


RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Rethinking Qing Manchuria's Prohibition Policies

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(Received 4 September 2020; revised 8 December 2020; accepted 19 December 2020)

## Abstract

Historians hold that to preserve the Manchu homeland the Qing court instituted a “policy of prohibition” (Ch: *fengjin zhengce*), forbidding Han immigrants from settling in the region until the final decades of its rule. Using Manchu-language archives from the garrison of Hunčun (Ch: Hunchun), this article questions whether such a prohibition guided local governance. In some jurisdictions in Manchuria, including in Hunčun, the Qing state did not always have an overarching policy towards Han migrants. Migration, in fact, was often less of a concern to the state than poaching. We can reassess the history of Manchuria accordingly. Modern historians have been preoccupied with the coming of Han migrants to Qing Manchuria; the Qing government in Hunčun was not.

**Keywords:** Qing; Manchuria; migration

## Introduction

High Qing Manchuria is perhaps known best for what it was not: a legal home for Han Chinese settlers. To preserve the Manchu homeland, we believe, the Qing court instituted a “policy of prohibition” (Ch: *fengjin zhengce* 封禁政策), forbidding Han immigrants from settling there until the final decades of its rule. The “policy of prohibition,” however, proved a failure. Despite the government’s best efforts, Han migrants came to Manchuria in ever-growing numbers through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In retrospect, their coming presaged greater changes to come. In the early twentieth century, as industrialization afforded migrants unprecedented economic opportunity, roughly 25 million Han Chinese would settle in the region from the 1890s through the early 1930s.<sup>1</sup> Today, Han people constitute the vast majority of those living in Northeast China; everyone else is now a national minority (Ch: 少数民族). When the Japanese empire created the puppet state of Manchukuo, and violently contested the status of Han people in the region and its history, the story of Han migration to

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I wish to thank Anthony Barbieri, Patricia Ebrey, and all the participants in the “State and Migration in Chinese History” workshop for the insights they offered in their own papers and in response to mine. Special thanks, too, to Steven Miles, Zhao Shiyu, and two anonymous reviewers for incisive written feedback. All remaining shortcomings are my own.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Gottschang and Diana Lary, *Swallows and Settlers: The Great Migration from North China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2000), 2–3.

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Northeast China emerged as a predominant focus for scholars of not only modern history, but the greater Qing period as well.<sup>2</sup> Han migration is not a subfield of Manchurian history, then; it is a defining part of the region's national narrative.<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by recent scholarship, this article argues that the “policy of prohibition” is a flawed paradigm. Scholars have long written innovative histories of the region that move beyond this basic framework. Using Manchu sources, for example, historians have shown that Han migrants were hardly the sole shapers of the region's history during the Qing period; Manchus, Orochen, Butha Ula, Daur, Mongols, Solon, and multitudes of others were too.<sup>4</sup> Other historians have documented how bannermen and their successors played formative roles in local society well into the modern era.<sup>5</sup> Still others illuminated how environmental dynamics and non-human actors shaped the region's past—and how, in particular, fur-bearing-animals, freshwater mussels, and wild ginseng played outsized roles in Manchurian lives and governance.<sup>6</sup> Han settlers, to be sure, played decisive roles in the history of the region as well. Yet we miss too many perspectives, and ignore too much local history, when we frame Manchuria's past solely in terms of Han Chinese settlers, a process of Sinicization, or the region's modern fate, as the “policy of prohibition” framework urges us to do.<sup>7</sup>

This article offers yet another reason to question the “policy of prohibition” paradigm: Across much of the region, the prohibition did not exist. Until its final years, that is, when the Qing government began to support Han settlers throughout Manchuria systemically, there was no singular, top-down immigration policy that

<sup>2</sup>The historiography on the national identity of the region has been prodigious since the early twentieth century. For recent entry points, see Song Nianshen, *Making Borders in Modern East Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 201–18; Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); and Annika A. Culver, *Glorify the Empire: Japanese Avant-Garde Propaganda in Manchukuo* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup>Many works put Han migration at the center of their Manchurian histories. For an empirically rich early work on Qing Manchuria as a Sinicizing frontier, see Robert H.G. Lee, *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch'ing History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). For more recent scholarship, see James Reardon-Anderson, *Reluctant Pioneers: China's Expansion Northward, 1644–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and Patrick Fuliang Shan, *Taming China's Wilderness* (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>4</sup>For a touchstone recent work, see Loretta E. Kim, *Ethnic Chrysalis: China's Orochen People and the Legacy of Qing Borderland Administration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019); for overviews of other parts of northern Manchuria, see Yanagisawa Akira 柳澤明, “Shinchō tōchiki no Kokuryūkō chiku ni okeru shōminzoku no keisei saihen, katei no kenkyū 清朝統治期の黒龍江地区における諸民族の形成・再編過程の研究” (Tokyo: Waseda University, 2007); and Matsuura Shigeru 松浦茂, *Shinchō no Amūru seisaku to shōshū minzoku 清朝のアムール政策と少数民族* (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2006).

<sup>5</sup>Yoshiki Enatsu, *Banner Legacy: The Rise of the Fengtian Local Elite at the End of the Qing* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2004); Shuang Chen, *State-Sponsored Inequality: The Banner System and Social Stratification in Northeast China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

<sup>6</sup>David Anthony Bello, *Across Forest, Steppe and Mountain: Environment, Identity and Empire in Qing China's Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland: Territorial Boundaries and Political Relations between Qing China and Chosŏn Korea, 1636–1912* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017); Jonathan Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

<sup>7</sup>Critiques of Sinicization have challenged the field for decades; by 1990, to quote Pamela Crossley, it already seemed “conceptually flawed, intellectually inert and impossible to apply to real history.” Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” *Late Imperial China* 11.1 (1990), 2.

applied across all of the region's jurisdictions. Instead, as Lin Shixuan has argued, there were multiple local forms of "enclosure" (Ch: *guanjin* 關禁).<sup>8</sup> In some jurisdictions, the court justified prohibitions on Han migration as a way of protecting the Manchu homeland; in others it did not. Distinctive governing logics applied to the region's Mongol territories, border areas adjoining the Russian and Joseon states, local hunting reserves, jurisdictions defined by their geomantic power, and the so-called "prohibited mountains" (Ma: *fafulaha alin*; Ch: 封禁山林, 封禁山地, or 禁地): vast regions where the state organized its governance around the production of natural resources. There, the Qing court did not frame its work in terms of Han migrants at all. Instead, the state focused on controlling poachers.

To reveal these dynamics at work, I turn to archives from the garrison of Hunčun (Ch: Hunchun 琿春), which sat in the southeastern tip of Girin (Ch: 吉林), the Qing territory from which the modern Chinese province of "Jilin" derives its name.<sup>9</sup> In Hunčun, as in Girin as a whole, there was no enforcement of an overarching ban on Han migration. Han Chinese migrants certainly came to and settled in Hunčun during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whether they were legal migrants or not, however, was of less concern to the state than their interactions with natural resources. We might rethink the relationship between the state and migration in Qing Manchuria accordingly. Many modern historians have been preoccupied with the story and presence of Han migrants in the region. Until the modern era, the Qing government in Hunčun was not.

### Migration and Restriction in Hunčun

Modern "Hunchun" sits in the eastern corner of the People's Republic of China, in Jilin, where the province borders Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Qing court founded a garrison at the site in 1714. Until 1907, when Jilin became a province, the Qing court governed Girin territory through the banner system. The highest ranking official in Girin was a "military governor" (Ma: *jiyanggiyün*; Ch: *jiangjun* 將軍), and, until 1859, the ranking officer in Hunčun was a "banner colonel" (Ma: *gūsai da*; Ch: *xieling* 協領; abbreviated hereafter to "colonel"), who in turn reported to a "lieutenant general" (Ma: *meiren-i janggin*; Ch: *fudutong* 副都統) in the town of Ningguta (Ch: Ningguta 寧古塔). In 1859, amid Russia's annexation of Manchuria's Pacific Coast, the Qing court made Hunčun's ranking officer a lieutenant general himself, and direct communication between Hunčun and Girin's military governor became more common.

Hunčun's archival record captures communications along these chains of command; the garrison clerks copied dispatches to and from Ningguta until 1859 and dispatches to higher offices thereafter. They kept these records almost exclusively in Manchu until the early nineteenth century, and they continued to use Manchu for the most part until the final decades of the nineteenth century, when record-keeping in Chinese became the norm.<sup>10</sup> Hunčun's archives are special, in part, because they have survived. The Russian army absconded with them in 1900 during an invasion of Manchuria, and

<sup>8</sup>Lin Shixuan 林士鉉, *Qingji Dongbei yimin shibian zhengce zhi yanjiu* 清季東北移民實邊政策之研究 (Taipei: Guoli zhengzhi daxue lishi xuexi, 2001), 17–62.

<sup>9</sup>The full Manchu name for the territory is sometimes given as Girin Ula.

<sup>10</sup>See Guo Chunfang 郭春芳, "Qingdai Hunchun fudutong yamen ji qi dang'an" 清代琿春副都統衙門及其檔案, *Lishi dang'an* 歷史檔案 (2004), 126. According to Guo, 100% of the records from the Qianlong



**Figure 1.** Hunčun and Its Environs, ca. 1820. Map by Jordan Blekking. Karun locations from Xu Shaoqing 徐少卿, “Jiyu ‘Hunchun fudotong yamen dang’ de Hunchun xieling xiaqu kalun tixi fuyuan (1736–1860nian)” 基于《珲春副都统衙门档》的珲春协领辖区卡伦体系复原(1736–1860年), *Beifang wenwu* 北方文物 4 (2014), 86–91. All other physical and administrative information from CHGIS, Version: 6. (c) Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies of Harvard University and the Center for Historical Geographical Studies at Fudan University, 2016.

the Soviet Union returned them to Beijing as a goodwill measure in 1956; they have been housed in the First Historical Archives ever since, and, in 2007, Guangxi Normal University Press published them in 238 volumes.<sup>11</sup>

Across these many volumes, the archives offer a spectacularly granular look at a local government at work. Many of the records describe how the colonel’s office maintained the fiscal and service obligations of the banner system, recording promotions and demotions, salary disbursements, notices of marriages and deaths, population registers, weather and crop reports, tribute submissions, and the transferring of bannermen to war.<sup>12</sup> The office produced these documents with regularity, generally on a monthly or seasonal basis. Through the mid-nineteenth century, they offer no comparably regular reports about Han migrants.

That is not to say that migrants—at least as we might define them—were not integral to the administrative life of Hunčun. The colonel’s office was responsible for more than

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reign period are in Manchu; 86% are for the Jiaqing period; 94% for the Daoguang period; 68% for the Xianfeng period; 65% for the Tongzhi period; 17% for the Guangxu period.

<sup>11</sup>Guo Chunfang, 125–26; *Hunchun fudotong yamen dang’an* (HCDA) 珲春副都统衙门档案 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2006), 1: 5–6. The published archives include the materials taken by the Russian army in 1900, as well as later records compiled in Hunčun between 1901 and 1909.

<sup>12</sup>See, for example, the range of dispatches (*xingwen* 行文) from Hunčun in HCDA 3: 30–263 (QL19) and HCDA 39: 404–500, 40: 1–316 (DG9).

just the garrison itself; it oversaw an enormous territory, comparable in size to Belgium or Massachusetts, with a jurisdiction that extended from the mountainous interior east of Changbaishan to the islands along Manchuria's Pacific Coast, including around modern-day Vladivostok.<sup>13</sup> Beyond maintaining the banner system, the colonel's office devoted considerable energy to regulating access to and movement across this vast space. Patrolmen based in Hunčun issued and inspected travel permits, checked ginseng-picking licenses, monitored the fur-trade along the Korean border, blocked access to rivers that produced fresh-water pearls, guarded a local hunting reserve, and regularly arrested poachers.

Even local bannermen could not travel within the region without proper paperwork, even for personal business. In the mid-eighteenth century, in fact, nearly half of the garrison's dispatches to Ningguta were records of travel permits issued to bannermen on the move. Into the nineteenth century, one reads of bannermen granted permits to visit other garrisons to purchase grain, paper, and other goods, see doctors, call on parents, and conduct betrothals, weddings, and funerals.<sup>14</sup> The garrison also issued permits for more permanent migrations. A bannerman transferred to Beijing, for example, received paperwork to relocate his mother to the capital: a widow, aged 60 *se*, along with their two servants (Ma: *kutule*), a cart, and eight horses.<sup>15</sup>

Qing subjects who did not belong to the banner system also needed licenses to travel within the colonel's jurisdiction. Such migrants were in fact a common sight around Hunčun, particularly in the busy summer months. Each year, throughout the Qing period, many Han and Hui men received permits to collect wild ginseng in the territory.<sup>16</sup> In the early nineteenth century the garrison further licensed Chinese migrants to work the garrison's farms during the harvest season.<sup>17</sup> The state required both ginseng pickers and migrant farmhands to work on a purely seasonal basis; neither could legally stay through the winter months. Some migrants did become permanent residents, however. A report from 1761, for example, described multiple types of "Chinese commoners outside the banner system" (Ma: *irgen*) who lived in the garrison's vast jurisdiction: thirty-nine merchants, eight woodworkers, seven ironsmiths, a mason, two straw-weavers, and 461 farmers.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Based on *karun* locations detailed in Xu Shaoqing "Jiyu 'Hunchun fudutong yamen dang' de Hunchun xieling xiaou kalun tixi fuyuan (1736–1860nian)". My estimate is that the territory covered roughly 10,500mi<sup>2</sup> (27,000km<sup>2</sup>). Massachusetts is 10,565mi<sup>2</sup>; Belgium is 11,849mi<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>14</sup>HCD 3: 30–263 (QL19), *passim*. 76 of 190 archived dispatches from QL19 relate to these basic travel permits.

<sup>15</sup>HCD 40: 7 (DG9.3.5). Manchu *se* translates to *sui* 歲 in Chinese. A person was one *se* at birth, two *se* with one's first lunar year, three with the second, and so on.

<sup>16</sup>The Qing court reformed the licensing system rules for legal ginseng picking multiple times. An early touchstone study is Imamura Tomo 今村鞆, *Ninjin shi* 人參史 (Chōsen Sōtokufu Senbaikyoku, 1934–1940). For more recent scholarship, see Van Jay Symons, *Ch'ing Ginseng Management: Ch'ing Monopolies in Microcosm* (Tempe: Arizona State University Center for Asian Studies, 1981); Wang Peihuan 王佩环, "Qingdai dongbei caishenye de xingshuai" 清代東北采参业的兴衰, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社会科学战线 4 (1982), 189–92; Chiang Chushan, *Qingdai renshen de lishi: yige shangpin de yanjiu* 清代人參的歷史：一個商品的研究 (PhD Thesis, National Tsing Hua University, 2006); Tong Yonggong 佟永功, *Manyuwen yu Manwen dang'an yanjiu* 满语文与满文档案研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chanbanshe, 2009), 258–278; Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*.

<sup>17</sup>HCD 32: 436 (JQ24.12.10); HCD 33: 301 (JQ25.12.15).

<sup>18</sup>HCD 4: 341–342 (QL26.3.15). The meaning of *irgen* varied by context. In the administrative context of Qing documents, it meant a commoner outside of the banner system, and, as such, it referred primarily

Legal migration, in fact, was woven into the fabric of garrison life. With the exception of the indigenous Kūrka (Ch: *Ku'erka* 庫爾喀 or *Huerha* 瑚爾哈) community, whom the state incorporated into the banner system upon the garrison's founding, all the bannermen in Hunčun were either migrants or the descendants of migrants, with the state relocating families from Ningguta, Ilan Hala (Ch: Sanxing 三姓, modern Yilan 宜蘭), or the Butha Ula (Ch: *Dasheng wula* 打牲烏拉) banners to the region.<sup>19</sup> The court transferred still others to Hunčun as well; in 1743, most notably, the Qing state moved a community of Oirat Mongols to the jurisdiction.<sup>20</sup> Local bannermen, on the other hand, were periodically transferred out: to other garrisons in Manchuria, to Beijing, and to all of the empire's major wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such transfers were central events in family histories, with memories of them persisting among the bannermen's descendants through at least the 1990s.<sup>21</sup>

Should we describe these bannermen as "migrants"? Perhaps not: Qing documents use a distinctive lexicon to describe the movements of bannermen as opposed to commoners. Bannermen might be *transferred* (Ma: *tebuneme unggire*), for example; they never simply moved.<sup>22</sup> Bannermen that migrated without proper permission, for their part, were not *migrants* but "deserters" or "fugitives" (Ma: *ukanju*; Ch: *taoren* 逃人).<sup>23</sup> Similar terminology applied to other types of subjects. Hunčun's escaped slaves, for instance, could never simply migrate either; they too were "deserters" if they left their assigned jurisdictions on their own accord.<sup>24</sup> Qing documents use comparable language for Russian and Joseon subjects that illegally crossed into Qing territory as well.<sup>25</sup> Records of Koreans who "deserted" to Hunčun were relatively rare until

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—but not exclusively—to people that were Han Chinese. See Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 133.

<sup>19</sup>For an overview of the administrative history, see HCDA 1: 1–4; on the early Qing history of the area and the Kūrka people, see Terauchi Itarō 寺内威太郎, "Kyonwon kaisi to Konshun 慶源開市と琿春," *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 69 (1985), 76–90.

<sup>20</sup>*Gaozong chunhuang shilu* 高宗純皇帝實錄, in *Da Qing lichao shilu* 大清歷朝實錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 182: 355a (QL8.1.4). Subsequent *Veritable Records* references are abbreviated by emperor's temple name (e.g. *Gaozong shilu*). On the local administration, see for example HCDA 1: 137 (QL12.2.4), 140 (QL12.2.13), 170 (QL12.5.16), 260 (QL13.2.12), 264 (QL13.2.24), 298 (QL3.3.13), 310 (QL13.4.9), and 343 (QL13.5.12). On population movements and the Oirats under the Qing see Ochirin Oyunjargal, *Manzh-Chin ulsaas Mongolchuudig zakhirsan bodlogo* (Ulaanbaatar: Arvin Sudar, 2009).

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, accounts in Hosoya Yoshio 細谷良夫, "Hunchun de Manzu 琿春的滿族," *Manzu yanjiu* 滿族研究 4 (1996), 81–82.

<sup>22</sup>The Sibe, for example, whom the court ordered to move from Manchuria to the furthest corner of Xinjiang, were simply "transferred to another garrison" (Ma: *tebuneme unggire*), just as others were "transferred with their families" to Dzungaria during the Dzungar wars. *Qingdai Xinjiang Manwen dang'an huibian* 清代新疆滿文檔案匯編 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe), 68.108, 69.95.

<sup>23</sup>The term *ukanju* varies by context. I have translated it elsewhere as "escapee," and "runaway" can be a fair translation as well.

<sup>24</sup>See, for example, the language in the monthly reports on escaped slaves. HCDA 3: 31 (QL19.1.19), 39 (QL19.2.23), 94 (QL19.3.22), 103 (QL19.4.1), 111 (QL19+4.22), 128 (QL19.5.22), 131 (QL19.6.20), 136 (QL19.7.22), 155 (QL19.8.21), 171 (QL19.9.29), 224 (QL19.10.22).

<sup>25</sup>It was boilerplate to describe Russians who sought to live in Qing Manchuria as people who "escaped out" (Ma: *ukame tucike*). See FHA MWLF 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3820.48.182.3437 (JQ17.8.17), 3834.52.183.3260 (JQ18.9.6), 3854.12.185.1030 (JQ19.10.13), 3879.63.187.658 (JQ21.7.6), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 4008.27.195.666 (DG4.8.18), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), and 4039.1.197.170 (DG6.8.22). On Koreans, see

the modern era, when the pace of Korean migration to the area boomed; records of local bannermen and slaves “deserting” to elsewhere, in contrast, proliferated throughout the Qing period. Some bannermen and slaves fled Hunčun; others migrated to it; others left but returned several months or years later.<sup>26</sup>

Records of desertion thus abound in the archive. In the mid-eighteenth century, the colonel’s office generated reports on escaped slaves on a monthly basis, including during months when none had escaped.<sup>27</sup> When a bannerman or slave did escape, moreover, the colonel’s office had to detail the fugitive’s name, age, body-type, skin coloration, pockmarks, and clothing, and to provide a brief account of how and where the escape occurred. The office likewise received regular all-points bulletins dispatched from Ningguta about fugitives from other jurisdictions who remained at large.<sup>28</sup> From these reports, the historian gathers much about how many migrants-to-be left their homes. In one typical case, a local officer asked a bannerman, aged 25 *se*, to escort carts laden with government grain from Hunčun to Ningguta, about 100 miles away; at an opportune moment on the way home, the bannerman simply abandoned his cart, slipped out of sight, and was never found again.<sup>29</sup>

Crucially, however, while records of desertion are abundant, there are no comparable documents about where deserters went and how they lived out their lives. Only contingencies produced such information; a deserter had to return home and ask to rejoin their banner, for example, or they had to be caught committing a more serious crime. Consider the case of a man named Hüribu, who spent eight years living off the grid before he was caught in 1745.<sup>30</sup> From an arrest report from that year, we learn that he spent these years working near the Pacific Coast, where he joined a diverse group that included four Han Chinese commoners, two Hui, and two Manchu bannermen who had deserted from other garrisons in Girin. Not only were they supplying local ginseng poachers with grain, tobacco, and other supplies; they were tipping them off as to when and where Hunčun’s guardsmen conducted their winter patrols for ginseng poachers that illegally stayed through the season.

Hüribu’s desertion thus serves as a cautionary tale. When patrolmen finally arrested him, an investigation revealed that his superiors had failed to report him missing in the first place. If desertion was illegal, then, not everyone took it seriously: not Hüribu, and not his commanding officer, who was either too negligent or corrupt to care that he had been gone for seven years. Critically, moreover, one meets Hüribu not in a report on deserters, but in a dispatch from patrolmen tasked with detaining poachers. Hüribu’s migration did not make him visible in the archives, then, his connection to the ginseng trade did. A kaleidoscope of migrants thus emerges from the Hunčun archive: transferees, fugitives, escaped slaves, widowed mothers, seasonal workers, and so on. Yet migrants who lived illegally outside Hunčun’s local banner system stay mostly invisible in

*Gaozong shilu* 666: 442b–443a (QL27.7.2). Note also that the Turguts were “deserters,” per *Gaozong shilu*, 887: 879a–880b (QL36.6.17) and 887: 881b–883a (QL36.6.18).

<sup>26</sup>The laws for desertion changed over time, and punishments varied both by the number of times one deserted and the length of time one was away. See, for example, *Xuanzong shilu*, 204: 10b–11b (DG12.1.21).

<sup>27</sup>See citations provided in footnote 24. The document elaborates three types of slaves: older household slaves (Ma: *gūsai niyalma i booi fe aha*); slave children (Ma: *ujin aha*); and slaves that had been sold with proper paperwork (Ma: *doron gidaha bithe udaha aha*).

<sup>28</sup>HCD 3: 85 (QL19.3.21), 103 (QL19.4.1), 154 (QL19.8.21).

<sup>29</sup>HCD 39: 463 (DG9.2.25).

<sup>30</sup>The following derives from HCD 1: 209–222 (QL12.6.23). The record, written in Manchu, provides no Chinese name for Hüribu.

standardized reports about migrants. We must learn about them, by and large, through accounts of patrolmen looking for poachers and their suppliers. Hūribu became visible through his connection to an illegal trade, and not as an illegal migrant *per se*.

### The Importance of Poaching

The ginseng trade was a major draw for migrants to Hunčun through the mid-nineteenth century, and it is reasonable to imagine that most of Hunčun's migrants were connected to the trade.<sup>31</sup> Yet the fact that the historian encounters illegal migrants in the archival record primarily as poachers is revealing all the same; it reflects the peculiar outlook of the local government, its patrolmen's work, and the categories they used to classify local subjects. What, then, was the charge of Hunčun's patrol units?

Hunčun's patrolmen had differing tasks depending on the area they oversaw, as different mandates applied to the different parts of Hunčun. A report from 1761, for example, identified four types of jurisdiction within the banner colonel's ambit: 1) an area to the north and east of the garrison, which was overseen by ten guard-posts, called *karun* (Ch: *kalun* 卡倫); 2) an area along the Pacific coast, overseen by three *karun*; 3) an area along the Tumen River and the border with Joseon; and 4) the garrison's "villages and hamlets" (Ma: *gašan tokso*), where most bannermen and their families lived.<sup>32</sup> A register of *karun* officers from 1787 offered a similar division of administrative space; it described the same four jurisdiction types, but also elaborated a fifth one: an area encompassing fourteen islands off the coast, overseen by its own special units.<sup>33</sup>

The patrolmen who worked these different jurisdictions had differing jobs to do. In the "villages and hamlets," most notably, one does find something akin to a "policy of prohibition" aimed at Han Chinese. Anxiety about the wellbeing of Manchu bannermen and the productivity of their farms runs through the documents about village patrols. The population of the "villages and hamlets" was relatively small, though it grew substantially over time; the registered population in 1823, for example, was 6,158 bannermen; in 1844 it had grown to 9,586.<sup>34</sup> These families endured special challenges. Hunčun was prone to flooding, and the harvest was often insufficient; the garrison would never have survived as it did without regular influxes of cash and grain from the state, or from the wealth generated from illegal trades in local resources.<sup>35</sup> Yet although local families participated in regular trade at the Joseon border, and they did business with Han and Hui merchants with ties to the Qing interior, they remained relatively poor.

<sup>31</sup>For an overview of this dynamic, see works cited in note 16.

<sup>32</sup>HCD4 4: 341–342 (QL26.3.15). The office in turn subdivided the ten guardposts into three types: three *karun* on the route to Ningguta (Hašun, Mukdehe, and Mijan); six "in the vicinity of Hunčun" (Angga, Hadama, Amida, Fotosi, Jurun, and Daidu), one "in addition to the above nine" (Monggo). Monggo *karun* was most likely on the coast on what is now called Amur Bay, opposite Vladivostok.

<sup>33</sup>HCD4 15: 389 (QL52.2.10). This record also elaborates distinctions between permanent and seasonal *karun*.

<sup>34</sup>HCD4 15: 389 (QL52.2.10). For more on the sources, see Yang Derong 杨德荣, "Qingdai Hunchun baqi bidingce chutan" 清代珲春八旗比丁册初探, *Wenjiao ziliao* 文教资料 34 (2019), 96–98.

<sup>35</sup>Perhaps the most calamitous flood of the Hunčun River came in 1846, when the registered banner population fell from roughly 9,500 to 8,000. See Xu Shaoqing 徐少卿 and Li Yan 李燕, "Hunchun fudutong yamen dang' 1781–1860 nian renkou dangce zhengli" 《珲春福都统衙门档》1781–1860 年人口档册整理, *Lantai shijie* 兰台世界 8 (2015), 138–39.



Within this context, the patrolmen tasked with overseeing the villages had two tasks. The first was to root out “unemployed” and “vagrant Chinese commoners without property.” The focus on vagrancy was particularly great in the mid-eighteenth century; patrolmen regularly reported on commoner vagrants, even when none were found. A patrolman’s report from 1761 found no such illegal vagrants, for example, reporting that all of the villages’ “Chinese commoners” (Ma: *irgen*) were legally employed as farmers, merchants, and artisans.<sup>36</sup>

Patrolmen in the villages had a second task, as well: to root out illegal “grain traffickers” (Ma: *bele benere urse*) who were supplying ginseng pickers in the surrounding area—men like Hüribu, who traded grain along the coast. Multiple times a year throughout the mid-eighteenth century, specially appointed men of the rank of lieutenant (Ma: *funde bošokū*) led three patrol teams into the villages in search of Chinese vagrants and illegal grain traders.<sup>37</sup> Notably, the appointed lieutenants stopped submitting regular reports in the late eighteenth century, when other issues came to the fore. In the early nineteenth century, for example, village patrolmen focused more on monitoring Chinese farmworkers, who came to Hunčun legally for the harvest, but were forbidden to remain after threshing was complete.<sup>38</sup>

The patrolmen who worked the Tumen River along the border with Joseon Korea, in contrast, had a different mandate. The archive holds no regularized reports from them. Instead, it seems, crises along the border would trigger a flurry of relevant paperwork in certain years, as in 1762, when the court demanded a sweep for every “Joseon subject” (Ma: *coohiyān gurun i irgen*) who had crossed into Qing territory.<sup>39</sup> As Seonmin Kim has shown, Qing patrolmen were particularly on the lookout for Korean ginseng poachers through the mid nineteenth century, and, for this reason, Korean migrants thus also tend to become visible in the archives in their connection to illegal ginseng picking.<sup>40</sup> The same holds for other trades as well; the colonel’s office, for example, was particularly careful to report on any prohibited fur trade between Korean merchants and the local Kūrka.<sup>41</sup>

Beyond the “villages and hamlets” and the Tumen River, the colonel’s office governed the rest of Hunčun primarily as “restricted mountains” (Ma: *fafulaha alin*) set aside for ginseng picking, freshwater pearl collection, and other types of resource extraction, and across most of the territory the rules governing access focused on interactions with resources. Nobody other than tribute-collection parties could legally harvest freshwater mussels. Ginseng pickers, in contrast, could work throughout most of the region with a proper license. The Qianlong emperor further issued decrees in 1759 and 1761 that instituted a “general prohibition” (Ch: *fengjin* 封禁) on “commoner Chinese migrants” (Ch: *liumin* 流民) or “Chinese commoners” (Ch: *minren* 民人) wintering in area.<sup>42</sup> Bannermen could not permanently settle outside their designated villages

<sup>36</sup>HCDA 1: 333 (QL13.4.27); HCDA 4: 341–342 (QL26.3.15).

<sup>37</sup>See reports, for example, from the year 1754 (QL19) in HCDA 3: 31 (QL19.1.19), 87 (QL19.3.21), 95 (QL19.3.27), 115 (QL19.+4.15), 134 (QL19.6.28), 157 (QL19.9.9), and 228 (QL19.10.24).

<sup>38</sup>HCDA 32: 436 (JQ24.12.10); HCDA 33: 301 (JQ25.12.15).

<sup>39</sup>See, for example, HCDA 5: 113 (QL27.3.14), 124 (QL27.3.24), 143 (QL27.5.7), 184 (QL27.+5.29), 357 (QL27.3.14), 378 (QL27.3.30), 409 (QL27.5.21), 420 (QL5.+5.21).

<sup>40</sup>On the centrality to ginseng in the formation of the Qing-Joseon border, see Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland*.

<sup>41</sup>See, for example, HCDA 27: 144–145 (JQ19.2.15) and HCDA 38: 363 (DG8.1.25).

<sup>42</sup>*Da Qing huidian shili* (DQHDSL) 大清會典事例 (JQ): 186, 14b–a; HCDA 29: 300–305 (JQ23.8.28).

either; until 1832, in fact, bannermen were prohibited from even hunting or otherwise profiting from things across the vast restricted areas.<sup>43</sup>

Patrolmen who worked this region had distinctive mandates. Those based to the north and east of the garrison, for example, were on guard against “rogues illegally picking ginseng and trafficking in grain.”<sup>44</sup> Since routes to key “ginseng-producing mountains” in Suifun, the Ussuri, and other areas wound through Hunčun’s territory as well, guardsmen also had special orders to arrest poachers passing through to these other regions as well.<sup>45</sup> These mandates were serious; unlike in the villages and along the Tumen officers on patrol generated regularized reports deep into the nineteenth century. Starting in 1822, for example, and continuing through at least 1850, the state even began requiring commanding officers at four key *karun* to submit monthly affidavits (Ma: *akdulara bihe*; Ch: *baojie* 保結) that vouched for the thoroughness and integrity of their work.<sup>46</sup> One typical affidavit read:

The affidavit report of Dahūngga, an active duty bannerman of the rank Junior Bodyguard, stationed at Gahari *karun*. In accordance with my commission, I have strictly inspected the jurisdiction of my *karun*. From the first day of the third month to the first day of the fourth month, no people (Ma: *urse*) obtained permits and passed through. Further, no person (Ma: *niyalma*) has been logging, hunting, or passing through on their own initiative. There has been no deception or cover-ups; this report is uncorrupted. I submit a sealed and written affidavit on these matters. Verily, Dahūngga, an active duty bannerman of the rank of Junior Bodyguard.<sup>47</sup>

Every month for decades, like a drumbeat, such affidavits arrived in Hunčun and were forwarded to Ningguta. While the language of the affidavits have slight differences across time, they use the same key terminology to differentiate legal subjects (“people who obtained permits and passed through”) from illegal ones (a “person [who] has been logging, hunting, or passing through on their own initiative”). Like the mandate to capture poaching “rogues” (Ma: *dursuki akū ursu*), the affidavits used the Manchu terms *urse* (“people”) and *niyalma* (“person”) to describe the targets of their search—words that do not identify or suggest an ethnicity, unlike *irgen* (usually “Chinese commoner outside the banner system”) or *nikan* (“Han Chinese”). The guards at these *karun* not only had to arrest all “people that have been illegally hunting or logging” in the area; they also had to burn down any wooden shelters (Ma: *cohon*) they discovered.<sup>48</sup> No person of any sort, in fact, was welcome in the area unless they had proper permission; guardsmen had to swear that “no people [Ma: *urse*] were passing through the officials’ *karun* jurisdiction on their own accord.”<sup>49</sup>

Similar patterns held for patrolmen’s reports from other parts of the restricted territory. Along the Pacific Coast, for instance, *karun* officers began submitting similar types of affidavits in 1822, guaranteeing that patrolmen had not encountered any

<sup>43</sup>Xuanzong *shilu*, 204: 10b–11b (DG12.1.21).

<sup>44</sup>HCDA 3: 57 (QL19.3.14).

<sup>45</sup>HCDA 1: 333 (QL13.4.27).

<sup>46</sup>HCDA 33–53.

<sup>47</sup>HCDA 40: 28 (DG9.4.15).

<sup>48</sup>HCDA 33: 435–437 (DG2.5.1).

<sup>49</sup>HCDA 43: 335 (DG14.10.15).

“criminals that had wintered” in the area, any “criminals that had illegally deserted,” or any “shelters or reclaimed land.”<sup>50</sup> The language of their affidavits again relies on Manchu terms that focus on illegal activities, not the identity of the migrant. Similar patterns held in the policing of pearl mussel poaching. In order to restore declining mussel populations, the court instituted moratoriums on pearling multiple times during the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century, and *karun* guards were responsible for enforcing the bans.<sup>51</sup> Thus, starting in 1828, Hunčun’s patrolmen began submitting affidavits on illegal pearling.<sup>52</sup> These affidavits accordingly focused on “people that illegally poached pearls,” defining the targets once again by a criminal’s actions, not their ethnicity.<sup>53</sup>

Similar mandates held at the local game reserve (Ma: *hoihan*; Ch: 圍場), where patrolmen began submitting additional affidavits on poaching in the 1820s. Here, bannermen hunted as part of their military training and as an expression of their Manchu identity.<sup>54</sup> Yet if the function of game reserves was distinctive, the policing of it was not. Guardsmen were concerned about the poaching of “ironwood trees” (Ma: *selengge moo*; Ch: *tieshu* 鐵樹;) and the establishment of ginseng farms within the reserve.<sup>55</sup> Again, the officers’ reports describe the patrolmen’s work with characteristic language: their task was to catch poachers, not Han migrants *per se*.

Judging from the descriptions of the criminals these patrolmen caught, we can quickly gather that Han Chinese constituted a clear majority of the poachers, even if Hui Chinese and bannermen were found poaching across Hunčun as well. It is not unreasonable to imagine, moreover, that “poacher” might sometimes denote “Han Chinese.” The Qianlong emperor himself, for example, conflated poachers with “commoner Chinese migrants,” as his decrees of 1757 and 1761 make so clear. The court’s interest in products such as freshwater pearls, after all, was itself connected to its Manchu identity.<sup>56</sup> Nor was Hunčun divorced from broader efforts to define and protect the “Manchu Way” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>57</sup> In 1737, the Qianlong emperor issued an edict that required the colonel in Hunčun, and all other senior officials in Mukden (Ch: *Fengtian* 奉天 or 盛京), Sahaliyan Ula (Ch: Heilongjiang 黑龍江), and Girin, to use only Manchu words when referring to local places in the region, and to stop using transliterations from Chinese.<sup>58</sup> Later generations of Hunčun bannermen received similar enjoinders to master the Manchu language and hone their martial skills—and the Manchu language, for its part, would continue to be used in local society deep into the nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>50</sup>HCD 33: 262 (JQ25.11.10).

<sup>51</sup>Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*, 55–91.

<sup>52</sup>HCD 40: 286 (DG9.11.15).

<sup>53</sup>HCD 39: 351 (DG8.11.5); 40: 286 (DG9.11.15).

<sup>54</sup>Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 175–91.

<sup>55</sup>Jerry Norman defines *selengge moo* as “a tree with black trunk and leaves, and light purple flower that blooms for months without withering.” Jerry Norman, et al, *A Comprehensive Manchu–English Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 315.

<sup>56</sup>Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*, 17–50.

<sup>57</sup>On the “Manchu Way” and its significance, see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*.

<sup>58</sup>HCD 1: 272–278 (QL13.2.27).

<sup>59</sup>See, for example, HCD 37: 437 (DG8.1.25). The threat of bannermen in Guangzhou losing the Manchu way triggered the decree that arrived in Hunčun that year. In retrospect, such edicts must have found a peculiar local reception, as Manchu predominated locally. Knowing Chinese was the issue; in

It is all the more striking, for this reason, that one consistently encounters language mandating the arrest of “commoner Chinese” (*irgen*) vagrants in the “villages and hamlets,” but not elsewhere. Rather, it seems, in a territory of Massachusetts, the patrolmen’s primary task was to stop poachers and their suppliers. The state demanded regular reports on hunters, pearlers, loggers, and ginseng pickers. It even began to require regular, personal affidavits that verified that patrolmen were doing this work. Patrolmen worked the coast and the inland rivers, staking out positions along travel routes poachers were known to use. Other than the *karun* guards themselves, nobody could winter outside of the designated villages. A prohibition mattered, then: a prohibition on the exploitation of *things*.

Perhaps the distinction is a nominal one. From the perspective of a Han migrant, it might have seemed all the same; “poachers,” after all, were mostly Han Chinese. Yet from the perspective of a local Manchu-language archive, the distinction matters. The Qing state was not shy about using ethnic identifiers or crafting migration policy; in Hunčun, for one, it was explicit in its effort to remove illegal “commoner Chinese” from the area’s banner villages in the mid-eighteenth century. The language used in the resource-producing zones is all the more remarkable for this reason. It is possible that Hunčun’s archives slip into an unusually indirect register when describing a Han migration policy in the “prohibited mountains.” It is certain, however, that differing governing logics applied to Hunčun’s differing jurisdictions—and that migration policy ended, and resource management began, at the boundary between the banner village and the vast, forested tracks around them.

### Hunčun in its Regional Context: High Qing Migration Policy in Jilin

Was Hunčun typical, then, or anomalous? The administrative history of Girin suggests that Hunčun was, in many ways, a microcosm of its home territory; like Hunčun, Girin as a whole was divided into differing types of jurisdictions, each with differing governing mandates, but regulating access to the territory’s natural resources tended to command the attention of officials.

Consider what one needed to know to effectively govern Girin. In his *Emu tanggū orin sakda-i gisun sarkiyān* (120 *Stories from Old Men*), the scholar-official Sungyūn (Ch: Songyun 松筠, 1752–1835) devoted a chapter each to the responsibilities of the military governors of Mukden (Ch: Fengtian 奉天 or 盛京), Girin, and Sahaliyan Ula (Ch: Heilongjiang 黑龍江).<sup>60</sup> Sungyūn did not discuss a “policy of prohibition” or illegal Han migrants in any of these chapters. For Girin, Sungyūn opens his account with a brief description of Changbaishan (Ma: Golmin Šanyan Alin), which he celebrates as a wellspring of Qing power of “astonishing *fengshui*.”<sup>61</sup> He then transitions to a discussion of the lucrative ginseng monopoly, ginseng’s scarcity, and the fact that one needed special *karun* to guard the “ginseng-producing mountains”; finally, after dealing with the territory’s unique riches, he concludes with a meditation on corruption and the importance of personal integrity.<sup>62</sup> In contrast, Sungyūn lists many

1738, the Hunčun garrison had to request that a translator be specially sent from Ningguta to handle Chinese-language documents; HCDA 1: 426 (QL13.7.23).

<sup>60</sup>For an introduction to the text see Nakami Tatsuo, “Some Remarks on the *Emu tanggū orin sakda-i gisun sarkiyān*,” in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manchu-Tungus Studies*, ed. Giovanni Stary, et al (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 77–94.

<sup>61</sup>Sungyūn, *Emu tanggū orin sakda-i gisun sarkiyān*, 41a.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 41b–47a.

more responsibilities of the military governors of Sahaliyan Ula and Mukden. He had less to write about these other tasks, though. Governing Sahaliyan Ula, for example, required managing the border with Russia, collecting sable tribute, overseeing farms, and dealing with exiled families; it really was “not that complicated.”<sup>63</sup> His chapter on Girin is longer than the ones for Mukden and Sahaliyan Ula combined.

To be sure, a quick look at the *Veritable Records* confirms that the court issued multiple edicts against Han migrants settling in Girin to protect the territory’s Manchu identity. The Qianlong emperor was particularly vocal about the issue. In 1741, he decreed that “crowds of commoner Chinese migrants” (Ch: *juji liumin* 聚集流民) should not be allowed in Girin as they brought “no benefit” to the “Manchu homeland” (Ma: *manzhou genben* 滿洲根本)—a term that the court usually reserved for Mukden during the eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup> In 1777, the emperor again decreed a need to defend the “pure and old customs of the Manchus” from the “corrupting evil ways of Han people,” and he deplored Girin’s growing numbers of “commoner Chinese migrants,” warning that Girin was following the path of Mukden, which already had a large Han population.<sup>65</sup> In 1781, the court once again warned of Han immigrants despoiling the “old customs” and “livelihoods” of bannermen in Mukden and Girin.<sup>66</sup> Qianlong’s successors, for their part, made similar assertions. The Daoguang emperor lamented that Han migrants were crossing the Great Wall and coming to both Mukden and Girin, together the “homeland where our state was founded.” Migrants, he wrote, were homesteading on “unfarmed state land” (Ch: *guanhuang* 官荒), chasing profits, ginning up disorder, and corrupting the “pure customs” of bannermen.<sup>67</sup>

Yet the *Veritable Records* also make clear that not all Han migrants were equal, and that the emperors regularly made distinctions among them on a case-by-case basis. Were the migrants employed? Were they troublemakers? Were they new arrivals, or had they lived in the region for years? Did they have a compelling reason to emigrate, or were they simply vagrants? Were they travelling alone or with families? Would repatriating them be impractical? Or cruel? Even if they had come illegally, the court tended to grant legal status and enroll into *baojia* 保甲 units migrants who had clean records, were employed, had been in the region for years, and were already established in the local community. Known criminals, the unemployed, and fresh arrivals received harsher treatment.<sup>68</sup>

If the court did not treat all migrants the same in Girin, it likewise failed to treat all jurisdictions within the territory equally either. In jurisdictions where Manchu bannermen had special claims on the land, imperial discourse did emphasize a need to protect the culture and livelihoods of the Manchus. Yet a different logic applied to Girin’s Mongol territories, where the court invoked a mandate to protect the way of life, pastureland, and livelihoods of the Mongols.<sup>69</sup> A third logic applied to Girin’s territories

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 47a–55b. For “not that complicated,” see the opening statement on 47a. His chapter on Mukden likewise surveys a range of tasks, but offers little about their significance or the special difficulties they posed. Ibid. 38a–40b.

<sup>64</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 142: 1045a (QL6.5.8).

<sup>65</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 1035: 868a–b (QL42.6.21).

<sup>66</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 1144: 328a–b (QL46.11.1).

<sup>67</sup>*Xuanzong shilu*, 250: 778a–b (DG14.3.20).

<sup>68</sup>See the concerns raised in *Gaozong shilu*, 273: 562a–b (QL11.8.18); 274: 583b–584a (QL11.9.7); 356: 917a–b (QL15.1.11); 1100b–1101a (QL15.8.24); *Renzong shilu*, 252: 404a–405a (JQ16.12.20); and *Xuanzong shilu*, 146: 231b–232b (DG8.11.4); 250: 778a–b (DG14.3.20); and 273: 206b (DG15.10.17).

<sup>69</sup>See, for example, *Renzong shilu*, 228: 59b–60b (JQ15.4.17). For similar language in a different context, see *Renzong shilu*, 245: 165a–166b (JQ15.10.18).

that produced ginseng and pearls. In 1744, for example, when the court restricted undocumented ginseng picking in the “prohibited mountains and forests” of Elmin and Halmin, near Changbaishan, the Qianlong emperor argued that overharvesting both diminished the supply of the product and disrupted the *fengshui* of Changbaishan.<sup>70</sup> With a focus on controlling and conserving ginseng, the court would ultimately prohibit access to vast regions of Hunčun, Ningguta, and Ilan Hala from the interior to the Pacific Coast.<sup>71</sup>

Boundaries separated these various types of jurisdictions. The Willow Palisades, most famously, marked off Mongol lands to the north, lands reserved for resource extraction and hunting reserves to the east, and, to the south near Fenghuang (Ch: *Fenghuang cheng* 鳳凰城), the boundary-zone with Joseon Korea.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, a perimeter of *karun* marked off a “prohibited territory” that stretched north from Hunčun through Ningguta to Ilan Hala. Other boundary markers (Ch: *fengdui* 封堆) would delineate legally arable lands from “restricted unfarmed land” (Ch: *jinhuang* 禁荒 or *guanhuang*) near the settlement at Shuangcheng, where the Qing state orchestrated the migration of bannermen from Beijing in the early 1800s.<sup>73</sup>

Over time, the differing mandates in these spaces tended to trump broader, territory-wide concerns. Qianlong’s 1741 edict against new “crowds of undocumented Chinese migrants” in Girin, for example, was indeed thorough; it extended a prohibition on Han settlement to four types of jurisdictions: banner farmland, Mongol pastureland, “Girin’s rivers that produce ginseng and freshwater pearls,” and the “rivers and overland routes leading to places such as Changbaishan and the Ussuri.”<sup>74</sup> Yet four months after this decree, the emperor elaborated different terms for legal Chinese migration: Those who had already settled in Girin, and whom the court had granted legal status to, could stay. They simply had to follow the rules; they could not poach ginseng, smuggle furs, or illegally homestead in territory beyond their allotted jurisdiction.<sup>75</sup>

The court reserved the harshest language about Han migrants, in fact, for moments when it was in fact *opening* land to settlement. In 1781, for instance, as the court lamented a report that Han immigrants were despoiling the “old customs” and “livelihoods” of Manchu bannermen in Girin, it was simultaneously determining a proper grain tax for legalized migrants.<sup>76</sup> The pattern would hold: when the Daoguang emperor lamented Han migrants crossing the Great Wall and compromising the “homeland where our state was founded,” the issue at hand was not that migrants were present in Girin, but that they had begun to occupy restricted “unfarmed government land.” To the Daoguang court, it seemed inexpedient and wrong to banish all law-abiding migrants from Girin, especially if the migrants had lost their homes amid a natural disaster. Culling the territory’s specially prohibited mountains of profit-seekers, on

<sup>70</sup>DQHDSL (QL) 129: 22a.

<sup>71</sup>See, for example, DQHDSL (JQ): 186, 14b–a.

<sup>72</sup>A touchstone overview of the Willow Palisades and its functions remains Richard L. Edmonds, “The Willow Palisade,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69.4 (1979), 599–621.

<sup>73</sup>For context, see Shuang Chen, *State-Sponsored Inequality*. Other internal boundaries emerged elsewhere. In 1832, for example, while allowing bannermen to begin using formerly “prohibited” territory, the court redrew boundaries and prohibited them from using land used for tribute collection, as well as areas west of the Sunggari and north of the Hoifa Rivers. *Xuanzong shilu*, 204: 10b–11b (DG12.1.21).

<sup>74</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 142:1045a (QL6.5.8).

<sup>75</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 150: 1152b–1153b (QL6.9.6).

<sup>76</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 1144: 328a–b (QL46.11.1).

the other hand, was another matter.<sup>77</sup> Appeals to expediency or humanity had currency in some jurisdictions, then; they just did not in areas assigned to produce precious resources for the court.

Only in the nineteenth century, when it was clear that the region's resources were being utterly exhausted, did the court allow some flexibility in the prohibited mountains. By 1812, the Jiaqing emperor could assert that rampant poaching, while unfortunate, had presented a new opportunity to resettle Beijing's unemployed bannermen in Girin. In his words: "I have heard that beyond the Willow Palisades, ginseng picking is happening in mountains that are increasingly distant, leaving empty space for more than a thousand *li*." He thus decreed that the "ginseng area's boundary" be pushed back accordingly, and migrants be allowed to homestead in the newly formed space between the Willow Palisades and diminished prohibited zone.<sup>78</sup>

The logic of opening land to Han migrants in the later nineteenth century often proved similar. In 1857, when the court deliberated opening Hulan (Ch: *Hulan* 呼蘭; today a district in Harbin) to legal migration and homesteading, it hesitated; much of the land that the administrators hoped to open had been set aside as "land for ginseng picking and pearl collecting in Girin." Local officials thus had to prove that these resources had already been exhausted. A subsequent investigation later confirmed that in Hulan "ginseng shoots are extremely scarce and mussels do not breed." The court thus decided to open the land to migrant settlement and rejected an "obdurate commitment to prohibition." Nonetheless, it maintained that future reclamation schemes should not interfere with four special types of government business: ginseng operations (*shenwu* 蔘務), pearling (*zhuwu* 珠務), garrison farms (*tunwu* 屯務), and border security (*bianwu* 邊務).<sup>79</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the very term "prohibition," or *fengjin*, in fact usually did not usually apply to Girin as a whole, but to specific jurisdictions within the territory, such as to Mongol pasturelands, the "restricted mountains" used for resource production, "unfarmed state land" near designated settlements, hunting reserves, and places with special *fengshui*, as near Nurhaci's tomb.<sup>80</sup> The governing logics in these various spaces, though interconnected, varied by jurisdiction. It took significant administrative reform during the Qing period, and particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to unify the rules governing these disparate jurisdictions and create a single logic where there had once been many.<sup>81</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, of course, so much had already changed: there was insufficient wild ginseng and pearl mussels to justify the existence of expansive "prohibited mountains"; the military no

<sup>77</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 250: 778a–b (DG14.3.20).

<sup>78</sup> *Renzong shilu*, 456: 55b–456b (JQ17.4.2).

<sup>79</sup> *Wenzong shilu*, 567a–b (XF7.6.4)

<sup>80</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 327: 1142a–b (DG19.10.21), 327: 1143a (DG19.10.22), 343: 226a (DG20.12.25), 364: 564a–b (DG21.12.28); *Wenzong shilu*, 567a–b (XF7.6.4); *Muzong shilu*, 370: 905a. On Mongol lands, see *Xuanzong shilu*, 80: 294b (DG5.3.20), 215: 200a–b (DG12.7.13); 362: 533a–b (DG21.11.26), 379: 847a (DG22.8.27), 447: 607b–608a (DG27.9.14). On grappling with the special prohibitions on settling in hunting reserves, see *Xuanzong shilu*, 37: 659b–660a (DG2.6.16) *Muzong shilu*, 101: 224a–b (TZ3.4.25); 241: 340b–341b (TZ7.8.24); *Dezong shilu*, 69: 68b (GX4.3.2), 125: 804a–b (GX6.12.29), 198: 817b–818a (GX10.11.26) 246: 309b (GX13.8.22) 274: 662a–b (GX15.9.24). On *fengshui*, see *Muzong shilu*, 203: 624a–625a (TZ6.5.20), 247: 435b–436a (TZ7.11.20), 249: 474a–b (TZ7.12.27), 259: 601a (TZ8.5.25), 263: 653a–b (TZ8.7.25), 301: 1165a–b (TZ9.12.26); *Dezong shilu*, 67: 29a (GX4.2.6) and 80: 221b (GX4.10.18).

<sup>81</sup> For a comparable modern dynamic, see Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

longer needed hunting reserves to train; aggression from the Russian and Japanese empires seemed to demand radical new forms of state-building; the relationship of the court to its imperial constituencies shifted. In its final decade of existence, the Qing state accordingly embraced, for the first time in its history, an all-encompassing migration policy for Manchuria: a “policy of defending the border with [Han commoner] migrants” (Ch: *yimin shibian zhengce* 移民實邊政策).<sup>82</sup> A modern era of state-sponsored Han settlement had begun.

### Conclusion: Beyond *Fengjin*

In the period before the late nineteenth century the Hunčun archives, and the broader administrative history of Girin, offer two insights into migration policy in Qing Manchuria: first, that local mandates could outweigh broader regional ones, despite courtly rhetoric suggesting otherwise; and, second, that in much of the region, there was no overarching policy aimed at “migrants” at all. In Hunčun, at least, patrolmen focused not on Han migrants as such, but on poachers. I have argued elsewhere that the court increasingly identified the Manchu homeland with the “Three Eastern Territories” (Ch: *Dongsansheng* 東三省) from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>83</sup> Yet while a real and significant phenomenon, the discourse of the “Manchu homeland” had only so much salience in local governance. The banner colonel in Hunčun continued to govern his domain according to the needs of his differing jurisdictions, and, in practice, preserving the Manchu nature of the homeland was but one mandate among many.

Taking into account the region’s multitudes would only enrich our understanding of Manchuria and the Qing empire more broadly. There were jurisdictions where the court aimed to protect the Manchu Way from Han migrants, or where the court positioned itself as the protector of Mongol ways. The language of Qing documents in these spaces was not exceptional; one finds comparable language in other parts of the empire where Manchus and Mongols resided. Other types of jurisdictions, however, require different comparisons. Changbaishan and the tomb of Nurhaci, where protecting *fengshui* was key; the game reserves; the emptied borderlands with Joseon Korea: these spaces have their own distinctive parallels in other parts of the empire.<sup>84</sup> None were wholly unique to Manchuria.

Manchuria’s vast “prohibited mountains” have a broader imperial history as well. In 1778, for example, when confronted with unlicensed jade production and smuggling in Xinjiang, the court adopted a “prohibition” (Ch: *fengjin*) policy in Xinjiang, explicitly comparing Xinjiang’s jade smugglers with Mukden and Girin’s ginseng poachers.<sup>85</sup> The court, in fact, commonly applied special “prohibitions” to jurisdictions identified with natural resources, such as mines.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, in the *Da Qing huidian shili* 大清會

<sup>82</sup>Lin Shixuan, *Qingji Dongbei yimin shibian zhengce zhi yanjiu*.

<sup>83</sup>Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*, 88–91.

<sup>84</sup>On *fengshui*, see Tristan G. Brown, *The Veins of the Earth: Property, Environment, and Cosmology in Nanbu County, 1865–1942* (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2017); on hunting reserve policy, see Luo Yunzhi 羅運治, *Qingdai Mulan weichang de tantao* 清代木蘭圍場的探討 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1989); and Nicholas K. Menzies, *Forest and Land Management in Imperial China* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 55–64.

<sup>85</sup>*Gaozong shilu*, 1070: 344a–b (QL43.11.3).

<sup>86</sup>Excluding sulfur-producing zones, for which references abound, references in the *Veritable Records* to discussions of *fengjin* prohibitions at various types of mines include: *Shengzu shilu*, 221: 229a (KX44);



典事例, the lone reference to a *fengjin* policy in Manchuria appears not in a chapter on bannermen or migrants, but in one on “collecting and hunting” (Ch: *cai bu* 採捕); it records a Qianlong-era prohibition against ginseng poaching in Elmin and Halmin. Tellingly, this *Huidian* chapter fails to describe a general prohibition on Han migration across Manchuria. Rather, it offers specific rules, for specific places, for exploiting specific things: ginseng, furs, sturgeon, pearls, and so on.<sup>87</sup>

Precious resources, restricted places, and migration policies connect in Qing texts. Minerals, rare pharmaceuticals, and other treasured things proliferated at the empire’s edges, and the state’s migration policies could simultaneously address the oftentimes connected ambitions of controlling resources and defining ethnic and imperial boundaries.<sup>88</sup> The presence of precious natural resources, or the realization of their exhaustion, had differing meanings and consequences in different parts of the empire, and those differences mattered; we cannot fully account for the relationship between migration and the state without accounting for histories of natural resources, circulating things, and changing local environments. Qing documents themselves urge us to draw these connections.

In Hunčun, at least, one has to work to find Han “migrants” in the archives. Social historians will no doubt use these archives to write a rich new history of Han migrants in the region. Such a project will require enormous labor; enterprising historians will have to reorganize the archival record around modern categories and sift through thousands of records that address matters of seemingly greater interest to the state: records about ginseng pickers, loggers, pearl-ers, grain smugglers, and so on.<sup>89</sup> Historians of Qing-era prohibitions have an easier task; the other matters of state that make Han migrants visible are the message.

In too many histories it seems the court had a simple choice: to capitalize on settlement and Han migration, or not? Perhaps Qianlong’s decrees against Han migrants speak too easily to us; like his decrees that dispensed with the Macartney mission, his edicts on Han migrants seem to offer fundamental truths about premodern follies.<sup>90</sup> In other contexts, however, historians have learned to question the wisdom of the “prohibition” paradigms that emerged with modern imperialism: the “maritime prohibitions” (Ch: *haijin* 海禁) that seemed to isolate and weaken China as the West was

*Shizong shilu*, 41: 606a–b (YZ4.2.10), 53: 803a (YZ5.2.8); *Gaozong shilu*, 35: 658b–659a (QL2.1.29); 95: 465b (QL4.6.29); 159: 15a (QL7.1.30), 240: 96b (QL10.5.10), 253: 272b (QL10.11.19), 269: 494b (QL11.6.21), 309: 46b (QL13.2.21), 360: 956a (QL15.3.1), 419: 488a–b (QL17.7.18), 511: 465b (QL21.4.30), 549: 1002a (QL22.10.27), 441: 1040a (QL22.11.28), 645: 222b–223a (QL26.9.28), 857: 481b–483b (QL35.4.27), 909: 170b–171a (QL37.5.22), 923: 405a–406a (QL37.12.28), 997: 335b–336a (QL40.11.21), 1039: 925a–b (QL42.8.29), 1070: 344a–345a (QL43.11.3), 1071: 361a–b (QL43.11.16), 1106: 797b (QL45.5.2), 1140: 890b (QL45.9.8), 1251: 820a (QL51.3.29); *Renzong shilu*, 80: 37b–38a (JQ6.3.8), 87: 155b–156b (JQ6.9.26), 297: 1073b–1074a (JQ19.9.17), 282b (JQ21.11.24), 347: 586b–587a (JQ23.9.20); *Xuanzong shilu*, 23: 464b (DG1.8.30), 26: 471b (DG1.11.23), 46: 814b–816a (DG2.12.7), 111: 858b–859a (DG6.12.11), 118: 994b (DG7.+5.14), 154: 362b–363a (DG9.3.23)158: 444a–b (DG9.7.26), 166: 579b (DG10.3.24), 388: 965a–b (DG23.1.5), 389: 990b–991a (DG23.2.17), and 465: 866b–867a.

<sup>87</sup>DQHDSL (QL), 129: 1a–22b.

<sup>88</sup>Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*.

<sup>89</sup>For a fresh start in this direction, see Ma Jinzhu 马金柱, “Qingdai dongbei fengjin zhengce xia de qimin jiaowang guanxi—yi Qianlong chao Jilin Hunchun wei li” 清代东北封禁政策下的旗民交往关系—以乾隆朝吉林琿春为例, *Lishi dang’an* 历史档案 1 (2020), 97–103.

<sup>90</sup>On the Qianlong emperor and the Macartney mission, see Henrietta Harrison, “The Qianlong Emperor’s Letter to George III and the Early-Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China’s Foreign Relations,” *The American Historical Review* 122.3 (2017), 680–701.

rising; the “closed country” (Ja: *sakoku* 鎖国) policies that did the same for Japan; and those of Joseon Korea, which seemed a “Hermit Nation” to its would-be colonizers.<sup>91</sup> By measuring the Qing, Tokugawa, and Joseon states by their capacity to match the growing power of the imperial West, these “prohibition” frameworks oversimplified and misconstrued the complex outlooks, practices, and foreign relations of the Qing, Tokugawa and Joseon states. The same holds for prohibition in Qing Manchuria; we lose too much framing the region’s history in terms of a quixotic response to an ever-growing number of Han settlers. Historians can do more; Hunčun’s archives neither simply prefigure an inevitable future nor offer its opposite: an unworkable and futile “policy of prohibition.”

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<sup>91</sup>On the *haijin* paradigm, see Harriet Zurndorfer, “Oceans of History, Seas of Change: Recent Revisionist Writing in Western Languages about China and East Asian Maritime History during the Period 1500–1630,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 13.1 (2016), 61–94. On *sakoku*, a touchstone piece is Tashiro Kazui, trans. Susan Downing Videen, “Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: *Sakoku* Reexamined,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8.2 (1982), 283–306; for more recent work, see Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640–1868* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009). On the problematic identity of Joseon Korea with hermitic prohibitions, see Yi Tae-Jin, “Was Korea Really a ‘Hermit Nation?’” *Korea Journal* 38.4 (1998), 5–35. For a synthesis that goes beyond prohibition paradigms, see Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 50–61.