

Manchu-Tungus Group

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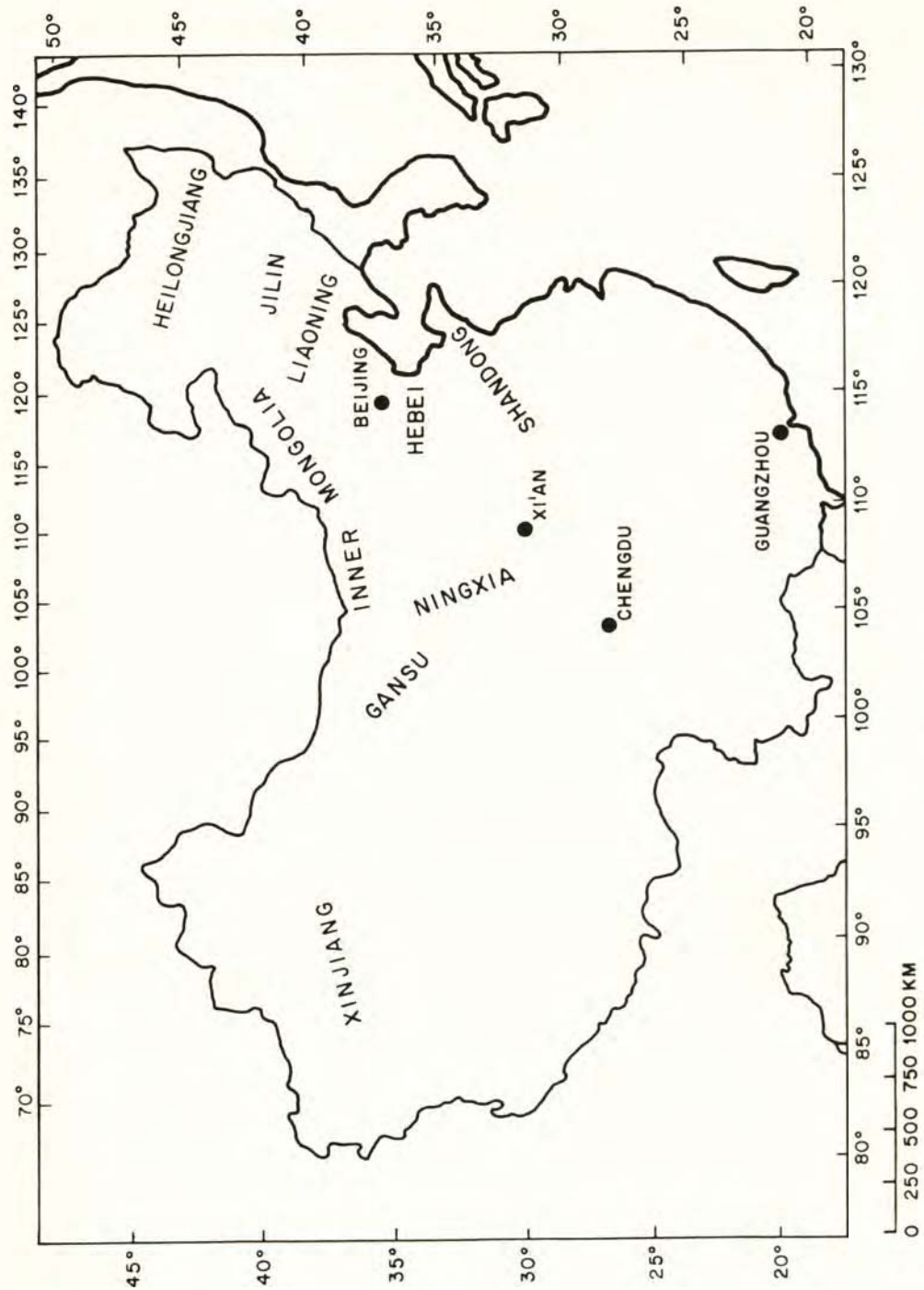
Manchu

Size and Location

At 4,299,159 in 1982,¹ the Manchus 满 are one of China's largest nationalities and, like the Hui, they are found in almost all parts of the country. Some 2,320,000, or about fifty-four percent of the total, live in Liaoning, the former homeland of the Manchus. Large groups of Manchus are also found in the provinces of Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang,² Gansu, Ningxia, and Shandong as well as in the cities of Beijing, Chengdu, Xi'an, and Guangzhou (see Map 13). Despite their considerable numbers, however, the Manchus do not have their own autonomous areas.

History

The Manchus appeared in historical records under their present name at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but their antecedents reach back 3,000 years to the Suzhen 肃慎.³ Chinese records report that the Suzhen sent tribute to the kings of the Western Zhou in the eleventh century B.C. The tribute consisted of arrow shafts made of gu wood from the Changbaishan 长白山 (Long White Mountain) and arrows fashioned from the hard bluish rock found along the Sungari River. By the sixth century B.C. the Suzhen, together with the Yan 燕 and Hao 亳 tribes, occupied the territory of modern Manchuria, with their center in the Changbaishan area. There the Suzhen practiced farming and raised pigs and other domesticated animals. Other



Map 13. Manchu

Suzhen, living north and east of the Changbaishan, were still hunting and fishing.

During the time of the Han dynasty one of the Suzhen tribes, the Yilou 挹婁, was known to grow the "five grains" which were rice, two kinds of millet, wheat and beans, and to raise pigs as well as making hemp cloth and pottery li, a kind of cooking tripod with hollow legs. They traded red jade and marten pelts for Chinese copper, iron, cotton and silk. They used the copper and iron for making arrow heads and armor. They also built small boats in which they undertook fishing trips on the many rivers in the region. The Yilou lived next to the Fuyu 夫余, a strong, slave-owning group on the middle reaches of the Sungari River who seemed to have the upper hand over the Yilou.

The Wuji 勿吉 were the descendants of the Suzhen and Yilou who in 493 overwhelmed the Fuyu and moved into the latter's territory on the Sungari. Soon thereafter, having acquired considerable power and a wide territory, the Wuji group came to be articulated into seven tribes: Sumuo 粟末, Boduo 伯咄, Anchegu 安车骨, Funie 拂捏, Haoshi 号室, Heishui 黑水, and Baishan 白山.

The Sumuo lived farthest to the south, near the modern city of Jilin, and abutted China of the Sui and Tang dynasty as well as Koguryō, the Korean state which then extended across the Yalu River into modern Manchuria. The Heishui were the northernmost Wuji tribe living north of the Amur River, and also economically the most primitive.

In the early seventh century Koguryō expanded and subjugated the Sumuo and Baishan tribes. After the defeat of Koguryō at the hands of Tang China and the South Korean state of Silla in 665, a portion of the Sumuo settled in the Yingzhou 营州 (modern Chaoyang in Liaoning province) area where it mingled with another tribe, called Mohe 靺鞨 in Chinese sources. Chinese historians consider Mohe as another name for Wuji. In 696 the Kidan attacked Yingzhou and forced the Mohe to move eastward to the area between the upper reaches of the Sungari River and the Changbaishan. There they formed a state called Zhengguo in Chinese records. The rulers of this state appear to have been survivors of the rulers of the now defunct Koguryō state as well as the Mohe tribes of Sumuo, Baishan, Buduo, and Anchegu. In other words, the new state was a Korean-Tungus state.

In 714 the Zhen state was renamed Bohai 渤海 which for more than 200 years ruled an area of Eastern Manchuria and Northern Korea. Sometime around the end of the eighth century it expanded into Central Manchuria and absorbed the Funie and Haoshi tribes as well as a small portion of the Heishui tribe. Thus, of the original seven Wuji (later Mohe) tribes, only the Heishui remained outside the control of the Bohai state. Of its five capitals, the Bohai supreme capital was located on the site of modern Dongjing 东京 of Ningan 宁安 county, Heilongjiang. The Bohai state practiced agriculture and weaving, mined minerals and manufactured a variety of metal implements.

Bohai's end came in 926 when the Kidan annihilated it and renamed it Dongdan 东丹. The Kidan also resettled some of its inhabitants in the Chinese portions of the new Kidan state of Liao where they gradually merged with the Chinese population.⁴ Other Bohai inhabitants migrated to Central Korea where they formed one of the elements in the new Koryŏ state. Meanwhile the Heishui Mohe had been prospering during the time when the Bohai state was in existence. Its sixteen clans lived on both sides of the Amur river east of modern Aihui county. When Bohai was defeated and its population scattered, the Heishui moved south to occupy the northern part of the now defunct Bohai state.⁵ There they came to the attention of the Kidan who called them Jurchen (Nuchen 女真), a name which gradually replaced the older Mohe.

At the end of the tenth century a tribe of the Heishui Mohe, now called by the Kidan "wild Jurchen," by the name of Wanyan 完颜, settled on the plains of the modern Ashi 阿什 River where they began to farm. Over the next century they also developed metallurgy which, among other things, allowed them to manufacture their own arms. This, in turn, enabled the Wanyan tribe to expand its control which by the early twelfth century included an area between the Sungari and Ussuri Rivers and as far south as the present Yanbian Korean autonomous prefecture. Then in 1115, under the leadership of Aguda, these Jurchens invaded Northern China where they defeated the Kidan state of Liao and replaced it with their own Jin (Golden) dynasty, with its capital at Yanjing (modern Beijing). Before long, however, most Jurchens who had moved into China became acculturated by their Chinese subjects and eventually lost their own national identity.

After the Mongols had conquered both the Jin state (1234) of Northern China and the Chinese rump state of Song (1273) in the South, they used those Jurchen still living in Manchuria for various military campaigns, including the two abortive invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281. Throughout the Mongol period and well into the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), large numbers of Chinese migrated into southern Manchuria, roughly corresponding to the modern province of Liaoning. The Jurchens living there were quickly absorbed by Chinese culture.

Other Jurchens, however, remained beyond the reach of this wave of Chinese migration. They lived far to the north, with the center located in today's Yilan 依兰 county of Heilongjiang. It was these Jurchens who eventually united all non-Chinese people living in the region into a strong sedentary nationality which became known as Manchu.

The rise of the Manchus was led by Nurhachi (1559-1626) who in 1583 began to unite all Jurchens. In 1601 he created the first four banners which, with the addition of another four banners in 1615, resulted in the famous eight-banner system which other nationalities, like the Oroqens, Hezhens, Evenks, as well as some Mongols and Chinese were forced to join. With his power consolidated in the entire Northeast, Nurhachi in 1616 declared the founding of

the Latter Jin state, an obvious allusion to the former Jin state of the Jurchens.

The Manchus now concentrated on their ultimate goal of conquering their giant neighbor to the South, China. They studied the history of the Mongol conquest of China in the thirteenth century and concluded that one major reason why the Mongols' rule over China did not last longer than about one hundred years was their unwillingness to work through Chinese institutions. Consequently, the Manchus set to work to create in their own homeland a Chinese-style government. They also studied the classics of Chinese philosophy. When this task was completed, the Manchus declared the creation of a Chinese-style empire, called Qing, in 1636.

Only eight years later, in 1644, the Manchus breached the Great Wall and began their conquest of China. Although it would take them several decades to consolidate their power over the vast empire, they triumphed in the end. They retained control over China much longer than the Mongols had; in fact, they ruled China for more than 250 years under one of the longest dynasties in that country's history. The Manchus' political and military successes, however, were purchased at the expense of losing their ethnic identity. Long before the Qing dynasty collapsed in 1911, most Manchus had ceased to be Manchus ethnically, linguistically, and culturally.

Language and Literature

Manchu was once the largest language in the Manchu-Tungus group of the Altaic family of languages. Today, however, few people outside Sanjiazui in Fuyu county and Dawujia of Aihui county, both in Heilongjiang, actually still speak the language, and even in those two villages, only some old people still speak some form of Manchu.⁶

Manchu has eight vowels as follows:⁷

a as in am 'father'
ə as in gəne 'to go'
ɛ as in ɛm 'one'
i as in filən 'chapter'

o as in om 'pond'
u as in ut/un 'song'
y as in ujyn 'nine'
ɔ as in ɔrin 'twenty'

The twenty-seven consonants are:

n as in naden 'seven'
k as in kumun 'music'
g as in gurun 'country, people'
χ as in χawən 'official'
b as in bitxe 'book, letter'
p as in puseli 'store'

j as in jilan 'three'
r as in erin 'time, season'
f as in fax 'worker'
w as in wəge 'stone, rock'
ɳ as in ɳiti 'when'
q as in qorsu 'to grieve'

s as in se- 'to say'
ʃ as in ʃan 'ear'
t as in tulʃ 'outwards'
d as in dafsun 'salt'
l as in lef 'bear'
m as in maf 'ancestor'
tʃ as in tʃimar 'tomorrow'
dʒ as in dʒuan 'ten'

ɕ as in ɕasəɕə 'bird'
x as in xɛʃən 'brink, brim'
ts as in tsa 'tea'
tɕ as in tɕoɕo 'chicken'
dʒ as in dʒibən 'capital' (money)
ɕ as in ɕus 'purple'
dʒ as in dʒu 'two'

Like all Altaic languages, Manchu is characterized by agglutination and vowel harmony. The latter is not strictly observed within stems but more so in the formation of suffixes. For example, a suffix must have a back vowel (a, o, or u) if the stem has a back vowel and, likewise, have a front vowel (e, i, or u) if the stem has a front vowel. If the stem has more than one vowel, the final vowel determines the choice of suffix vowel.⁸

Stress is on the final syllable. Only personal nouns have plural forms, with rare exceptions, like *morisa* 'horses'.⁹ All other nouns express their plurality by a variety of means, including prefixed numbers.

Alone among the Tungus languages, Manchu has its own script and literature. In 1599 Nurhachi, as part of his efforts to build a modern state, adopted Mongolian as the chancellery script. Two years later, one of his most valued officials, Dahai, added diacritical marks to distinguish between certain phonemes and a few letters for translating Chinese sounds (see Table 10).¹⁰

If one uses the term literature in the broadest sense, Manchu literature can be said to be rather extensive. Virtually all of its works, however, are either histories and other official communications or translations from the Chinese. Unlike Mongolian, Manchu did not develop its own belles-lettres literature. Dahai himself began in 1630 to translate Mengzi (Mencius),¹¹ while others produced Manchu versions of most of the great Chinese classics in philosophy, history and literature. Also worthy of note are the early Manchu chronicles, *Tongki fuka sindaha hergen i dangse*, of the period from 1607 to 1637, the epic shamanistic tale *Nišan saman i bithe*,¹² and the record of Tulishen's travel to the Volga Kalmucks in 1712 to 1715.

There have been a few Manchu writers in this century whose writings, however, have been entirely in Chinese. By far the best known among them was Shu Qingchun 舒庆春 who became world-famous under his pen name Lao She 老舍. He fell victim to Mao Zedong's so-called cultural revolution.¹³ Contemporary Manchu writers are little known even inside China. Li Huiwen 李惠文¹⁴ was born in 1931 in Suizhong county of Liaoning where he grew up and has lived almost his entire life. His parents were poor peasants belonging to the Regular Red banner who could not afford to send him to higher education after he had graduated from primary school. In the early 1950s he

Table 10
MANCHU SCRIPT

	A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D
1	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵᡵ	a	18	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	m
2	ᡵ	ᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵᡵ	əɛ	19	ᡵ			tʃ
3	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	i	20	ᡵ			dʒ
4	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	o	21	ᡵ			j
5	ᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵ	uɣ	22		ᡵ	ᡵ	r
6	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	ɔ	23	ᡵ	ᡵ		f
7	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵᡵ	n	24	ᡵ	ᡵ		w
8	ᡵᡵᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵᡵ	K	25		ᡵ	ᡵ	ŋ
9	ᡵᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵ		g	26	ᡵ			q
10	ᡵ	ᡵ		ʎ	27	ᡵ			ɕ
11	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	b	28	ᡵ	ᡵ		x
12	ᡵ	ᡵ		p	29	ᡵᡵ			ts
13	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	s	30	ᡵ			tʂ
14	ᡵ	ᡵ		ʃ	31	ᡵ			dʒ
15	ᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵ	ᡵ	t	32	ᡵ			ʂ
16	ᡵᡵ	ᡵᡵ		d	33	ᡵ			dʒ
17	ᡵ	ᡵ	ᡵ	l					

A = Initial position
B = Medial position

C = Final position
D = IPA transcription

worked as a cadre in a variety of county jobs and, after 1958, was a commune chief for several years. He began his writing career as a local reporter, then wrote short stories and essays for several regional and national magazines.

Other Manchu writers include Tong Xiren 佟希仁, born in 1935,¹⁵ who has written more than one hundred children's poems and presently works as a lecturer of foreign literature in the normal college of Fushun city. The female writer Shao Changqing 邵长青, born in 1931, has published short stories in a number of magazines in the Northeast since 1951, and the youngest known Manchu writer is Wang Jianan 王家男, born in 1962.

Society¹⁶

Marriages used to be arranged by parents when their children were as young as six or seven years of age but more usually in their early teens. Engagements occurred around sixteen years of age. The boy's family would engage a matchmaker who contacted the girl's family three times, each time offering bowls of spirits. When the marriage contract was completed, a bride price was paid which usually included pork, wine, money, clothing, and headgear. At the wedding the bride sat on the south kang (a raised platform made of bricks or adobe and heated by flues) for one whole day. In the evening, she placed a table on the floor with two wine flasks and two cups. The bride and groom circled the table three times and then drank the wine. A pair of candles were placed on the kang where they burned all night, while outside one or several persons sang the lakongjia, a kind of wedding song, for about two hours. On the third day the new couple visited the bride's old home.

When a son was born, a bow and arrow was hung in front of the door in the hope that he may become a brave hunter. By the age of six or seven he would start practicing to shoot targets.

When a person died his body was not allowed to rest on the east or north kang because the east kang was too close to the door which was to be used only by the living and the north kang was reserved as a seat of honor. The body was removed from the premises through a window. On the west side of the courtyard a five-meter tall pole was erected from which flew a three-meter long red and black cloth streamer. After interment friends and relatives took the cloth and made clothes for their children to ward off evil spirits and to prevent them from doing evil.

The typical Manchu home consisted of two rooms, often as part of a compound of several, sometimes connected, houses forming a horseshoe pattern around a courtyard. The outer room was away from the courtyard and contained the kitchen and stove which heated the kangs in the inner room where the family lived, ate, and slept. The west side was reserved for guests, the north for adults, and the south for children. The door was on the east side, if the building was detached.

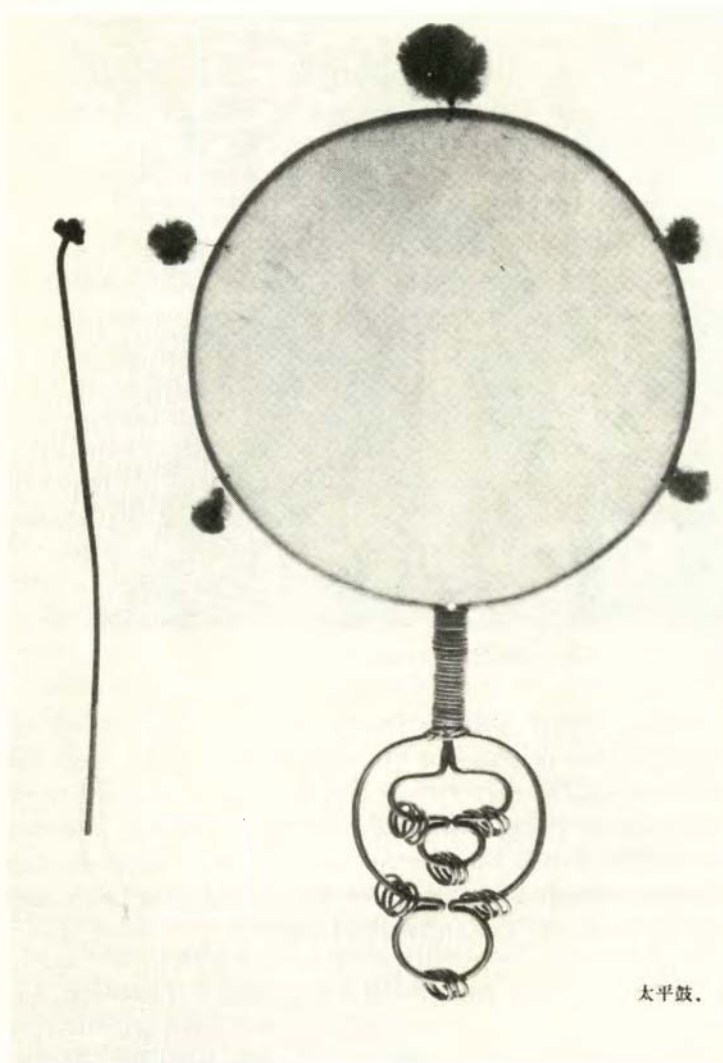


Illus. 24. Manchu Costumes

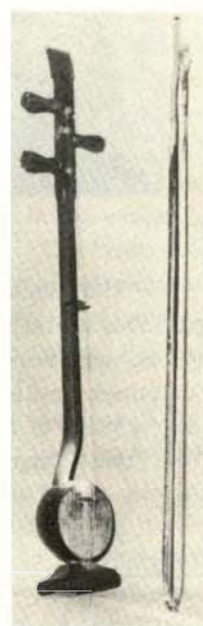
The traditional Manchu diet was primarily based on cooked millet, glutinous millet, and bobo, a kind of steamed bun made of glutinous millet. On special occasions, like New Year's, each family prepared aijigebo, meat-filled dumplings similar to the Chinese jiaozi. On New Year's only, Manchus also ate large chunks of boiled meat with their hands, a custom they had perhaps adopted from the Mongols. Other festival foods included boiled and roast pork and saqima, a kind of fried cake made of flour and sesame seeds.

Religion¹⁷

The predominant religion among the Manchus was shamanism. At the time the Manchu state was established, but before the Manchu conquest of China, there were two kinds of shamans. Palace shamans were in charge of certain court ceremonies. During the Qing dynasty they were drawn mostly from the Aisin Gioro clan which also furnished several emperors, including the last one in 1908. Common shamans, in turn, were of two kinds. Each village had one shaman whose sole duty was to be in touch with the spirits. The other kind of common shaman was in charge of managing rites within each clan. This task was part-time, with the shaman spending most of his time in the field or some other profession. Both kinds of common shamans could still be found as late as the 1940s in some villages of Ningan and Aihui counties.



太平鼓。



腰鈴。

Illus. 25. Manchu Musical Instruments

Ancestor worship was also practiced, with virtually every home having an ancestor tablet, about sixty centimeters wide and fifty centimeters long, hanging on the west wall of the main room. Heaven worship was performed on the day after ancestor worship.

Recent Developments¹⁸

While Manchus living in other parts of China are located almost exclusively in cities, about eighty percent of those living in the Northeast are found in small towns and villages. Manchu farmers are principally engaged in growing gaoliang, soybean, baomi 苞米, sumi 粟米, tobacco, apples, and zuocan 柞蚕 tussah, a kind of silkworm. Manchus living in the foothills of the Great Xing'an mountain range grow ginseng and mushrooms. Many of the urban Manchus are now working in factories, but one can also find large numbers of Manchus in various professions and in clerical jobs.

Notes

¹Minzu yanjiu 23 (1983), 80.

²The number of Manchus in Xinjiang in 1982 is reported to be 9,137. Minzu tuanjie 150 (1983), 10.

³Jiankuang, v. 2, 1; Zhao 1983, 1.

⁴Zhao, 1983, 6.

⁵Op. cit., 7.

⁶Jiankuang, v. 2, 1; Zhongguo, 27-28.

⁷Examples are selected from Yamamoto.

⁸Peeters, 353.

⁹Norman 1965, 4.

¹⁰Fuchs 1968, 1. Dahai undertook a final reform of the Manchu script in 1632 (Manzu jianshi, 222).

¹¹Op. cit., 2.

¹²English translations have been provided by Seong and Nowak.

¹³Another famous Manchu intellectual is the linguist Luo Changpei 罗常培.

¹⁴See his biography by Wang Ke.

¹⁵For literary samples by this and the two subsequent writers, see their respective entries in the bibliography. See also the entries for Ge Fei, Guan Shouzhong, He Chengzhi, Hu Zhao, Tong Mingguang, and Wang Jianan.

¹⁶Information on Manchu society is adapted from Zhongguo, 28 and Zhao 1983, 51-59.

¹⁷Information on Manchu religion can be obtained from Zhongguo, 29-30.

¹⁸Information on recent developments is in Zhongguo, 27, 39-42.