

The Qing Lifanyuan and the Solon People of the 17th-18th Centuries

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The exploration of the newly published Manchu tiben leads to this first dedicated study of the relationship between the hunting Solon people in Heilongjiang and the Qing Inner Asian governing institution, the Lifanyuan. The discoveries impact our understanding of Manchu statecraft through its interaction with a small hunting minority.

Introduction

The relationship between the Solon people, natives of Heilongjiang, and the Lifanyuan, a Qing (1636-1911) frontier governing institution, has remained an understudied subject.¹ This research explores the newly published *Qingchao qianqi lifanyuan manmengwen tiben* (Early Qing Manchu and Mongolian Lifanyuan Tiben² or *EQMMLT* later), and develops the first study on this important subject in Western scholarship.

The name of the Lifanyuan in Manchu, *Tulergi golo be dasara jurgan*, means the ministry that governs the outer (namely the non-Chinese) regions. All the 1,613 *tiben*³ under investigation were written by the Lifanyuan minister, or vice minister occasionally, to the emperor during 1653-1795. Among them fourteen provide the archival evidence⁴ that the Qing frontier administration cannot be understood properly if the full story of the Solon is not considered in the study of the Lifanyuan, and Qing empire-building cannot be comprehended integrally if the examination of Qing statecraft continues to overlook the Solon-Lifanyuan relationship.

The Heilongjiang General, appointed in 1683 as a split from the Ninggutai General in Eastern Heilongjiang,⁵ played a key role in the Solon-Lifanyuan

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1. Only the two following publications by Chinese scholars briefly discuss the Solon-Lifanyuan relations, Zhou Xifeng's *Qingdai qianqi Heilongjiang minzu yanjiu* [The study of the minority nationalities in Heilongjiang during the early Qing] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 93-97 and Han Di's *Qingdai baqi suolunbu yanjiu* [The study of the Solon tribe of the Qing] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), 76-77. Japanese scholar Yanagisawa Akira is the leading scholar in this field, with his valuable article on the Butha and Hulunbuir banner. But there should be more to quest to the Solon-Lifanyuan relationship.

2. *Qingchao qianqi lifanyuan manmengwen tiben* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010). *Tiben* is a type of formulated report written by officials to the emperor.

3. *EQMMLT* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Preface, 2.

4. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, No. 27, 57 and 65, Volume 5, No.12, 13 and 40, Volume 7, No. 37 and 46, Volume 8, No. 5, 6, 7 and 64, Volume 10, No. 17, and Volume 20, No. 3.

5. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6434.

interaction and connected the borderland hunting minority to the solemn imperial court in the capital, Beijing. Both his Manchu (*Sahaliyan ula i jergi babe tuwakiyara jiyanggiyūn*)⁶ and Chinese (*Zhenshou Heilongjiang dengchu jiangjun*) titles meant "the general who protects the areas of Heilongjiang." The titles were shortened as *sahaliyan ulai jiyanggiyūn* and *Heilongjiang Jiangjun*.⁷ Under this general, Solon life along the middle and lower Amur River was unique inside the Lifanyuan-administered zone in Inner Asia.⁸ I have previously argued that inside this zone, the Banner-league system for all the Mongol groups, the Dalai-*amban* system in heartland Tibet, the *Tusi* (aboriginal) system for the Amdo Tibetans in Qinghai and its surrounding regions, and the *Beg* system of the Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang preserved and sustained four types of social entities centered on each people's culture and identity.⁹ The early Qing Solon, however, experienced a different path from these Inner Asian peoples.

The Solon in Early Qing

The Qing Solon mainly consisted of three small Heilongjiang minorities currently recognized by the People's Republic of China: the Evenki (current population 30,875), the Oroncon (8,659) and the Dagūr (131,992).¹⁰ Acknowledging their differences, the Oroncon appeared in Qing record in 1640, and Dagūr, during the Shunzhi (r. 1643-1661) and Kangxi (r. 1662-1722) times. In 1683, the Kangxi court listed Solon, Dagūr, and Oroncon separately for the first time. "Solon" was used thereafter more often to refer to the Evenki.¹¹ Nevertheless, the collective identity for them all as Solon continued through the dynasty.¹²

The Solon identity was rooted in a hunting-related lifestyle and the military merit associated with it. The Qing writer Xiqing wrote that the peoples

6. *EQMML*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, No. 27, 165, Volume 5, No. 12, 84 and No. 40, 345, Volume 8, No. 64, 389.

7. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Vol. 4, No. 65, 537. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 1, 5211 and 5040 and Volume 2, 6393 and 6433. *Qingchao tongdian* [Comprehensive Statutes of the Qing] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 21, 2199. *Qianlong neifu chaoben lifanyuan zeli* [The handwriting edition of the Regulations of the Lifanyuan in the Qianlong reign], in *Lifanyuan gongdu zeli sanzong* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan weisuo zhongxin, 2010), Volume 1, 66, 80, 170, 346, and 349.

8. For the discussion of the Lifanyuan zone vs. the Libu zone, see Chia Ning, "Lifanyuan and Libu in Early Qing Empire Building," in *Managing the Frontier in Qing China: Lifanyuan and Libu Revisited*, ed. Dittmar Schorkowitz and Chia Ning (Brill, forthcoming).

9. Chia Ning, "Lifanyuan and the Management of Population Diversity in Early Qing (1636-1795)", (Max-Lanck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung, Working Paper No. 139).

10. PRC, Census website, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1j2J6yM>.

11. Han Di, *Qingdai baqi suolunbu yanjiu* [The study of the Solon of the Qing] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), 30-31.

12. Song Sen, *Qingding lifanyuan zeli* [Regulations of Lifanbu], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan Xizangxue hanwen wenxian wenxian bianjishi, 1992), 116, 249, 253, and 302

in Heilongjiang preferred to call themselves "Solon", a renowned term for "mighty warriors" and a status carrying great pride, even though "so many kinds of people" were found inside Solon.¹³ The Qing official view corresponded to this self-preference and praised the Solon's "military talent."¹⁴ The Solon hunting lifestyle preserved their military skills and distinguished them when the Manchu Eight Banners' military prowess was slipping toward the middle of the Qing.¹⁵ Both the Kangxi and Qianlong (1736-1795) emperors dispatched Solon for critical military missions against the Zungars.¹⁶ Both also requested the Solon, as the "horseback hunting masters," to serve at the Imperial Hunt in Mulan.¹⁷ In Jiaqing's time (1796-1820), the Solon certainly exceeded the Manchu Eight Banners in military capacity.¹⁸

Since Qing Taizu (r. 1616-1626) and Taizong's (1626-1643) time the Solon were consistently organized into banners by the Lifanyuan.¹⁹ The "Solon banner,"²⁰ a distinct organizational identity, however, duplicated neither the Manchu Eight Banners nor the Mongol banner-leagues.²¹ The position of banner head, *Suolun zongguan* (the Solon Commander-in-chief)²² with a local

13. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 28

14. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6434.

15. Jin Xin, "Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao," *Minzu yanjiu* 6, (2012):75.

16. *Qinggaozong shilu* [The veritable records of emperor Gaozong of the Qing], (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1985), Volume 14, 974, 1017, 1027-8, and 1188, and Boying Zhang, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), Volume 2, 1360.

17. *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili* [The lifanyuan cases from the collected statutes of the Qing], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan, 1991), 211; Song Sen, *Qinding lifanbu zeli* [Regulations of Lifanbu], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan Xizangxue hanwen wenxian bianjishi, 1992), 289-290 and 302-3; and Xiqing, 36.

18. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 34.

19. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 7279; He Qiutao, *Shuofang beicheng* [The Northern leading hurses], (Shenaghai: Guji chubanshe, 1995), 70-71; Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992). Volume 1, 31 and Volume 3, 2703; and Jin Xin, Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao [The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows], *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012), 75-85.

20. Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), Volume 1, 31, and Volume 3, 2703.

21. For the Manchu Eight Banners, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). For the banner-league system of the Mongols and the other Inner Asian social systems, see Chia Ning, *Lifanyuan and the Management of Population Diversity in Early Qing (1636-1795)*, (Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung, Working Paper No. 139, 2012), 9. For the Solon banners, see Ma Xiurong and Na Xiaopo, "Qingchu baqi suolun bianqi shezuo kaoshu" [The Solon banners and arrows in the beginning of Qing], *Zhongguo bianjiangshidi yanjiu*, 17, 4(2007), 8-17.

22. Yongzheng edition of *Daqing huidianzhongde lifanyuan ziliao*, "Daqing huidianzhongde lifanyuan ziliao" [Lifanyuan records in the Qing collected statutes], in *Qingdai*

nickname *dasheng toumu* (the hunters' head),²³ was assigned to a Manchu, from the imperial clan or among the capital officials. In 1732 the court changed the title to *Dutong*, the same used in the Manchu Eight Banners,²⁴ and the position lasted 199 years until its elimination in 1882 by the Guanxu (1875-1909) court.²⁵ From Qing Taizong to Qianlong, the Solon were dispersed batch by batch into six types of Qing banners: the Manchu Eight Banners in the capitals Mukden/Shengjing and Beijing, the garrison Eight Banners in Chinese provinces, the frontier Eight Banners in the cities defending the Amur River (mainly Qiqihar, Heilongjiang/Aihui, Mergen, and Hulan), the hunting Butha banners along the Nen River, the nomadic Hulunbuir banners in Inner Mongolia, and the battalion Banners in faraway Xinjiang.²⁶ The Heilongjiang General supervised the Amur River garrison banners, the hunting Butha banners, and the nomadic Hulunbuir banners.

Each type of the Solon-manned banners provided a particular service to the Qing Empire, and the service influenced the Solon identity. The Taizong court assigned some Solon to the Mukden banners. A number of them were later transferred into the Beijing banners, and part of them were again assigned into the strategic garrisons in or surrounding China proper. They became no longer Solon but melted into the most privileged military professionals of the Manchu Eight Banners.²⁷ Those of the Heilongjiang garrison cities during the Kangxi time became more urbanized with military service as their primary duty.²⁸ Over half of the Solon population still remained on their hunting

Lifanyuan ziliao jilu [Collection of the Qing Lifanyuan records], ed. Zhao Yuntian (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu, 1988), 3; *Qianlong neifu chaoben lifanyuan zeli*, in *Lifanyuan gongdu zeli sanzong* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan weisuo zhongxin, 2010), 350; and Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 30; *Qingchao tongdian*, [Comprehensive Statutes of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 70, 2538.

23. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 33.

24. Wei Xiaoyan, Feng Lu, Zhou Lina and Li Jianmin, "Qingdai Ewenkezu hukuo dang'an shulue" [Summary of the household archives of the Qing Ewenki], *Manzu yanjiu* 43, no. 2 (2006):87.

25. Tang Ge, "Elunchunze de 'buluo' zhuzhi" ["The "tribal" organization of the Oroncun"], *Manyu yanjiu* 35, no 2 (2002):120.

26. Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), Volume 2, 1123, and 1149; Wu Xuejuan, "Kangxi nianjian Heilongjiang zhufang baqi de chuangujian" [Establishment of the Heilongjiang garrison banners during the Kangxi reign], *Manyu yanjiu* 39, 2 (2004):109-114; Han Di, *Qingdai baqi suolunbu yanjiu* [The study of the Solon of the Qing], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), 49, 83, 86, 111; Guo Junlian, "Qingdai zhaofu suolun buzhu ruqi kao" [The examination on organizing the Solon into the banner in the Qing dynasty], *Manzu yanjiu* 3(2003): 44-5.

27. Tang Ge's study suggests that some of the Oroncun who served in the Manchu Eight Banners did not only blurred their identity with the Manchu but even with the Han-Chinese, 119.

28. Han Di, *Qingdai baqi suolunbu yanjiu* [The study of the Solon of the Qing], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), 79, 83, and 104.

homeland along the Nen River²⁹ where they migrated in from the middle and upper Heilongjiang River during Shunzhi's time.³⁰ They kept their ancestral lifestyles after being organized into banners during 1683-1732.³¹ "Butha," a Manchu term for "hunting and fishing," or *dasheng*, its close Chinese equivalent, became their organizational label.³² The Manchu Butha Commander-in-chief³³ managed the Solon *niru* (arrow) units based on their original hunting tribes, which continued to carry out the traditional mink hunt.³⁴ Some Butha Solon were moved into Hulunbuir in 1732 where they involved heavily in the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols,³⁵ and were addressed as "the Hulunbuir Solon."³⁶ Those who were dispatched to the Xinjiang battalions in middle of the Qianlong reign³⁷ established a remote Solon identity. Because the Lifanyuan did not administer the Manchu Eight Banners, which were under the direct command of the emperor, the Solon in these banners had no relationship with the Lifanyuan. The Xinjiang Solon were also more under the Yili General, to whom the court granted more governing power³⁸ rather than placed closely under the Lifanyuan. The Solon-Lifanyuan relationship in this study, therefore, focuses on the Solon in the Heilongjiang General's responsible region.

Only in Butha banners were the Solon the overwhelming majority. Fully recognizing their internal division, Butha had three Dagūr banners, five Solon

29. Cao Tingjie, *Dongbei bianfang jiyao* [The outline of the Northeastern border defense], (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), Volume 2, 33-34, and Jin Xin, *Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao* [The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows]. *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012): 75.

30. Jin Xin, "Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao" ["The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows"], *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012): 75.

31. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), Volume 1, 13; Zhou Xifeng, *Qingdai qianqi Heilongjiang minzu yanjiu* [Study of minority nationalities in Heilongjiang during early Qing], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 142, and Su Xin, "Guangyu qingdai buteha baqi de jige wenti" ["Issues of the Qing Butha banners"], *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* 85, 2 (2005):73-76.

32. *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili* [The Lifanyuan cases from the collected statutes of the Qing], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan, 1991), 31 and 93-4.

33. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6434.

34. Liu Shuzhen, "Qinxi qingdai elunchun manwen huji dang'an" ["A brief analysis on the Orocon household registration in the archival sources"], *Manyu yanjiu*, 2 (2005):36, and Ma Xiurong and Na Xiurong, "Qingchu baqi suolun bianqi shezuo kaoshu" ["The study of the Solon Eight Banners and niurus at beginning of the Qing"], *Zhongguo bianjiangshidi yanjiu* 17, 4 (2007), 12-14.

35. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 67, and Bao Meihua, *Yongzheng Qianlong shiqi hulunbe'er baqi yanjiu* [The study of the Hulunbuir banners during the Yongzheng and Qianlong period], (PhD diss., University of Inner Mongolia, 2012), 24-6.

36. Alugui Sarula, "Lun qingdai hulunbe'er defang de qibing zhidu jiqi tezheng" ["The local cavalry organization in Hulunbuir and its cachet"], (2013), 1.

37. Tong Keli, "Qingdai yili zhufang suolunying shimo" ["History of the Qing Solon banners in Yili"], *Xinjiang daxue xuebao* 34, 1 (2006):68-72.

38. Liang Guodong, "Qianjia shiqi youguan yili jiangjun de jige tedian," ["The Yili General's special status during the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns"], *Jiamusi daxue shehui kexue xuebao*, 2 (2013):108-11.

(Evenki) banners, six Oroncon horse banners and eight Xing'an Oroncon banners, with some non-Solon groups mixed with them.³⁹ The horse-riding Oroncon lived farther toward the Russian border, and the deer-riding Oroncon, at the farthest. Both roamed in deep forests for mink hunting.⁴⁰ The Moling's Oroncon were involved in the banner military service, but the Yafahan Oroncon, only in hunting.⁴¹ Regardless of these differences, the Butha bannermen best represented the Solon hunting tradition by remaining *turen* (aboriginal).⁴² They rotated their life between the mink hunt and military service at the call of the Qing court.⁴³

Scattered allocations, divergent banner types, distinct professions, and dissimilar lifestyles separated the already internally diverse Solon along organizational lines, administrative boundaries, and professional divisions. Meanwhile, however, the Mongols, Tibetans, and Muslims each kept a unified identity, with overwhelming majority of each (either the whole people or each sub-group) carrying a shared nationality inside one type of social organization; their internal variation was much less than that of the Solon. The Solon "abnormal" experience, thus, set up a distinct minority-state relationship.

The Lifanyuan, the Heilongjiang General, and Qing Governance over the Solon

A 2012 summary of the Butha study addressed the uncertainty among historians about the Lifanyuan, Board of War, Board of Revenue, and the Heilongjiang General in the Solon affairs.⁴⁴ This study of the Manchu *tiben* helps clarify this uncertainty.

The fourteen Manchu *tiben* all reflect the same administrative routine: the Heilongjiang General reported a local case to the Lifanyuan; the Lifanyuan inspected the case, discussed it according to imperial rules, and presented a managing proposal to the emperor for approval. The frequent words in *tiben*, *ere baita tulergi golo be dasara jurgan ci alifi* (let the Lifanyuan manage this

39. *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili*, The Lifanyuan cases from the collected statutes of the Qing], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan, 1991), 93-4 and Jin Xin, "Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao" ["The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows"], *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012): 75-82.

40. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6434 and *Qingchao tongdian* [Comprehensive Statutes of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 70, 2538.

41. Ge Tang, "Elunchunzu de "buluo" zhuzhi" ["The "tribal" organization of the Oroncon"], *Manyu yanjiu*, 35, 2 (2002): 119.

42. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 2.

43. *Qianlongchao manwen jixindang yibian* [The Manchu archival collection of letters during the Qianlong reign, with Chinese translation], (Changsha: Hunan yuelu shuyuan, 2011), No. 24, 752.

44. Wang Xueqin, "Butha baqi yanjiu shulue" ["Outline of the Butha studies"], *Manchu yanjiu* 106, 1 (2012):84.

affair),⁴⁵ claimed the Lifanyuan's charge over these cases. All *tiben* received the emperor's instructions written in red, which finalized the decision. These *tiben* confirm that the Lifanyuan was the primary governing institution for all the peoples under the Heilongjiang General, and this general was the local administrative arm of the Lifanyuan.

Four *tiben* managed the inheritance of official titles, three for the Butha Solon and one for the Mongol Dörbed.⁴⁶ Title inheritance, a core part of the imperial governance over the minority leadership as well as a key part of the Lifanyuan's Inner Asian administration, significantly affected the stability of frontier societies and the Qing Empire's solidity.⁴⁷ Through the general-Lifanyuan-emperor routine, the Qing court implemented state supervision over the Solon leadership.

Three *tiben* dealt with territorial violations during the mink hunt in Butha. The 1754 case handled a report from the Board of War to the court about violations by nineteen Butha hunters. The court transferred the matter to the Lifanyuan for investigation and decision of punishment.⁴⁸ The 1759 case dealt with five Butha Solon, also reported by the Board of War, who committed territorial violation while hunting.⁴⁹ The 1762 case penalized eight Butha Solon who, under their Commander-in-chief, entered the hunting territory of the Ula people in Jilin. The Lifanyuan quoted the imperial rules for disciplining the responsible Commander-in-chief and suggested the transfer of this official to another position.⁵⁰ These *tiben* reflect the Qing ordinance for hunting-territory violation and show that the emperor relied on the Lifanyuan, not the other boards, to process Solon affairs.

Seven *tiben* demonstrate the Lifanyuan's authority over livestock theft. The 1752 case handled cattle theft by two Mongol Gorlos in Hulan City,⁵¹ and the 1758 case, Hulunbuir bannermen stealing horses from the Khalkas.⁵² The first 1759 *tiben* recorded the Lifanyuan's inspection of the Heilongjiang General's report about two Jalaid Mongol horse thefts in Qiqihar and his suggestions for punishment.⁵³ The second 1759 *tiben* penalized the Dörbed Mongol for cattle theft,⁵⁴ and the third, Korchin Mongols' horse theft.⁵⁵ The 1762 case dealt with cattle theft by Butha bannermen in Jilin while their

45. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, No. 57:475 and 541, Volume 5, No. 40:349, Volume 7, No. 37:294, Volume 7, No. 46:360, Volume 8, No. 5:44, Volume 8, No. 6:50, Volume 8, No. 7:54, Volume 10, No. 17:199, and Volume 20, No. 3:31.

46. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, no. 27, 165-166, Volume 5, no.12, 84-5, Volume 5, no. 13, 87-88 are for the Butha banners and Volume 8, no. 64, 389-390 is for the Dörbed banner.

47. Chia Ning, "Manwen tiben jieshide qingdai menggu gebu guizu nüxing dui chengxi shiwu de canyu: yi qinghai menggu weizhongxin de duibi he fenxi" ["Qing Mongolian women to the noble inheritance: Discoveries from the Manchu archives with focus on the Qinghai Eight Banners"], *Journal of the Frontier and Nationality Studies* 8 (2014):83-95.

48. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 5, no. 40, 345-349.

49. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 7, no. 37, 291-294.

50. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, no. 65, 537-42.

51. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 5, no. 57, 464-476.

52. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 7, no. 46, 355-360.

53. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 8, no. 5, 40-50.

54. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 8, no. 7, 51-55.

55. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 8, no. 8, 56-59.

territory-crossing hunting took place.⁵⁶ The 1767 *tiben* recorded the Dörbed Mongols' cattle theft in Butha and the Lifanyuan's management of it.⁵⁷ These *tiben* demonstrate the Lifanyuan's administration not only over the Solon but over the Mongol groups adjacent to Butha and inside the Heilongjiang General's region.

The extensive 1791 *tiben* recorded the Lifanyuan regulation of human trafficking among the Mongol Gorlos, together with horse theft. It demonstrates that the Qing court did not allow a bannerman to sell his family slave. The heavy discussion of the Qing criminal exile policy provides the knowledge of the Qing's exile locations in various frontier regions. Several important topics of the Qing frontiers, seldom studied in current Qing scholarship—slaves of the borderland banner families, Qing exile policies, the change of frontier exile locations in the expanding process of the Qing Empire, etc.—have arisen from this *tiben* study.

The fourteen Manchu *tiben* illustrate the four governing domains of the Heilongjiang General: (1) The Manchu, Chinese, Solon, Xibo, Mongol Barhū and Guarcha in the Heilongjiang garrison cities (Qiqihar, Heilongjiang/or Aihui, Moegen, and Hulan);⁵⁸ (2) the Butha bannermen in the Solon homeland along the Nen River; (3) the Mongol groups and Solon, with a few Manchu, in Hulunbuir of Inner Mongolia; and (4) the Mongol banners of Jalaid, Dörbed, and Gorlos, which were usually only known as part of Inner Mongolia. Tied together by the Heilongjiang General's administration, these four frontier societies constituted a special region, called *Heilongjiang Jiangjun suoshu buluo*, "units under the Heilongjiang General."⁵⁹ From official inheritance to livestock, in daily living the Lifanyuan's supervision over these domains was established through the local general, whose region stood west of the Ninggutai General's,⁶⁰ where the Lifanyuan exercised no responsibility.

With the *tiben* evidence, this Heilongjiang General's region stands out, more than ever before, among the frontier regions in the Lifanyuan administrative zone: Inner Mongolia, Khalka Mongolia, Qinghai, the Yellow River bend Oirats, Ejene Torghuds, the Ili Four Routes, Kobdo, Chahar, Tarbahatai, Tangnu Ulianghai, the Lama Banner in Faku outside Shengjing, the Muslim (southern Xinjiang), and Tibet.⁶¹ Embracing not only the banners that included Solon, but also the Jalaid, Dörbed, and Gorlos Mongols, the

56. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 4, no. 65, 537-542.

57. *EQMMLT*, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 10, no. 17, 180-200.

58. Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [*The Heilongjiang gazetteers*], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992) 514.

59. *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili* [*The Lifanyuan cases from the collected statutes of the Qing*], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan, 1991), 31.

60. The position was established in 1662 and its title was renamed as the Jilin General in 1757. Jin Xin, "Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao" ["The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows"], *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012): Volume 2, 918.

61. *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili*, [*The Lifanyuan cases from the collected statutes of the Qing*], (Beijing: Xizang shehui kexueyuan, 1991), 31.

Heilongjiang General's region matches neither modern Heilongjiang nor the PRC Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region but combines a part of both.

The *tiben* source enlightens the Heilongjiang General's conjunction with the Board of War and the Board of Revenue. In 1690 the Board of War delivered the court's order to the Heilongjiang General to break ground for the construction of Qiqihar City, in response to the previous communication from the general to the court.⁶² In 1742 the Board of Revenue issued an order to the Heilongjiang General for grain relief from Hulan City to Heilongjiang City.⁶³ No document for either case suggests any need of approval from the emperor, leaving the impression that the responsible boards could take charge. The matters and cases in the fourteen Manchu *tiben*, however, all required the emperor's instruction, indicating their seriousness to the Qing court, as well as the critical position of the Lifanyuan in handling them.

Tiben, furthermore, significantly boost the study of the institutionalized Solon mink hunt and strengthens our knowledge of mink hunting as the Solon's lasting occupational identity. The Qing documents recorded the earliest Solon-Qing relationship starting from the Solon mink tribute to the Taizong court.⁶⁴ The expression *be gemu sahaliyan ula i haranga alban seke butara solon*, or "We all [are] the Heilongjiang tribute[-presenting and] mink-hunting Solon,"⁶⁵ expressed the Solon self-identity. Parallel to it, the Qing official documents referred the Solon as "the mink-hunting new Manchu" in 1718,⁶⁶ and during the Qianlong reign the Solon-Dagūr were referred as "the mink-hunt professionals inside the deep mountain forests of the farthest northeastern region,"⁶⁷ "the Butha mink-hunting Solon-Dagūr,"⁶⁸ and "the mink tribute-presenting Oroncon".⁶⁹ In the Qing tribute system, each Butha male adult was obligated to present a mink fur as his annual tribute to the court⁷⁰. Once the

62. Zhou Xifeng, *Qingdai qianqi Heilongjiang minzu yanjiu* [Study of minority nationalities in Heilongjiang during early Qing], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 148-9.

63. *Qinggaozong shilu*, [The veritable records of emperor Gaozong of the Qing], (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), Volume 7, 21.

64. Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), Volume 2, 2701 and 2703 and Yan Chongnian, "Qingtaizong jinglue suolun bian" ["Qingtaizong's managements of Suolun"], in *Qingshi lunji*, ed. Chen Jiexian, Cheng Chongde, and Li Lijixiang (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2006), 34-5.

65. EQMMLT, (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2010), Volume 7, No. 37, 292.

66. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6432 and Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), 516.

67. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 7280.

68. *Qianlongchao manwen jixindang yibian* [The Manchu archival collection of letters during the Qianlong reign, with Chinese translation], (Changsha: Hunan yuelu shuyuan, 2011), No. 065, 2243.

69. *Qianlongchao neifu lifanyuan chaoben* [The handwriting edition of the Regulations of lifanyuan in the Qianlong reign], in *Lifanyuan gongdu zeli sanzong*, (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan weisuo zhongxin, 2010), Volume 1, 349 and 352.

70. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 52-3.

mink furs came into the court, the Lifanyuan checked their number and quality before turning them over to joint acceptance by the Board of Revenue and the Imperial Household Department (*Neiwufu*). As part of the Tribute Ritual, the Lifanyuan granted emperor's rewards to the Solon presenters and also arranged the court's financial support to them on their returning trip to Heilongjiang.⁷¹

The ruling Manchus came from a tradition that highly valued animal fur, and the designs of the items made for them from these tribute furs—addresses, court dresses, and sitting pads for use inside the Qing palace—were politically regulated. These designs differentiated the hierarchical ranks at the court and helped sustain the ruling order.⁷² The study of *tiben* helps to explain the relationship between the Solon hunters and the court hierarchy, and its implication for the regime's policies in punishing hunting-territory violations. This relationship, from the perspective of the court political culture, explains why Solon hunting mattered to the emperor and why the court must have the Lifanyuan, the key institution managing Inner Asian affairs, in charge of it.

The Significance of the Solon Study to Qing History

The Lifanyuan study has long focused on the large Inner Asian non-Chinese peoples, the Mongols, Tibetans, Northwestern Muslims, and the Qinghai Amdo. This study of the Solon-Lifanyuan relationship highlights a tiny minority's impact on the Qing state.

The size of the Solon population in early Qing is reflected in scattered numbers in records. In 1667, the Lifanyuan organized 1,100 Dagūr and 2,134 Evenki into *niru*. Next year 1,105 Dagūr men were organized, with each *niru* holding 70 to 100 male adults.⁷³ In 1732, the new Butha banners had 6,661 hunting Solon.⁷⁴ During the Qianlong reign, 960 Solon and Dagūr bannermen resided in Qiqihar, together with 960 Manchu, 240 Barhū Mongol and 253 Chinese bannermen. 64 Solon and 420 Dagūr bannermen served in Heilongjiang or Aihui City, accompanying 960 Manchus and 100 Chinese bannermen. Mergen had 600 Solon and 300 Dagūr together with 100 Chinese bannermen. The 300 bannermen in Hulan mixed the Manchu, Solon, Dagūr,

71. *Qianlongchao neifu lifanyuan chaoben*, Volume 1, 349, 352, and 448-450, in *Daqing huidian lifanyuan shili*, 218. Song, 347, 249 and 253. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, Volume 1, 5211.

72. *Qingchao tongzhi* (The comprehensive gazetteers of the Qing), (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), 7093-7102; *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [*Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing*], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 1, 6073-6083; and Feng Qiuyuan, "Qingdai gongting yishi pimao xisu he fazhen" ["The fur custom in the palace rituals and its development during the Qing"], *Manzu yanjiu*, 3 (2003): 79-84.

73. Zhou Xifeng, *Qingdai qianqi Heilongjiang minzu yanjiu* [*Study of minority nationalities in Heilongjiang during early Qing*], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 97.

74. Ma Xiurong and Na Xiaopo, "Qingchu baqi suolun bianqi shezuo kaoshu" ["The study of the Solon Eight Banners and niurus at beginning of the Qing"], *Zhongguo bianjiangshidi yanjiu* 17, 4(2007), 12.

and Chinese together.⁷⁵ In Hulunbuir, the Solon and the Mongol Barhū jointly numbered 960,⁷⁶ of which the Solon should be a small part since the Yongzheng court transferred 270 Butha Solon into the newly established Hulunbuir banners in 1732.⁷⁷ When the Qianlong court migrated 1,000 Butha bannermen to Xinjiang,⁷⁸ their family members went along and a total of 3,860 Solon arrived Ili in 1764.⁷⁹ The largest Solon community, Butha, had a population of 7,300 in 1730, 6,984 in 1731,⁸⁰ 4,033 households and 18,930 people in 1808.⁸¹ A rough estimation of the total Solon population during the Qianlong reign could come to around 25,000 at its height. In comparison, the inferred Tibetan population in 1737 was 1,293,000.⁸² The Qing total population was close to 143,411,559 in 1741 and 295,273,300 in 1800, not including the ruling Manchu, the Manchu Eight Banners, the Mongol, Tibetan, Xinjiang Muslim, and some other Inner Asian groups.⁸³ With their importance to the border defense along Heilongjiang–Inner Mongolia–Xinjiang, mink tribute to the court hierarchy and dynastic order, military service to the empire formation, hunting service to the Imperial Hunt ritual, etc., the Solon impact on the Qing statecraft alters the study of the Lifanyuan from being concerned with only the large Inner Asian groups.

The Solon experience enhances our knowledge regarding the formation of the early Qing multinational communities. The banner organizing process, at first, formulated the Manchu Eight Banners in which the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese bannermen gained a common identity as *Manzhou*, regardless their

75. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6433. According to Wu Xuejuan, "Kangxi nianjian Heilongjiang zhufang baqi de chuangjian" ["Establishment of the Heilongjiang garrison banners during the Kangxi reign"]. *Manyu yanjiu*, 39, 2 (2004), 112, the local banner registration documents show that when "Solon and Dayūr soldiers" were mentioned together, only Solon were found but no Dayūr.

76. *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* [Comprehensive examination of literatures of the Qing], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), Volume 2, 6434.

77. Zhang Boying, *Heilongjiang zhigao* [The Heilongjiang gazetteers], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1992), Volume 1, 514.

78. *Qinggaozong shilu*, [The veritable records of emperor Gaozong of the Qing], (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), Volume 14, 1072 and 1083.

79. Keli Tong, "Qingdai yili zhufang suolunying shimo" ["History of the Qing Solon banners in Yili"], *Xinjiang daxue xuebao*, 34, 1 (2006), 69.

80. Jin Xin, "Qingdai buteha baqi jianli shijian ji niulu shu'e xinkao" ["The study of the time of the Qing Butha banners and its number of arrows"]. *Minzu yanjiu*, 6 (2012):77 and 82.

81. Xiqing, *Heilongjiang waiji* [Outside accounts of Heilongjiang], (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 29.

82. Yang Huajun and Chen Changwen, "Xizang renkou tongji de lishi he fensi" ["History of the Tibetan census and its analysis"], *Zhongguo zangxue* 3 (2005), <http://bit.ly/1Vpr0Ij>.

83. "China, historical demographical data of the whole country". *Populstat*, accessed February 13, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1PPB1YH>; Jiang Tao, "Qingdai renkou tongji zhidu yu 1741-1851 nianjian de zhongguo renkou" ["The Qing census and the Chinese population during 1741-1851"], *Renkou yu jingji*, 4 (1983): 26-50, <http://bit.ly/1FKkqVD>, accessed February 13, 2015; Ni Jianglin, "Qingdai qianqi renkou tongji wenti yanjiu" ["The study of the early Qing census"], *Renkou yu jingji*, 4 (1983), <http://bit.ly/1FKkqVD>.

national origins. Organizing the Solon into banners, however, opened a reverse process. Dispersing this internally diverse population into various types of banners further divided, or even diminished, their collective identity. Through the banner system, the Solon were involved in multinational communities, probably more than many other people in the Qing Inner Asian frontiers. The various types of the banners in which Solon served also prove that the Qing banner system was far from a unified social organization.

The Lifanyuan's responsibility in the Solon mink tribute introduces unexploited themes into Qing studies for future research, such as the wildlife resources (mink fur) in relation to the imperial hierarchy (noble ranks), the material fur culture in relation to the court political culture, and the hunting space in the remote mountain forests in relation to the ritual (Chinese *li*) space at the imperial center.

The Solon life path during the 17th-18th centuries has left us a rich legacy for studying the frontier societies of the Qing Empire as well as the Qing government itself through the Lifanyuan.

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