo-Yup Lee, "Were the Historical Oirats 'Western Mongols'? An Examination of their Uniqueness in Relation to the Mongols," *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* 47 (2016), pp. 6-7.

²⁹ *Qingzheng Pingding shuomo fanglüe* 親征平定朔漠方略, j. 1, p. 10a, in Wu Fengpei 吳豐培, ed., *Qingchu xijian fanglüe sizhong huibian* 清初稀見方略四種彙編 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1993), vol. 2, p. 511.

³⁰ *Qingzheng Pingding shuomo fanglüe*, j. 1, pp. 18-32b [vol. 2, pp. 515-22].

fanglüe 平定準噶爾方略, the history of the late-Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong-era campaigns.³¹ Despite initiating this effort to highlight the Junghars as a specific group to be distinguished from other Oirat, Kangxi still did not refer to them as Yi.³²

Based on evidence in the Veritable Records, Yongzheng only began to refer to the Junghars as Yi in the summer of 1729, just as he launched an expedition toward their home territory in Ili.³³ Published memorials show, however, that terms like “rebellious Yi” were used in the early years of his reign to refer to the followers of the Khoshot leader Lobzang Danjin, whom the Qing regarded as rebels.³⁴ Whether Yi was used in Qinghai for loyal Khoshots is somewhat unclear, because the region had a mixed population, which included indigenous Tibetans that all Qing emperors would have regarded as Yi.³⁵ The Junghars, however, were described as Yi in Chinese-language memorials from the Yongzheng reign.³⁶ In the Yongzheng Veritable Records, from 1729 to the end of his reign, the Junghars constitute fully 41% of all references to Yi. Yongzheng-era reference to the Junghars are especially hostile, terming them “bandit Yi 賊夷” and “rebellious Yi 逆夷.” In the truce years of the early-Qianlong reign this shifted to the more neutral “Junghar Yi 準夷” or “Yi person 夷人.” There are several indicators of the particular Yi-ness imputed to the Junghars by

³¹ The original Chinese transcription of this name, used in the Kangxi and early Yongzheng periods, was *Zhungaer* 諄噶兒. Dr. Iwata Keisuke 岩田啓介 informs me that a reference to *Jun gar* in a Manchu-language edict of KX55/10 (Nov. 14–Dec. 13, 1716) appears to be one of the earliest uses of the term by a Qing emperor. In this edict, Kangxi distinguishes Tsewang Rabtan’s lineage from that of the Khalkha and the Qinghai taijis. Dr. Iwata notes that this is an apparent effort to distinguish the Junghars from other Mongol and Oirat groups (personal communication of Aug. 8, 2018). Miyawaki Junko 宮脇淳子 states that it is not known when the name Junghar came into use; Miyawaki, “Did a Dzungar Khanate Really Exist?,” *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolian Society* 10 (1987), p. 1. Pamela Crossley notes that “it became a distinctive feature of Qianlong rhetoric to neutralize the Oyirod heritage of the Dzungars”; “Making Mongols,” p. 74.

³² Memorials and edicts on Kangxi’s later campaigns against the Junghars under Tsewang Rabtan, in the *Pingding Zhungaer fanglüe* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1990), also do not refer to the Junghars as Yi.

³³ The first entry to describe the Junghars as Yi is on YZ7/6/10 (July 5, 1729).

³⁴ *Nian Gengyao zouzhe zhuanji* 年羹堯奏摺專輯 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1971) 1, p. 23, memorial of YZ1/9/11 (Oct. 9, 1723).

³⁵ From about 1725 to about 1751, the Chinese version of the title of the supervising amban in Qinghai often described him as being in charge of “Yi conditions 夷情.” Yi here likely indicates both the “Fan” or Tibetan-speaking nomads and the Qinghai Khoshots. I am indebted to Max Oidtmann for information about this office.

³⁶ It would not be surprising if the Junghars were called Yi as early as the Lobzang Danjin rebellion at the start of the Yongzheng reign, when that term was applied to Lobzang Danjin and his followers. However, the earliest memorial I have so far found explicitly referring to the Junghars as Yi is from YZ6/11/6 (Dec. 6, 1728); *Gongzhongdang Yongzheng chao zouzhe*, vol. 11, p. 698 (number 40200640).

Yongzheng and Qianlong. In the Veritable Records, the neutral term “Junghar person 準噶爾人” occurs in the late-Kangxi reign, but is not found in the Yongzheng reign or first years of the Qianlong era. It reappears only in 1742, shortly after the Qianlong emperor accepted a negotiated settlement with them, but remains less frequently used than references to the Junghars as Yi.³⁷ (“Junghar Yi” is found 211 times in the Veritable Records; “Junghar person” occurs 51 times). A signature of Qing efforts to label the Junghars as Yi is that their emissaries were almost always called “Yi envoys 夷使,” whereas I have found only two instances in which this term was applied to a non-Junghar envoy in the Veritable Records before 1753.

There seems to be little doubt that in the Junghar case, Yongzheng and Qianlong chose to accord them Yi status because they were regarded as the particular enemies of the dynasty. Toward the end of his reign, Yongzheng commented that it was inappropriate to use the insulting terms *hu* (“northern nomad”) or *lu* (“captive”), except when applied to the Junghars, who had brought such status upon themselves by their rebellious behavior. It seems likely, although Yongzheng does not say so explicitly, that calling them Yi was similarly a means of denigration.³⁸

To be sure, the statistics given here reflect the political context of the period selected: a survey of the later decades of Qianlong’s reign would reveal far more references to the Burmese and English as Yi, and fewer to the conquered Junghars. Yet regardless of the period under study, no other group before 1800 came close to approaching the degree of Yi identity imputed to the Junghars.

In general, evidence from the Veritable Records is corroborated by the usage found in the *Zhigong tu* 職貢圖, an illustrated catalog of Qing subjects and tributaries commissioned in the Qianlong period.³⁹ The Chinese text of this catalog applied the term Yi to all East and Southeast Asian tributaries of the Qing, including Korea, the Liuqiu kingdom, Annam, Siam, Sulu, Laos, Burma, and to all European countries

³⁷ Shibuya Kōichi 渋谷浩一, “1734-40-nen no Shin to Jūn-garu no kōwa kōshō ni tsuite: Kyafuta jōyaku teiketsu go no Chūō Yūrashia no kokusai kankei” 1734-40年の清とジュン・ガルの講和交渉について、キャフタ条約締結後の中央ユーラシアの国際関係, *TSK* 70.3 (2011), pp. 1-37.

³⁸ QSL-YZ, j. 130, YZ11/4/28 (June 10, 1733). Cf. Wang, “Civilizing the Great Qing,” p. 138.

³⁹ Xie Sui “*Zhigong tu*” *Manwen tushuo jiaozhu* 謝遂‘職貢圖’滿文圖說校注, ed. Zhuang Jifa 莊吉發 (Taipei: Guoli Gugong bowuyuan, 1989). This work was commissioned in QL16 (1751), and completed in stages, with the last entry written in 1793. The final form of the book, which included a Manchu translation, was ready in 1805.

and colonies listed in the work. Some non-Han tribes in the southwest are also termed Yi, but the usage in a domestic context was more restricted than in the Veritable Records.

A comparison of the *Zhigong tu* with two editions of the comprehensive gazetteer of the realm, titled the *Da Qing yitong zhi* 大清一統志, reveals the emergence and solidification of a pattern. Their Ming predecessor (1461) referred to all foreign peoples as “outer Yi,” and did not place them in regional order.⁴⁰ The first Qing edition (printed 1744) divided territories outside of the Chinese provinces into three groups: “the 51 banners of Mongol outer feudatories,” referring to the jasagh-banners of Inner Mongolia; the “Mongol subject countries,” referring to all other parts of Inner Asia under Qing rule, such as the Khalkha Mongols, Qinghai, Tibet, Hami, and Turfan; and finally “tributary countries,” a class containing all non-Qing territories including those to the northwest, such as Russia, the Torghud Oirats, and Yarkand.⁴¹ The second edition (printed 1790) introduced a more fine-grained geographical categorization of land outside of the Chinese provinces. Peoples subject to the Qing were classed as either “old” or “new” Mongols, Tibet, or the “Western Regions New Frontier” (*Xiyu xinjiang* 西域新疆). Non-Qing subjects encountered during the conquest of the Western Regions were given their own category of “subject feudatories of the New Frontier” (*Xinjiang fanshu* 新疆藩屬), and thus distinguished from the category of “tributary countries,” which included states from East and Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Europe, as well as Russia.⁴² Unlike their Ming predecessors, Qing compilers did not use the term Yi to name a category of foreign peoples in the *Yitong zhi*. However, it is striking that those foreign countries termed Yi in the *Zhigong tu* fall into the “tributary countries” category in the second edition of the *Da Qing yitong zhi*. None of those peoples listed as “subject feudatories of the New Frontier” are termed Yi in the *Zhigong tu*. In short, apart from the Junghars, Inner and Central Asians were not Yi.

⁴⁰ Li Xian 李賢 et al., comp., *Da Ming yitong zhi* 大明一統志 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1965), vol. 10, p. 5469 (j. 89, p. 1a). The “Ancestral Instructions” of the Hongwu Emperor 皇明祖訓 also contain a list of foreign countries regarded as the “various Yi of the four directions 四方諸夷.”

⁴¹ Jiang Tingxi 蔣廷錫, comp., *Da Qing yitong zhi*, 1st edn. (in 356 *juan*) (Beijing: Wuyingdian, 1744), *mulu*, pp. 36a-40a.

⁴² *Da Qing yitong zhi*, 2d edn., in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), vol. 474, pp. 41-44.

Identifying the “Non-Yi”

The evidence outlined above reveals that the Ming-era usage of the term Yi bifurcated in the Qing period. Not only the Manchus, but all Inner and Central Asians inside and beyond Qing territory, were no longer Yi. The only exception was the hostile Junghars. All other non-Han, internal and external, retained their Ming-era status as Yi. This finding, however, is purely descriptive of Qing usage; it tells us nothing about the rationales behind this redrawing of the boundaries of Yi-ness. To seek the rationale, we can begin with one of the most prominent groups removed from Yi status in the Qing period, the Mongols. Their special status is illustrated by the coverage given in the *Zhigong tu*. In the edict launching the project, Qianlong stipulated that it was to include “the Miao, Yao, Li, Tong, and the outer Yi and Fan groups 苗, 獠, 黎, 獐, 以及外夷番眾.” Mongols were excluded from this collection and, by implication, did not fall under any of those headings.

Earlier in his reign, Qianlong had repeatedly rebuked officials in Chinese provinces who, when writing in Chinese about the China-Mongolia frontier, used Yi in a way analogous to its use elsewhere in the empire. His pronouncements on this point are worth quoting at length, because they offer virtually the only attempt in a Qing administrative context to clarify and justify why Yi could not be applied to a particular group. Qianlong’s first edict on the topic came in 1741, when he objected to phrases in a memorial from the governor-general of Zhili, Sun Jiagan 孫嘉淦 (1683–1753):

[In his memorial, Sun] termed the inner jasaghs [in charge of Inner Mongolian banners] as Yi people. This is extremely wrong and muddled. From earlier times we have called the Junghars Yi people. As for the inner jasaghs, they are the subjects of our dynasty. For Sun Jiagan to carelessly call them Yi people is to treat them like Junghars. If they hear of it, how could they not be chagrined? Moreover, if we term inner jasaghs Yi people, then what shall we call the Junghars? Sun Jiagan has made a major lapse in attention.

稱內扎薩克爲夷人，甚是錯謬，向來稱準噶爾爲夷人。至於內扎薩克，乃本朝之臣僕也。孫嘉淦忽稱爲夷人，是以準噶爾待之矣。伊等聞之，豈不寒心，況稱內扎薩克爲夷人。更將何語稱準噶爾乎。孫嘉淦太失檢點。⁴³

⁴³ QSL-QL, j. 139, QL6/3/24 (May 9, 1741).

The following year, Qianlong used almost the same wording to criticize a memorial submitted to him by Sun's successor.⁴⁴ Despite this, he was forced to return to this topic again in 1745:

Now, Yi people are those not subject to the inner lands, such as the Junghars. As for those Mongols along the frontier, they are all subject to the inner lands, and should be called Mongols. They should not be called Yi people. In the future he should correct this. 夫夷人乃非內地所屬，如準噶爾之類。至於沿邊蒙古，皆係內地所屬，應稱為蒙古人，不應以夷人稱之也。嗣後應改正。⁴⁵

A more detailed comment on the same issue came nearly five years later, in early 1750:

Mongols and Han are equally our subjects. When there is occasion to write of them, they should be designated "Mongols" and "inner lands." You cannot fill out documents with muddled phraseology like "Meng-Han." I have already issued edicts about this more than once. Now in Malingga's memorial he still distinguishes them by the two terms Yi and Han. You can see that he and others are completely not paying attention. Moreover, to view Mongols who have been inner subjects for over a century as Yi is not only an improper use of names, but the Mongols will also be displeased. As for the Junghars and the Jinchuan Fan-savages, what shall we call them?

蒙古漢人，同屬臣民，如有書寫之處，應稱蒙古內地，不得以蒙漢字面，混行填寫，已屢經降旨。今馬靈阿奏摺，猶以夷漢二字分別名色。可見伊等全未留心，且以百餘年內屬之蒙古，而目之為夷。不但其名不順，蒙古亦心有不甘。將準噶爾、及金川番蠻等，又將何以稱之。⁴⁶

On the cusp of war against the Junghars in 1754, Qianlong repeated himself:

Furthermore, in his memorial Wang Jintai included the phrase "bandit Yi who steal livestock." When I first read it, I thought he meant the Junghar Yi. Then I looked carefully, and realized he was speaking of the Khalkha and other Mongols of the Northern Route. Mongols are a tribe of the inner lands. If there are instances

⁴⁴ QSL-QL, *j.* 167, QL7/5/28 (June 30, 1742).

⁴⁵ QSL-QL, *j.* 253, QL10/11/20 (Dec. 12, 1745).

⁴⁶ QSL-QL, *j.* 354, QL14/12/4 (Jan. 1, 1750). On several occasions, Qianlong explained that his objection to rendering Menggu as "Meng" was part of a general opposition to the abbreviation of non-Han names in official documents: see for example: QSL-QL *j.* 641, QL26/7/30; QSL-QL, *j.* 748, QL30/11/5; QSL-QL, *j.* 881, QL36/3/19; QSL-QL *j.* 1383, QL56/7/16. I have not yet identified the pre-1750 edict Qianlong alludes to in this passage.

in which they steal livestock, although they should be apprehended in accord with the statutes, how can they be termed “bandit Yi”? What then would we term the Junghar Yi people?

再王進泰摺內，有偷竊牲畜賊夷字樣。初閱疑爲準夷，及詳視，始知其指北路喀爾喀等蒙古而言。蒙古爲內地部落。偶有偷竊牲畜之事，雖當照例緝拏，然豈可竟以賊夷名之。准噶爾夷人，又將何以名之。⁴⁷

Less than a year later, in response to a memorial from Chen Hongmou regarding the migration of Han settlers from Shaanxi north into the Ordos region, he commented:

However, the Ordos are Mongols, that is, they are hereditary subjects and it is not fitting to regard them as Yi. This is the talk of pettifogging, vulgar officials. Saying things like Yi-Han and Meng-Han is extremely improper. I hate to see this. Henceforth [the two groups] can only be called Mongols and Han people. 但鄂爾多斯蒙古，乃屬世僕，不應目之曰夷。此皆俗吏刀筆之談。如云夷漢蒙漢等語，甚屬不經。朕惡觀之。此後但稱蒙古漢人可。⁴⁸

What features, then, prevented the Mongols from being Yi? Qianlong emphasized the “inner” and “subject” status of the Mongols, explaining that they were not Yi because they were “subjects of our dynasty 本朝之臣僕,” were, like Han Chinese, “equally our subjects 同屬臣民,” and were “hereditary subjects 世僕.” He observed that Mongols along the border “belong to the inner lands 內地所屬,” and in 1754 he called the Mongols a “tribe of the inner lands 內地部落.” Qianlong was not entirely consistent: in 1750 he suggested that Mongols should be contrasted with “inner lands,” which in that case he used as equivalent to Han Chinese 漢人, but in the same edict he referred to Mongols as “inner subjects 內屬之蒙古.”⁴⁹ What Qianlong fails to explain here is why other non-Han groups under Qing rule, most notably those living within Chinese provinces under the *tusi* system, were not also “inner” or “subjects,” and thus could be called Yi.

Qianlong also emphasized the need to reserve the label Yi for the Junghars. In 1750, he adds the Jinchuan 金川, with whom he had fought a bitter war between 1747–1749. The association of Yi with enemies is strengthened by remarks made in 1787, in response to the governor

⁴⁷ QSL-QL, j. 453, QL18/12/25 (Jan. 17, 1754).

⁴⁸ QSL-QL, j. 477, QL19/11/29 (Jan. 11, 1755).

⁴⁹ In contemporary scholarship in the PRC, *neishu Menggu* 內屬蒙古 is a technical term referring to those Mongol groups governed by directly-appointed officials rather than their own *jasaghs*. This usage seems to date back to the Guangxu period. Here, *neishu zhi Menggu* seems to refer to all Mongols subject to the Qing (for another instance of this usage, see QSL-KX, j. 157, KX31/11/22 [Dec. 29, 1692]).

of Shaanxi's report on an envoy from the Dalai Lama entering his jurisdiction. Qianlong complained,

In [the document] there is the term "Yi envoy." This is extremely mistaken. Within our state, the Central and Outer are one family. Moreover, Tibet has long been our territory. It is not comparable to a case like Russia, which is still beyond our direct control (lit., "on a loose rein") and can be viewed as outer Yi. 內稱夷使字樣，甚屬錯謬。國家中外一家，況衛藏久隸版圖，非若俄羅斯之尚在羈縻，猶以外夷目之者可比。⁵⁰

It is noteworthy that Qianlong here invokes Russia where in earlier decades he had cited the Junghars. He doubtless does so because relations with Russia had deteriorated to the point that a trade embargo had gone into effect in 1785. The archetype of Yi was whoever happened to top Qianlong's enemies list at a given moment.

Although Qianlong never makes the point explicitly, it is clear that the Yi status of the Junghars is exceptional. As an Inner Asian people, they would normally be excluded from being termed Yi in official discourse, as were all Mongols and (by that time) other Oirats. When allowing them to be called *hu* and *lu*, Yongzheng specified that they could be exposed to slurs not permitted for other Inner Asian groups. Still, a number of puzzles remain. On the northern frontier, Yi status is associated with hostility to the Qing. Yet elsewhere in the Qing empire, notably in the southwest, this implication seemingly did not apply. Obedient subjects and peaceful neighbors were termed Yi. On what basis, both within and beyond the empire, were some groups Yi and others not? Since the groups labeled Yi were very diverse, what precise characteristic put them into that category? Why did early Qing rulers, notably Kangxi, seem to shun the term even for the hated Galdan, while his son and grandson came to apply it extensively? These questions emerge from the administrative context, but cannot be answered unless we turn our attention to larger discussions about Yi within the realms of Manchu identity and classical scholarship.

⁵⁰ QSL-QL, j. 1292, QL52/11/9 (Dec. 17, 1787). Qianlong was not totally consistent in regarding central Tibetans as non-Yi. In an edict of 1785, he referred to envoys from the Dalai and Panchen Lamas as representing the "fan-Yi 番夷." However, his edict on this occasion referred to these lama-envoys as simply "envoys 來使," not "Yi envoys" (QSL-QL j. 1229, QL50/4/29 [June 6, 1785]).

PART II: THE CONCEPT OF YI IN QING IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

The usage of the term Yi in an administrative context was connected to the evolving way emperors handled the more delicate question of how it applied to themselves, and to Manchus more broadly. When Qing forces entered China in 1644, rulers gained certain political and cultural resources, notably the ability to ban the use of certain terms, and to position themselves as arbiters of the correct meaning of the classics. Although they deployed these resources primarily with their own interests in mind, their strategies had implications for the use of the term Yi in general.

There appears to be no surviving direct or indirect evidence about how the Shunzhi emperor and his officials addressed the question of whether the Manchus were Yi, but since the term was immediately made taboo it is clear that they wished to suppress such an identity. Kangxi presumably inherited and accepted this approach. However, given that the negative political and moral implications of Yi status were believed to be enshrined in the classical texts of Confucianism, in influential commentaries on them, and in canonical works of history, a policy of total suppression would have been difficult. The first hint of Qing policy-making on this question that I have been able to discover is indirect, transmitted via the funerary essay for He Zhijie 何之杰 (z. Yian 毅庵, 1621–1699) composed by the prominent scholar Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (d. 1713). In 1686, He had been arrested and interrogated by local authorities on suspicion of having authored seditious writings.⁵¹ According to Mao's account, one of the charges was that he had referred to the Qing as Yi. He Zhijie is said to have responded:

What is Yi? [I meant it in the sense of] "borders." Shun was a man of the Eastern Yi, King Wen a man of the Western Yi. Moreover, Yi and Xia are opposites. Now our dynasty possesses the Chinese lands, and three majestic ancestors have presided over China and pacified the Yi of the four directions. Who could regard us as Yi? To regard us as Yi would be high treason, and [the person mak-

⁵¹ The date of this case was established by Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 as KX₂₅ (1686); *Sangyuan dushuji* 桑園讀書記 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), p. 82. This date is accepted by Hu Chunli 胡春麗; "Mao Qiling nianpu (xia)" 毛奇齡年譜(下), *Zhongguo jingxue* 中國經學 8 (2011), p. 209, and Hu Qiguang 胡奇光, *Zhongguo wenhuoshi* 中國文禍史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 133 (although he wrongly dates KX₂₅ to 1685). Hu points out that earlier scholarship was confused by the fact that when Xu Ke 徐珂 included this passage in his 1917 *Qingbai leichao* 清稗類鈔, he wrongly claimed that He Zhijie had entered the custody of the Manchu general Giyešu, who was in Zhejiang in the 1670s.

ing that charge] deserves the punishment for false accusations.⁵²
 何爲夷? 裔也。舜東夷, 文王西夷也, 且夷與夏對, 今我有方夏, 煌煌三祖
 蒞中國而撫四夷。誰夷我者? 夷我者大逆, 當反坐。

As Mao recounted the story, He's interrogators were baffled by this clever defense, and their superiors at the top of Zhejiang's provincial administration concluded that the Kangxi emperor would not support further prosecution. The decisive intervention came from the chief judicial officer in the province:

Provincial surveillance commissioner Tong [Guozuo] directly cited the case of Mr. Qian of Jiaxing to the effect that, in all instances of old carved books and writings, when there is a [character that violates a Qing] imperial taboo this should not be prohibited. [Tong added that] with reference to those characters such as *qing*, *ming*, *Yi*, *lu*, and so forth, an edict was received in the History Bureau that these were not to be avoided as taboo.⁵³ 按察佟某直據嘉興錢氏例, 凡舊刻文卷, 有國諱勿禁, 其清明夷虜等字, 則在史館奉上諭, 無避忌者。

In other words, Ming-era books and materials containing terms that had become taboo under the Qing were not illegal in certain contexts. Following his record of Tong's comment, Mao himself noted:

In the metropolitan examination of the Kangxi *yichou* year [24, 1685], the outer examiners did not understand the rules, and there were still some who were suspicious of [the use of the characters] *ri*, *yue*, *Yi*, and *lu*. Only when they saw that the emperor set the topics [with the phrases] “like the sun and the moon in their successive shining” [from *Zhongyong*] and “Bo Yi was the sage who

⁵² Mao Qiling 毛奇齡, *Xihe wenji* 西河文集, in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* 清代詩文集彙編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), vol. 88, p. 99 (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘, j. 14, p. 17b). To preserve a sense of He's wordplay, *Yi* in this translation can be read as “borders,” and in some cases perhaps as “to exterminate.” I am indebted to Li Ren-Yuan for making this point. This passage is quoted in a short article by Qian Zhongshu, which has been translated by Ronald Egan, “The Concepts ‘Chinese’ and ‘Barbarian,’” in idem, *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1998), pp. 379–80. Egan translates 三祖 as “Third Progenitor (the Kangxi emperor).” It seems unusual to refer to an emperor in this way during his lifetime. I follow Hu Qiguang in interpreting this as a reference to Kangxi's three predecessors (*Zhongguo wenhuoshi*, p. 133).

⁵³ What is meant by the case or precedent of Mr. Qian of Jiaxing is uncertain. An edict from the early-Kangxi period requested that books on late-Ming history be submitted to the state, and promised “even if they contain taboo language, this would not be prosecuted 雖有忌諱之語, 亦不治罪”; see QSL-KX, j. 16, KX4/8/16 (Sept. 24, 1665). Later, in 1678, it is said that Shi Runzhang 施閏章 was almost expelled from the *boxue hongru* 博學鴻儒 exam for writing *Qing yi* 清彝, regarded as a taboo violation, but was strenuously defended by grand secretary Li Wei 李蔚; Chen Wenxin 陳文新, ed., *Zhongguo wenxue biannianshi: Mingmo Qingchu juan* 中國文學編年史, 明末清初卷 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 354.

was unsullied” [from *Mencius*] did they desist.⁵⁴ 康熙乙丑會試，外簾官不曉事例，尙有以日月夷虜爲疑者，及見上命題，有如日月之代明，伯夷聖之清者也，遂止。

If we accept Mao’s narrative as accurate, it contains much ambiguity. He’s interrogators, and seemingly He himself, given his elaborate excuse, accepted that calling Qing emperors Yi would ordinarily be a crime. However, higher officials did not endorse this view. Kangxi, based on the edicts cited, appears to have taken a nuanced position. In the case cited by Tong, the emperor seems to have judged that Yi was not taboo when found in “old” works, that is, those predating Qing rule. In the second pronouncement cited by Mao, it was determined that the character Yi was not taboo when it had meanings unconnected to the sense of “barbarian” or “foreigner.” Kangxi was certainly not stipulating that contemporary authors under Qing rule could use the term to refer to the Manchus. Mao’s account fits well with what we know indirectly. Although Yi was often changed to a homophone when Ming-era books were reprinted, a fact remarked upon by Yongzheng and Qianlong (see below), there was no attempt by Kangxi to scour Yi from the voluminous mass of late-Ming printed works, which probably would have been impossible given the still-limited resources of the court.

Shunzhi and Kangxi seem to have prudently said little about the Yi issue, but the Yongzheng emperor brought it to prominence in one of the most famous, if short-lived, ideological reformulations in Qing history. Toward the middle of his reign, at the end of 1728, Yongzheng confronted the case of Zeng Jing 曾靜 (1679–1736), an obscure scholar who attempted a rebellion against the Qing partly inspired by arguments that non-Han rule was illegitimate. Yongzheng commissioned a work to refute Zeng’s anti-Qing views, namely, the *Dayi juemi lu* 大義覺迷錄, printed in 1730. A long edict of November 2, 1729, constituting a preface to the work, asserted that the division of peoples into Hua and Yi was principally geographic, so that those originating within China (*Zhongguo*, here evidently the provinces of China proper) were Hua and those originating outside China were Yi. Using selective citations, Yongzheng argued that canonical Zhou-era classics had not de-

⁵⁴ Mao, *Xihe wenji*, vol. 88, p. 100 (*Muzhiming*, j. 14, p. 18–b). Translations of *Zhongyong* are from James Legge, “The Doctrine of the Mean,” in *The Four Books* (rpt., Taipei: SMC Publishing, 2001), p. 427; and of *Mencius* from D.C. Lau, *Mencius: A Bilingual Edition* (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 2003), p. 219. This is corroborated in the Qing Veritable Records, where Kangxi states “I have heard in the past that when examination topics are selected, there are many cases in which phrases with taboo characters are avoided. This seems to be pointless. 朕聞向來場中出題，多有避忌字句者，似屬無謂。” QSL-KX, j. 119, KX24/2/9 (Mar. 13, 1685).

scribed the Yi as inferior, rather this mistaken view had first emerged in the unifying turmoil of the Jin (260–420) period, when political fragmentation led northerners to insult southerners as “island Yi 島夷” and southerners to call northerners “queue-wearing caitiffs 索虜.” Later Chinese rulers, frustrated that they were too weak to control foreign peoples, applied these same petty insults to vent their rage. Qing rulers, powerful and confident, could finally transcend this partial viewpoint. In short, Yongzheng claimed that Hua and Yi originally were terms devoid of political or moral significance, meaning little more than “within 中” China and “outside 外” it.⁵⁵

The intellectual origins of Yongzheng’s bold reinterpretation of the term Yi deserve more careful scrutiny than is possible here. It seems likely that it furthered an exegetical tendency already present in a less systematized form under Kangxi. For instance, when Confucius expressed a desire to settle among the Nine Yi and was asked if he could endure their crudeness, he replied “Once a gentleman settles amongst them, what uncouthness will there be?” The commentary prepared under Kangxi’s supervision explains:

Thus, human nature is good everywhere. If the performance of the way, virtue, benevolence, and righteousness, and the practice of the rites and music, and of the teachings and culture, can operate within China, how could they not operate among the outer countries? “What uncouthness will there be?” Now, above and below, in ancient and recent times, in all directions, this mind and this principle are the same. Under the influence of a sage, there is fundamentally no difference between Within and Outside.

且天地間，人性皆善，道德仁義之氣，禮樂教化之習，安在行於中國者，不可行於外國乎，何陋之有哉？蓋上下，古今，東西南朔，此心此理，莫不相同，聖人之化，原無分於中外也。⁵⁶

*tere anggala abka na i sidende, niyalmai banin gemu sain, doro, erdemu, gosin, jurgan i yabun, dorolon kumun, tacihyan wen i tacin, dulimbai gurun de yabuci ojongge, ainahai tulergi gurun de yabuci ojarahū ni, ai albatu babi sehebi, ainci dele fejile, julge te, dergi wargi, julergi amargi de, ere mujilen, ere giyan, ishunde adali akūngge akū, enduringge niyalmai wen de, daci dorgi tulergi ilgabun akū kai,*⁵⁷

⁵⁵ QSL-YZ, j. 86, YZ7/9/12 (Nov. 2, 1729); *Dayi juemi lu* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1966), pp. 1–25.

⁵⁶ *Rijiang Lunyu jieyi* 日講論語解義, in *Siku quanshu* 208:179 (7.11b)

⁵⁷ *Inenggidari giyangnaha sy šu i jurgan be suhe bithe* (1677), j. 7, p. 21a (*Lunyu* 9.14); held in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Here the exegesis of the Kangxi court comes close to erasing any moral foundation for the Hua–Yi distinction, but does not go as far as Yongzheng in stressing that Yi and Hua are equal.

In the last years of his reign, Yongzheng grew more emphatic that it was wrong to deny or obscure that the Manchus were Yi. In an edict of June 10, 1733 (11/4/28), he argued:

When I read books printed or copied by subjects of our dynasty, whenever there are characters like *hu*, *lu*, Yi, and *di*, they are invariably left blank or changed to a homophone of a different form, so that for instance Yi becomes [its homophone] Yi, or *lu* becomes [its homophone] *lu*. This is very hard to understand. Speculating about the meaning behind it, this is probably regarded as a taboo of the present dynasty, and people avoid these to show their respect. Little do they know that this in fact violates reason and propriety, and is extremely disrespectful.

朕覽本朝人刊寫書籍，凡遇胡虜夷狄等字，每作空白，又或改易形聲，如以夷爲彝，以虜爲鹵之類，殊不可解。揣其意，蓋爲本朝忌諱。避之以明其敬慎，不知此固背理犯義，不敬之甚者也。

Yongzheng proceeded to amplify his earlier arguments, that Yi was “only a geographic term 不過方域之名,” that sages “did not regard it as taboo 不以爲諱也,” and “it is permissible to call [Manchus] people of the eastern Yi 若言東夷之人則可.”⁵⁸ Yongzheng went so far as to taboo the taboo: henceforth it would be illegal to use homophone substitution or leave a blank space, though it was not necessary to make changes to things already written.⁵⁹ Still, as with Kangxi’s pronouncement, it is worth pointing out a certain degree of ambiguity. Yongzheng is not saying that Manchus must be called Yi, but only that they could be called Yi, and in such cases the expression should not be suppressed.

Lydia Liu is surely correct to observe that Yongzheng “adopted the strategy of limiting the semantic scope of the concept of *yi*, taming it with the Manchu interpretation and rendering it harmless to his rule.”⁶⁰ However, as Lawrence Wong has noted, although Yongzheng denies that people can be classed as “birds and beasts” simply because of their Yi origins, this does not mean that people *cannot* be classed as Yi on the basis of bad behavior. There are passages in the *Dayi juemi lu* showing that Yongzheng and his collaborators “made a distinction be-

⁵⁸ QSL-YZ, j. 130, YZ11/4/28 (June 10, 1733); an alternative translation of this passage is found in Liu, *Clash of Empires*, pp. 85–86.

⁵⁹ QSL-YZ, j. 130, YZ11/4/28 (June 10, 1733).

⁶⁰ Liu, *Clash of Empires*, p. 87.

tween different kinds of Yi,” and allowed that remote peoples ignorant of proper human relationships did have animal-like characteristics.⁶¹

This distinction between different types of Yi helps explain the seeming paradox of Yongzheng’s position. In 1729, he made the radical departure of acknowledging that the Manchus were Yi, while at the same time reconceptualizing Yi as a neutral geographic term, in no way prejudicial to Manchu political legitimacy. In the same year, based on the Veritable Records, he began to single out the Junghars as distinctively Yi. This was a deliberate shift, connected to his effort to destroy them, and clearly had pejorative overtones. It would seem, although Yongzheng does not say so explicitly, that he is using Yi in two senses: neutral when used for groups regarded as civilized, pejorative when used for groups regarded as uncivilized. Still, this was clearly an unstable formulation – Yongzheng never explains how to distinguish these two usages – a fact that likely explains why his formulation was significantly modified by his son Qianlong.

Yongzheng’s removal of the taboo on the term Yi changed the way Qing court scholarship treated the classics, especially the *Chunqiu* and its three major commentaries, regarded as the classical sources most emphatically commanding a Hua–Yi distinction. Under the preceding Kangxi reign, when the emperor eschewed the term, court scholarship had frequently censored its use. Around 1699, Kangxi commissioned an authoritative compilation of scholarship on the *Chunqiu*, the *Qinding Chunqiu zhuan shuo huizuan* 欽定春秋傳說彙纂, which was published in his lifetime (imperial preface dated 1721) and thus reflects his own editorial preferences.⁶² An examination of the text shows that passages in the authoritative *Zuozhuan*, *Gongyang*, and *Guliang* commentaries that made critical remarks about the Yi were quietly deleted.⁶³ To give one example, the underlined text in this passage from the *Gongyang* commentary was surreptitiously removed:

They are Yi-Di, but frequently trouble the central states. The southern Yi and northern Di join together, and the survival of the central states is [as fragile as] a single thread. Duke Huan [of Qi] rescued the central states, and repelled the Yi-Di, in the end stabilizing Jing. These actions are the affair of a true king.

⁶¹ Wong, “Barbarian or Not Barbarian,” p. 319.

⁶² Wang Shan 王揆, ed., *Qinding Chunqiu zhuan shuo huizuan* 欽定春秋傳說彙纂; preface dated KX60/6/1 (July 24, 1721).

⁶³ Kang Kailin 康凱淋, “Lun Qingchu guanfang dui Hu Anguo ‘Chunqiu Hushi zhuan’ de piping” 論清初官方對胡安國‘春秋胡氏傳’的批評, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 28.1 (2010), pp. 314–15.

夷狄也，而亟病中國，南夷與北狄交，中國不絕若線，桓公救中國，而攘夷狄，卒帖荆，以此爲王者之事也。⁶⁴

Unlike its original form, the expurgated gloss offers no support for the view that Yi are a threat that should be expelled.

Kangxi commissioned a second exegesis of these works, titled the *Rijiang Chunqiu jieyi* 日講春秋解義, which ostensibly reflected interpretations accepted by the emperor and court scholars during the “Daily Lectures” underway by 1686. However, as Xiao Minru 蕭敏如 has noted, there is evidence that Kangxi disagreed with at least some of the content presented to him by these lecturers, who followed Ming precedent and relied on the strongly anti-Yi views of Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074–1138). Possibly for this reason, the order to print these lectures came only in the Yongzheng reign. Despite bearing an undated preface by Kangxi, and one by Qianlong, under whom the printing was completed, Xiao argues convincingly that the work was substantially re-edited under commands Yongzheng issued in 1729, around the time he commissioned the *Dayi juemi lu*.⁶⁵ Whereas Kangxi’s *Huizuan* (mentioned above) was altered to suppress some passages critical of the Yi, no censorship is evident in either the Chinese or Manchu form of the *Rijiang Chunqiu jieyi*.⁶⁶

Qianlong’s Yi Inheritance

Yongzheng’s attempt to revolutionize the interpretation of Yi lasted only six years, from the publication of the *Dayi juemi lu* in 1730 to his death in 1735. Although Qianlong suppressed his father’s book immediately upon taking the throne, its content was so varied that this cannot be regarded as a sign that he specifically disagreed with the interpretation of the term Yi. Indeed, there is considerable debate over the degree to which Qianlong accepted his father’s views. Lydia Liu has stressed evidence of continuity, arguing that Yongzheng’s views remained Qing official orthodoxy. Others, notably Pamela Crossley, have highlighted evidence that Qianlong rejected his father’s views, as part of a larger disagreement over what had qualified the Manchus to become the legitimate rulers of China.⁶⁷ There is a basis of supporting

⁶⁴ *Qinding Chunqiu zhuan shuo huizuan* (1721), j. 12, p. 32a.

⁶⁵ Xiao, *Cong ‘Hua-Yi’ dao ‘Zhong-Xi’*, pp. 77–109.

⁶⁶ For example, the passage about Duke Huan rescuing Jing, quoted above, is reproduced in full: *Rijiang Chunqiu jieyi* 日講春秋解義 (1737), j. 15, pp. 23b–24a; Wolfgang Bauer, “Tsch’un-Ts’iu, mit den drei Kommentaren Tso-tschuan, Kung-yang-tschuan and Ku-liang-tschuan,” *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 33 (1960), p. 171.

⁶⁷ Crossley argues that when evoking Shun and King Wen as Yi, Yongzheng “acknowledged

evidence for both interpretations, and the challenge that presents itself is to parse the nuances of Qianlong's attempt to salvage expedient elements of his father's arguments even as he repudiated those parts viewed as dangerous.

Decades after he took the throne, Qianlong cribbed his father's arguments that Yi, properly understood, was a neutral geographic term, equivalent to the name of a Chinese province, and also referred to the Yi origins of Shun and King Wen. He continued:

Nothing about this can be tabooed, and also nothing need be. But if one mistakenly regards inner and outer to be high and low, and gives license to this one-sided viewpoint and wildly issues derision and calumnies, to say nothing of the attacks this may generate from petty subordinates, this is truly inappropriate. Distinguishing between genealogical systems and clearly instructing later generations does not lie in this [biased viewpoint]. Furthermore, earlier histories recorded the mutual vilification of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. These are all instances where in those days [those on] each [side] would perhaps deliberately use these derisive terms on behalf of his ruler.

此無可諱，亦不必諱，但以中外過為軒輊，逞其一偏之見，妄肆譏訕，毋論桀犬之吠，固屬無當，即區別統系，昭示來許，亦並不在乎此也，況前史載南北朝相稱互行詆毀，此皆當日各為其主或故為此訕笑之詞。⁶⁸

Qianlong made these remarks in 1782 when appraising the Ming-era historical work *Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 續資治通鑑綱目. One of the explicit purposes of this work had been to denigrate Yi rulers in the past, and its commentaries were even more ferociously anti-Yi. By reiterating his father's views, Qianlong emphasized that histories were wrong to stress the intrinsic illegitimacy of Yi rulers. A few years earlier, Qianlong also reiterated his father's objections to homophone substitution. Spotting this practice in a draft prepared for his massive literary collection, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, Qianlong found that it originated in alterations found in Kangxi-era reprints of the original

and made explicit" a "process of transformation" by which both came from "barbarian territories" but became sage rulers through "subsequent moral improvement" after reaching China. She describes this as the process of "repair" or "cultivation" (*xiu* 修); *Translucent Mirror*, p. 261. Although cultivating moral virtue was a duty of all Confucian monarchs, I cannot find in the passages she cites, or elsewhere in *Dayi juemi lu*, any acknowledgement that any earlier Aisin Gioro-descended ruler had ever become fit to rule only because of entering China and adopting Confucianism. Yongzheng's point seems to be precisely the opposite, that Mencius called Shun and King Wen "Yi," as a neutral description of their geographic origins, without implications for their original moral state prior to entering China.

⁶⁸ QSL-QL, j. 1168, QL47/11/7 (Dec. 11, 1782).

texts. The emperor thought his editors should have restored the original form, pointing out, once again, that Yi was a word found in the classics, and thus not taboo. Like Kangxi's pronouncement, he was not suggesting that Yi could be used for Manchus, and was careful to point out that Yi in these particular texts did not violate taboos associated with the Manchus.⁶⁹

Although I have found no evidence that any foreign peoples complained to Qing officials about being termed Yi before 1800, several complaints were made in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In reply, officials closely followed the interpretation pioneered by Yongzheng. The first such complaint, as Lawrence Wong has found, was lodged by the English in 1814.⁷⁰ In response, Qing officials formulated an argument already endorsed by Yongzheng and Qianlong, that Yi was a purely neutral geographic appellation.⁷¹ A decade later, in a case discussed by Benjamin Elman, the Daoguang emperor offended an envoy from Vietnam by referring to the "way of tribute for outer Yi [*waiyi*]." ⁷² When the envoy asked that this term be altered to "outer feudatories [*wai fan*]," the eminent scholar Liu Fenglu drafted a reply on behalf of the Board of Rites. Combining older arguments with some he apparently devised himself, Liu denied that Yi had pejorative overtones. According to the Qing record this satisfied the envoy; however, a similar complaint was lodged in 1841.⁷³

Evidence of continuity from the Yongzheng to the Qianlong period does not hide major differences. Unlike his father, who came to believe that all non-Han groups were Yi, Qianlong seems never to have expressed the view that the Manchus were Yi, and banned its use for Mongols and, later, central Tibetans. Even his objection to homophone substitution is misleading, because while the editors of the Siku quanshu project did indeed, as they edited and copied the thousands of books,

⁶⁹ *Zuanxiu Siku quanshu dang'an* 纂修四庫全書檔案, comp., *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 751-52.

⁷⁰ Wong, "Barbarians or Not Barbarians," pp. 338-40; Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, p. 361. As Wong notes, this case necessitates a revision of Liu's claim that the "British protest of the word *yi* to the Chinese authorities can be dated to the year 1832" (*Clash of Empires*, p. 40).

⁷¹ *Putaoya Dongbota dang'anguan cang Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen dang'an huibian* 葡萄牙東波塔檔案館藏清代澳門中文檔案彙編, comp. Liu Fang 劉芳 (Macao: Aomen jijin hui, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 724-26. Document of JQ19/11/17 (Dec. 18, 1814).

⁷² This case is discussed in Benjamin Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1990), pp. 216-17.

⁷³ Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1971), pp. 117-18.

retain the character Yi in some cases, they also deleted or rewrote passages mentioning it (or the Hua–Yi distinction) when to keep them was regarded as objectionable. It is impossible to determine how often this occurred without collating each version with a reliable original.⁷⁴ In the 1930s, textual comparison by Chen Yuan 陳垣 established that the Qianlong-era Siku quanshu text and palace printing of the *Jiu Wudai shi* had systematically altered a range of characters regarded as offensive, including Yi.⁷⁵ Even Mao Qiling’s funerary biography of He Zhi-jie (above), which recorded his successful defense against the charge of insulting the Qing using Yi and other terms, was quietly omitted when Mao’s collected works were copied into the imperial collection. In the Siku quanshu version of the *Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu*, the history Qianlong accused of mistaken anti-Yi bias, his editors systematically rewrote passages in its Ming-era commentaries that remarked on the need to firmly adhere to the Hua–Yi distinction. For example, a comparison of the original Ming-era *Faming* commentary on the death of Chinggis Khan, followed by its adaptation in the Siku quanshu, shows a concerted effort to suppress Hua–Yi content (censored and altered content underlined):

⁷⁴ On difficulties in identifying this form of censorship see Bernhard Führer, “‘The Text of the Classic and the Commentaries Deviates Greatly from Current Editions’: A Case Study on the Siku quanshu Version of Huang Kan’s *Lunyu yishu*,” in Bernhard Führer, ed., *Zensur: Text und Autorität in China in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), pp. 24–27.

⁷⁵ Chen Yuan 陳垣, *Jiu Wudai shi jiben fafu* 舊五代史輯本發覆, in *Sui Tang Wudai zhengshi dingbu wenxian huibian* 隋唐五代正史訂補文獻彙編, comp. Xu Shu 徐蜀 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004), pp. 1–30.

ORIGINAL

When a leader of the Yi-Di dies, one writes “died” (*si*). Temüjin had earlier declared himself emperor and proclaimed a new dynastic calendar. The reason why it writes *si* at this point is to correctly indicate his status as Yi-Di. He could not be listed in the ranks of the Chinese (Zhongguo) lords. When we come to the year Shaoding 4 [1231], the status of Ögödei is advanced for the first time: he is called “lord,” and when he dies he is said to perish (*zu*). Probably, after having stolen and held the Central Plains for two generations, [the Mongols] were gradually inculcated with Chinese (Hua) mores, and it became necessary to raise their status and treat them as belonging to the ranks of the illegitimate states. How strict is the intention here of valuing what is Hua and denigrating what is Yi!⁷⁶

夷狄之酋，卒則書死，鐵木真前已稱帝改元，至此亦書死者，正其夷狄之名，不得齒於中國諸侯之列，至紹定四年窩闊台始進而稱主，卒則書卒，蓋至二世盜有中原，漸染華風，不得以僭國之列待之，其貴華賤夷之意，嚴哉！

REWRITTEN

In all cases where one who has not proclaimed his rulership dies, one writes “died” (*si*). Temüjin had earlier declared himself emperor and proclaimed a new dynastic calendar. The reason why it writes *si* at this point is to not grant him legitimate succession with undue haste. [His treatment] could not be likened to the rules for [writing about] the rulers of China. When we come to the year Shao 4 (sic) [1231] the status of Ögödei is advanced for the first time: he is called “lord,” and when he dies he is said to perish (*zu*). Probably, after having held the Central Plains for two generations, and unifying the realm, they could no longer still be treated as belonging to the ranks of illegitimate states. How strict is the intention here of maintaining the intention of legitimate succession!⁷⁷

凡未稱君，卒則書死，特穆津前已稱帝改元，至此亦書死者，不遽予以正統，不得比于中國共主之例，至紹四年烏格台始進而稱主，卒則書卒，蓋至二世據有中原，統壹區宇，不得尚以僭國之例待之，其維持正統之意，嚴哉！

In a direct repudiation of Yongzheng’s last pronouncement on the subject, the large censorship effort associated with collecting books for the Siku quanshu project also involved an attempt to censor or destroy writings that referred to the Manchus as Yi. Qianlong’s major contribution, then, was to sharpen a bifurcation in the official treatment of the term Yi, encouraging its use for some categories of people, but restricting its use for others.

⁷⁶ *Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 續資治通鑑綱目 (1630), j. 19, p. 23b.

⁷⁷ *Yupi Xu Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 御批續資治通鑑綱目, in *SKQS*, vol. 694, p. 120 (j. 19, p. 19).

PART III: YI IN MANCHU TRANSLATION

Qing rulers and their official translators also had to consider how to render Yi in Manchu. The clearest evidence comes from the Confucian classics, the most deliberative and meticulous sphere of translation from Chinese into Manchu. There is a scholarly consensus that translations from the Kangxi period generally rendered Yi phonetically as Manchu “*I*,” found alone or in compounds.⁷⁸ Even at this early date, however, exceptions can be found. Twice in the Kangxi-era translation of the *Analects*, the Chinese term “Yi-Di” is rendered “*tulergi gurun*” (“outer state” or “outer country”).⁷⁹ A further development can be seen in the *Rijiang Chunqiu jieyi*, a Kangxi-era text revised to reflect the editorial standards of the late Yongzheng period (discussed above). Here the phonetic rendering *I* is retained in most cases, now always followed by *aiman* (“tribe”). There is, however, still a variety of usage. *Siyi* 四夷 (“Yi of the four directions”) was translated in some cases as *duin ergi aiman* (“tribes of the four directions”) and in others as *tulergi aiman* (“outer tribe”), a translation also used for *manyi* 蠻夷. When translators had to translate *yi* 裔 (“borders”) and Yi in the same passage, they use *tulergi aiman* for the former, and *I aiman* for the latter.⁸⁰ In Qianlong-era translations, which culminated this process of development, there was a near total rejection of phonetic translation. Whereas in Yongzheng-era translations Yi was often followed by *aiman*, or translated as *aiman* preceded by a modifier, *aiman* alone now came to be used as a modifier to represent Yi.⁸¹

The growing association of Yi and *aiman* in the field of classical translation raises interesting questions. It is clear that the decision to stop translating Yi phonetically as *I* was connected to the broader trend of replacing Chinese loanwords in favor of indigenous (or invented, pseudo-indigenous) Manchu terms.⁸² Not clear, however, is whether *aiman* was regarded as a direct translation of Yi, or merely an interpretation of it. Chuang Chi-fa 莊吉發 suggests that choosing *aiman* was a way to avoid a tabooed word entirely by replacing it with a word of a

⁷⁸ Zhuang Jifa [Chuang Chi-fa] 莊吉發, “Qing Gaozong chiyi ‘Sishu’ de tantao” 清高宗敕譯‘四書’的探討, in idem, *Qingshi lunji* 清史論集 4 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 2000), pp. 61–76, p. 66; Mark Elliott, Yuanyuan Qiu, and Yulian Wu, “Mencius,” unpublished paper presented at Translating Manchu in the Qing, Harvard University, May 16, 2015.

⁷⁹ *Inenggidari giyangnaha sy šu i jurgan be suhe bithe* (1677), j. 4, p. 73b (*Lunyu* 3.5) and j. 9, p. 35a (*Lunyu* 13.19); held in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁸⁰ Bauer, “Tsch’un-Ts’iu,” pp. 143, 171, 229, 241, 441, 654, 923.

⁸¹ Elliott, Qiu, and Wu, “Mencius,” p. 18.

⁸² Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1998), p. 37.

different meaning.⁸³ Since there is no entry for the word Yi in any work of official lexicography, this question cannot be answered definitively. *Aiman* was defined as equivalent not to Yi but to the Chinese *buluo* 部落 (“tribe”) and the Mongol *ayimagh*.⁸⁴ It was also used to translate the word *tu* 土 (“aboriginal”) in reference to the *tusi* system of aboriginal administration.⁸⁵ It may be that Yongzheng- and Qianlong-era translators believed that the only “states” (Chinese: *guo* 國, Manchu: *gurun*) in the period of the classics were those of the Zhou order, collectively constituting the Hua, so that all non-Hua were by definition members of “tribes.”

To some extent, a similar pattern can be observed in documents concerning the contemporary world. In bilingual documents produced with regard to foreign peoples on the coast, Yi was at first rendered phonetically. At least two very early Kangxi-era official documents dealing with Macao rendered the Chinese term “Yi person 夷人” as Manchu: *I i niyalma*.⁸⁶ A collection of bilingual documents regarding relations with the Liuqiu (Ryūkyū) Islands indicates that phonetic translation was standard well into the Qianlong period, but was then replaced by *aiman* sometime in the 1760s, well after *aiman* had become standard in translating the classics. Yi in these documents was rendered both *aiman i niyalma* (“Yi person”) and with the neologism *aimaci*, seemingly in free variation.⁸⁷

Different practices are found in the Inner Asian context. Where the Chinese edition of the Kangxi-era history of the Galdan campaigns uses Yi to refer to Oirats in memorials and edicts of the 1670s, the Manchu version renders the term as *ület i monggoso* (“Oirat Mongols”), “outer Mongols,” or just “Mongols.”⁸⁸ While the term “Junghar Yi” was

⁸³ Zhuang, “Qing Gaozong chiyi,” p. 66.

⁸⁴ Hitoshi Kuribayashi 栗林均 and Hurelbator, eds., “*Gyosei Manju Mōko Kanji sangō setsuon Shinbunkan*” *Manshūgo hairetsu taishō goi* “御製滿珠蒙古漢字三合切音清文鑑”, 滿洲語配列对照語彙 (Sendai: Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University, 2008), vol. 1, p. 18.

⁸⁵ Hu Zengyi 胡增益 et al., eds., *Xin Man-Han da cidian* 新滿漢大辭典 (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 16–17.

⁸⁶ Yang Jibo 楊繼波 cites two documents from the first year of Kangxi that use *I i niyalma*. It seems that these were bilingual documents, and the Manchu was used to render the Chinese 夷人; “Lüetan Aomen diming de yanbian” 略談澳門地名的演變, *Aomen yanjiu* 澳門研究 11 (1999), p. 119.

⁸⁷ *Qingdai Zhong-Liu guanxi dang'an sibian* 清代中琉關係檔案四編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), p. 268, 314. The final document found using *I* is dated QL27/3/26 (Apr. 14, 1762), the first to use *aimaci* is from QL34/3/10 (Apr. 16, 1769). After this date, both *aimaci* and *aiman i niyalma* can be found. The neologism was clearly formed by adding the suffix *-ci*, normally denoting an occupation, to *aima(n)*.

⁸⁸ *Qinzheng Pingding shuomo fanglüe*, vol. 2, pp. 511–22 (j. 1, pp. 10–32b); *Beye dailame wargi amargi babe necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe* (1709), j. 1.

commonly found in the Chinese version of the history of the Yongzheng- and Qianlong-era campaigns against them, the equivalent in the Manchu version is simply “Junghar” (*Jun gar*).⁸⁹ Likewise, in Manchu documents about Junghar affairs, Yi or its equivalent seems not to have been used at all, despite being a standard usage in Chinese. For instance, Junghar envoys were almost invariably referred to in the Veritable Records as “Yi envoys,” and indeed the Chinese name for the Manchu record of their visits was “Yi envoy files 夷使檔.” However, the documents regarding these missions, kept only in Manchu, do not refer to these envoys as Yi, calling them simply *elcin*, “envoys,” and the Manchu name of the same files also refers only to *elcin*.⁹⁰

The *Zhigong tu* text, supplied with a Manchu version as well as the Chinese original, was produced over the course of the Qianlong reign, and its translators followed no standard principle in rendering Yi. As Chuang Chi-fa has found, when the Chinese text used Yi in the title line of an entry, this was invariably dropped in Manchu.⁹¹ However, Yi sometimes occurs in the body of the Chinese description. In some instances the word was also dropped in Manchu, so that for instance “Yi women 夷婦” is invariably translated as just *hehesi* (“women”), and “Yi commoners 夷民” invariably as *irgen* (“commoners”). In other cases, no attempt is made at translation and a placeholder is inserted, so that Yi person 夷人 is translated most commonly as *tubai urse* (“people of that place”), but also as *tere ba i niyalma* (“a person of that place”). However, following translations of the classics, Yi is also sometimes rendered *aiman* as a modifier.⁹²

The *Zhigong tu* retains phonetic translation in three references to Yunnan’s Bai Yi, namely, 擺 (or 白) 夷 (Manchu: *Baii* or *Bai I*), and one to “Yunnan Yi 滇夷” (*Yün nan i I i niyalma*).⁹³ This late use of the phonetic *I* demands explanation. The Jiaqing-period (1796–1820) edition of the *Qinding Da Qing Huidian* 欽定大清會典, the official compendium of administrative regulations, classified households for tax purposes into Hui 回, Fan 番, Qiang 羌, Miao 苗, Yao 猺, Li 黎, Yi 夷, and others.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *Jun gar i ba be necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithei sirame banjibun* (1770), j. 10, pp. 16a, 29a; Fuheng 傅恒, ed., 平定準噶爾方略 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1990), vol 4, pp. 2642, 2646 (續編 10.8b, 15a). I am grateful to Dr. Onuma Takahiro for making the Manchu version of this campaign history available to me.

⁹⁰ Zhao Lingzhi 趙令志 and Guo Meilan 郭美蘭, eds., *Junjichu Manwen Zhungaer shizhe dang yibian* 軍機處滿文準噶爾使者檔譯編 (Beijing: Zhongyang Minzu Daxue chubanshe, 2009).

⁹¹ Xie Sui “*Zhigong tu*,” p. 28.

⁹² Xie Sui “*Zhigong tu*,” pp. 67, 83.

⁹³ Xie Sui “*Zhigong tu*,” pp. 169, 423, 431, 435.

⁹⁴ Tuo-jin 托津 et al, eds., *Qinding Da Qing huidian (Jiaqing chao)* 欽定大清會典 (嘉慶朝) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1985), pp. 595–56 (j. 11, pp. 1a-b).

The Yi tax category was found only in several prefectures in south-western Yunnan, and the Manchu translators seem to have retained a phonetic translation here to indicate that the word was, in this specific Yunnan context, a proper noun. Supporting this interpretation is their fastidiousness in dealing with other groups to whom Yi was loosely applied in the Chinese text. When the group was classified as Fan, the Manchu translators alter the Chinese “crowd of Yi 夷眾” to *terei fandz se* (“those Fanzi”), and in three cases where the group is identified as Miao they translate the Chinese Yi as *miyoodz*.⁹⁵ In short, in Chinese all aboriginal groups within China could be termed Yi regardless of their specific identity, but in Manchu *I* was retained for use only for those groups for which Yi was a proper name.

Several provisional conclusions can be offered. First, it appears that Yi occurred in Manchu only in the context of translation from Chinese. So far I have discovered no evidence of its use before 1800 in documents composed only in Manchu.⁹⁶ Second, although translations of the classics and bilingual official documents seem to have followed a standardized usage by shifting from *I* to *aiman* in the Qianlong period, there was a notable tendency elsewhere for Yi to be dropped or replaced with an altogether different word. The translators of the book *Zhigong tu* in particular seem to have regarded Yi as basically untranslatable in many contexts. It is also striking that any form of Yi was avoided in Manchu documents about the Junghars at the same time that it was widely used in Chinese. These findings open further questions. First, did emperors regard Yi as a distinctly Chinese concept, only relevant in that language? If emperors did not insist on the Yi status of the Junghars in Manchu documents, did this imply a critical distance from their application of the term in Chinese? Other questions are raised by the choice of rendering it as *aiman*. Was this a direct translation, or one among several possible interpretations or placeholders? If a direct translation, does this suggest that Yi status was associated with “tribal” political formations? Usage in the *Zhigong tu* and elsewhere seems to contradict this, because Mongols and a number of outer groups who lived in what were regarded as “tribes” were not called Yi, whereas most of the peoples living in “states” were. It would seem that using *aiman* as an equivalent to the Chinese Yi was devised specifically for classical

⁹⁵ Xie Sui “*Zhigong tu*,” pp. 447, 571.

⁹⁶ It would seem that the Tibetan aboriginal groups living in Qinghai, Gansu, and elsewhere, called fan-Yi 番夷 in Chinese, were called *aiman-i fandz* in Manchu. It seems likely that fan-Yi is regarded here as something like a proper name, and therefore not an exception to the non-usage of Yi in Manchu-only documents, but this hypothesis merits further research.

translations, and then applied to the current world where in fact there was no correlation between being “tribal” and Yi status.

PART IV: YI AND NON-YI IN THE QING
IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY: AN INTERPRETATION

The binary Hua–Yi classification of the world’s peoples bequeathed to the Qing government by its Ming predecessor not only had uncomfortable political implications, but also failed to fit the Qing context. Instead of a binary, Qing emperors before 1800 divided the peoples of the world into three major classes: Han Chinese, diverse Yi, and a third group of “non-Yi” – Manchus, Mongols, and other Inner Asians who fit into neither category. In other words, the Ming category of Yi still applied to some non-Han peoples within and beyond the empire, but not to others.

Qing emperors tried various strategies to address the difficulties posed by the legacy of this Hua–Yi binary. Shunzhi and Kangxi, limited in their cultural resources and ambitions, chose ad hoc defensive measures. Yi could no longer be applied to the Manchus themselves (or to their Mongol allies, although this was not made explicit). It could still be applied to other foreign peoples via the device of homophone substitution, but even this usage notably declined. Under Kangxi, official exegesis of the classics removed or reinterpreted passages that seemed to promote a hierarchical Hua–Yi distinction, but there was no systematic effort to change the term’s implications. Yongzheng, at the midpoint of his reign, boldly restored the Ming-era binary, applying the term Yi to all non-Chinese while trying to remove its negative overtones. This was not a complete break with his predecessors. When Yongzheng emphasized that Yi in the classics was a neutral term for place of origin, he was speaking principally with reference to the Manchus and Mongols. At the same time, he made a point of applying the term to the hated Junghars in a sense that clearly retained pejorative overtones. Qianlong was more conscious than his father of the potential danger in allowing Chinese subjects to describe the Manchus and others as Yi. Although he echoed some of his father’s arguments, in practice he sharpened distinctions implicit under Kangxi, becoming more explicit about who were not Yi, yet using the term more frequently in foreign relations.

Yi was only one among a matrix of concepts central to the imperial ideology. To understand its nuances in the Qing context, it must be considered relative to a range of other terms. Like Yi, these terms

often had their meanings subtly adjusted to align with the political perspectives of the Qing state, and, like Yi, the nature of this adjustment often depended on specific contexts. Although a thorough examination of this matrix of concepts is needless to say beyond the scope of this paper, I will conclude with some hypotheses about how the Yi and non-Yi categories fit into the Qing imperial ideology as a whole.

As early as 1622, Nurhaci claimed to have united under his rule Han Chinese (*Nikan*), Jurchens (*Jusen*; later renamed Manchus), and Mongols.⁹⁷ His successors came into contact with those they regarded as Yi during the decades-long conquest of China, and with the peoples regarded as “non-Yi” (except, of course, the Manchus themselves) during the efforts to dominate Mongol territories. Control over Mongols expanded from a southern Mongolian core to encompass northern (Khalkha) Mongolia, Qinghai, Tibet, and finally the homeland of the Junghars and its subject territory in the Tarim Basin. The diverse inhabitants of these Inner Asian regions shared no single lifestyle, religion, language, or mode of local administration; all that unified them is that they became subjects during wars against Mongol and Oirat rivals. To rule them, Qing monarchs employed political traditions of Mongol, or at least steppe, origin. As Onuma Takahiro has found, the vocabulary of the *ejen* (lord)–*albatu* (subject) relationship applied equally to Qing subjects in Inner Asia and independent Central Asian rulers.⁹⁸ All of these territories were subject to one agency in Beijing, known originally as the “Mongol Office,” but later called in Chinese the “Court for the Administration of Feudatories” (feudatory, *fan* 藩, indicating a territory under hereditary leadership established for defensive purposes), and in Manchu: the Board Governing the Outer Provinces (Tulergi golo be dasara jurgan). Its Mongol name continued to specify that it administered the “Outer Mongols” (*ghadaghadu Mongghol*). In short, although Qing Inner Asia expanded beyond Mongolia, its origins from a Mongol core remained well understood.

Nurhaci’s successors continued to boast that they ruled a composite domain. They gave their realm several names, among which was Zhongguo, normally translated as “China.”⁹⁹ Qianlong explicitly

⁹⁷ Kanda Nobuo 神田信夫 et al., ed. and trans., *Manwen laodang* [*Manbun rōtō*] 滿文老檔 II, “Taizu 2” (Tokyo: Toyo bunko, 1956), p. 569. See Devin Fitzgerald, “Discussing ‘The Making of ‘China’ out of ‘Zhongguo,’” *Journal of Asian History* 50.2 (2016), p. 301.

⁹⁸ Onuma Takahiro, “Political Relations between the Qing Dynasty and Kazakh Nomads in the Mid-18th Century: Promotion of the ‘*ejen-albatu* Relationship’ in Central Asia,” in Noda Jin and Onuma Takahiro, *A Collection of Documents from the Kazakh Sultans to the Qing Dynasty* (Tokyo: TIAS Department of Islamic Area Studies, 2010), p. 111.

⁹⁹ Kishimoto, “‘Zhongguo’ he ‘Waiguo,’” pp. 364–65.

listed Zhongguo as an acceptable term for his state in communications with foreign governments.¹⁰⁰ He was also proud to boast that the Qing iteration of China (Zhongxia 中夏) was distinct from the smaller and weaker versions of earlier dynasties.¹⁰¹ Yet Qing emperors remained well aware that their ancestors had once lived outside of Zhongguo. Nurhaci, in one of his earliest surviving pronouncements on the subject, described his realm as the Outer Country 外國, in contrast to Ming Zhongguo.¹⁰² For Yongzheng, coming from the “Outside,” the territory beyond China’s provinces, is what made the Manchus Yi. Qianlong also stated of the preconquest Manchus that “our Great Qing arose in the East, having no connection with Zhongguo 我大清興于東海，與中國無涉。” The signature rhetorical innovation of Qing emperors was their insistence on the continuing importance of this Central and Outer distinction after China and Inner Asia had both been united under their rule. Ming emperors, drawing on Yuan rhetoric, emphasized that they had unified the realm, and that this unification had incorporated or attracted non-Han outsiders.¹⁰³ They spoke of “unifying the Hua and Yi 統一華夷” and “the Hua and Yi forming one family 華夷一家.”¹⁰⁴ Qing emperors substituted Central and Outer for this Hua–Yi binary, proclaiming that under their rule “Central and Outer are united 中外統一” (a claim made 14 times in the Veritable Records before 1800); that they had “united Central and Outer 統一中外” (2 times), and that “the Central and Outer are one family 中外一家” (30 times). Such references to Central and Outer never occur in the Veritable Records compiled for the Ming-dynasty reigns.

At first glance these references appear to show that the Qing borrowed Ming-era claims about imperial unification that were in turn taken from Yuan rhetoric. The Qing merely changed Hua and Yi to

¹⁰⁰ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 386.

¹⁰¹ QSL-QL, j. 499, QL20/10/18 (Nov. 21, 1755). Cited in Zhao, “Reinventing *China*,” p. 4, and Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, p. 360.

¹⁰² Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland: Territorial Boundaries and Political Relations between Qing China and Chosŏn Korea, 1636–1912* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2017), p. 36.

¹⁰³ Hodong Kim, “Mongol Perceptions of ‘China’ and the Yuan Dynasty,” in Timothy Brook et al., eds., *Sacred Mandates: Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 53–54.

¹⁰⁴ As David Robinson notes, to assert his universal rulership during steppe campaigns, the Yongle emperor claimed that “Chinese and barbarians are one family,” and stressed that he did not distinguish between Chinese and non-Chinese when selecting talented servitors. This, he argued, made him more universal than his Yuan predecessors, who had discriminated against their Chinese subjects; *Ming China and Its Allies: Imperial Rule in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2020), p. 91. However, Yongle elsewhere harshly disparaged his steppe enemies using traditional anti-Mongol tropes, and thus, unlike Qing rulers, cannot be seen as systematically endorsing the equality of Chinese and Inner Asian peoples.

the more neutral Central and Outer. Yet an important shift had taken place. A clue to this is found in the statement that the Qing “did not distinguish Central and Outer 無分中外” (a phrase found in the Veritable Records of the Qing 13 times before 1800). Hua and Yi could not be substituted into this expression without seeming to threaten a hierarchical divide emphasized by Ming-era Confucians, and indeed the corresponding phrase “did not distinguish Hua and Yi” never appears in the Ming Veritable Records. Although Central and Outer could sometimes refer to the Qing empire and the world beyond it, a particularly prominent usage was to represent the special Qing achievement of uniting the “Central” provinces of China proper and the Mongol-centered “Outer” sphere on the basis of mutual equality. Yongzheng explained that whereas Ming emperors, fearing the Mongols, had been unable to create “a framework for unifying the Central and Outer 中外一統之規,” Kangxi had “joined the Mongols and China, accomplishing a flourishing state of unity 合蒙古中國，成一統之盛.”¹⁰⁵ Around the same time, he remarked:

Furthermore, the administrative units of China are simply like the tribal units of the various Mongols. Historically, the various Mongols regarded themselves as hegemony and fought with each other. Only in the time of Yuan Taizu [Chinggis Khan] did they become unified. Thus, the unification of China began in the Qin dynasty, and the unification beyond the frontier began with the Yuan dynasty, but this situation has reached an extremely flourishing state under our own dynasty. From ancient times, none have surpassed our dynasty with regard to the Central and Outer forming one family, and the realm being most expansive.

且中國之郡縣，亦猶各蒙古之有部落耳。歷代以來，各蒙古自爲雄長，亦互相戰爭。至元太祖之世，始成一統，是中國之一統，始於秦，塞外之一統，始於元，而極盛於我朝。自古中外一家，幅極廣，未有如我朝者也。

Here Yongzheng specifies that the Qing realm merged and furthered the imperial projects of both the first Qin emperor inside Zhongguo, here meaning China proper, and Chinggis Khan in the lands beyond. The special feature of the Qing realm was not only that it had brought these lands together in a stable union, but that it rejected a hierarchical distinction between them. Indeed, before 1800 Qing rulers did not aspire in rhetoric or practice to “transform” Inner Asia in a way that asserted Confucianism or Chinese practices as a new norm.

¹⁰⁵ *Dayi juemi lu*, p. 258 (j. 2, p. 53).

In the Qing ideology, Outer corresponded to the group we have identified as the “non-Yi,” to which emperors themselves belonged. It might be argued that a Central-Outer binary is intrinsically Sinocentric, showing that Qing emperors acknowledged the centrality of Chinese provinces, with Mongols simply “outer feudatories,” “outer provinces,” or “outside the frontier [of the Chinese provinces].” This has a kernel of truth: the Qing were forced to adopt Chinese terms with deep histories, and China had an immutable prior claim on centrality. Yet one should be cautious in regarding this as a transparent representation of the spatial vision of Qing emperors. Consider, for instance, the parallel case of the Qing use of “inner” (*nei*). As Kataoka Kazutada 片岡一忠 has found, “outer feudatories” and their aristocrats were outer not with respect to China, but to the “inner” Eight Banner system and its nobles.¹⁰⁶ In Qing usage, “inner lands” was a relative concept. As we have seen, the phrase was sometimes used to distinguish China proper from non-Han regions, including those lying within provincial boundaries. In other contexts, however, “inner lands” meant Qing territory as a whole, distinguished from non-Qing territory.¹⁰⁷ Thus, southern Mongols, “outer” with reference to the Eight Banners, could in other contexts be termed “inner Mongols” (*dorgi monggoso*), rendered in Chinese as “Mongols of the inner lands 內地蒙古.” Qianlong used the expression “tribe of the inner lands” (*neidi buluo*) to refer even to the northern Khalkha.¹⁰⁸ Thus, “inner” and “central” do not neatly map onto each other: although Central and Outer often meant China and Inner Asia, in other contexts it was necessary to indicate that both were “inner territories” compared to non-Qing territory. This is likely what Qianlong had in mind when he remarked, as quoted above, that “Yi people are those not subject to the inner lands.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, while the “non-Yi” were the Outer component in the Central-Outer binary, Qianlong made clear that both Central and Outer were “inner” when

¹⁰⁶ Kataoka Kazutada 片岡一忠, “Chōga kitei kara mita Shinchō to gaihan: chōkōkoku no kankei” 朝賀規定からみた清朝と外藩, 朝貢国の関係, *Komazawa shigaku* 駒沢史学 52 (1998), p. 245.

¹⁰⁷ Liaodong could be described as *neidi* with regard to Korea: See Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*, p. 126; Nian Gengyao described its conquest as making Qinghai part of the *neidi*; Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2005), p. 247.

¹⁰⁸ Borjigidai Oyunbilig, *Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des Berichts über den persönlichen Feldzug des Kangxi Kaisers gegen Galdan (1696–1697)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), pp. 109–10.

¹⁰⁹ Further proof that Central and Inner were not synonyms in this sense comes from the fact that while the phrase “Central and Outer are one family” occurs 30 times in the *Veritable Records* in the period under study, “Inner and Outer are one family 内外一家” occurs only once.

compared to the Junghar territories, Korea, Russia, and others lands. China remained “Central,” but Qing rulers emphasized that this did not exclude or denigrate the “Outer.”

This paper has identified the category of “non-Yi,” a term never used by emperors or officials. This category had no Manchu cognate, and emerged as the Manchus encountered Yi, a specifically Chinese concept that threatened the legitimacy of their imperial project. For that reason, our clearest evidence that “non-Yi” existed as a category comes from Qing defensive measures: first an implicit taboo, and then edicts clarifying prohibition on its use. It is easy to see why Manchu emperors expanded this defensive umbrella to shield Mongols and other Inner Asians. To many Chinese observers, Qing rule restored the baleful conditions of Yuan control, and pejorative references to the Mongols and their dynasty could easily be coded attacks on the Manchus. When Qianlong in 1755 found a highly-placed Manchu writing poetry deemed insulting to northern people, he upbraided him:

Furthermore, as for calling the Mongols *hu'er* (a pejorative name for northern nomads), Mongols have from the earliest generations of our dynasty inclined their hearts toward us and submitted themselves. They are fundamentally of one body with the Manchus. How then is categorizing them as *hu'er* different from denigrating oneself? If this is not forgetting one's origins, what is it? 且至稱蒙古爲胡兒。夫蒙古自我朝先世，即傾心歸附。與滿洲本屬一體。乃目以胡兒，此與自加詆毀者何異。非忘本而何。¹¹⁰

“Non-Yi” expressed the boundaries of the loose group of Inner Asian peoples Manchus saw themselves as leading – but also the group into which they knew their Han Chinese detractors placed them. “Non-Yi” was thus a taboo category that expressed itself by non-application, yet it identified an important boundary in Qing statecraft. Was there another, positive name for the “non-Yi” category? The Qing state worked with an inherited Chinese political vocabulary, whose implications did not entirely fit its imperial vision. In a sense, Yongzheng had attempted to turn “non-Yi” into a positive, explicitly-named category simply by rehabilitating the term Yi. This bold effort to openly revolutionize existing Chinese vocabulary to suit new conditions failed in two senses: First, Yongzheng's son, and probably most Qing officials, doubted that even an imperial edict could drain the term of its tainted connotations; second, it contained an internal contradiction,

¹¹⁰ QSL-QL, j. 485, QL20/3/27.

since Yongzheng continued to use Yi in a pejorative sense when referring to the Junghars, in parallel to its neutral reformulation.

If the rehabilitation of Yi was impossible, could “non-Yi” be expressed in other terms? Part of the Qing imperial vision could be expressed by *yitong*, but while this denoted a unified realm it did not unequivocally express this as a unification of equal parts on the basis of permanent internal differentiation. Alone, *yitong* could just as well express, as it did in Ming usage, the merging of territory into a single Chinese core.¹¹¹ As we have seen, the distinctive rhetorical adjustment of Qing emperors was to stress that this unification was based on the equality of Central and Outer. In this sense, Outer was the positive referent to the negative “non-Yi” category, and indeed Yongzheng had used it as a synonym for his rehabilitated Yi. Yet Outer gained meaning only when paired with Central, and was not a satisfactory stand-alone identity for the non-Chinese hemisphere of the realm. Other Chinese categories such as “frontier 邊, 疆,” or “beyond the frontier [of the Chinese provinces] 塞外” also implied reference to a center. Needless to say, Qing emperors did not have at their disposal the neutral geographic term “Inner Asia,” so convenient for modern scholars, nor could they evidently identify an appropriate neutral term analogous to the way *yang* 洋 was later adopted to replace Yi when referring to Euro-American foreigners. The fact that the “non-Yi” category was never given a satisfactory name reveals how hard it was for Qing rulers to fully express their political vision in Chinese, not that the category did not exist.

Insofar as “non-Yi” formed part of a triad, its relationship to the two other components, Yi and Hua, offer insight into the Qing political project and its ideological basis. Here I would like to conclude by sketching out certain hypotheses and questions for future study. Manchu rulers inherited and maintained the Ming view of aboriginal peoples in the southwest as internal aliens, with whom they had no perceived political or cultural commonality. Less clear, however, is why aboriginal groups on the edge of Inner Asia, in Khams, Amdo, and Gansu remained Yi, distinguished from the non-Yi central Tibetans and Oirats.

¹¹¹ Willard Peterson observes that Li Si used the term *yitong* to describe the centralized control newly established by the Qin empire via the bureaucratic *junxian* system. In Peterson’s view, the Qing tried to build a comparably “integrated domain” by slowly incorporating Inner Asia into a Chinese core. Qing administration of Inner Asia did increasingly draw on bureaucratic practices originating in China, particularly in the field of law. However, the political vision of *yitong* before 1800 did not include a unification of the realm within a single *junxian*-style administration; Willard J. Peterson, “Introduction: The Ch’ing Dynasty, the Ch’ing Empire, and the Great Ch’ing Integrated Domain,” in Peterson, ed., *Cambridge History*, vol. 9.1, pp. 5–9.

Being classed as “Fan 番” (sometimes 蕃), as these groups were, was closely correlated with Yi status; to my knowledge, no group considered “Fan” belonged to the non-Yi category.¹¹² However, this reveals little, because “Fan” itself was applied to a very diverse group of people, and the exact criteria underpinning “Fan” status in the Qing context awaits careful study.¹¹³

One commonality among Qing subjects who remained Yi was that they were, or had initially been, subject to the *tusi* administration, a form of government for non-Han aboriginals inherited from the Ming. Qing emperors and officials were uncomfortable with this system. Whenever possible, *tusi* administration was eliminated, sometimes with great violence, and replaced with rule by directly-appointed officials. Viewed only within the context of China proper, the problem with the *tusi* system appears at first glance to be its reliance on hereditary officials governing their own ancestral territory. At best, this hampered direct rule from Beijing; at worst, it threatened it. As the gazetteer of Guizhou put it in 1692, the *tusi* system was a malign remnant of the extinct feudal (*fengjian* 封建) mode of administration, an archaism in a China that had shifted to bureaucratic (*junxian* 郡縣) governance, and had to be tamed by cultural transformation or military force.¹¹⁴ Stepping back to view the Qing empire as a whole, however, indirect governance was clearly not the core issue. The jasagh-banner system was typologically similar to the *tusi* system: in both cases local aristocrats, who normally inherited their position subject to imperial approval, had considerable autonomy under loose central oversight. What distinguished the two modes of administration was that the *tusi* system was exclusively connected to peoples who could be classed as Yi. A review of the Qing Veritable Records also suggests that concepts such as being “beyond the pale of civilization 化外” were used for both *tusi* peoples and entities

¹¹² Only the case of central Tibet presents some ambiguity: although Qianlong explicitly denied that envoys from central Tibet were Yi envoys, in other contexts he sometimes extended the “fan-Yi” identity to central Tibet. This is likely connected to the real but inconsistent Qing effort, noted by Max Oidtmann, to distinguish central Tibet (as *Tanggūt*) from Tibetan-speakers in Khams and Amdo (as *fan*); *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet* (New York: Columbia U.P., 2018), pp. 22–24.

¹¹³ This question has recently been broached by Max Oidtmann, “Overlapping Empires: Religion, Politics, and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Qinghai,” *Late Imperial China* 37.2 (2016), p. 45. On the origins of the term Fan and its use in earlier periods, see Yang Shao-yun, “*Fan* and *Han*: The Origins and Uses of a Conceptual Dichotomy in Mid-Imperial China, ca. 500–1200,” in Francesca Fiaschetti and Julia Schneider, eds. *Political Strategies of Identity Building in Non-Han Empires in China* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), pp. 9–35.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in John E. Herman, “The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China’s Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier,” in Crossley, et al., eds., *Empire at the Margins*, p. 161.

beyond Qing rule. As Yi, inhabitants of the *tusi* system were subject to a discourse of political and cultural “transformation.” *Tusi* rule was an obstacle to this process, and thus eliminated where possible. By contrast, the Qing state had no such transformative agenda for “non-Yi,” and thus jasagh-banner administration posed no obstacle to the state’s ambitions. The fact that terms like “beyond the pale of civilization” were explicitly not applied to jasagh-banners indicates not that Qing emperors had greater control over Mongol aristocrats than their *tusi* counterparts, but that the two groups existed, from the imperial perspective, in different conceptual realms, one civilized but not Hua, the other not fully civilized.¹¹⁵

In the Qing context, changing the meaning of Yi had implications for its binary counterpart, Hua. Under the Ming system, Hua meant Han, just as Yi meant all non-Han. Hua, however, had connotations of “civilized” that Han did not. In Qing official usage, Han Chinese were called Han or Nikan, not Hua, and terms like *Huaren* 華人 (“Hua person,” meaning Han Chinese) fell out of use in official discourse. In short, the Qing state neutralized any specifically Han claim to civilized status, except for the brief period in which Yongzheng restored the Hua–Yi binary in a way that Hua meant only Han Chinese. In theory, disassociating Hua from Han opened the door for Qing rulers to bypass the complexities of the “non-Yi” identity and simply call themselves Hua in a new sense of “civilized” that embraced both Central and Outer. There were precedents for this: as early as the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534), non-Chinese rulers had tried to eliminate the ethnic connotations of Hua and apply it to subjects of different origins.¹¹⁶ For Qing rulers, however, a common Hua identity would have made it hard to maintain the balanced equality between the Central and Outer, which would in turn have undercut two key policies: ensuring that Manchus (and Mongols) did not merge with the Chinese and lose their distinct identity, and keeping the Chinese language and Confucianism out of Inner Asia. It would also have made it harder for Qing rulers to pinpoint their political success in dominating Central and Outer without

¹¹⁵ The Yongzheng court clarified that those subject to the Lifanyuan were not “people beyond the pale of civilization 化外” for legal purposes, but this policy had likely been in effect from the beginning of the dynasty; Shimada Masao 島田正郎, *Shinchō Mōko rei no kenkyū* 清朝蒙古例の研究 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1982), pp. 87–88. On this issue see Ying Hu, “Justice on the Steppe: Legal Institutions and Practice in Qing Mongolia,” Ph.D. diss. (Stanford University, 2014), pp. 76–118

¹¹⁶ Mark Elliott, “*Hushuo*: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese,” in Thomas S. Mullaney et al., eds., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China’s Majority* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2012), pp. 173–90.

treating either as “high” or “low” as a specifically Manchu, and not generically Hua, achievement.¹¹⁷

As we have seen, one conceptual complexity posed by describing the Qing realm in Chinese was the dual use of the term *Zhongguo* and its cognates, which were sometimes used to distinguish China proper from Inner Asia, and sometimes used to describe the Qing empire as a whole, particularly with reference to the outside world. In the former context, as one of the individual component units of Qing territory, terms like *Zhongguo* aligned closely with the use of *Han* to refer to one body of Qing subjects. Conversely, when *Zhongguo* or its cognates *Zhonghua* and *Zhongxia* referred to the empire as a whole, a usage found most commonly in the context of interstate relations, it embraced the Manchus and other Qing subjects in Inner Asia. Were Qing rulers in this second usage adopting for themselves the prestigious status of *Hua*? In part, this is a question of semantics: when using Chinese, Qing emperors were extremely cautious in employing the term *Hua-Yi* even when discussing relations with outside states, and indeed the expression was used only once in the Qing Veritable Records before 1800 to describe the relative position of the Qing empire and a foreign state (when Qianlong justified to George III his prohibition of Christianity in 1793).¹¹⁸ Still, if it was rare for Qing emperors to refer to their realm simply as *Hua*, they did refer to it as *Zhonghua* (*Hua*, *Zhonghua*, and *Zhongguo* were translated identically into Manchu as *Dulimba-i gurun*). Thus, while in an internal context Qing emperors regarded themselves as transcending the Central-Outer division, in an interstate context they were prepared to regard themselves as the Center.

When interpreting what this Central identity meant in this interstate usage, however, the “non-Yi” status of Manchus and Mongols must be kept in mind. Even when presenting themselves as the Center, Manchu rulers were not claiming to be *Hua* in the Ming sense of the Chinese side of the *Hua-Yi* binary. Emphasis on the supposedly unique power and virtue of the Qing empire implied no acknowledgment of a turn toward specifically Han Chinese cultural values. As Kishimoto Mio 岸本美緒 points out, Qing rulers did not attribute their unique predominance in the world to certain cultural practices or moral learning that specifically originated with the Han Chinese.¹¹⁹ To the contrary,

¹¹⁷ Mark C. Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” *JAS* 59.3 (2000), p. 616.

¹¹⁸ In the Qing administrative context *Yi* was often juxtaposed to *Han*, but this was not a universal binary encompassing all people, but rather a limited descriptor of demographic conditions on certain borderlands.

¹¹⁹ Kishimoto, “‘Zhongguo’ he ‘Waiguo,’” p. 388.

they explicitly linked Qing political success to their Manchu origins and to the rejection of what they regarded as the narrow and bigoted worldview of earlier Han Chinese states, notably the Ming.

Thus, ideological pronouncements in foreign relations must be interpreted with attention to parallel internal discourses. The *Zhongguo* or *Zhonghua* invoked to describe the Qing empire in some contexts was itself a union of Han and “non-Yi.” There is reason to be cautious, then, when looking to the Qing application of the term Yi in foreign relations as evidence of a fundamental shift toward conceiving of the realm as a “Chinese empire.”¹²⁰ As early as the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns, emperors referred to outsiders on their maritime and Southeast Asian frontiers as Yi, and their own state as *Zhonghua*. Qianlong’s greater enthusiasm in applying the term Yi to outside states in no way affected his careful policing of any transgression against the internal balance between Central and Outer. Unlike in the Ming period, Yi in the Qing context before 1800 had no connotations of meaning “non-Chinese,” or even “non-Confucian,” and whether or not a given group fell into this category had nothing to do with the degree to which they had adopted Han Chinese cultural norms.

Ultimately, the subtle ideological positioning of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong with regard to the concept of Yi was fragile, because it proved impossible to create “non-Yi” as a category that could be named, openly acknowledged, and made permanent. After 1790, the ability of the court to police and mold the discourse of Han Chinese scholars on foreign affairs and Inner Asia greatly declined. This did not generate disloyalty or sedition. Han scholars willingly embraced the imperial message that their dynasty’s vast territories were a sign of splendor and greatness. However, such scholars downplayed the less appealing imperial message that the realm was a merger of two equal parts, in which Chinese and Inner Asian peoples were each civilized on their own terms.¹²¹ At the same time, under Jiaqing and Daoguang (1821–1850) the center of gravity in Qing foreign relations shifted to the coast, a region where the Yi status of all foreigners was unambiguous. The wars after 1840 were understandably seen as a battle between Hua and Yi.¹²² For all of these reasons, the triadic worldview began to erode and the Hua–Yi binary resumed a central place in official

¹²⁰ Wang, “Civilizing the Great Qing,” p. 117.

¹²¹ Matthew W. Mosca, “The Literati Rewriting of China in the Qianlong–Jiaqing Transition,” *Late Imperial China* 32.2 (2011), pp. 89–132.

¹²² On Yi in the foreign relations of the nineteenth century, see the sources cited in notes 7 and 11, above, as well as Wong, “Barbarians or Not Barbarians.”

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and unofficial worldviews in the nineteenth century. By the time Qing scholars and intellectuals began to encounter a world of neologisms, in other words, the subtle but radical reformulations of the early and High Qing were flattened into what many took to be the timeless language of “Confucian tradition.” This should not, however, hinder understandings of the more complex period before 1800.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

QSL *Qing shilu* 清實錄. The various reigns compiled together as *QSL* and published digitally by the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica (<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw>)