

Fear of communism mobilized the Allies to feed the starving populations of Europe and Asia, even when it meant cutting the rations of British civilians. The shared experience of hunger was profoundly socially leveling and contributed to the success of social democracy and the origins of the welfare state. Acts of mass vengeance found political support nearly everywhere, except by the Zionist leadership, who eschewed Jewish revenge for “a different kind of normality, of heroic Israelis . . . fighting their enemies as proud citizen-soldiers, far from the war-bloodied lands of Europe” (p. 101). People’s courts and trials—such as those in Manila, Belsen and Nuremberg—were flawed, but bolstered the political legitimacy of postwar governments and “spiked the guns of vengeance” (p. 233). After the war, what led to the creation of international institutions “was not so much religion or moral ideas, as politics” (p. 314). He concludes that the United Nations was weak because of the inability of the Big Powers to forge an effective alliance and to arrive at a “worldwide consensus on moral judgment” (p. 329).

***Reorienting the Manchus: A Study of Sinicization, 1583–1795***

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The fifteen years after the antiphonal statements of Evelyn S. Rawski (“Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 [1996]: 829–50) and Ping-ti Ho (“In

Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing,'" *Journal of Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 [1998]: 123–55) on the identity of the Manchus and their Qing 清 dynasty (1644–1911) have witnessed a growing influence of the "New Qing History," which places Qing history in the larger context of Inner Asian history and believes that a comparative approach based on non-Chinese-language sources can open new horizons for appreciating the Manchus and the Qing. This current book by Pei Huang, an established historian on eighteenth century China, is however the latest manifestation of the long-held sinicization theory that firmly opposes the "New Qing History." Criticizing the "New Qing History" for unjustifiably overstating the ethnic and cultural distinctions between the Manchus and the Han-Chinese and therefore ignoring the sinicization process, Huang stresses firmly that the Manchus were decisively and thoroughly sinicized, not unwillingly or being forced, and their sinicization played the most dominant role throughout the course of the dynasty.

Next to an introduction and a conclusion, the whole of Huang's narrative is organized topically into eight chapters. Chapter 1 begins with an inquiry into the geographical conditions of Manchuria to trace the long and complex ethnic strands of the Manchus. Although various peoples, including the Mongols, Chinese, and Koreans, were also components of the later Manchus, it were the Jurchens who acted as the core and laid the groundwork for the Manchu sinicization. The following chapter then illustrates how Nurhaci 努爾哈赤 (1559–1626) created a frontier state and how his two sons, Hong Taiji 皇太極 (1592–1643) and Dorgon 多爾袞 (1612–1650), founded the Qing and accelerated the sinicization process of the Manchus. Chapter 3 turns to analyze the impact of various economic activities in this process and explores how agriculture, frontier markets, and tributary relations together brought about political and social transformations among the Manchus. Centering on "frontiersmen" and "transfrontiersmen," people "living on or near a frontier but under indigenous influence" (p. 136) and those "crossed border between one ethnic group and another, cutting their social and cultural roots" (p. 145), Chapter 4

investigates the particular role these people played in introducing Chinese culture and ideas to the Manchus. Chapters 5 to 8 trace the Manchu adoption of Chinese administrative and legal institutions, Chinese influence on the Manchu social institutions (marriage, funeral, naming practices etc.), changes brought up by Chinese in Manchu language and literature, and Chinese characteristics in Manchu architecture and religious belief, respectively. In the conclusion Huang reiterates his argument that sinicization of the Manchus “had been an ongoing and complex process” (p. 296) and the Manchus were “the most sinicized of all the frontier conquerors in Chinese history” (p. 5).

The most precious contribution of this book is Huang’s forward-looking approach to treat Manchu history and culture in a broader geographical and ecological context. Although much of the content of the eight body chapters can be found in existing scholarship or other survey histories, Huang aptly places these topics against the background of specific geographic conditions of the Manchu homeland in Liaodong to demonstrate why it became the place of birth of the Jurchens, and later the Manchus. Quoting Owen Lattimore’s seminal observations of Manchuria and the Tungus peoples (Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* [New York and London: MacMillan, 1932]; *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* [New York: American Geographical Society, 1951]), Huang persuasively argues that because of Manchuria’s geographic position as being the meeting point of China proper, the Mongolian steppe, Siberia, and the Korean peninsula, it had always been a dynamic region where multiple peoples with distinctive cultures co-existed and interacted, creating an exceptionally vibrant civilization marked by regional differences, ecological interplay, and cultural diversity.

To examine the Manchus within the complex of intricate ethnical and cultural relationships in Manchuria is welcome and essential, but more often than not, Huang adopts this approach only too exclusively. A deeper insight into the earlier history of the Manchus, for instance, will help us clarify much of the vagueness about the Manchu identity and construct a more historically grounded picture of the transmission of Manchu

traditions, a point Evelyn S. Rawski has recently reminded us (Manchu Studies Group, “MSG Interview: Evelyn Rawski,” accessed July 1, 2014. <http://www.manchustudiesgroup.org/2014/01/07/msg-interview-evelyn-rawski>). But this is largely absent in Huang’s narrative. In particular, Huang could have elaborated more on the Jurchens, the Manchu forefathers who with their Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234) had dominated East and Northeast Asia for over one hundred years in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. If he had done so, some of the biased knowledge he provides might be rectified. For example, the labor of enslaved Chinese may well be essential to the development of Manchu agriculture in the predynastic period, but Huang goes further to argue that from these Chinese “the Jurchens learned Chinese farming methods” (p. 140). It was only by the fifteenth century, as we learn from Huang, that the Jurchens began to be engaged in agriculture and “became accustomed to a sedentary life [and] sought iron implements and plow animals” to improve their farming (pp. 296–297). But we shall not forget that agriculture was in fact nothing new to the Manchu ancestors and the Jurchens were actually always of an agrarian or semi-agrarian economy. Archaeological evidence from the last decades amply shows that as early as in the late eleventh century the Jurchens already began to use similar farming tools (including a variety of iron tools, larger ones pulled by oxen) as their contemporaries in the China proper did and probably also enjoyed similar farming technology available to their Chinese counterparts (Heilongjiang sheng wenwu kaogu gongzuodui 黑龍江省文物考古工作隊, “Heilongjiang pan Suibin Zhongxing gucheng he Jindai muqun” 黑龍江畔綏濱中興古城和金代墓群, *Wenwu* 文物 1974, no. 4 [1974]: 40–49; “Songhuajiang xiayou Aolimi gucheng jiqi zhouwei de Jindai gumu” 松花江下游奧里米古城及其周圍的金代古墓, *Wenwu* 文物 1974, no. 4 [1974]: 56–62; Alexander Kim, “Archaeological Studies of the Jurchen in the USSR and Russia,” *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher* 23 [2009]: 247–62). Although Huang does acknowledge the fact that the early Jurchens conducted agriculture and their economy was at least semi-agrarian, he still decides to downplay the agricultural achievements of the

Manchu forbears and their vast influences on the Jurchen culture prior to the fifteenth century.

In other cases, Huang interprets many examples of what may be considered selective imitation or adaptation as indicating the intentional and wholesale adoption of the entire Chinese culture. It seems much more likely that the adoption of certain Chinese methods was in many cases an entirely practical and pragmatic response to a particular situation the Manchu rulers faced. For instance, that Hong Taiji established a set of administrative and legal institutions on the Ming model could mean that the Manchus were absorbing Chinese political culture, or merely that this adoption was a pragmatic way for the Manchu ruler to convey his power and legitimation both to his own Manchu tribesmen and to Chinese subjects. As among the Khitans, Jurchens, and Mongols, clearing the clan and tribal elements and replacing them with Chinese model of administration was part of the Manchu imperial effort to weaken the remnants of tribal institutions and to enhance the imperial authority. Nurhaci did not make much effort in adopting Ming institutions because his primary aim was to consolidate other Jurchen tribes within Manchuria. The rise of taking Ming institutions started only when Hong Taiji set his ambition to conquer the Ming and envisaged replacement of the Ming by his Manchu kingdom. The Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (r. 1661–1722) embraced and promoted Confucianism to legitimize political centralization and to set up his personal authority. His successor, the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor (r. 1722–1735), was devoted to introducing his Manchu subjects Confucian values and he issued a series of imperially approved propagating documents such as the *Dayi juemi lu* 大義覺迷錄 [Records of Great Righteousness Resolving Confusion] (Jonathan Spence, *Treason by the Book* [New York: Penguin Books, 2002]). All these actions came into being as the efforts of the Manchu rulers to lend themselves political legitimacy and to establish themselves not only as chieftains of the Manchus but also as sovereigns of the whole Chinese realm.

Huang's interpretation of the influence of the novel *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (The Three Kingdoms Narrative) is another vivid

example of his over-interpretation of sinicization. Quoting Martin Grimm, Huang considers the Manchu translation of the novel as “one of the most important works to the sinicization of the Manchus” (Martin Grimm, “Manchu Translations of Chinese Novels and Short Histories: An Attempt at an Inventory,” *Asia Major*, 3rd series, vol. 1, no. 2 [1988]: 103) and it therefore became “a sourcebook from which Manchu officials and officers drew inspiration for argument and action” (p. 143). But is it really an intentional act of the Qing imperial effort of thorough sinicization? In her earlier treatment of the *Sanguo yanyi*, Anne E. McLaren reminds us that non-Chinese rulers and revisionist historians often deviated from the norms of traditional historiography by devising new narrative strategies to further their political agenda (“History Repackaged in the Age of Print: The *Sanguo zhi* and *Sanguo yanyi*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69, no. 2 [2006]: 293–313). Thus, we may wonder whether this novel was translated into Manchu for promoting the sense of loyalty rather than sinicization among the Manchus? Or in another case, the cult of Guan Yu 關羽 (160–219) under the Qing imperial patronage was out of inclination to Chinese popular cult or rather promotion of his loyalty and valor? Furthermore, were the Qing emperors really “hardly aware of the sinicization process” (p. 194)? Or did they actually do whatever they felt as necessary in the circumstances and justify it with whatever came to hand?

This invites us to think through the sinicization theory and its entrenched influences in traditional Chinese historiography. From the Song 宋 (960–1276) to the present day, the vast majority of Chinese literature on regimes of non-Chinese rule insists on seeing them as inveterate “barbarians” who sought nothing less than the conquest of China and were constantly in the process of sinicization since their rise. The corollary to these presuppositions is that Chinese culture was so powerful that it proved irresistibly attractive, such that “the conquerors were themselves conquered.” In other words, they were sinicized and the only matter of debate is the extent to which this happened. The sinicization approach has provided some useful contributions to the scholarship, but it also has tremendous

limitations. As Naomi Standen pertinently notes, this approach “effectively close[s] off whole avenues of enquiry by simply not providing space for the questions to be asked” and it is “untenable as an explication of sino-foreign interaction” (Naomi Standen, “Alien Regimes and Mental States,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 1 [1997]: 76). It is not to say that the paradigm of sinicization is of no use at all in our understanding of non-Chinese rules, but its validity shall be warned and it at least should not be the only framework for our inquiry. Unfortunately, Huang still insists on treating the Manchu and their Qing dynasty as a special case exclusively through the theory of sinicization.

In support of Ping-ti Ho’s claim that sinicization overrides all other trends in the Qing, Huang argues that there were no close links between the Manchus and the Inner Asian regions (p. 9) and that “Inner Asian commonality, especially the Mongols, did not play an important role in the conquest of China” (p. 10). But elsewhere we also read sentences like “[t]he Mongols influenced many aspects of Jurchen life, such as rituals, terminology, and tribal organization” (p. 44); “the Mongol culture, especially its writing system and martial arts, influenced the Manchus (p. 54); “[t]he institutions Nurhaci organized were simple, and characterized by Mongol influence (p. 79); and “[t]he Jurchen state in its early stages . . . was influenced by Mongol culture (p. 176). Such self-contradictions may well result from an oversimplified Sino-centric consideration of the Mongols and other peoples. For example, Huang labels the practice of levirate marriages “incestuous” (p. 207). It seems certain that to the Confucian Chinese, sexual relations and marriages between a widow and any of her husband’s relatives are “incestuous” incest, so that they had an ideological aversion to this custom. Yet as Jennifer Holmgren shows in her study of marriage patterns of the Khitans and the Mongols, to marry stepmothers (not biological mothers) or consorts of deceased uncles or brothers was allowed, whereas remarriage between a widow and someone with blood relation (for example her own son) was strictly prohibited (Jennifer Holmgren, “Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices, with Particular Reference

to the Levirate,” *Journal of Asian History* 20 [1986]: 127–92). Through an extensive analysis of levirate among nomadic peoples, she deliberately notes that such marriage pattern might appear “alien” to sedentary societies but was formed based on both economic and social rationalities in nomadic cultures. A comparative observation of marriage practices of the Manchus and other Inner Asian peoples from the steppe confirms that there are direct and tangible links between them.

Elsewhere in his survey of the origin of Buddhist religion among the Manchus, Huang resolutely claims that from China Buddhism reached Manchuria during the Tang (p. 274). Those better versed in the history of the Bohai 渤海 kingdom (also as Parhae, 698–926) will recall the prosperous Buddhism within its realm in southern Manchuria and northern Korea (Johannes Reckel, *Bohai: Geschichte und Kultur eines mandschurisch-koreanischen Königreiches der Tang-Zeit* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995], 499–500). Given the geographic location of the Bohai and their ethnical relations to the Jurchens, one would venture to say that Buddhism was more likely to be introduced from the Bohai than from the Central China Plain to the Jurchen ancestors. In addition, the Khitans can also be a source for Buddhism among the early Jurchens, as Jing-shen Tao has noticed long ago (Jing-shen Tao, *The Jurchen in Twelfth Century China: A Study of Sinicization* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976], 10–13). One may therefore expect that a more extensive study of the Jurchens/Manchus in relation with their non-Chinese neighbors can unveil more obscure aspects and correct the biased conclusion that Huang leaves us in this narrative.

However, what strikes me most is Huang’s appreciably arrogant attitude towards the Manchu language. He determinedly states that Chinese and Manchu have “grammatical and calligraphic relations” because they share one or two syntactic similarities (p. 241) and that “the Manchu language was not adequate to expressing new or complex ideas” (p. 239). It is then perhaps not surprising to read that Huang argues that to translate and study Manchu sources is doomed to a futile project, insisting that “[i]t is safe to say that once the

contents of the Manchu archives are known to the scholarly community, the general picture of the Qing dynasty will remain the same, even though certain specific aspects may change” (p. 8). But we should not forget that throughout the Qing, over eight hundred editions or works were published in Manchu and they are monolingual, without parallel versions in Chinese or other languages (Evelyn S. Rawski, “The Non-Han Peoples in Chinese History,” *East Asian Library Journal* 10, no. 1 [2001]: 214; “Qing Book Culture and Inner Asia,” in *Books in Numbers: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library Conference Papers*, ed. Wilt L. Idema [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007], 207). Many texts in the Old Manchu Script, as Tatiana A. Pang and Giovanni Stary cogently point out in their analysis of three such works in the library of the Musée national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet in Paris, are valuable sources for early Manchu history, since they reveal hitherto unknown aspects of the inside struggle for power among the early Manchu rulers (Tatiana A. Pang and Giovanni Stary, *New Light on Manchu Historiography and Literature: The Discovery of Three Documents in Old Manchu Script* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998]). Furthermore, memorials and imperial edicts written only in Manchu were also numerous, because “military intelligence and discussions of military campaigns and imperial family matters used Manchu as a ‘security’ shield”. Even some of these memorials are translated into Chinese, most of their Chinese translations are severely shortened and their vocabulary differs significantly from the original (Mark C. Elliot, “The Manchu-Language Archives of the Qing Dynasty and the Origins of the Palace Memorial System,” *Late Imperial China* 22, no. 1 [2001]: 44–46). Certainly, these texts are possibly too idiosyncratic and time-bound to translate and analyze easily, but as long as so many Manchu documents still remain untouched in the archives, Huang’s definite allegation seems too early to be made.

*Reorienting the Manchus: A Study of Sinicization, 1583–1795* represents the culmination of Pei Huang’s decades of dedicated research on the Qing and it seeks to counteract the “New Qing history” by emphasizing the ultimate importance of sinicization

of the Manchus. The author succeeds in providing a reasonable first introduction to the history of early Qing by integrating the Manchus with Chinese culture in a readable form. Covering a wide range of aspects of Manchu culture and history, such a survey shall be warmly recommended for instructors and students of Chinese history in general. However, readers should also bear in mind the obvious limitation of Huang's narration and interpretation. It appears that the author is overwhelmed by his interest in strengthening preconceived ideas rather than raising new questions or offering new interpretations. No wonder that very few of many recently published refreshing and thought-provoking works have found its way into the outdated bibliography to this volume. In this sense, I would be more tempted to recommend tested and less biased works by Pamela Kyle Crossley (*The Manchus* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997]; *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999]), Evelyn S. Rawski (*The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998]), and Mark C. Elliot (*The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* [Stanford: Stanford University Press 2001]). Certainly, I expect such comparative read will stimulate more future researches on the topic of non-Han peoples in Chinese history. As the issue of ethnic minorities in China becomes thorny again in the recent years, this topic surely has direct contemporary implications as well.