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**THE COMPOSITION OF THE EMPIRE AND  
THE CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL NATURE  
OF THE CH'ING'S RULING CLASS:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE MANJU WOMEN**

For more than a century, the trends in the study of Ch'ing history have been relatively uniform throughout the world. In particular, the anthropological characteristics of the ruling class of the Ch'ing Empire are defined as equivalent to the cultural characteristics of the social group of the ruled class. Through this article, the author hopes to show readers a brand-new concept of country and culture. That is, through the analysis of women, the uniqueness of the Manju Group and its national nature are discussed. From the linguistics point of view, the Manju circle speaks the Manchurian language. In terms of cultural attributes, JianZhou Jurchen belongs to the cultural category of Tunguska. Social life characteristics are completely different from Han Chinese, Mongol, Chinese Muslim, Tibetan and other cultural groups in the Empire. From the perspective of religious cultural anthropology, JianZhou Jurchen Group is a Shamanism believer. Furthermore, Eight Banner, a military organization that absorbed military-civilians of different races and cultural backgrounds through surrender and capture, was completely redefined as a JianZhou Jurchen-style civilization with a unified ideology during the imperial rule for more than two hundred years. Therefore, the author advocates that Manju people and their culture should not be confused with the cultural characteristics of other groups in the Ch'ing Empire, and should be clearly separated and studied.

**Key words:** Manju (Manchu), Ch'ing (Qing), Jurchen, Tungus, JianZhou, women, Matrilineal Clan Society.

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**Цин билеушілерінің империясының құрамы және  
мәдени-антропологиялық табиғаты: манжу әйелдері мысалында**

Бір ғасырдан астам уақыт бойы Цин тарихын зерттеудегі тенденциялар бүкіл әлемде бірдей болды. Атап айтқанда, Цин империясының билеуші класының антропологиялық сипаттамалары билеуші таптың әлеуметтік тобының мәдени сипаттамаларына балама ретінде анықталады. Бұл мақалада автор оқырмандарға ел мен мәдениеттің мүлдем жаңа тұжырымдамасын көрсетуге тырысады. Яғни, әйелдерді талдау арқылы манжу тобының бірегейлігі және оның ұлттық сипаты талқыланады. Лингвистика тұрғысынан манжу шеңбері манчжу тілінде сөйлейді. Мәдени атрибуттар тұрғысынан Цзянчжоу юрчен Тунгус мәдени санатына жатады. Әлеуметтік өмірдің сипаттамалары хан қытайларынан, моңғолдардан, Қытай мұсылмандарынан, тибеттіктерден және империядағы басқа да мәдени топтардан мүлдем өзгеше. Діни мәдени антропология тұрғысынан Цзянчжоу Юрчен тобы шаманизмнің жақтаушысы болып табылады. Сонымен қатар «Eight Banner», тапсыру және басып алу арқылы әртүрлі нәсілдер мен мәдениеттердің әскери-азаматтық тұлғаларын сіңірген әскери ұйым екі жүз жылдан астам уақыт бойы империялық билік кезінде біртұтас идеологиясы бар Цзянчжоу Юрчен стиліндегі азаматтық ұйым ретінде толығымен қайта қаралды. Сондықтан автор манжу халқы мен оның мәдениетін Цин империясындағы басқа топтардың мәдени ерекшеліктерімен шатастырмау керек, бірақ нақты бөлініп, зерттелуі керек деп сендіреді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Манжу (Манчжурия), Циун, Чжурчжэни, тунгустар, цзяньчжоу, әйелдер, матрилиндік ру қоғамы.

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### Состав Империи и культурно-антропологическая природа правлящего класса Цин: исследование женщин манджу

На протяжении более века тенденции в изучении истории Цин во всем мире были относительно единообразными. В частности, антропологические характеристики правящего класса Империи Цин определяются как эквивалентные культурным характеристикам социальной группы правящего класса. В этой статье автор ставит цель – показать читателям совершенно новую концепцию страны и культуры, то есть посредством анализа женщин показать уникальность группы Манджу и ее национальный характер. С лингвистической точки зрения кружок Манджу говорит на маньчжурском языке. По культурным характеристикам Цзяньчжоу Чжурчэнь относится к культурной категории Тунгуски. Характеристики социальной жизни полностью отличаются от ханских китайцев, монголов, китайских мусульман, тибетцев и других культурных групп Империи. С точки зрения религиозной культурной антропологии, группа Цзянь Чжоу Чжурчэнь является сторонником шаманизма. Более того, Восемь Знамен, военная организация, которая поглощала гражданских лиц разных рас и культур посредством капитуляции и захвата, была полностью переопределена как цивилизация в стиле Цзяньчжоу чжурчжэней с единой идеологией во время имперского правления на протяжении более двухсот лет. Поэтому автор выступает за то, чтобы народ манджу и его культуру не следует путать с культурными характеристиками других групп в Империи Цин, а следует четко разделить и изучить.

**Ключевые слова:** Манджу (маньчжурия), Цин (Цин), Чжурчжэни, тунгусы, цзяньчжоу, женщины, Общество матрилинейных кланов.

#### Introduction

The Tungus regime of the Ch'ing Empire is quite different from the Ming Dynasty and the present day People's Republic of China. Due to the unique rule of the Ch'ing government and the special ethnic nature of the rulers, the country's multinational structure was completely different from that of the Ming and Beiyang governments 北洋政府. In addition, both the Yuan Empire and the Ch'ing Empire were regimes established by foreign rulers. In both cases, neither the ruling groups, nor the imperial organizational structures of the country, were inherited from the previous dynasties. Moreover, the Han cultural area only constituted part of the territory of the Yuan and Ch'ing dynasties. Since the Ch'ing's ruling class was a foreign ethnic group, its method of ruling was very different from that of people of Han culture. To a large extent, at least before the death of Empress Dowager Cixi, even shrewd and capable Han officials, like YuanShikai, were deliberately excluded from the center of power.

In this study, the author distinguish the Ch'ing Dynasty, as more than a mere moment in a purely Chinese history. Since the object of the study is Tungus aristocratic women and their social history, in order to distinguish them clearly, unlike what was done in previous studies, the term "Chinese" is avoided to refer to the citizens of the Ch'ing Empire. The Manju culture, language and religion are

obviously different from that of traditional Chinese. Therefore, neither do I use the word "China" to refer to the Ch'ing Empire. When studying cultural phenomena and exploring their truth, it is useful to eliminate ideological interference caused by today's international political vocabulary. Therefore this thesis avoids using the common historical view reflecting the current political situation in an effort to make clear the multinational nature of the Ch'ing Empire and the particularity of the imperial ruling group as well as the relationships between the ruling class and the ruled groups.

Many current researchers of Chinese history seem to believe that after non-Chinese-speaking groups invaded and ruled China, their own territory was defined as Chinese territory, as a part of China. Furthermore, it is believed that these foreign conquerors would eventually be assimilated by China. However, this is unilateral wishful thinking. On the contrary, Chinese culture and Chinese-speaking people have always been influenced by foreign cultures. Cultures and languages are constantly being influenced by foreign civilizations, even eating habits and clothing are deeply influenced by foreign groups. For example, the Xianbei 鲜卑 people who founded the Sui 隋 and Tang 唐 empires, and the later regimes of the Liao, Jin, Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, without exception, greatly influenced and changed Chinese culture and spoken Chinese in various historical periods. Before the Ch'ing

Empire, the Northern Conqueror Group had already thoroughly influenced cultural attributes of a vast area and its population. Including Chinese-speaking regions where, for example, Modern standard Chinese is spoken Chinese with a strong Manchu and Mongolian pronunciation, not the Chinese spoken by the people in the Ming Dynasty. The costumes and dresses were of Jurchen style. The hot pot was brought by the Manju to the Chinese-speaking areas and through the Mongolian and Chinese relay it has undergone continuous evolution and development. It is still a favorite of the eating habit in Southeast and Southwest China, except for the northern part of those regions. Therefore, the academic view that insists on the ultimate Sinicization of the foreign conqueror ruling group, the author believes, cannot be an objective conclusion. During the nearly 270-years rule of the Ch'ing empire, the hairstyles of the subjects in all the territory were full Manju style bald braids, which throughout the 19th century was considered in the West as a typical Chinese characteristic.

#### **Justification of the article's theme, goal and objectives**

This research focuses on the cultural significant of the Manju women at the time of the establishment and operation of Manju society. This influence reveals the core nature taking place among the Manju women. The author claims that the appearance of this social phenomenon was influenced by Manju social ideology which in turn was influenced by the JianZhou Jurchen directly. In particular, the social and historical significance and value of the fact that Manju women's cognition and action was influenced by Tungus culture and its ideological philosophy needs to be affirmed and generally evaluated. Although due to the restrictions of the relatively independent living community environment created by the apartheid policy of Manju society, the outsiders' in-depth understanding of Manju groups was inhibited, so that this unique cultural phenomenon and related anthropological characteristics have been misinterpreted. As a result, the misunderstanding has continuously spread to become public knowledge. The author thinks that it is necessary to conduct an in-depth investigation of the intellectual history of Manju women and their special significance.

Through this micro case study, I aim to better reflect the perception of the foreign world by Manju elite ladies and the positive self-innovation to which it may have led. At first sight, this feminine social

research topic seems to have no direct connection with the US-Ch'ing relations. However, this is, I think, an excellent highly representative case to investigate the fermentation produced by the US-Ch'ing relations inside of the Manju elite class. This thesis aim is to show the direct positive influence and social effects of the active diplomacy of the US-Ch'ing relations on the lady community of Manju society by showing the role it had in the creation of this and other lady's schools. It further demonstrates the unique feminist supremacy of women of the Banner Men society and the ideological drive of Manju women in the Ch'ing Empire to struggle and strive for change. This is a skylight that must be opened to face up to the culture of the Manju Group.

#### **Research methodology**

As a descendant of a Manju academic family with a detailed genealogy, the author himself has had excellent opportunities to learn about his family and his nation in the comprehensive fields of linguistics, literature, religion, and history. It is precisely because of this family environment that the author of this article has expanded his domain of research from literature to historiography, to religious and cultural anthropology, and to women sociology with the ambition of showing the true social character of the Manju group. This is a research on the Manju written by a Manju, this, I hope, could be a path to a better, deeper and wider understanding of the Manju, because the author's family environment provided him with a solid ethnological knowledge and a strong will to inherit his national thought and culture. These factors enable the author to understand and restore the historical truth closer and deeper through ancestral historical data.

#### **Results and discussion**

In historical studies of the Ch'ing Dynasty, the social and cultural characteristics of the Tungus Manju matriarchal clans and the nature of the Ch'ing state are generally ignored, which leads to misrepresentation, lack of precision and understanding in research related to the Ch'ing Dynasty and Manju. For example, when studying the literary works about Manju social life written by Manjus in the Ch'ing, authors such as Shibui Kimiya 渋井君也 do not pay attention to or mention Manju culture and the special place occupied by of Manju women. Furthermore, others SunChangLiang 孫長亮 classify such works as Chinese literature. A blatant example of how research on women during

the Ch'ing Dynasty fails to distinguish between Han society and Manju society, indiscriminately using the case of Han women to illustrate cultural phenomenon related to women of the Ch'ing Empire. Another example of this disregard for the complexity of the situation in common academic vocabulary used in the study of the Ch'ing Dynasty is to refer to the Ch'ing Empire as China, the name of a current regime in the international system, and to refer to the people of the Ch'ing Empire as Chinese, the name of a nation in the current world division of nations. However, the Ch'ing Empire is not identical with present day China, neither in its territory nor population composition. The amalgamation of these two very different historical entities tends to distort research results and misleads public understanding of history and culture.

For example Xiong Yuezhin in *The Eastward Dissemination of Western Learning in the Late Ch'ing Dynasty* (Xiong Yuezhin 2013) fails to distinguish the attitude and culture of the Manju ruling class in the Ch'ing from those of Chinese living in the Chinese-speaking area. He refers to the entire Ch'ing as Chinese. This is a political point of view consistent with the contemporary national concept of China, but from a purely academic historical point of view, it misrepresents the reality of the Ch'ing Empire. Historical research should pay attention to distinguish groups with specific culture, language, and religion. If that is the case, then it would be better and more objective not simply represent the people of the Ch'ing simply as "Chinese". It is well known that the Ch'ing Empire included many groups, such as Mongolians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Chinese, but also belong to different religions such as Muslims, Confucians, Buddhists, and Shamanism etc. All these groups were part of the Ch'ing Empire like the Manju. Therefore, these ethnic groups cannot be simply described as Chinese people in Ch'ing history studies. Because the Ch'ing Empire was established by the Non-Chinese Tungus Jurchen Group of Northeast Asia, it was a huge alliance that united many different regions and many different cultural groups. The simple and broad use of the 'Chinese' to refer to the citizens of the Ch'ing Empire reflects an ignorance of the special political structure of the empire and the relationship between various groups and an obstacle to the objectivity of historical research.

Nanxiu Qian (2015) talks about Ch'ing women, however Dr. Qian does not mention either Manju women or Mongolian women or even Tibetan women at all. In consequence, this is an overly general historical summary of the characteristics

of women which typically ignores the social characteristics of the different groups of women in the empire. This kind of one-sided research in this topic is actually extremely common, and is not only limited to Asian scholars, many Western scholars also adopt a similar view of the Ch'ing history.

In her article, Wong Yin Lee (2006) does not mention the cultural and social differences between the Banner man in the Ch'ing and the Han Chinese, but completely ignores this important historical fact. Such a perspective is somewhat like that of contemporary Hong Kong costume drama movies, especially those with historical themes taking place in the Ch'ing period (including Kung Fu movies). The movies have a great influence over the world, and most of the stories are inseparable from the people and things in Canton area. However, all the props and interpretations involving the Manju Group's organizational structure, history, language, culture, and politics are inadequate from a historical point of view, because such movies do not understand and are not interested in Manju social and cultural characteristics. As a result, this kind of film and television series give a distorted image of the truth, and influences people's perception of the history and culture that misrepresents reality. This distorted image of Manju has become characteristics of entertainment in the whole Chinese world. Of course, Hong Kong films do not either represent or reflect the social organization characteristics of other ethnic minorities. However, if we ignore the central characteristics of the regime and of its ruling class in the study of Ch'ing women education, we will inevitably misrepresent the truth and fail to understand historical events. What is regrettable but understandable in the case of popular movies should have no place in academic studies.

Shibui Kimiya<sup>1</sup>, he did not realized the research object was a Manju elite lady SirinGioro TaiCh'ing<sup>2</sup> and her literature work "Hong lou meng ying" 『紅樓夢影』<sup>3</sup> was based on her Manju royal daily life. Again, Shibui Kimiya fail to emphasize the special significance of the Manju culture. Moreover, CaoXueqin 曹雪芹, the author of the "HongLouMeng" 『紅樓夢』, he is a Manju nobleman, and his literature work is his real life and experience of the Manju society with full of the information of Manju women community.

<sup>1</sup> 渋井 君也, 顧太清と『紅樓夢影』 Shibui Kimiya, Gu Tai-Ch'ing and "Hong lou meng ying", Bulletin of Bunka Gakuen University and Bunka Gakuen Junior College 49, 39-48, 2018-01.

<sup>2</sup> GuTaiCh'ing 顧太清.

<sup>3</sup> Continued version of "Dream of Red Mansions".

These researches are all about Manju women and their place and action during the Ch'ing, but they fail to mention the historical significance and particularity of the status of women in Manju matriarchal society and their social activities. The above texts. Published either in English, Chinese or Japanese, do not distinguish between the social structure and culture of the Manju group and the of Han group in the Ch'ing. They share two important characteristics: first, there is no mention of Manju matriarchal clan society; second, there is no distinction between different cultural groups in the Ch'ing Dynasty.

The above-mentioned scholars have unique academic insights in various fields related to Manju and Ch'ing Dynasty women. Some have made outstanding research contributions in their respective research fields, but lack of attention to cultural differences between groups comes with limitations. It is not clear why so many researchers fail to address the multinational dimension of the Ch'ing Empire. But as long as it continues it is inevitable that investigations in historical studies of Ch'ing women will ignore the role of Manju and Manju women. The use of "Chinese" to collectively refer to the nationals of the Ch'ing Dynasty is clearly influenced by the definition of the country and the concept of its people in contemporary international (and Chinese national) politics. These influence current historical research in its motivation and development. However, the studies of women in the Ch'ing Dynasty that do not mention Manju women, or the social distinctions of ethnic groups obviously cannot fully reflect historical facts.

The name Manju is originally a political term and does not correspond to a specific ethnic group. In 1635, Aisin Gurun<sup>4</sup>'s second emperor HongTaiji<sup>5</sup> announced that all his people in the Eight Banner System would be banned from using the old group name Jurchen and use Manju instead. The central tribe of the Manju was the JianZhou 建州<sup>6</sup> Jurchen tribe. JianZhou Jurchen belongs to a southern branch of the Tungus ethnic group, in terms of language and customs, and in terms of shamanistic beliefs, JianZhou Jurchen and the other tribes they ruled belonged to the Tungus culture. The culture of

this ethnic group from Northeast Asia is essentially different from that of the populations who used Chinese language (the people of the Ming Empire) in many respects. The nature of the Ch'ing Empire established by the Manjus was, not surprisingly, very different from the political and social structures of the previous Ming Empire.

The territory of the Ming Empire was largely occupied by groups of people who used Chinese language and almost all regions were of Chinese culture. The Ch'ing Empire was a conquering empire established by south Tungus people who came from Manchuria. Although originally the political term Manju was used to redefine all of the Eight Banners society ruled by Jurchen, after its formation this political association gave rise to a new community dominated by Jurchen culture which led to the complete formation of a new cultural identity. In other words, the Manju Banner Society formed of different races, tribes, cultures and religions was unified and "naturalized" into a Jurchen group. Manju was a military organization that became completely Jurchenized in terms of national identity, language, and customs. As early as the early Ch'ing, the Mongols, Chinese, Tungus and the other small groups that formed the Manju had completed their transformation as a mature cultural community.

After the unification of all other Jurchen tribes, JianZhou Jurchen continued to expand, and small groups of other races and cultures continued to come and join this emerging power. All foreign forces that were captured or voluntarily joined were unified and adopted the Manju (JianZhou Jurchen) style and cultural characteristics by the time the Ch'ing Army formally invaded the Ming Empire southward. Language, clothing, hairstyle, eating habits, daily habits and even self-recognition were thoroughly Manju. In the next two hundred years, this Manju group was fully educated into and completely inherited the JianZhou Jurchen culture. They developed a unified ideology and unified social and cultural characteristics.

The Jurchen people unified in this military establishment are also called Banner Man (Gusai Niyalma 旗人). In 1624<sup>7</sup>, Banner Men and the Eastern Mongolian Khorchin<sup>8</sup> tribe established a military alliance based on marriage. When two

<sup>4</sup> Later Jin (1616-1626), the Kingdom of Manchu. The name was used during Nurhaci and HongTaiji's time.

<sup>5</sup> Nurhaci's Inheritor. He renamed Manju Gurun into Daicing Gurun., which means the county of warriors. Nurhaci is the leader of JianZhou Jurchen, he united all eight tribes of JianZhou and established the King of Aisin Gurun (Golden Kingdom)

<sup>6</sup> 建州女真. Nurhaci's clan, a group of Jurchen was identified by the Ming Dynasty.

<sup>7</sup> James A. Millward, Ruth W. Dunnell, Mark C. Elliott. *New Qing imperial history*. p.100.

<sup>8</sup> The younger brother Khasar of Genghis Khan is the ancestor of the tribe.

Narangoa, Li. 2014. *Historical Atlas of Northeast Asia, 1590-2010: Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, Eastern Siberia*. New York: Columbia University Press. p17.

large-scale rebellions occurred in the weak Ming Empire they took advantage of these rebellions to quickly go south and gradually occupied all of the territory of the Ming. But this country is not just as seems indicated by the name "Ch'ing 清" in Chinese. The Daqing 大清 Empire in Manju is written as "Daicing Gurun", which means "the state of warriors" Daicing Gurun's heyday territory also far exceeded that of the Ming empire. Because in their conflicts with the Jungar Empire of Central Asia, the Manju established a military alliance with Khalkha of Mongolia and became successor of Mongolian Khan. At the time, the Emperors of Daicing Gurun believed in Buddhism and became the protector of Tibetan Buddhism. Which brought the Mongolian nobles and Tibetan monks closer together. Therefore, the Emperor of Daicing Gurun has several identities: First, Emperor of the Manchuria. Second, the Emperor of the China. Third, Great Mongolian Khan. Fourth, main donor of Tibetan Buddhism. Fifth, ruler of former Junger Empire's territory, which also called Xinjiang, which means the New Territory.

In summary, the nature of the Manju group is different from the Ming Dynasty ruling group, and culturally different from the Ming Dynasty Chinese population. Manju Banner Men society is a politicized military aggregate from outside of Chinese culture, and it belongs to the Jianzhou Jurchen system in terms of cultural characteristics as a branch of South Tungus. And, because the Manju society maintained an apartheid living pattern from the Han society during the Ch'ing Empire, the Manju society maintained a more primitive Jianzhou Jurchen culture. What's more, the Manju imperial family are the direct descendants of Jianzhou Jurchen, and their special social status makes their families more superior in maintaining the inherent traditional culture. In this special social environment, the Manju women because of their rights have an advantage in the family and society, which helped them face changing times. In the last period of time when the Manju Group was still influential, there appeared a women aristocratic lady's school run by a Manju woman aristocrat JianNian. The achievements of JianNian's school are not only relative to the global environment and the national conditions of the Ch'ing Empire at that time, but more importantly, they reflect the basic social conditions provided by the unique social status of women maintained in the relatively closed social life pattern of Manju. (Kaihe 2021) These particular conditions constitute an important prerequisite for the establishment of this lady's school.

The dominant current research approach in the field of Ch'ing history that avoids the racial peculiarities and cultural differences of the ruling class of the Ch'ing Empire makes that a vast majority of researchers are unaware of the huge hidden difference between the ethnic cultures of the different people of the empire.

The Manju Banner Men formed a military-civilian organization. Their numbers were small compared to the Chinese population, except in Beijing where 80% of them were stationed, the other 20% troops and their families were stationed at major junctions or in big cities around the empire. Apart from the troops stationed on the territory of the Ming Empire, those in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Manchuria all had garrison troops with their families. These garrison troops and families lived in independent fortified compounds inside of the local city instead of living with the locals. As in the capital, the northern part of the city, also known as the inner city (内城/北城), was where the living area of the Banner men was located. The outer city (外城/南城) to the south is the living area of the Chinese, former subjects of the Ming who were originally moved out of the inner city when Manju arrived. The goal of that segregation policy established by the Banner Men was to protect their original culture and language.

Because they inherited the culture of the Tungus matriarchal society, the status of Manju women in family life and social life was very different from that of women of Han culture and nationality. Manju women did not practice foot-binding, women have the right to participate in family discussions and they also did housework. However, not only housework, women also participated in activities of social production, in hunting and fighting like men. What's more, as is commonly the case in matriarchal societies, the wife's relatives have a superior status within the husband's household. In addition, the dress, hairstyle, special platform shoes and manners of Banner Men girls are different from those of Han girls.

There are two reasons why Manchu women had little contacts with Han women. First, the living area of the Banner men, family members of the garrison are separated from the rest of the town. Although they can go shopping during the day, the gate of the Manju garrison castle will be closed at night, mainly for safety reasons. The Beijing Banner men division's inner city garrison and the three Special Forces in the western suburbs of Beijing also adopted the same management model. Second, although Manju noble women had the opportunity to contact the wives and daughters of the senior Han bureaucrats, their contacts were limited. Only a few women, such

as SirinGioro TaiCh'ing 西林覺羅春, also known as GuTaiqing 顧太清 (1799-1877), who were proficient in Chinese literature, had the opportunity to meet a large number of Han women literati friends. (JinQizong 1989, 2009)

Compared to Manju women in the Ch'ing, the status of Chinese Han women in the family and society was significantly lower than that of men, as was the case for women in most other countries around the world at that same time.

It is an important point that the social and family status of Manju noble women has generally not been noticed or has been ignored by most people. In the reform process chaired by Empress Dowager Cixi, Manju noble women were affected by the change in policies and had more conditions to contact Westerners and come in contact with Western objects than before the Boxer Rebellion. Therefore, the girls' school run by Manju women is a cultural phenomenon characteristics of the times. Although it existed for a short period of time only, it is of great significance for the study of the social activities of Manju women in the late Ch'ing and their utilization of Western ideas, and their reaction to new cultural and social trends.

In addition to discussing women's social status in Manchuria social life, the author also wants to insist on the power and social influence that women possess in social and family life by reference to the content of a famous story among Manchu traditional religious legends. "Nišan Saman I Bithe" is the most complete Manchu Shamanic folk tale written in Manchu that has been preserved so far. The protagonist in the story is a widow shaman. Her name is Nišan Saman. She was entrusted by a rich man to go to the underworld to take the soul of rich man's son. The process of redeeming the soul of the rich man's son is the clue to the whole story. Nišan Saman negotiated with different people, ghosts and gods all the way, and through clever communication, she finally realized her journey and succeeded in saving the little boy's soul and resurrecting the boy. On the way, Nišan Saman visited the realm of God, and God was an old lady named Omosi Mama. This old lady is the God in charge of the underworld, of God's own realm and of the human world. The story does not come from the Ch'ing Empire's official publishing office, but is a long-lived folk legend in Manchuria. It was collected by Russian scholars at the border of Ch'ing and Russia in several different editions in the early twentieth century. This legend is an important document born out of real social life and reflecting its reality. As the protagonist of the story, the woman who mastered the ability to communicate with

ghosts and gods shows that the basis of the status of women in social culture is stable. Omosi Mama, who governs the Three Realms of Man, Ghost, and God, is also an older woman. (Kaihe2019) This is completely consistent with the cultural phenomenon of women holding a family or holding a country in Manchu society. Therefore, the author argues that the supremacy of feminism in Manchurian society is a collective social phenomenon accumulated by long-term social production and life, and is an inherent custom of Manchurian society.

Since Emperor HongTaiji (1529-1643) used religious power to expand political alliances, Tibetan Buddhism became the official religion of the Ch'ing Dynasty. The public activities of Shamanism were banned for a long period of time after 1636. This kind of religious intervention for political needs forced shamanism to lose most of its influence in the banner culture of the Han-dominated areas. However, the Manju Emperor kept a secret shamanic ritual place in the Forbidden City, and had a complete systematic shamanic sacrificial system. This is the religious politicization of the Manju rulers from the Tunguska system. The Manju rulers hid its own primitive religion and used Tibetan Buddhism and Confucianism to rule different parts of the empire.

In the land of Manchuria, the preservation and continuation of shamanism enjoyed a certain geographical advantage. The story of 'Nišan Saman I Bithe'<sup>9</sup> was formed over a long history. The story itself is a representative of the Manju original religion's resistance to foreign religious ideology. On the surface, the source of the story can be seen as dominated by Buddhist elements, but in fact the story illustrates the identity and influence of the Manju Tungus religious system on the Manju society. In other words, the story deliberately reduces the influence and importance of other religions in a euphemistic but very efficient way. This is a clear manifestation of religious consciousness and religious resistance among the people of Manju. The majority of Manchurian social groups living in the capital also did not lose their shamanism. Women in the Banner Men circle enjoyed extremely high powers but that was not known nor cared about by outsiders<sup>10</sup>. (Kaihe 2019)

<sup>9</sup> A Tale of a lady Shaman, her names Nišan.

<sup>10</sup> Kaihe, THE GHOST AND GOD WORLDS STRUCTURE IN THE "NIŠAN SAMAN I BITHE. Russia, THE 3th INTERNATIONAL TUNGUS CONFERENCE "SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, LANGUAGES, LANDSCAPES (EVENKS, EVENS, OROCHEN AND OTHER ETHNOSES)" June 14-16, 2019.p222-234

Jin Qizong offers a description of a specific characteristic of Manju society as "The wife's family is favored" social phenomenon in his book *JinQizong talks about the Manju in Beijing*<sup>11</sup>. JinQizong takes one example: JinQizong's mother's family is a hereditary military officer's family stationed in a firearm camp in the western suburbs of Beijing. This unit is one that uses muskets and artillery. JinQizong's father's family was a royal family who lived in the Manju city (inner city/ North city) inside Beijing. According to the patrilineal clan structure of Han Chinese society, the husband is a royal noble, and the wife is an officer's family background. The social status and family status of the wife and wife's family should be lower than that of the husband's family. However, In Banner Men circle, whenever the wife's family comes to visit her husband's house, the husband respectfully receives and entertains his wife's family. Even men or women younger than the husband receive warm hospitality. This is the proper to the social culture of Manju matriarchal clan society, which following JinQizong I call "The wife's family is favored."

The above example is not an isolated phenomenon. According to the family history of Prince Hošoi Derengge, Yihui treats his wife SirinGioro TaiCh'ing and her family very well, not only respecting his wife and his wife's family in the etiquette of the two families, but also helping his wife's eldest brother and sister.

Similarly, the founder of Manju elite lady's school, JianNian, she is also from a family of hereditary military officers. Her brother Yanling is also a frequent visitor to Prince Hošoi Derengge's family. JianNian's husband Puyun and his cousin Pulun are all members of the royal family of Aisin-Gioro<sup>12</sup> family. Yanling became relatives with Pulun through Puyun. The three of them are familiar with Western affairs. Most of the content of their conversation was about Western social culture. It is important that in Manju society, men and women eat and chat in the same room. Women in Han society are not allowed to eat at the same table with men, and the social culture which is one of not chatting with men is completely different. This naturally enabled JianNian to acquire much knowledge about the social life of foreign women.

<sup>11</sup> Jin Qizong 2009 *Jin Qizong Tan BeiJing de Manzu. ZhongHuaShuJu. 金啓宗 2009 《谈北京的满族》中华书局.*

<sup>12</sup> The family name of Royal family of the Manju, which means the Golden family.

"The wife's family is favored" is a social and cultural phenomenon peculiar to Manju society. This phenomenon is not seen in other branch of the Tungus groups. Only the Manju society of Tungus South branch retains this characteristic. From the perspective of world history, women in Manju society at the beginning of the twentieth century still had a very high social and family status, while at that same time, in the Han society women had a low status. The feminist movement and women's social education in European and American societies had only begun at the time. Therefore, Manju women did not have the need to fight for women's rights. The inherent family education system of Manju women however was not sufficient for the life needs of women in the era of the late Ch'ing. The Ch'ing government officially promulgated the Education Law to enable aristocratic women like JianNian, who had both Western social knowledge and vision, to use their social status to improve and enhance the homes of relatives and friends. Raising girls' level of knowledge, helping them to welcome and understand the world's knowledge opening up the career of lady's school.

### Conclusion

The Manju female social and cultural phenomenon is the reference research object that retains the important characteristics of Manju's ideology and cultural anthropology. Through the above-mentioned superficial analysis of Manju women's social and cultural characteristics, the author can obtain direct and clear evidence to illustrate the particularity of Manju cultural groups. In short, it is obviously very unobjective to use Han Chinese women to represent the female cultural characteristics of the Ch'ing Empire when studying the issue of women in the Qing Empire. The era of Ch'ing Empire was not a single nation state. It is impossible to use the cultural phenomena of a certain group to summarize the cultural characteristics of other cultural groups. By analogy, the culture of the Manju group is included in the diverse composition of the Ch'ing Empire, but it can never represent the overall cultural characteristics of the Empire. In the same way, Han Chinese culture is only a member of the diverse cultural groups of the Ch'ing Empire, and Han culture cannot be defined as a representative cultural feature of Ch'ing.



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