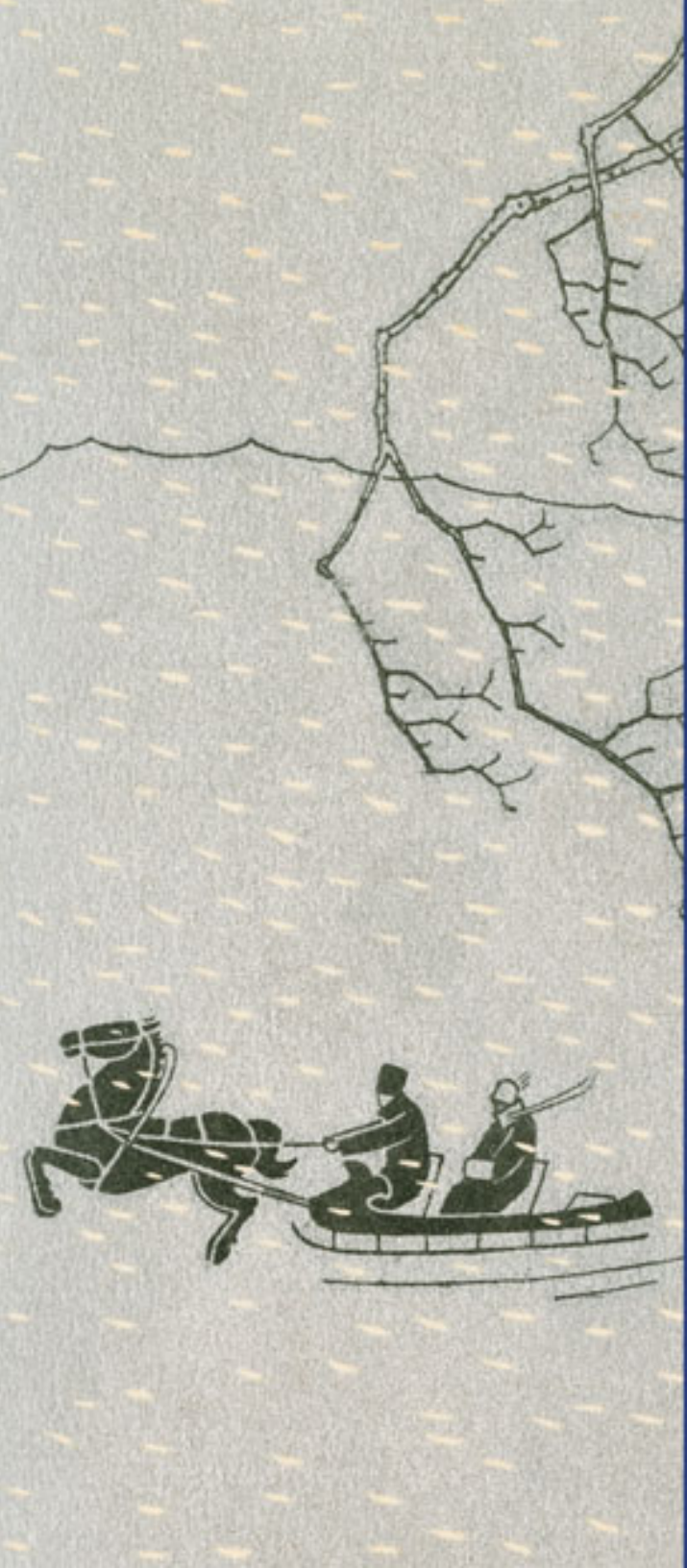


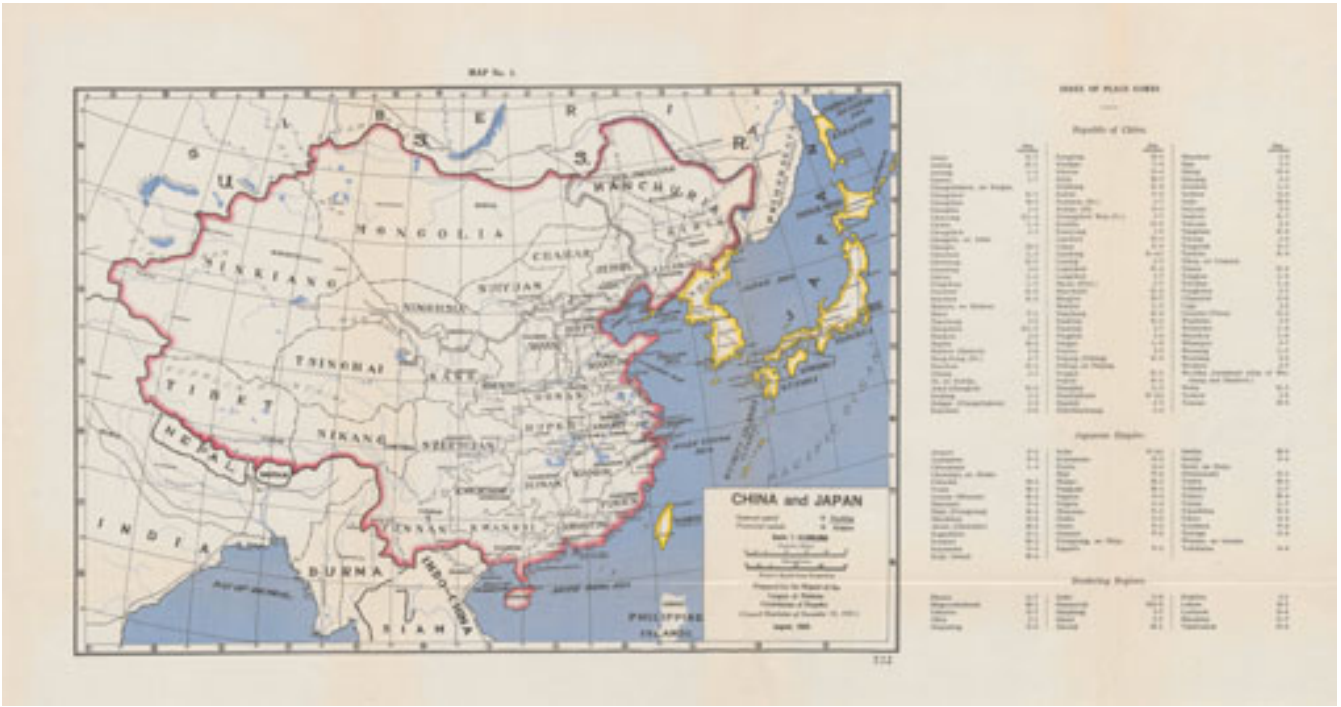
I.B.TAURIS

MANCHURIA

A CONCISE HISTORY

MARK GAMSA

Manchuria



Frontispiece: 'China and Japan'. Map by the League of Nations, showing Manchuria, 1932.

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Part One

INTRODUCTION

Manchuria and a Regional Approach to Chinese History

On today's maps, you will not see Manchuria. The common historical definition of this region comprises the three north-eastern provinces of China, which were known under the Qing dynasty as Dongbei san sheng 東北三省, the north-eastern edge of Inner Mongolia and the northernmost part of Hebei province around Chengde 承德. At present, the term Dongbei is more often used in a narrow sense, to indicate the three provinces of the Northeast: Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning. In this book, I will refer to 'Manchuria' and 'the Northeast' interchangeably when discussing the region's history before the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but will only use 'the Northeast' for the period thereafter.[1] Some scholars, like the linguist and anthropologist Juha Janhunen, speak of a greater or 'outer' Manchuria, which extends the scope of this historical term further to the north and east so as to include the territories ceded by the Qing to Russia by 1860, from the Amur and the Ussuri to the Stanovoy mountain range between Yakutia and the Pacific Ocean, and even encompassing Sakhalin Island beyond the Strait of Tartary.[2] A broad transnational perspective on this region has been proposed recently in a monograph by historian Evelyn S. Rawski.[3]

Historical research on Manchuria as contained within the borders of present-day China can be situated within the regional approach to the study of Chinese history as opposed to discussing China as a whole, or focusing on particular provinces. One rationale for this is the often arbitrary nature of provincial borders (indeed, those of the three north-eastern provinces have changed repeatedly, as have their names). There are clusters of culturally and economically homogenous areas in China,[4] and the Dongbei is among the most important of these. The second part of this book surveys the three provinces and the Mongol element in Manchuria, combining historical and geographical perspectives. Another discipline relevant to research on Manchuria is border studies: the Northeast is one of the border regions where China has experienced the reciprocal influence of other cultures.[5] Lastly, since the later 1990s, research on the two port cities in Manchuria, Harbin 哈爾濱 and Dalian 大連, has emerged as something of an alternative to the customary

focus on Shanghai as the urban centre where contact between China and the West was a catalyst for modernization.

To find a comprehensive history of Manchuria in a Western language one has to go very far back indeed, perhaps as far back as *Manchuria: Its People, Resources and Recent History*, by the British diplomat in China, explorer and botanist Sir Alexander Hosie (1853–1925). This book first came out in London in 1901, saw two editions and was republished in the handsomely illustrated 'Oriental series' in Boston in 1910.[6] Immediately after the Russo-Japanese War and, once again, when Manchuria attracted worldwide interest because of the Japanese invasion in 1931, several books about this region were published in English. The work of Owen Lattimore (1900–89) stands out within this literature and will be mentioned again here. Most recently, the veteran historian of international relations Ian Hill Nish (born 1926) published a two-volume *History of Manchuria, 1840–1948*, of which the first volume surveys the region's history and the second reprints select historical sources.[7]

Research on various aspects of Manchurian history has been large but fragmented. The present book stems from a seminar, which I have taught at Tel Aviv University for over a decade. To bring the story of Manchuria to my students, I had to collect and systematize the historical literature as well as follow the latest publications on the subject; and because no textbook on Manchuria existed, I gradually wrote one. Many of the sources on which the present book is based, therefore, have been debated in class, and my interpretation of them is indebted to those discussions. As this concise history is meant to be a textbook, I have mostly aimed to refer readers to publications in English. When important sources in Chinese or Russian are cited, their titles are translated into English in the bibliography.

No historian works on Manchuria as a whole: I, too, specialize in one facet of the story, the relations between Chinese and Russians in this region.[8] My aim here has been to synthesize the most important scholarship so as to offer readers a new resource: an up-to-date history of Manchuria from the seventeenth century to the present, combining the perspectives of politics, culture and economy. Beyond any professional bias towards Russia, I also hope to demonstrate that Manchuria's history has been intertwined with the history of Russia's advance towards the Far East since the early Qing and especially from the late nineteenth century.

Russian–Chinese relations have not been limited to the Northeast (there has always been contact and military friction between the two states over Xinjiang) and, in turn, the history of the Northeast did not always involve Russians. Some aspects of life in Manchuria did not involve any foreigners, whereas in some periods the most important outside factor in the region were

the Japanese. Indeed, Japan will often be mentioned here. However, it cannot be denied that from the late nineteenth century on Russia made an enormous impact on life in Northeast China. Although we do not have space to discuss it here, the impact of proximity to China was also important on the Russian side of the border. While Russian–Chinese relations will be a recurring theme, this book centres on the Northeast itself.

Before considering the name Manchuria, let us look at the Russian word for China: 'Kitai', comparable with the English Cathay, the name of (northern) China as used in medieval Europe. Kitai evolved from the ethnonym of the Qidan 契丹 (also Khitan, or Kitan) people, and was probably brought to Russia via India in the fifteenth century.[9] The Qidan founded the Liao state in 916; in 1125 they were defeated by the Jurchen people. The Jurchen (Chinese: Nüzhen 女真, or Ruzhen), founders of the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) also defeated the Song dynasty of China (960–1279), putting an end to the period that retrospectively became known as the Northern Song. After the Jin conquered the capital Kaifeng in 1126, taking emperor Huizong 徽宗 as prisoner, the Song moved their capital south to Hangzhou.[10] The third northern people to invade China after the Qidan and the Jurchen were the Mongols: Genghis Khan (?1167–1227) vanquished the Jurchens, sacking Beijing in 1215. The Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) was followed by the Han Chinese rule of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but the Ming were succeeded by the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) of the Manchus, who accordingly were the fourth northern nomadic people to conquer China, in whole or in part. As for 'Cathay', until the early seventeenth century some Europeans thought that a Christian community by this name existed somewhere in Central Asia and was distinct from 'China'.

When Russia first made contact with the Manchu Empire in the Far East in the seventeenth century, neither side had any knowledge of previous contacts between them, not even the fairly recent time when both Russia (1240–1478) and Yuan-dynasty China were under Mongol rule. At first the Russians did not realize that their adversary along the Amur River was subject to Peking's rule and instead believed the enemy to be a small kingdom ruled by a 'Bogdoiskii Khan'. For their part, the Qing called their enemy *Luosha* or *Luocha* 羅刹 (this term is usually interpreted as a reference to demons mentioned in Buddhist scriptures, although some scholars have suspected here a calque from the Russian *lovets*, a now obsolete word for 'hunter').[11] These 'Luocha' were actually Cossacks, whom the Qing did not initially identify with the distant continental Russians in Moscow, for the latter were known to them as *Eluosi* 俄羅斯.[12]

As we begin our study of this region, it is important to remember how large and how relatively empty it was. The territory of Manchuria as of 1895

was 390,000 square miles, i.e. 1,010,100 square km. This would be over 10 per cent of the current size of the People's Republic of China, more than twice the size of Japan, or almost twice the size of France. Writing in 1932, Owen Lattimore described Manchuria as having the size of France and Spain combined. Manchukuo, which included territory beyond the three provinces of the Northeast, measured 1,303,143 square km in 1940,[13] making Manchukuo the seventh largest country in the world. The three north-eastern provinces alone today measure 789,000 square km, or 8 per cent of the territory of China, and this is also the percentage of the Northeast population within the country. However, fewer than 2 million people lived in Manchuria in 1842, when its territory was larger than the (narrowly defined) 'Northeast' today. The Manchu people were about 5 million strong nationwide in 1900, while the total for Manchuria had by then risen to 17 million. More than 122 million people lived in the Northeast according to the PRC census of 2010.

'Manzhou' 滿洲 was originally an ethnonym,[14] a Chinese transcription of the Manchu word *Manju*, meaning the Manchus as an ethnic group. It will be of no use therefore to infer meaning from the two Chinese characters (which would be something like 'full continent'). Yet even the origin of the Manchu use of this name is obscure, as we shall see below. *Manzhou* functioned as a Chinese toponym from about 1877 (it appeared on maps from the early 1900s) to the early 1950s. The Western geographical term 'Manchuria', however, emerged through Jesuit maps drawn at the Qing court in the early eighteenth century. The term was copied by the Japanese, possibly through Russian maps, in the 1790s, and brought to Europe by the German Japanologist in Dutch service, Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866).[15]

By the 1830s 'Manchuria' had succeeded the older toponym 'Tartary', which Europeans began to use for the homeland of the Mongols, whom they called 'Tartars' in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[16] The name 'Tartars' had evolved either from the Chinese *Dada*, which was used for northern nomads, or from the Russian application of *tartary* to the conquering Mongols (with the added 'r' conveying the connection to Tartarus, the Latin for 'hell'). In the seventeenth century Western Tartary signified the Mongol lands, whereas Eastern Tartary was applied to the territory of the Manchus.[17] These appellations have nothing to do with the Tatars, a Turkic people in Asian Russia, with a centre in today's Republic of Tatarstan on the River Volga. Although the name 'Manzhou' never enjoyed wide currency in Chinese, it met with disapproval in the PRC and the name 'Manchuria' dropped out of international usage by the 1950s, as it was too closely associated with the Manchukuo state. A regional 'Manchurian' identity is extant under another name today in the collective notion of Dongbei, Northeast China.

Qing Manchus called themselves *qiren* 旗人 (bannermen) in Chinese: a non-ethnic appellation, rather than the later *Manren* 滿人, or the now standard form, *Manzu ren* 滿族人. The system of the 'eight banners' evolved in the early seventeenth century from the Manchu clan organization. Not only the Manchus, but also the Han Chinese, Mongol and tribal forces who had joined them were divided into detachments called after the colour of their flag. Initially there were four 'plain' banners (yellow, white, red and blue) and, after 1615, also four 'bordered' ones of the same colour.[18] By 1642, the total number of banners reached twenty-four. In the late Qing, ethnic Manchus made up more than half of the banners and Han Chinese about a third (the Mongols were next with about a seventh, followed by the native peoples of Manchuria). Until the end of the Qing, bannermen, somewhat similarly to Russian Cossacks, were born into military service. Enjoying privileges that set them apart from (and evoked the jealousy of) most Chinese, they were not permitted to take up another occupation. In the early years, a Manchu boy would be assigned to a banner at age three; later in the Qing a bannerman's service lasted from age 16 to 60.[19]

The first two emperors of the Qing imagined the bannermen as 'universal functionaries', to be trained both in the Chinese classics and in the traditional skills of riding and archery.[20] By the end of the Qianlong 乾隆 reign in the late eighteenth century, however, in an effort to counter the decline of the Manchu language and traditions among the Manchu bannermen, the emperor launched a reform, by which they were urged to study Manchu, riding and archery, instead of Chinese.

Notes

1 The same policy is adopted here for China's capital city, which is referred to as Beijing or Peking for the late imperial and republican periods, but exclusively as Beijing from 1949.

2 Juha Janhunen, *Manchuria: An Ethnic History* (Helsinki: The Finno-Ugrian Society, 1996).

3 Evelyn S. Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Cf. Nianshen Song, 'Northeast Eurasia as Historical Center: Exploration of a Joint Frontier', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 13, 43:1 (2 Nov. 2015), who proposes the notion of North-east Eurasia instead of the problematic 'Manchuria'.

4 Cf. Yongtao Du and Jeff Kyong-McClain, eds, *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

5 A pioneering treatment from the perspective of political geography was W. A. Douglas Jackson, *Russo-Chinese Borderlands: Zone of Peaceful Contact*

or Potential Conflict? (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1962). An excellent historical anthropology of China's border with tsarist Russia, then with the Soviet Union and after 1991 with the new states of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is Steven Parham, *China's Borderlands: The Faultline of Central Asia* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2017). An attempt at a cultural history of China's north-eastern border, Victor Zatsepine, *Beyond the Amur: Frontier Encounters between China and Russia, 1850–1930* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2017) is, however, far less successful.

6 Alexander Hosie, *Manchuria: Its People, Resources and Recent History* (Boston: J. B. Millet, 1910).

7 Ian Nish, *The History of Manchuria, 1840–1948*, in 2 vols (Folkestone: Renaissance Books, 2016).

8 See articles cited below, and Mark Gamsa, *Harbin, City between Russia and China: A Cross-cultural Biography*, forthcoming at University of Toronto Press.

9 A. I. Kobzev, 'Kitaistika i summa sinologiae', in *Arkhiv rossiiskoi kitaistiki*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka – Vostochnaia literatura, 2013), pp. 15–16.

10 On the Liao, see Michal Biran, 'The Mongols and Nomadic Identity: The Case of the Kitans in China', in Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, eds, *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change: The Mongols and their Eurasian Predecessors* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), pp. 152–81.

11 Anna Di Toro, *La percezione della Russia in Cina tra XVII e XVIII sec.* (Rome: La Sapienza Orientale, 2012), p. 189; on the loss of information about earlier contacts, see pp. 38, 41, 165–6.

12 At least by 1686, Emperor Kangxi knew the Russians on the Amur were subjects of Ivan and Peter, if indeed he wrote the letter to them cited in Susanna Soojung Lim, *China and Japan in the Russian Imagination, 1685–1922: To the Ends of the Orient* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 17 (ibid., p. 24, says it is unclear whether the 14-year-old Peter got the letter).

13 Peter Duus et al., eds, *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. xiii.

14 Many other linguistic explanations are offered in Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 6th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 24–5.

15 Mark Elliott, 'The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (Aug. 2000), pp. 603–46. Elliott is mistaken in the population figures he gives for 1900 in this important article: it was about 17 million, rather than '170 million total, of whom 150 million Han', p. 636, the result of miscalculating 1,700 *wan* from a Chinese source.

16 See, on Tartary, Jürgen Osterhammel, trans. Robert Savage, *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenment's Encounter with Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

17 The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary*, eds Judy Pearsall and Bill Trumble, 2nd rev. edn (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1476, 1477, regards 'Tatar' as merely a variant of 'Tartar', but ignores the historical association of Tartary with Mongolia and the subsequent application of the term to Manchuria.
18 The yellow, white and blue flags were bordered with red, and the red flag with white.
19 See Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861–1928* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000).
20 Pamela Kyle Crossley, 'Manchu Education', in Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 340–78, quoting p. 363.

1

The Ethnic Mosaic of the Northeast

Qing garrisons were established not only in Manchuria, but also near many cities in mainland China. Bannermen (Manchus, Han Chinese and others) lived in these military outposts with their families, while being permanently supported by state salaries. Until 1735, the garrison towns in Heilongjiang were Aigun (Chinese name Aihui 愛輝), Mergen (founded in 1688; now Nenjiang 嫩江) and Qiqihar 齊齊哈爾. In Jilin these were Ninguta 寧古塔 (founded in 1654; Chinese name Ning'an 寧安), Boduna (伯都納, also transcribed Potune; now Songyuan 松原), Alechuka (now Acheng 阿城 district of Harbin), Sanxing 三姓 (now Yilan 依蘭) and Hunchun 琿春. All were located along the major rivers of Manchuria: the Amur, Nonni (Nenjiang; the river and town share the same name), Sungari (Songhuajiang 松花江), Hurka (old name of Mudanjiang 牧丹江) and Tumen 圖們江. Attracted by the comforts of life in the capital Beijing, most of the Manchus who were not stationed in the garrisons had left their home region by the seventeenth century.[1] Despite the long official ban on Han Chinese settlement in Manchuria, still to be discussed, the number of Chinese colonizers there constantly rose.

Frontier tribes

Among the indigenous nomadic peoples of Manchuria, the Solon (Chinese: Suolun 索倫) and the Daur tribes (Chinese: Dawoer 達斡爾) were historically and linguistically affiliated with the Mongols. They also lived next to each other, mainly in the basin of the Nonni River, between the two garrison towns of Qiqihar and Mergen (today's Nenjiang). This is the region in Heilongjiang where the biggest community of Daurs is now extant at the Daur Autonomous Banner, Morin Dawa 莫力達瓦, located on the border with Inner Mongolia (another five to six thousand Daurs presently live in Xinjiang, where their ancestors were sent out from Manchuria in Qing service in 1763). To the north of it is the Elunchun 鄂伦春 Autonomous Banner in Inner Mongolia. The Daur language is still spoken in these parts.

The Qing incorporated the Solon and the Daur into the Buteha banners (Buteha 布特哈, now called Zhalantun 札蘭屯, is a town in Hulunbuir 呼倫

貝爾, Inner Mongolia), in which native chiefs were supervised by Manchu commanders. The natives who joined the Qing banners became known as the 'new Manchus'. Under the Qing tribute system, the indigenous peoples were required to submit fur and ginseng to the imperial court but otherwise carried out regulated trade with Chinese merchants.[2] From the last decade of the Qing to Japanese conquest in the 1930s, the Chinese policy was to 'sinicize' natives by turning them from hunting nomads to farmers and replacing their horses with cattle. The ecological change that followed Han Chinese immigration and settlement further reduced their hunting options.[3] The Oroqen in Heilongjiang, however, readily adopted Russian names and clothing and much to the alarm of Qing border officials joined the Russian Orthodox Church and married Russians. Beyond the Russian border, they often became naturalized as Russian subjects.[4]

The Oroqen (also Orochen; Chinese: Elunchun) were also partly organized within the Buteha banners in the Qing, although many of them remained in scattered groups in the Xing'an 興安 (or Khingan) ranges south of the Amur and the Argun rivers. Since 1957, China has classified the Solon, the Tungus Evenki (also known as Khamingan) and the smallest community of Reindeer Evenki (herders in the Argun River area, who now number about 250) under a single term, Ewenke 鄂温克. Accordingly, these groups, who are largely concentrated in Inner Mongolia, have been considered as a single national minority, while the Oroqen and the Daur are classified separately.[5]

The Khamingan and Reindeer Evenki had actually moved into China from the Russian Far East between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s; in China today, they still use many Russian words in daily life and attach symbolic importance to eating bread.[6] In Russia, various groups of Tungus peoples, including Evenki, Even (most of whom live among the Yakut people in Russia's Sakha Republic) and Nanai, are spread across Siberia and the Russian Far East with a total of 72,229 persons counted in the census of 2010. In China, the same year's census registered 30,875 Evenki, 8,659 Oroqen (Elunchun) and 5,354 Hezhe 赫哲.[7] The Evenki, Oroqen and Hezhe languages are hardly spoken in China by now, but the Solon still is.[8]

Until the early twentieth century, shamanism characterized the religious and social life of Evenki, Oroqen and Hezhe in both Siberia and China, as well as of the Manchus, who also belong to the Tungus peoples. Indeed, the word 'shaman' reached European languages in the late seventeenth century from the language of the Siberian Tungus. A hereditary shaman, initiated after an illness, would enter a trance and dance while being possessed by spirits. Shamanism was classified as superstition and violently outlawed in both Soviet Russia and the PRC, and it could not be revived once more tolerant policies replaced persecution in both countries. Instead, 'neo-

shamans' have emerged in Russia and professional performers have begun acting out shamanist ceremonies for the ethnic tourist industry in China.[9] In 1994, two US anthropologists met a man they described as the last shaman of the Oroqen near Huma River 呼瑪河, a tributary of the Amur in Heilongjiang.[10]

The cession to Russia of lands beyond the Amur and the Ussuri in 1860 (which will be discussed in Chapter Five) disrupted the tribute system as the basis for the native people's relations to the Qing Empire. Some of them, such as groups of Oroqen, the Hezhe (whom the Chinese traditionally called Yupi dazi 魚皮韃子, Fishskin Tatars; Russians called them Gol'dy or Nanai) and the Giliaks (Chinese: Feiyaka 费雅喀), found themselves living in Russia. Their numbers in that country subsequently dwindled due to recurring epidemics, of which smallpox claimed the heaviest toll. The Giliaks, who relied on fishing for their livelihood, came to Russian attention mainly as the native inhabitants of Northern Sakhalin, where they are known today as Nivkhi. A chapter in Anton Chekhov's (1860–1904) travel account *Sakhalin Island*, the longest piece of prose by the famous playwright and short-story writer, provided an ethnographic overview of their situation as of 1890.[11]

The Hezhe, another fishing people who turned to hunting in winter, also lived on both sides of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. In China, those who concentrated near Sanxing, the Songhua River port in Heilongjiang, were closest to the Manchus culturally. Owen Lattimore visited them there, describing their shamanist rituals.[12] In 1921, Russian writer Vladimir Arsenyev (1872–1930) published an account of his friendship with a Gol'd (Hezhe), whom he had hired as a guide in the exploration of the Russian Ussuri Province between 1902 and 1910. The guide's name was Dersu Uzala. The book was translated into several languages, enabling readers beyond the region to discover the Hezhe through Arsenyev as they had the Giliaks through Chekhov.[13] A Soviet-Japanese film based on the book, *Dersu Uzala* by director Akira Kurosawa, won the Academy Award for the best foreign language film in 1975.

In the film, Dersu saves Arsenyev's life during a snowstorm near Lake Khanka; Arsenyev and his men reciprocate by rescuing the drowning Dersu during their second expedition. But Dersu was losing his eyesight and could not stay on as a hunter in the taiga. Arsenyev therefore brought his friend to live with him in Khabarovsk. Unable to adjust to city life, Dersu tried to return to the taiga but was soon robbed and killed. Much has been written on the factual background, fiction and art of *Dersu Uzala* as both literature and cinema.[14]

The native peoples inhabiting the banks of the lower Amur had also been in contact with the Ainu people of Sakhalin, who crossed the Strait of Tartary into the mainland to trade in Chinese brocades. A centre of this trade was a