

**WHERE URBAN MIGRANTS MET RURAL SETTLERS:  
STATE CATEGORIES, SOCIAL BOUNDARIES, AND WEALTH  
STRATIFICATION IN NORTHEAST CHINA, 1815 – 1913**

by

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**For my parents, Tong Niannian, and Thomas**

## Preface

My graduate education at the University of Michigan has been a journey from traditional history to quantitative history to social history. Six and a half years ago, in January 2003, I arrived at the University of Michigan with a background in political and institutional history. Interested in learning social and quantitative history, I entered the field of historical demography and enrolled in classes in social scientific and demographic methods. I soon discovered, however, that in the post-modern era after the linguistic turn, most historians were no longer satisfied with numerical descriptions of social behavior. Instead, they sought the stories behind their quantitative results to elucidate the mentality and agency of historical actors. Accordingly my graduate education also became a journey to develop solutions to integrate quantitative and qualitative methods and produce a more holistic understanding and history of human experience.

Fortunately, the well-preserved archival sources in Shuangcheng enabled me to integrate quantitative and qualitative analyses and produce a textured history of land distribution. Shuangcheng was established through the relocation of a state bannermen population in the early nineteenth century. Upon their arrival, the state allocated land to official immigrants and tried to preserve its equal distribution within and unequal distribution between state-designated population categories. At the same time, in the century from 1815 to 1913, local practices also interacted with state policies to bring forth changes in both policy and local society. Although the distribution of landed wealth is

considered an important topic in Chinese history and history in general, due to the lack of individual plot data, especially longitudinal and intergenerational wealth data, few studies anywhere have explored individual and household-level land distribution for entire communities or higher levels of administrative aggregation, especially over time. In my dissertation, I can do so and describe not only the pattern of distribution *per se*, but also the state policies and local practices that produced and maintained this pattern.

I commenced my project by analyzing the socio-demographic data generated from the Qing banner population registers for Shuangcheng. The Qing banner population registers in Shuangcheng were compiled annually between 1866 and 1912 as part of the local government archives. My professors, James Lee and Cameron Campbell, had already located and acquired the microfilm version of these voluminous registers from the Genealogy Society of Utah and recruited me to this project. In the summer of 2003, under their direction, I went through these microfilms and compiled, in longitudinal order, the lists of registers which need be entered first. In the winter of 2004, they began to code these data with the data coders in the Lee-Campbell research group: Sun Huicheng and Jiyang. In a fall 2004 research seminar with Professor Myron Gutmann, relying on their initial data transcriptions of 231,392 observations of 19,240 individuals, I wrote my first research paper on mortality in the Shuangcheng banner population. In 2005, I further developed these research results into my first conference presentation to the IUSSP Conference on Vulnerable Populations where I identified distinctive mortality patterns between the two categories of immigrant populations: metropolitan and rural bannermen. And this presentation in turn became my first English language publication, albeit in a French journal (Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2006).

At the same time, beginning in the summer of 2004 with support from the Department of History, the International Institute, and the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan, I started to collect qualitative sources on Shuangcheng and encountered a sea of alternate materials. I first visited the First Historical Archives in Beijing, where I found court memorials archived in the collection of the Grand Council or *Junjichu lufu zouzhe*, which thoroughly documented the early history of the Shuangcheng state farm from the initial policy discussion to relocation and settlement from the central government's perspective. Then, in the Liaoning Provincial Archives in Shenyang, the large collection of *Shuangchengpu Zongguan Yamen Dang'an*, or Shuangcheng banner government archives, provided me with rich information of the later development of Shuangcheng society. With 1,555 volumes of documents dating from 1850 to 1924, this archival collection not only included communications between local and provincial government on policy implementation, fiscal reports, taxation files, and routine administrative paperwork, but also contained voluminous legal cases with rich information on local practices of land transaction, land rental, marriage, commercial activities, and etc.

In the summer of 2005, this time with support from the Center for Chinese Studies, I visited in addition to the First Historical Archives and Liaoning Provincial Archives, the Shuangcheng City Archives with my advisor, James Lee, and located not only the *Shuangchengpu Xieling Yamen Dang'an* (30,064 items), which is from the same government archive as the *Shuangchengpu Zongguan Yamen Dang'an*, but also the archives of the civilian local government (9,623 documents between 1882 and 1912). Since then, I worked intensively on these archival sources to explore the history of Shuangcheng.

These central and local government archival documents, with their rich information on historical context, provided important alternate insight into the population and land data. Beginning in May 2006, I initiated the data transcription, cleaning, and processing of the land data from four registers—compiled in 1870, 1876, 1887, and 1889—of the Bordered Yellow banner and linked them to the banner population registers most by machine and the remainder by hand. In the summer of 2006, I was therefore able to make a preliminary analysis of land distribution among the metropolitan bannermen in the Bordered Yellow banner. The results revealed a surprisingly equal land distribution which I described in 2007 and 2008 panel presentations at the annual meetings of the Social Science History Association. To investigate why the pattern of land distribution was so equal, I began to examine the institution that organized the land and population registers. I especially paid attention to official communications on policy implementation and legal cases regarding land disputes. Through close reading of the legal cases, I identified local practices that were not documented by the official paperwork and discovered that in Shuangcheng the unit of state land allocation was the household. Although the actual residential arrangements of household members varied, the government allocated land to all registered household units equally. Excited by these discoveries, I continued to explore social and economic organization in Shuangcheng. While the quantitative data generated the large picture, the qualitative materials fleshed out the mentality of the policy makers and local actors that directed their behaviors. Quantitative and qualitative methods and data, in other words, complemented each other to provide me with a holistic view of state land allocation and local practices of land accumulation and transfer.

Archival researches, moreover, also facilitated data transcription and linking. Until 2007, I had thought that the population data available for longitudinal analysis began in 1870, since an 1870 reform in Shuangcheng administration had renamed all banner villages, making it difficult to link populations before 1870. In the spring of 2007, based on archival studies and with the help of Sun Huicheng, I was able to link the Shuangcheng banner villages before and after 1870. This advancement enabled the extension of the longitudinal population dataset back to 1866.

During this mutual process of archival study and data analysis, the collective efforts of data acquisition and entry by James Lee, Cameron Campbell, Sun Huicheng, and Jiyang in the Lee-Campbell research group and the Asia Library of the University of Michigan made much of my research possible. In 2006, Michael Meng at the Asia Library generously purchased the microfilms of *Shuangchengpu Zongguan Yamen Dang'an*, which James and I hand carried back to the United States in separate trips. Beginning in September 2006, Sun Huicheng entered the remaining land registers. In August 2007, the major work of data entry was completed, generating a total population dataset of 1,346,829 observations of 108,100 individuals and a total land dataset of 19,609 records of 13,155 land owners, most of which I linked to the banner population registers by machine and the remainder, with Sun Huicheng's help, by hand.

In the summer of 2007, with support from professors James Lee and Cameron Campbell's research grants, I visited Shuangcheng City Archives for the second time. This time, in addition to the Qing dynasty archives, I also explored the Republican government archive, or *Shuangcheng xian gongshu dang'an* (10,033 items between 1912-1932), and the registration of land acreage and population class classification

compiled at the time of the 1947 land reform. The documents in these two collections revealed the persistence of the social structures and tensions created by the Qing government to the eve of the land reform.

In addition to the distribution of landed wealth, I also explored other aspects of social life in Shuangcheng. In January 2007, I analyzed institutional, household, and individual influences on the timing of first marriage for metropolitan and rural bannermen and presented my findings at “the International Conference on Marriage and Family” in Seoul, South Korea. The results for first marriage timing revealed distinct patterns for the two population categories, as had my analysis of mortality; men of metropolitan bannermen were more likely to marry than were those of rural bannermen, while women of metropolitan bannermen married later than their rural banner counterparts. This finding supported previous understandings of marriage behavior in China: male hypogamy and female hypergamy resulted in greater chances of marriage for men with higher social status, and late marriage for women with higher social status. This study was also the first quantitative analysis of the determinants of female first marriage for a late imperial Chinese population. In the summer of 2007, working with Professors Cameron Campbell and James Lee, I extended the analysis to include both banner population in Shuangcheng and the banner peasants of the Imperial Household Agency in Liaoning, the latter dataset consisting of 1.4 million observations of one-quarter million people. This paper will be the China country chapter of the Eurasia Project’s comparative volume on marriage and remarriage in Europe and Asia in the past, and was presented at the Population Association of America’s session “Family Change in Historical Perspective,” in New Orleans in 2008 (Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2008).

As my understanding of the history of Shuangcheng deepened, I also confronted the question of framing: what was the meaning of the history of Shuangcheng and the patterns of land distribution in this society to the large picture of Chinese history and society. Compared to the rural Chinese societies studied by other scholars in North China, the Yangzi delta, and Guanzhong (Huang 1985, 1990; Qin and Su 1996), the institutional setting and frontier environment of Shuangcheng was unusual. First, established by the state under the Eight Banners, Shuangcheng was highly institutionalized, and metropolitan and rural bannermen were well supported by the state land. Moreover, the abundant Northeast frontier land in Shuangcheng created a low labor-land ratio which was uncommon compared to other parts of China. Professor James Lee provided me with a comparative perspective and pointed out that state institutions in Shuangcheng had numerous precedents in Chinese history and, moreover, an enduring legacy in the present day. Using resource allocation to classify populations and structure the society was a typical practice of the Chinese state. In our numerous conversations, we placed the case of Shuangcheng in its historical context and compared it with similar institutions in Chinese history. Shuangcheng society, in other words, despite its unusual geographical and institutional context, represented one historical continuity in China's long history of state practice. As I show in my dissertation, although the meaning of population categories and the institutions that classified populations changed with political regimes and their contexts, such practices persisted through Chinese history.

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This study could not have been accomplished without the constant support of my teachers, colleagues, friends, and families, to whom I am grateful. I first would like to

express my gratitude to my advisor and mentor James Lee, a passionate, dedicated, and caring advisor. He provided me with my topic and much of my serial data as well as unfailing encouragement and intellectual support throughout the process of data analysis, dissertation framing, narrative construction, writing, and rewriting. When I was overwhelmed by the fascinating stories and details in the archives, James constantly reminded me to focus not on the trees but on the forest. I benefitted from his teaching not only on this specific project, but also from our general and wide-ranging discussions on methodologies and Chinese history. In my transformation from a traditional historian to a social historian, I especially appreciate his openness that allowed me to express different opinions; our intellectual exchange made me constantly reflect on my understanding of history and scholarship and find the direction I wanted.

I am also indebted to the other advisors in my committee: Professors Cameron Campbell, Myron Gutmann, Barbara Anderson, and Pär Cassel. Cameron Campbell, a wonderful teacher, taught me the techniques of data analysis through individual tutoring, which enabled me with little formal training in statistics to conduct data analysis independently. He also wrote the original code to process raw data entered by the coders into a form that was amenable to analysis. I am also grateful for the enormous amount of time he spent on reading and commenting on my dissertation chapters.

I am indebted to Myron Gutmann, for his knowledge and enthusiasm for historical demography and his sincerity as a historian. Throughout my graduate education, he always sought to broaden my eyes by bringing me to a larger community of historical demography, learning a variety of topics and techniques. Through my various discussions of methods with Myron, he helped me to develop my mind to place my data in their

institutional context.

Barbara Anderson, an enthusiastic and caring teacher, always provided me with generous support and encouragement. In her class, Research Methods in Population and Human Ecology, she not only taught me the methods *per se*, but also focused on equipping me with the mind to know “how far I can push my data.”

Pär Cassel, at the time when I launched my dissertation research, helped me narrow down my research topic and shared with me his experience in archival research.

I also would like to thank Professor Mark Elliott, my first advisor at the University of Michigan. As a student who worked on the history of the Yuan dynasty, I share his interests in the ethnic history of China. Although I only worked with Mark for one semester before he moved to Harvard, our discussions on the ethnic history of China inspired me for the rest of my graduate training. I still remember that, in one of our conversations, Mark raised the question on why some ethnic boundaries in Chinese history (e.g., those between the Han-Chinese, Khitan, and Jurchen during the twelfth and thirteenth century) quickly blurred upon the establishment of new regimes, no matter how great tensions had been previously. For the rest of my graduate education, this question came up to me from time to time. Much to my pleasure, my dissertation, by studying the creation of population categories in Shuangcheng, serves as an answer to this question; like the population categories in Shuangcheng, ethnicity in historical China was manipulated by state policies. By maintaining within-category equality and between category inequality in entitlement rights to material sources and political privileges, the state was able to build new boundaries between populations while clearing previous ones.

In China, I would like to give special thanks to Professor Ding Yizhuang, who

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The International Institute, the History Department at the University of Michigan, the Rackham Graduate School, and the Center for Chinese Studies provided with generous financial support for my study in Michigan and my various trips to the archives and the field. The Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan provided me with office space and resources during my six and a half years of graduate study. Moreover, the larger research project on population and demographic behavior in historical China of which this was a part was supported by NICHD 1R01HD045695-A2 (James Lee PI), “Demographic Responses to Community and Family Context.”

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## Conventions

### Weights and Measures

The following are the conversions of weights and measures used in Shuangcheng:

1 *li* = 576 meters = 0.58 kilometers

1 *shang* = 1.84 hectares

1 market *shi* = 4 imperial *shi* = 320.75 kilograms

1 tael = 38 grams

### Age

People's age is measured by *sui*. An infant is counted as one *sui* at birth and two *sui* at age one.

According to the Qing government standard, the age range for adult male in Shuangcheng is 20 to 50 *sui*.

### Place name

I use Liaoning to refer to the Qing dynasty Fengtian, the present day Liaoning Province.

## Glossary

- baimu zhi tian 百亩之田  
bajia junfen 八家均分  
bangding 帮丁  
baojia 保甲  
baqianshang 八千晌  
bendi qiren 本地旗人  
bitieshi 笔帖式  
booi 包衣  
bu 步  
bu zai ce fuding 不在册浮丁  
bubing 步兵  
buzhengshi 布政使  
buzhi quxiang 不知去向  
canguan 仓官  
cangwu bitieshi 仓务笔帖式  
chengding 成丁  
chengzhong jingqi di fuding 承种京旗地浮丁  
chi 尺  
chipin 赤贫  
Daxue yanyi bu 大学衍义补  
dian 典  
dilin 地邻  
ding 丁  
dingque 丁缺  
enque 恩缺  
fangyu 防御  
fengdui 封堆  
fu dutong 副都统  
fubing 府兵  
fuding 浮丁  
fuding buzhun lingdi 浮丁不准领地  
fuduo 浮多  
gongcang 公仓  
gongque 公缺  
gongtian 公田  
gongzu 公租  
guodan 过单  
hanjun 汉军  
hanren 汉人  
hengchan 恒产  
Hengchan fuduo 恒产浮多  
ji pin 极贫  
ji ru 寄入  
jia wu chanye nian yi cheng ding zhi xiansan 家无产业年已成丁之闲散  
jiala 甲喇  
jiangjun 将军  
jiao guan ling ding buchong 交官另丁补充  
jichan 己产  
jie ming bao guan, yi bei shu zu 借名报官, 以备输租  
jikou shoutian 计口授田  
jiming 记名  
jingqi 京旗  
jingqi yi 京旗翼  
jingshi (statecraft) 经世  
jingtian 井田  
jingyan 经筵  
jingzhi ce 经制册  
jinshi 进士  
jun 郡  
juntian 均田  
juntun 军屯  
li 里  
liangzhang 粮长  
lihua qian 犁铧钱

liji 礼记  
lingcui 领催  
linghu 另户  
liumin 流民  
maohuang 毛荒  
menfa 门阀  
mingtian 名田  
minren 民人  
mu 亩  
muzhang 牧长  
nanren 南人  
nazu 纳租  
neiwufu 内务府  
nianli jingzhuang kanneng wunong 年  
力精壮，勤能务农  
niru 牛录  
paoma zhanshan 跑马占山  
pija 披甲  
pin 贫  
qianfeng 前锋  
qidian 旗佃  
qiduwei 骑都尉  
qingfu fanghuang zongju 清赋放荒总  
局  
qiwu chengban chu 旗务承办处  
quechu 缺出  
ruding chenming 入丁陈民  
Sanxing 三姓  
sanwangshang 三万晌  
semu 色目  
shang 晌  
shao you yang shan 稍有养贍  
shengyuan 生员  
shi 石  
shijia zhang 十家长  
shipu 世仆  
shoutian 授田  
Shuangcheng 双城  
sitian 私田  
suique 随缺  
suique di 随缺地

taiqi 抬旗  
tongtun tongju 同屯同俱  
tun 屯  
tunda 屯达  
tunding 屯丁  
tuntian 屯田  
wei xiaoqi xiao 委骁骑校  
wei xieling 委协领  
wei zuoling 委佐领  
wopeng 窝棚  
wumu zhi zhai 五亩之宅  
xian 县  
xiansan 闲散  
xiaoqixiao 骁骑校  
xieling 协领  
yamen 衙门  
yangshan 养贍  
yangyubing 养育兵  
yicang 义仓  
yihu 一户  
yinhu 隐户  
yinjian 引见  
yiren buzhun chengling liangfen dingque  
一人不准承领两份丁缺  
youding 幼丁  
yusui 逾岁  
zhantian 占田  
zhaofei qian 照费钱  
zhaozhang jian de 照章拣得  
zhengding 正丁  
zhengshen qiren 正身旗人  
zhishen buzhun suan hu 只身不准算  
户  
zhushi 主事  
ziken 滋垦  
zong tunda 总屯达  
zongguan 总管  
zongzu 宗族  
zu 族  
zuzhang 族长

## **Abstract**

In this dissertation, I study the implications for patterns of equality and inequality of a common state practice in Chinese history, the creation of population categories with differentiated entitlement rights, using a well-documented example. In 1815, in response to the fiscal challenge of supporting bannermen, an elite population who depended on state stipends for their livelihoods, the court established a state farm in Shuangcheng in Northeast China, planning to relocate metropolitan bannermen from Beijing there to become farmers. The court also relocated rural bannermen from other parts of Northeast China to Shuangcheng to help the metropolitan bannermen adapt to the rural environment. Eventually, 3,000 rural and 698 metropolitan banner households resettled in the 120 banner villages in Shuangcheng, living off the land allocated by the state. The state divided these official immigrants and other unofficial immigrants to this area into four population categories with differentiated entitlements to land: metropolitan and rural bannermen as the haves and floating bannermen and civilian commoners as the have-nots.

I demonstrate the implications for inequality of the interplay of state land allocation policies based on population category and local land acquisition practices by analyzing longitudinal individual-level population data, household-level landholding data, and qualitative documents from central and local archives. The state's land allocation policies maintained inequality between categories and promoted equality within them: metropolitan bannermen had twice as much land as rural bannermen, while floating bannermen and civilian commoners were excluded from land allocation altogether.

Despite the persistence of various local practices of land accumulation, transaction, and inheritance, the data demonstrate enduring between-category inequalities and within-category equalities among the majority of the population in Shuangcheng from 1870 to 1912. Moreover, tensions built into the unequal distribution of land transformed administrative categories into distinct social groups that transcended individual and polity. By documenting this instance of the state's creation of population categories through the allocation of land and contextualizing it in Chinese history more broadly, this study shows the salience of within-category equalities and between-category inequalities created by state policy in stratification processes in Chinese society.

## **Part One Categorical Equality and Durable Inequality**

### **Chapter I State Categories and Durable Inequality**

Five days after the Chinese New Year in 1824, a procession of 53 wagons started their journey from Beijing, the Qing capital city, to Shuangcheng, a state farm established in 1815 in the northeastern frontier. In these wagons rode a total of 187 people from 53 households: 60 men, 54 women, and 72 children.<sup>1</sup> Descended from the conquest elite called bannermen who had conquered and settled in Beijing in the middle of the seventeenth century (Han 1987), these families were returning to the rural northeast many generations later, lured by the promise of economic rewards. Abandoning the relative ease of city life, they had little knowledge about either their itinerary or destination, for the government had arranged everything. All they knew was that they were returning to the remote homeland of their ancestors, where fertile land, clean and spacious houses, and assistance to farm the land awaited them.

These 53 metropolitan banner households were the first Beijing pioneers to settle in Shuangcheng, but others soon followed. In the next three decades, another 643 metropolitan banner households arrived in Shuangcheng. There they joined 3,000 households of rural bannermen from Liaoning and Jilin who had settled between 1815 and 1820 to assist the metropolitan bannermen, a large population of floating bannermen, who

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<sup>1</sup> NGTDQFDTYMDA, 1824, reel 52, vol. 289.

had begun to arrive in the early nineteenth century, and an increasing number of civilian commoners.

By the 1860s a total of 5,300 households had settled in Shuangcheng, establishing a rural society divided into two segments: the haves – metropolitan (*jingqi*) and rural bannermen (*tunding*), who were supported by the state with land grants – and the have-nots, floating bannermen (*fuding*) and commoners (*minren*), who were excluded from state land allocations.<sup>2</sup> Among the haves, the metropolitan bannermen were the top elite, with land grants twice the size of those allocated to rural bannermen. These asymmetrical entitlements continued until 1906, by which time Shuangcheng had become a county with more than 60,000 households and 440,000 people.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the legacy of this social segmentation persisted far beyond the fall of the Qing in 1912.

In this dissertation, I reconstruct the settlement history and the subsequent land distribution in Shuangcheng to explore how inequality and equality were structured in historical China. Social stratification in contemporary China has been a hotly-studied topic in recent years. However, scholars seldom recognize the institutional connection between contemporary and historical social stratification. Scholars of contemporary China often identify two contradictory characteristics of the socialist system between 1950 and 1980: on one hand, the egalitarian distribution of material wealth within categories and, on the other, inequality between state-created categories. In his work on social

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<sup>2</sup> The number of household is summarized from banner population registers and archival documents on the *baojia* system. Among the 5,300 households residing in Shuangcheng, 473 of them were headed by metropolitan bannermen, 3,000 were headed by rural bannermen, and 1,876 of them were headed by either bannermen or civilian commoners organized under the *baojia* system.

<sup>3</sup> See SCXZ (1990) p. 829. The data on the number of households and population are based on 1910 population information. Compared to that of 1860, the number of household and population in 1910 significantly increased because the administrative area of Shuangcheng had expanded in 1882, which included both the previous Shuangcheng and Lalin. The population increase is also partly due to immigration to this area.

stratification in post-socialist China, Wang Feng commented on these two characteristics:

“During no other period in its history did China pursue equality more rigorously than in the three decades between 1950 and 1980. With a socialist experiment, China transformed itself into one of the most egalitarian societies in the world in no more than a decade’s time. The internal logic of the very same social system, however, also dictated the creation of new social categories as the basis of economic and social organization.” (Wang 2008)

While this is a salient point, the egalitarian but segmented distribution of wealth, characterized by Wang as a socialist innovation, is actually a variation on a practice that existed in Chinese history for more than two millennia: the state’s classification of its population into distinct categories, corresponding to differential entitlements to material wealth. The Shuangcheng state farm is an example of such an institution. By creating four different categories of population – metropolitan, rural, floating, and civilian –the Qing state established differential entitlements to landed wealth and simultaneously distributed land equally within each population category. Through these arrangements, the Qing state built, maintained, and sustained a social hierarchy and an institutional context that persisted until the twentieth century, not just in Shuangcheng, but in many areas and populations in China. Despite a century of continuous social revolution and economic reform, the legacy of this institution continues today.

### **Political systems and wealth stratification**

In human history, inequality has existed in different forms and at different levels, and scholars have long established that patterns of social stratification are closely associated with political systems and culture (Lane 1987; Kerbo 2000; Ebert and Zavarzadeh 2008). Regarding the dynamics of inequality in different cultures, Western societies and China operate at opposite ends of the spectrum, corresponding to their contrasting political

systems and traditions. Western societies are characterized by material inequality within a democratic political tradition, while China is characterized by the equal distribution of material wealth under autocracy. This contrast in political system and wealth distribution between the West and China is still evident in the present day, even though the distribution of wealth in the West is more egalitarian now than in the feudal age and inequality in China has grown since 1979.<sup>4</sup>

In the early history of the West, the monarch and nobility owned the majority of landed wealth, and, during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, more and more land became the private property of the nobility (North 1973). At the same time, the institutionalization of democracy emphasized the impartibility of private property and enlisted state power to protect it (Moore 1966; North 1973). This transition, therefore, resulted in the concentration of landed wealth in the hands of merchant groups and the former noble class. Only in the nineteenth century, when the development of capitalism significantly increased total wealth, did wealth distribution become less concentrated.

In contrast to the triumph of private land ownership in western societies, state land ownership prevailed in China as a major land system along with an early version of privatization (Hou 1954; Li 1957). Both an early emergence of private land ownership and the intervention of political power into economic rights characterized the land system in historical China. As early as the fifth century B.C., the state allowed private land transactions, which indicated that landowners had acquired economic rights on their landed

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<sup>4</sup> In the West, the redistributive force generated by the development of capitalism and the welfare state has equalized the wealth distribution in the last one and a half centuries, while China is experiencing increasing inequality since the onset of economic reform in the late 1970s. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, in such Western countries as United Kingdom, Sweden, and United States, the top 10 percent of households possessed more than half of the total wealth,<sup>4</sup> while in China the top 10 percent of individuals only owned around 30 percent of total wealth (Li and Zhao 2007). This contrast between Western countries and China had much deeper historical roots.

property. At the same time, however, political power dominated economic rights (Yang 1990). Emperors, in the name of the state, possessed the power to take land away from owners and redistribute it. Land owners thus only had incomplete rights to their property. This dualism in Chinese land system created difficulty for scholars in distinguishing private from state land ownership.<sup>5</sup> Before the eighth century, the state did not collect tax on land, but levied a poll tax and labor service from commoners. This tax system was built on the basis of state land ownership; the state owned land and allocated it to commoners, and, in return, commoners paid their levies to the state. Therefore, despite the existence of private land transactions, state ownership was the major land system. In 780, the tax reform of the Tang state introduced the principle of tax collection based on household land and property and therefore marked the onset of the transition of land ownership from state to private (Woodside 2006). This transition continued in the following dynasties and was finally completed in the mid-eighteenth century, when the Qing state began to collect taxes exclusively on land. However, despite the growing importance of private ownership, the state still owned a larger proportion of land in the form of imperial and state farms (Chen 2007b). After 1949, state land ownership, again, became the major land system in post-revolutionary China.

The persistence of state land ownership went hand in hand with the autocratic political system that developed over China's long history, from the emergence of the first Chinese

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<sup>5</sup> Due to their different interpretation of the early emergence of private land transaction and political domination in economic rights, scholars have an especially hot debate on the nature of land ownership systems during the Qin and Han period (approximately 221 B.C.-220 A.D.). Three competing opinions exist: 1) state land ownership was the dominant form (Hou 1954; Li 1957; He 1956; Yang 1995; Fu 1982; Zhang 2004); 2) private land ownership was the major form (Hu 1957; Hou 1957; Tian 1960; Zhang 1995; Lin 1981; Zhao and Chen 1982; Zhang 1983); 3) state and private land ownership coexisted in this period, but private land ownership was the major type (Jiang 1957). Despite these diverging opinions, scholars generally agree on the existence of the dualism of the Chinese land system. Here I follow the point of view that during the Qin-Han period, state land ownership was the general practice.

emperor in 221 B.C. to the present day. Since the third century B.C., China's autocratic political system has been marked by a well-developed centralized bureaucracy, which managed to govern a vast territory for more than two millennia. This long history of unity not only generated a refined bureaucratic system, but also established centralization as the norm. The autocratic nature of the Chinese state legitimized the emperor's absolute power and his ultimate control of land. Therefore, although during periods when the central government was weak, land became increasingly concentrated in the hands of large landlords and political elites, the ultimate nature of the state's relationship to land ownership was never in question, and eventually, the Chinese state was always able to reinstate its ownership rights (He 1956, 1958).

The case of Shuangcheng exemplifies the state's ability to maintain control over land even in a period when the power of the central government was on the wane. The Shuangcheng state farm was established in the twilight years of the Qing Empire in the late eighteenth century. From 1815 to 1906, despite internal rebellions and foreign invasions that seriously weakened the power of the central government, the Qing state succeeded in maintaining banner land ownership in Shuangcheng. Even after 1906, when land ownership in the state farm changed from the state to private, the legacy of state control still produced a stable land ownership regime for bannermen.

This study of Shuangcheng also highlights the Chinese state's tradition of maintaining an equal distribution of land across the population in general and especially within population categories. In Shuangcheng, the state not only allocated land equally among metropolitan and rural bannermen, but also developed systems to prevent future land concentration. This practice grew out of a rich ideological and institutional background of

equal wealth distribution which had been practiced in China for two millennia (Woodside 2006). While the egalitarian distribution of wealth had emerged as an influential ideal in political thought as early as the fifth century B.C., institutions that implemented an equal distribution actually dated back to the eleventh century B.C. Following this traditional practice, Chinese emperors constantly restricted the concentration of wealth in rich families through taxation and, when necessary, the coercive deprivation of property. At the same time, as early as the third century, the Chinese state developed a granary system to balance harvest fluctuations and relieve famines and disasters (Will and Wong with Lee 1991).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, such local social organizations as lineages and households also followed the same model to collectively allocate resources to their members (Campbell and Lee 2006, 2008; Faure 2007; Lee and Wang 1999).

Hitherto, despite the officially-proclaimed state and local procedures to prevent wealth concentration in China, the lack of empirical data on landholding largely restricted our understanding of their operation under the autocratic system. In previous national level studies of the distribution of landed wealth in China, scholars have generally agreed that land distribution underwent a ‘dynastic cycle;’ at the beginning of each dynasty, the state was able to maintain relative equality, while, by the end of each dynasty, land became increasingly concentrated, marking the decline of state power (He 1956, 1958). Chinese scholars, preoccupied with the egalitarian distribution of wealth, often focus on the historical periods and regions with concentrated land distributions, and therefore dispute the significance of earlier egalitarian wealth distribution, instead describing historical

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<sup>6</sup> According to Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong, the earliest granary that bore the function of balancing market fluctuation was established in the Jin dynasty (265-420 A.D.).

China as a country with a high level of inequality.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, although some scholars have managed to construct a picture of relatively equal land distribution in local communities (Huang 1985; Qin and Su 1996), the lack of longitudinal and household-level data often yields fragmented views (Esherick 1981).

In this dissertation, I use empirical data on land distribution in Shuangcheng to demonstrate that the state effectively maintained a relatively equal land distribution through the institution of population categories. I study Shuangcheng because the unusual completeness of historical sources allows me to explore the state institution of population categories from the perspective of both state regulations and local practices. To do so, I integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze two types of data drawn from central, provincial, and county archives: one a longitudinal individual-level household and land dataset for 108,100 individuals in 120 villages, mainly suitable for quantitative analysis; the other being the edicts, court memorials, local government administrative documents, lawsuits, and petitions which survive in various archives, all of which are mainly suitable for qualitative analysis. The two types of sources complement one another to provide a long-term view of state policy and local practice from 1815 to 1913, consisting of the state's official language of egalitarianism in wealth distribution, its operation in local society, and the actual distribution of land under the interaction of state policy and local practice.

Throughout the period under study, land distribution in Shuangcheng exhibited a

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<sup>7</sup> There are many such studies and they represent the main trend of studies on land distribution in historical China. For example, scholars generally consider the Song dynasty as a period with high level of land concentration (Wang 1996; Jian 1983), with large landlords and political elites accounting for two thirds of registered land ownership (Yang 1957) or even more (Li 1957). Another period with a high level of land concentration, which many scholars have studied, is the Ming dynasty. In fact, in almost every currently available general history of China, scholars described land amalgamation as a salient problem for almost all dynasties (Jian 1983; Fan 1953; Bai 1999).

pattern of categorical equality and inequality. Metropolitan and rural bannermen owned the majority of registered farmland in Shuangcheng. Civilian commoners and a limited number of floating bannermen could only officially own land by working as state tenants. While, in general, metropolitan bannermen owned more land than rural bannermen, land distribution within each category was relatively equal. Moreover, among the haves, state policy was especially effective in keeping the proportions of both the landless and the wealthy landed low.

### **Categorical equality and inequality**

Categorical distinctions – those that classify populations into separate groups along various axes of difference – are an important source of inequality. In his seminal work on categorical inequality, Charles Tilly pointed out that inequalities arising from categorical differences are usually the largest and most significant social inequalities (1998). In contemporary societies, there are two types of inequality, continuous and categorical. Continuous inequality is usually caused by acquired individual attributes that range along a scale from low to high – for example, education or income. This type of inequality is open, fluid, and easy to change. Categorical inequality, however, corresponds to ascriptive categories—such as black/white, male/female, and citizen/non-citizen—and is structured by boundaries that are hard, if not impossible, to cross. In many societies, categorical inequalities interact with continuous inequalities to become ‘durable’ inequalities.

Tilly’s theoretical framework, however, fails to account for an important set of categorical inequalities: those created by the state. Drawing from western experience, Tilly mainly focuses on ‘biologically’ or socially formed categories, e.g. race and gender.

In Tilly's framework, society is the principal actor that differentiates these categories and creates inequalities. However, in historical China, despite the existence of the above social categories, the population categories created by the state have comprised the most important source of inequality. The Chinese state was famous for its ability to divide the population into categories marked by differential obligations and privileges. In practice, the state could choose any ascriptive characteristics (e.g. ethnicity and work unit affiliation) as criteria to classify population. For example, in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the state classified the population into four ethnic categories –Mongol, Central Asian (*semu*), Han people (*hanren*), and Southerners (*nanren*) –and implemented policies to distinguish their political rights (Meng 1980). Under the socialist regime, the Chinese state elaborated the institution of population categories and expanded it to the national level. Not only did the urban/rural division mark fundamental differences in resource allocation, but income was also unevenly distributed between the various work units in urban areas (Wu 2002; Wang 2008). By differentiating privileges and obligations, the state created different political, social, and economic meanings to different ascriptive groups.

The Shuangcheng state farm was founded on the state institution of population categories. The state distinguished members of the Shuangcheng population by their eligibility to immigrate, banner affiliation, and place of origin, thereby differentiating immigrants' entitlement to land grants. Metropolitan and rural bannermen were the haves because they moved into the area at the behest of the state and with its support, while floating bannermen and civilian commoners were the have-nots because they were unofficial immigrants who came on their own. Among the have-nots, floating bannermen were distinguished from civilian commoners because they had banner affiliation.

Moreover, among the haves, more land was allocated to metropolitan bannermen because they were *jingqi* from Beijing, and rural bannermen were given less because they were *tunding* from the Northeast.

While the western concept of categories often essentializes the boundaries between categories and the population in each category,<sup>8</sup> in China, the definition and membership of the state-created categories often change with political regimes and policy. In Chinese history, although some sorts of categories persisted that differentiate the privileged group from the rest of the population, the boundaries of these categories and the content of the privileged population were redefined in each dynasty, as the composition of elite changed. For example, in his study on the emergence of local militarization in the nineteenth century, Philip Kuhn reveals the continuity of the militia system in historical China and implied that the Chinese state persistently organized a special population category under the militia system to ensure the supply of military force (Kuhn 1980). However, the population organized by these militia systems varied from dynasty to dynasty. Therefore, in China, the boundaries and contents of population categories are in fact mutable.

Due to this mutability of state-created categories in China, inequalities generated by these categories were not durable. The elite groups in one dynasty could be commoners in the other. Therefore, the entitlement the state assigned to population groups is often more important than the membership of any category *per se*. Moreover, since the entitlement assigned to population categories were so important, virtually all boundaries between categories in China, including both state-created ones and socially formed ones, eventually

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<sup>8</sup> Dorothy Solinger's study on the rural migrant workers in China is one example of such essentialization of boundaries between population categories (1999). In her work, Solinger powerfully analyzed the social consequences of urban-rural division in China and the disadvantaged situation of rural migrant workers. However, in this study, she paralleled this urban-rural division with the division of citizen and non-citizen and thought the Sojourning laborers "were seldom considered suitable candidates for citizenship" (277).

became porous. For example, the incorporation of the Khitan and Jurchen ethnic groups into Han-Chinese during the thirteenth century well illustrates how changes in the contents of state categories lead to changes in ethnic composition. Khitan and Jurchen were respectively the ruling ethnic groups of the two conquest dynasties, the Liao (916-1125) and the Jin (1115-1234). Under their regimes, Khitan and Jurchen respectively enjoyed political and economic privileges as conquest elites, which distinguished them from the Han-Chinese.<sup>9</sup> However, after the Mongols conquered North China in 1234, the glories of Khitan and Jurchen faded away. The Mongol ruler classified all ethnic groups in North China, including Han-Chinese, Khitan, and Jurchen, into the category of “Han people (*hanren*),” equalizing their political rights. The Mongols’ creation of “Han people” politically eliminated the boundaries between the categories of Khitan, Jurchen, and Han created by former dynasties. This policy change, together with the frequent interactions and acculturation between the three ethnicities, eventually led to the assimilation of Khitan and Jurchen ethnic groups.

Yet, in historical China, some state-created categories did generate durable consequences. For example, in his study on the Qing Eight Banner system, Mark Elliott explores the formation of banner identity and Manchu ethnicity as a result of the state institution of Eight Banners, which maintained the bannermen as the conquest elites (Elliott 2001). In my study on land distribution in Shuangcheng, I similarly argue that patterns of inequality and equality created by state categories are much more durable than previously understood, demonstrated by the fact that categorical inequality and equality in

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<sup>9</sup> The Liao dynasty governed the Khitan and Han-Chinese separately. As the ruling ethnicity, the Khitan enjoyed greater access to official positions than the Han-Chinese. In the Jin dynasty, the ruling ethnicity Jurchen also enjoyed political and economic privileges (Liu 1996a). The rulers moved the Jurchen population into North China and organized them into a special military organization called *tuntian jun*. Moreover, to support the Jurchen population, the Jin rulers occupied a large amount of land in North China and allocated it to this Jurchen army (Liu 1996b).

Shuangcheng persisted after the fall of the Qing.

These state categories became durable because the corresponding institutions continuously enforced both between-category inequality and within-category equality and thereby turned the loosely bound population categories into political, social, and economic groups. To create such population categories, the state imposed political and socio-economic inequalities to mark group boundaries according to the desired ascriptive characteristics. At the same time, the state had to enforce equality to eliminate or minimize existing boundaries within each population category. Since populations in a society could be grouped in different ways by various characteristics, subgroups still existed in each state created category. For example, in Shuangcheng, members of metropolitan, rural, and floating bannermen had different ethnicities, and members of civilian commoners had different places of origin. In order to integrate these subgroups, the state assigned equal entitlement to them to undermine differences associated with their ascriptive characteristics. Therefore, a dual process of differentiation and homogenization characterized the formation of state population categories: differentiation through between-category inequality, and homogenization through within-category equality.

These conflicting characteristics – between-category inequality and within-category equality – define distinctive and persistent features of Chinese social stratification with a long history. With the power to control and allocate material wealth, the Chinese state was able to differentiate the entitlement of different population categories. At the same time, with a long ideological and institutional tradition of equal distribution, the Chinese state was capable of enforcing within-category equality. In Shuangcheng, I will show that,

while the state created and maintained inequality between population categories, it simultaneously stipulated and enforced egalitarian principles within each population category. The state not only allocated equal amounts of land within the respective categories of metropolitan bannermen and rural bannermen, but also established regulations on land inheritance and land transfer to prevent wealth concentration. With empirical data, I also show that this enforced within-category equality played a crucial role in forging distinct group identities for metropolitan and rural bannermen, and that these group identities resulted in different performances in land acquisition. Because of this within-category equality, metropolitan and rural bannermen remained distinctive and separate groups even after the fall of the Qing (Komekura 1941).

This dissertation is therefore an examination of the process through which the state created and enforced between-category inequality and within-category equality in Shuangcheng. This process involved the participation of both the state and local society; although the state played a dominant role in creating population categories, it was their social acceptance that made these categories durable. In this study, I not only examine state policies from an institutional perspective, but also analyze local practices of land acquisition and transaction to investigate the process through which the local society accepted these policies, perpetuating the between-category inequality and within-category equality created by the state.

### **Actors and agency**

In my study of local land-acquisition practices in Shuangcheng, I also confront the issue of state-society interaction in historical China. I identify two seemingly conflicting

processes: on the one hand, the state controlled settlement and land allocation; on the other, local practices that deviated from these regulated behaviors also existed and persisted. Both processes influenced the distribution of landed wealth: between-category inequality and within-category equality were well maintained in the population as a result of state policy; at the same time, stratification did increase as a result of bannermen's land acquisition. The coexistence of these conflicting phenomena is in fact a typical pattern of state-society interaction in historical China.

In contrast to the binary model of state and society in the West, in which society was independent to and constantly struggled with royal power, civil society in historical China, as a product of such autocratic rule, never developed into a rival of state power (Kuhn and Jones 1978). The Chinese state had a long tradition of institutional intervention in social affairs. From as early as 221 B.C., the Qin Empire had established a hierarchical system of central, prefecture (*jun*), and county (*xian*) governments to control local society. Although the state did not establish formal government institutions below the county level, it still appointed local elites to government-controlled posts, such as a village head to supervise local society (Ch'u 1962; Hsiao 1960). Moreover, in late imperial China, the development of the civil service examination intensified state control of local society. Through the exam system, the state not only drew local elites into the bureaucratic system, but also disseminated Confucian doctrines through the process of exam preparation (Elman 1991, 2000).

However, despite the enduring autocracy of imperial rule, local agents representing what we often call 'local society' were still able to operate with tremendous leeway even in areas of important state concern, such as property accumulation and local order. The

agency of such local society originated in the intentionally imperfect nature of state institutions. On the basis of enforced imperial control, the Chinese state intentionally kept government lean, and separated the government from local society. The Chinese state did so to both ensure centralized control of the government system and avoid excessive state intervention in local society. From as early as the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C.-25 A.D.), the appointment of local officials had followed strict rules of avoidance, which prevented a candidate from serving in his place of origin or in the adjacent regions.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, for the convenience of governance, the state intentionally used local elites, informal government personnel, and such social organizations as lineage to carry out administrative tasks at the local level (Ch'u 1962; Guo 1994; Hsiao 1960; Reed 2000). This design allowed the above-described local agents tremendous independence in coordinating property transactions, mediating litigation, and maintaining local order (Huang 1996, 2001; Kuhn 1980; Scogin 1994, 2001). This design also enabled a centralized control by the Chinese state for two millennia over its vast territory.

The design of the Shuangcheng state farm also exemplified this paradoxical nature of state-society interaction in China. On one hand, when designing the settlement, the state dispersed immigrants from the same descent group or banner administrations into different villages to undercut the power of preexisting social organizations. Compared to the usual human settlement experience, in which such organic groups as lineage played important role in migration and settlement, this measure especially demonstrated the state's intention

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<sup>10</sup> The rule of avoidance originated in the Western Han. In the Han, members of the imperial lineage could not serve as official in regions surrounding the capital. In the Eastern Han, the state stipulated that an official candidate could not serve in regions where his affinal families originated, nor in the neighboring region to his hometown. The rule of avoidance continued to be elaborated in later dynasties. In the Qing, the regions a candidate had to avoid included the region where his lineage resided, the region where his own family had spent a considerable amount of time, and, if he was from a merchant family, the region where his family had business (Zhang 2003).

to exert strong control over banner immigrants in Shuangcheng. This move made the state the only authority in organizing settlement and land allocation. On the other hand, when designing local government, the state still followed traditional practice to maintain a lean government and left tremendous space for local agents and customary practices in land acquisition and inheritance. Since the state undercut lineage organization – an important local agent, during the settlement process – individuals and households also became independent and active agents.

Moreover, the fact that both the state and local society had a multitude of representatives at various levels increased the dynamism of local governance (Li 2005; Kuhn and Jones 1978). On the state side, the central, provincial, and local governments all represented the state. These three levels of government, however, did not necessarily share the same interests; while the central government focused on maintaining order at the national level, the provincial and local governments also sought to strengthen their own power. In Chinese history, these varied interests of the different levels of government comprised a chronic tension between centralization and localization. At the same time, the interests of local society were also diverse. Although local elites played a major role as intermediary between the state and local society, many more groups pursued their interests through various means. For example, in his research on clerks and runners in the Qing county *yamen*, Bradley Reed demonstrates that the non-elite group of *yamen* clerks and runners played an important social role, mediating the relationship between state and society (2000). These diversified groups in local society further increased the complexity of local governance.

Shuangcheng is a particularly interesting place to study state-society relations because

of its unusual importance as a national project. While the life of a specific county level government and society seldom attracted much attention from the central government, Shuangcheng was a major focus of central policy since its settlement in 1815. The state established the Shuangcheng farm both to relieve its fiscal burden of supporting the banner population and to sustain the Eight Banners. As I will show, the three levels of government institution sometimes had different foci on policy implementation, and thus conflicted with one another. Thus, the different interests of state representatives provided bannermen with opportunities to choose institutional support for their specific interests. At the same time, in the history of land acquisition in Shuangcheng, representatives of local society existed at all levels—individual, household, and village.

The drastic political and social changes in the nineteenth century further stimulated the diverging interests of the multitude of representatives of state and society. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Chinese state saw signs of decline in many aspects of its control, e.g. corruption of bureaucrats, serious fiscal problems due to an increasing dependent banner population, and the declining banner tradition. In the nineteenth century, internal rebellions and foreign invasions catalyzed these crises and thereby brought significant changes to the political system; the power of central government weakened and fiscal crises continued to grow. The changes at the national level affected every corner of China Proper, including Shuangcheng. The central, provincial, and local governments used various strategies to adapt themselves to the changing national and regional contexts. In Shuangcheng, differences between the interests of the three levels of government were especially pronounced, and the resulting power dynamic provided Shuangcheng residents with greater space to practice their agency. Before investigating

the specific behaviors of the representatives of state and society in Shuangcheng, I introduce here the actors in the national and regional contexts.

### **The central government**

The central government was the most steadfast proponent of state land ownership and the egalitarian principle in wealth distribution. In Shuangcheng, the central government established strict regulations to protect banner land ownership and the equal distribution of land among metropolitan and rural bannermen. These policies included residential segregation between bannermen and civilian commoners and rules of land allocation and reallocation that prevented wealth concentration. Moreover, even in an age of increasing fiscal crisis, declining central power, and pressing threats from internal rebellions and foreign invasions, the central government insisted on maintaining equality and state control. It was this central government insistence that made Shuangcheng an unusual case of durable state land ownership and equal land distribution in a period of increasing privatization.

By the time the Jiaqing emperor (r.1796-1820) established the state farm in Shuangcheng, the power of the central government had begun to decline. The White Lotus rebellion (1796-1804) broke out in the first year of the Jiaqing reign. It lasted for nine years and swept through Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Hubei provinces.<sup>11</sup> Quelling this rebellion cost the Qing state huge military expenditure, creating a fiscal crisis for the government. At the same time, in the process of suppressing the rebellion, local military forces consolidated under the organization of local elites (Kuhn 1980). Both the fiscal

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<sup>11</sup> Other than the three provinces, some insurrectionary armies also rose up in some counties of Henan and Gansu provinces.

crisis and local militarization threatened the central government's control.

In the wake of the White Lotus rebellion, the central government established the state farm in Shuangcheng to ameliorate its fiscal crisis. Ever since the establishment of the Qing, the government had continuously supported the bannermen with state stipends and land grants. As early as the 1730s, the state budget had fallen short of supporting an increasing banner population, and, under the deteriorating fiscal situation following the White Lotus rebellion, the government's difficulties in raising the banner population in Beijing became especially prominent. Moving the bannermen to the frontier and having them earn their living on state land became an ideal solution, both to relieve the fiscal crisis and to maintain the elite status of the banner population.

Despite the state's active responses, the political and fiscal crises continued to grow through the remainder of the Qing period. In 1840, the Opium War between Great Britain and China started a century-long history of foreign invasion that turned China into a semi-colonial society. Moreover, the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) swept half of China and seriously damaged the Yangzi delta, the most economically prosperous region and an important source for state revenue. Consequently, the power of the central government was further weakened; inside China Proper, provincial governors became more and more autonomous in their control of revenue and military forces. In addition to the increasing local autonomy, the Manchu rulers also felt pressing threats from the growing power of Han-Chinese officials. For 200 years, since the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1644, Qing emperors had maintained the dominance of the Manchu ethnicity in the government system. However, in the course of suppressing the Taiping rebellion, some Han-Chinese officials became powerful, and gradually occupied the most important posts, both in the

central government and in some provincial governments.

Under the pressing challenges to centralization and state power, the central government especially paid attention to maintaining state land ownership and population categories in Shuangcheng. While central control deteriorated in China Proper, the frontier setting in Shuangcheng provided the state an opportunity to intensify its control and to preserve the banner tradition, the symbol of Qing rule. Therefore, although the central government had to constantly adjust its policies to accommodate the deteriorating fiscal and political situation, it was reluctant to give up banner land ownership in Shuangcheng and Northeast China. In 1852, the state allowed private land ownership on banner land in other regions of China Proper.<sup>12</sup> However, it did not permit free land transactions in Northeast China until 1906.

### **The Jilin provincial government**

The central government succeeded in maintaining the state institution of population categories in Shuangcheng because of its tight control of Jilin Province, to which Shuangcheng belonged in the Qing. The Qing rulers considered Jilin, together with the other two northeastern provinces, Liaoning and Heilongjiang, the cradle of the Qing and the property of the Manchu. Therefore, throughout the Qing, the Manchu rulers maintained northeast China as the base for their rule over the majority Han-Chinese population. Qing rulers forbade free immigration to the three northeastern provinces from 1668 to the 1850s as to ensure Manchu military and economic control and privilege in this area. The state also designated all land in Jilin, including plains, mountains, and ponds, as

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<sup>12</sup> WZSL, juan. 62, QSL, Book 40, pp. 830b-831a.

state land. All products from the land were specially designated to supply the imperial lineage's consumption.

The military nature and the Manchu dominance of the Jilin provincial government also allowed for tighter state control. For the majority of Qing history, the Jilin Provincial government belonged to the Eight Banner garrison system. First established in the banner garrison of Ningguta in 1653, it supervised the garrisons scattered over the entire province and coordinated their military activities (Ding 2003). The chief official/officer held the title of general (*jiangjun*), and all personnel in the government were Manchu or Mongol bannermen. Before the mid-nineteenth century, the population of Jilin mainly consisted of soldiers, banner immigrants, criminal convicts, political exiles, and a few civilian commoners who had surreptitiously entered the region (Lee 1970). In addition to its military function, the provincial government handled civil affairs, collecting taxes on the few registered residents and the products from the land.<sup>13</sup> This military government lasted until 1907, when a civilian government replaced it.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the state's tight control, the drastic political and social changes in the nineteenth century also challenged the Jilin provincial government. The first challenge came from the growing immigrant population. With the settlement of Shuangcheng in 1815, more and more unregistered Han-Chinese and banner immigrants entered this area to make a living. For example, in 1845 and 1847, the Shuangcheng government registered more than 3,000 households of floating bannermen from Liaoning, who had moved to Shuangcheng without a government order. The growth of this unregistered population

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<sup>13</sup> In the 1720s, the Qing also established several civilian administrations at the local level to supervise the civilian population who surreptitiously migrated to this area (Fan 2007). However, the provincial government was still under the Eight Banners.

<sup>14</sup> At the provincial level, the state kept the banner government until 1907. At the local level, the state had established civil government in the 1730s to govern a handful of settlements of Han-Chinese immigrants, who entered Jilin surreptitiously and were registered by the government (Fan 2007).

posed a problem of control. At the same time, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the shortage of government revenue became a serious problem. Due to continuous foreign invasions and interior rebellions, the state's demand for military power significantly increased. Jilin was one of the major sites to supply the Eight Banner troops. Consequently, military expenditure became a heavy burden on provincial revenue. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the shortage of financial resources to cover the huge military expenditure persisted as a major theme in government policy discussions.

To cope with these challenges, successive generals of Jilin pushed the central government to adjust its policies to accommodate social and political changes. Proposals from the generals of Jilin often deviated from the central government's ideal of maintaining Manchu control. For example, in 1861, Jingchun, the general of Jilin (1853-1864), petitioned to allow free immigration to Jilin and to rent out uncultivated land to these new immigrants in order to increase government revenue. Despite its deviation from the state ideal, the central government eventually approved Jingchun's proposal, which would both relieve the state's fiscal burden and extend its control. This move marked the state's approval of free immigration to Jilin, initiating mass immigration to this province. Subsequently, the Jilin population increased by a factor of thirteen, from 327,000 in 1850 to 4,416,300 in 1907 (Fan 2007; Ho 1959; Liang 1980).<sup>15</sup> This example demonstrates that, compared to the central government, the provincial government usually took a more practical stance toward solving administrative problems to sustain the state governance. As I show in this dissertation, in the history of Shuangcheng state farm, four generals of Jilin—Fujun (1814-1817, 1818-1822, and 1824-1827), Boqitu (1827-1828),

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<sup>15</sup> The 1850 population data is from Ho 1959, p.283. The 1907 population data is from Fan 2007, p. 70. Liang Fangzhong's study also provided with similar results.

Jing'ebu (1840-1848), and Ming'an (1877-1883)—repeatedly pushed the state to adjust policies according to the context of Shuangcheng.

### **The local banner government and local society**

The Shuangcheng local banner government developed together with the local society. Up until the early nineteenth century, Shuangcheng was still largely empty land. In the first 35 years from 1815 to 1851, while the first generation immigrants settled down and were still adapting to the new environment, the banner administration in Shuangcheng only existed in its prototype, without independent rights of taxation and adjudication. In 1852, the local banner administration finally consolidated its power and acquired complete rights as a government, collecting rent and taxes, adjudicating legal cases, and maintaining local order. By then, the banner immigrants were in their second or third generation. Subsequently, lineages, which had been dispersed by the state during the settlement stage, re-emerged as an element of local society. Families, descent groups, and village communities were actively involved in activities of land acquisition and land transfer, and therefore, institutional and social development went hand in hand to mark Shuangcheng's development.

At the same time, the national political and economic changes that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century also provided Shuangcheng residents with opportunities for wealth accumulation. Beginning in the 1840s, in the wake of fiscal crises caused by foreign invasion and inner rebellions, the state sought to open more land in Northeast China to supplement state revenue with rent income. In Shuangcheng, the state thus allowed the residents to cultivate more land than the amount allocated to them. This move served to

legitimize the private land cultivation some families had practiced after their initial settlement. Such individual behaviors of land cultivation, together with land transfer, gave rise to stratification in landed wealth, and thereby further complicated local governance.

In the course of land allocation and land acquisition in Shuangcheng, the coexistence of competing institutions characterized local rule, both at the regulatory level and in the overall system of governance. In terms of regulation, state policies of land allocation and customary laws of land transaction complemented each other to provide convenience for the local government and residents. Although state regulations dominated land allocation and reallocation in the state farm, they also left space for customs to guide the myriad local behaviors of land inheritance and transaction. Therefore, customary norms became an important supplement to state regulations in directing the actual procedures of local practices. For example, in land inheritance in Shuangcheng, although the state mandated the primogeniture principle, some bannermen practiced partible inheritance under customary norms while simulating the façade of primogeniture in the official registers.

Discrepancies also existed between state regulations and customary norms. While the state emphasized equal land allocation within each population category, customary norms highlighted kinship and geographic ties. In local practices of land acquisition, this discrepancy enabled bannermen to choose between competing institutions according to their specific interests. In addition, the discrepancy between state regulation and customary norms provided local officials with greater autonomy in adjudicating land-related litigations; officials could refer to either state regulations or customary norms according to the context of specific cases. Through their tactical selection of rules, local

officials and bannermen both exhibited greater agency.

The changing social and political context in Northeast China further complicated local dynamics by bringing competing government systems to Shuangcheng. Before 1882, the Shuangcheng banner government was the sole government authority in the local society. However, the opening of Jilin to free immigration in 1861 resulted in a growing Han-Chinese population in Shuangcheng and its adjacent areas. Subsequently, in 1882, the state established a civil government in Shuangcheng. The civil government administered not only the area of the state farm, but also the adjacent areas that had previously belonged to a banner garrison named Lalin. At the same time, the Shuangcheng banner government remained the authority in the state farm, which included 120 banner villages and more than 100 natural settlements called *wopeng*. Therefore, for the thirty years from 1882 to the end of the Qing in 1911, a dual government system existed in Shuangcheng. Moreover, even after the fall of the Qing, the republican government still kept the banner administration, renaming it the Office of Banner Affairs (*qiwu chengban chu*), which continued to administer the 120 banner villages.<sup>16</sup>

The establishment of the civil government offered Shuangcheng bannermen an alternative institution and thereby weakened the power of the banner government. In theory, the banner government still had authority over all state farm-related affairs. In reality, however, due to the overlap of administrative areas, the duties of the two governments were not completely distinct. Not only did the two governments often work together to adjudicate disputes that involved both bannermen and civilian commoners, some bannermen also brought their disputes directly to the civil government. Unfamiliar

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<sup>16</sup> The persistence of banner administration after the fall of Qing was also a national phenomenon (Tong 1994).

with the state population categories and the corresponding land allocation policies, the judgments of the civil government sometimes deviated from state regulations and thereby benefited those bannermen who preferred solutions other than those offered by the land allocation policy.

### **Traditions, policies, practices, and consequences**

With rich historical sources on both state and local society, the history of the Shuangcheng state farm perfectly connects the Chinese state's tradition of equal distribution of material wealth with the creation of population categories in local society. The political ideal of equal distribution of wealth has a long history dating back to the classics of various philosophical schools of ancient China, including Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Eclectics.<sup>17</sup> However, due to the lack of data, no study has explored the application of this egalitarianism in local society. The history of land distribution in Shuangcheng reveals the entire process by which the state enforced such egalitarian ideals in local society, including institutional design, social responses to state policies, and the consequences of the state-society interaction on wealth distribution. To describe this process, I organize my dissertation into four parts, following the story line of ideals, state policies, local practices, and consequences.

In chapter two, I explore the tradition of egalitarianism in Chinese history and its application in the Qing Eight Banners. I demonstrate that in historical China, the political ideal of an egalitarian distribution of wealth persisted under both Han and non-Han

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<sup>17</sup> In their research on the thoughts of "Great Commonality" in ancient China, Chen Zhengyan and Lin Qiyuan explored philosophical teachings that contained the ideal of equal distribution of material wealth (1986). Not only Confucianism but also Daoism and Mohism as well as the Eclectics had expressed the ideal of egalitarianism.

regimes. Moreover, in application, this egalitarian ideal was often realized through the state institution of population categories; while promoting equality within each category, the state also maintained inequality between populations, differentiating their entitlement rights to material wealth. Therefore, the model of Shuangcheng state farm originated from a rich theoretical and institutional background in Chinese history.

I organize chapters three to nine into three parts –state policy, local practice, and wealth stratification and social formation—to reconstruct the settlement history, the subsequent distribution of landed wealth, and the formation of social groups in Shuangcheng. With this organization, I adopt the model framework in the field of resettlement study to narrate the settlement and development of the Shuangcheng society, inspired by case studies of the resettlement of involuntary migrants in Africa and Southeast Asia by anthropologists Elizabeth Colson and Thayer Scudder. The settlement of banner immigrants in Shuangcheng resembles in many ways the organized resettlement of “involuntary” migrants, which has been an increasingly common phenomenon in the last half-century in both developing and industrialized countries (Scudder and Colson 1982; Guggenheim and Cernea 1993).<sup>18</sup> Like the metropolitan bannermen relocated to Shuangcheng, these displaced populations are moved under government supervision because of projects and persecutions that are often initiated by the state without any local participation. Based on numerous case studies, Scudder and Colson theorize that relocation and resettlement took place in four stages: “recruitment,” “transition,” “potential development,” and “handling over or incorporation” (Colson 1971; Scudder 1985; Scudder

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<sup>18</sup> While there are numerous case studies on the phenomenon of involuntary migrants, two major volumes, one edited by Scudder and Colson in 1982 and the other edited by Scott Guggenheim and Michael Cernea in 1993 summarized the development of this field.

and Colson 1982).<sup>19</sup> This framework not only describes the resettlement process in a temporal phase, but also captures the key characteristics of the society of each stage.

In part two, which includes chapters three, four, and five, I focus on the official institutions and the state policy of land allocation which were established in the early stage of the settlement (1815-1830). This period resembles the “recruitment” and “transition” stages of the resettlement framework, during which the immigrants largely depended on the existing authorities for material and security. As I will show, the state was the only authority in planning and organizing the settlement of Shuangcheng immigrants. Moreover, through the planning of this settlement, the Qing designed a local society significantly dependent on state power. The land allocation policy and the corresponding registration system successfully created and maintained population categories with differential entitlements to land. Subsequently, the state institutions established in the early stage of settlement largely determined the nature of Shuangcheng society, as well as the social boundaries in the remainder of its history.

In part three, which consists of chapters six and seven, I study local practices of land acquisition, transaction, and inheritance, which became active in the mid-nineteenth century. These behaviors arose in the period resembling the “potential development” stage. After the initial transition period, individuals gradually adapted to the new environment and began to seek opportunities to maximize their own interests. Beginning

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<sup>19</sup> In the “recruitment” stage, the government makes decisions on where to move the migrants and how the move shall take place. In the “transition” stage, which refers to the first several years after the initial settlement, the dislocated individuals are still adjusting themselves to the new environment and show tremendous dependence to existing authorities. In the “potential development” stage, the individuals begin to adapt to the new environment, seeking new options, and new social organizations gradually develop. Consequently, the authority of old institutions declines, and inequality in the community widens. The “handing over or incorporation” stage deals with the long-term success of resettlement, demonstrated by the incorporation of the community into a larger territorial framework, and how the community plays a role in production and commerce.

in the 1840s, private land opening became more and more prevalent. At the same time, local methods of land transfer that deviated from official processes persisted. In dealing with the affairs of the state farm, the state also adjusted policies to accommodate the local practices. These behaviors made possible wealth accumulation and stratification that were contrary to the state's egalitarian ideal. Moreover, as immigrant families moved into their second and third generations, family and descent groups, which were undercut by the state during the initial settlement stage, reemerged as important local agents in coordinating wealth transmission and inheritance.

Finally, in part four, which consists of chapters eight, nine, and ten, I analyze land distribution among metropolitan and rural bannermen from 1870 to 1906 to examine the levels and sources of inequality. Land distribution is particularly salient during this period because, by 1870, Shuangcheng society had reached the stage of "handling over," becoming an important site of grain production in Northeast China. The level of inequality in land distribution in Shuangcheng, therefore, reflects social stratification resulting from the interaction between state policies and local practices over time. I reveal that, a half century after the initial settlement, patterns of land distribution in Shuangcheng exhibited both change and continuity. Through continuous private land cultivation and accumulation, an upper class had emerged in Shuangcheng, of which rural bannermen—who were relegated by state policies to a wealth status lower than that of metropolitan bannermen—accounted for a significant proportion. At the same time, some households, including those of both metropolitan and rural bannermen, had become landless. Yet, despite the emergence of stratification in landed wealth that transcended state population categories, both between-category inequality and within-category equality

were well maintained among the majority of the metropolitan and rural banner population, and the distribution of land in Shuangcheng exhibited a pattern of stratification without concentration. Eventually, the tensions between population categories created by the state's land allocation policy in Shuangcheng turned these administrative categories into social groups that persisted beyond the fall of the Qing dynasty.

## **Chapter II**

### **Egalitarian Principles and Institutional Traditions**

Over the course of human history, numerous societies that span the range of culture and geography have practiced equal distribution of wealth. Scholars have agreed that these characteristics are particularly common in early small-scale communal societies (Lenski 1966; Radcliffe-Brown 1948; Sahlins 1972; Turnbull 1961). The Andaman Islanders studied by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown is an example: in Andaman society, land is commonly owned, and everyone has equal access to the necessities of life. Food and wealth are equally distributed, despite the fact that the “produce of the land and all portable property are privately owned” (Lenski 1966). Although this type of society has become increasingly rare, examples can be found in many parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, communal ownership and the equal distribution of wealth have also been practiced in larger and more complex societies. For example, under the serfdom economy in Russia, village communes equally distributed and redistributed land and obligations among villagers according to their labor availability (Watters 1968). Even in the western societies in present day, public ownership has continued on community properties as well as some scarce resources.

While most societies became more unequal as they grew in size and complexity, China has distinguished itself by preserving the egalitarian tradition into its state

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<sup>1</sup> Some well-studied examples of primitive communal societies include the Andaman islanders in South Asia (Radcliffe-Brown 1948), Bambuti Pygmies of Zaire in Africa (Turnbull 1961), and the Dai communities in China (Ma and Miao 1989).

institutions and using state power to create and maintain such egalitarianism. The institution of state population categories in Shuangcheng was built on this egalitarian tradition. In this chapter, I situate the state farm institution in Shuangcheng and the corresponding Eight Banner system in historical and institutional context to understand the importance of the egalitarian tradition. I first examine the origins of the egalitarian ideal in Chinese history and how political philosophies and institutions converged in China to fashion the equal distribution of wealth, and to perpetuate such distribution as an important platform of political legitimacy. In this process, not only did the Han-Chinese dynasties pass down the essential theories and institutions that would enable an equal distribution of wealth, but the non-Han regimes, with their nomadic traditions, also contributed to the development of egalitarianism. I then summarize the key features of the Eight Banners in the Qing. The Eight Banners, which is the larger institutional background of the Shuangcheng state farm, represents an elaborated form of the state institution of population categories, a major component of which was the equal distribution of material wealth.

## **Roots of the egalitarian traditions**

### **Institutions and philosophy**

The practice of equal distribution and the ideal of egalitarianism in China originated in the ancient village communes, where local institutions ensured the equal distribution of resources. One well-known example of such an institution in ancient China was the *jingtian* system, the land system practiced by village communes in the period before written records.<sup>2</sup> Under the *jingtian* system, the village government controlled two types

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<sup>2</sup> Chinese scholars have debated the authenticity and actual practice of the *jingtian* system in Chinese

of land, corporate land (*gongtian*) and private land (*sitian*). Villagers worked the corporate land collectively and the village government divided the private land into plots of equal size to be farmed by households.<sup>3</sup> Each household, usually consisting of a married couple and their young children, received one plot. Moreover, after the initial distribution, the village redistributed the plots among the villagers every one to three years to maintain equality (Yang 2006b). When the king of Western Zhou (11th century- 771 B.C.) established a feudal state in China in the eleventh century B.C., he inherited this principle of equal land distribution and organized administrative and residential units accordingly; in the rural area around the capital, the basic residential units, known as *li*, each consisted of ten households (Yang 2006a). This early practice of equal distribution established an institutional model for later Chinese dynasties (Yang and Li 1990).

In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., in response to rising inequality and social disorder, egalitarianism gradually developed into a philosophy of governance. In the sixth century B.C., economic growth produced social and economic inequality, resulting in the collapse of the old social order. The power of the king of Zhou declined, and the lords under him waged wars against one another to expand their territory and power. In order to reinstate the old social order, philosophers generalized the life of ancient village communes to the entire society and created the ideal world of “Great Commonality,” described in detail in the *Book of Rites (lij)*:

“When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky; they chose men of talents, virtue, and ability; their words were sincere, and what they cultivated was harmony. Thus men did not love their

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history. Although the academy has not reached consensus about the practice and its nature, scholars in general agree that the *jingtian* system did exist in China and was the major land system practiced by village communes (Yang 2003; Li 1999; Zhou 2002).

<sup>3</sup> According to Mencius, each plot had a size of 100 *mu*. The actual practice of *jingtian* and the plot size, however, is still under debate.

parents only, nor treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young. They showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they were all sufficiently maintained. Males had their proper work, and females had their homes. (They accumulated) articles (of value), disliking that they should be thrown away upon the ground, but not wishing to keep them for their own gratification. (They labored) with their strength, disliking that it should not be exerted, but not exerting it (only) with a view to their own advantage. In this way (selfish) schemings were repressed and found no development. Robbers, filchers, and rebellious traitors did not show themselves, and hence the outer doors remained open, and were not shut. This was (the period of) what we call the Great Commonality.”<sup>4</sup>

As the above text indicates, the society of “great commonality” was an extremely altruistic society. In the society of “great commonality,” material wealth was a public resource that should be equally distributed among the population, regardless of gender, age, and biological conditions. The equal distribution of resources thus comprised an integral part of the greater ideal of “great commonality.”

While various philosophical schools shared this egalitarian ideal,<sup>5</sup> Confucian scholars continued to develop it, emphasizing that material wealth in particular should be equally distributed. In the *Analects*, Confucius stressed the importance of equal distribution in maintaining stability:

“The head of a state or a noble family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution, not about poverty but about instability. For where there is even distribution there is no such thing as poverty, where there is harmony there is no such thing as under-population and where there is stability there is no such thing as overturning.”<sup>6</sup>

Although Confucius expressed a strong preference for equal distribution as the key to good governance, he did not specify what should be equally distributed to maintain stability. It

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<sup>4</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, volume 28, part 4: The Li Ki, James Legge, 1885.

<sup>5</sup> Other than Confucianism, philosophers of Mohism, Daoism, and Eclectics (*zajia*) all expressed this egalitarian ideal (Chen and Lin 1986).

<sup>6</sup> *The Analects of Confucius*, book 16, Jishi, translator, D.C. Lau (Lau 1979).

was Mencius (372-289 B.C.) who indicated that it was the material wealth necessary to maintain people's subsistence that should be equally distributed. In his teachings, Mencius paid special attention to people's livelihood and provided more concrete descriptions of good governance to the rulers. Mencius summarized these basic materials with the term "constant means (*hengchan*)," which included land, food, clothing, and shelter. As for their distribution, Mencius followed the standard of the *jingtian* system; each household owned a "homestead of five *mu* of land (*wumu zhi zhai*)" and "a land lot of a hundred *mu* (*baimu zhi tian*)."<sup>7</sup> Only when people met their subsistence with equally distributed wealth, did their prince become a "true King."<sup>7</sup>

Along with the development of philosophical teachings, equal distribution remained a traditional practice in China and played an important role in the trend of centralization from the fourth to first century B.C.. Not only was this political ideal morally appealing, it also helped rulers consolidate political power. Carrying out and maintaining an equal distribution of wealth requires that a state centralize control of materials and population, and this centralization of power complemented changes already underway in China. From the fourth to the second century B.C., the Chinese political system transformed from feudal to imperial. This change required that the state undercut the power of the nobility, who controlled a considerable amount of land and population. The equal distribution of land therefore aided the consolidation of state power. Even before Confucianism became

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<sup>7</sup> In his conversation with King Hui of Liang on good governance, Mencius said: "If you wish to put this into practice, why not go back to fundamentals? If the mulberry is planted in every homestead of five *mu* of land, then those who are fifty can wear silk; if chickens, pigs and dogs do not miss their breeding season, then those who are seventy can eat meat; if each lot of a hundred *mu* is not deprived of labour during the busy seasons, then families with several mouths to feed will not go hungry. Exercise due care over the education provided by village schools, and discipline the people by teaching them duties proper to sons and younger brothers, and those whose heads have turned grey will not be carrying loads on the roads. When the aged wear silk and eat meat and the masses are neither cold nor hungry, it is impossible for their prince not to be a true King." See *Mencius*, Book I Part A. (Lau, p. 59).

the orthodox philosophy, the Qin state of the Warring States period (476-221 B.C.) had already equally allocated state land to eligible commoners through the *shoutian* and *mingtian* policies.<sup>8</sup> The Qin state went on to unify China in 221 B.C., establishing the Qin Empire under a central government. In the second century B.C., Emperor Wu (156-87 B.C.) of the Western Han (202 B.C.-25 A.D.) further strengthened the centralized government system and adopted Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology. Thereafter, equal distribution of wealth, together with other Confucian teachings, became the principle of good governance for Chinese emperors.

Philosophical teachings and institutional development thus went hand in hand to establish the equal distribution of wealth as a normative practice. The Qin (221-206 B.C.) and Han Empires (202 B.C.-200 A.D.) both inherited the practice of equal land allocation; the state consistently allocated land to commoners according to household size (*jikou shoutian*) (He 1958, 1956).<sup>9</sup> Even when China broke apart at the end of the Han period, state intervention in land distribution persisted. For example, in the Wei Kingdom, the government established the institution of *tuntian* to organize the peasants who farmed the state land allocated to them. This institution later developed into the *zhantian* system and was applied to all the land in the Western Jin (265-316), a dynasty which briefly unified China. Under the *zhantian* system, the state stipulated the amount of land an individual

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<sup>8</sup> In the fourth century, Qin had established a policy that allocated state land according to military rank. Officers who earned a high rank through achievement in the battlefield could have a considerable amount of land. At the same time, soldiers could attain a plot of 100 *mu* for killing one enemy officer (Han 1984).

<sup>9</sup> In the Qin and Han, under the system of equal land allocation, commoners also had certain property rights on their land. After the initial allocation, commoners could sell their land or buy more. However, when wealth became increasingly concentrated, the state would confiscate the property of merchants and big landlords and redistribute it. One famous example was the *gaomin* policy of Emperor Wu in the Han. In the beginning of the Western Han, the state did not control much land. In the second century B.C., the emperor confiscated rich merchants' properties, including slaves, vast amount of land, and houses. The confiscated land became state land and Emperor Wu allocated a considerable amount of state land to commoners (Han 1984; He 1956).

could have: each adult male had 70 *mu*, and each adult female had 30 *mu*.<sup>10</sup> This state practice of equal distribution of wealth has persisted for so long because it was an effective means for the state to maintain power and control, thereby providing later Chinese dynasties rich institutional precedents.

### **Equal distribution and conquest dynasties**

While the Han-Chinese dynasties built a solid theoretical and institutional background for equal land distribution, when land became seriously concentrated it was the non-Han regimes that reinstated equal land distribution as a national institution in medieval China. Beginning in the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 A.D.), land gradually concentrated in the hands of officials and large landlords (Wang 1992). This land concentration destroyed the equal distribution of land practiced in the Qin and Han periods. At the same time, the growth of the economic and political power of the large landlords seriously weakened the central government and led to the decline of the Eastern Han. In 316, the invasion of nomadic tribes divided China into two parts, north and south; this divided status was maintained for 265 years. The Han-Chinese regimes, though they only occupied the regions south of the Yangzi River, had to constantly fight the invaders to protect their territory. Ruling with a weakened central government, emperors relied heavily on the powerful noble lineages (*menfa*) to organize military power (Tian 1989).<sup>11</sup> These noble

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<sup>10</sup> See *Jinshu*, juan. 27, p.790. Since there are no detailed records about the *zhantian* system, scholars are still debating its application in the society. Yet this regulation indicated the state's intervention in land distribution.

<sup>11</sup> The noble lineages in the Southern dynasties were not the same as those in the feudal period. These nobles rose as a result of the weakened central power beginning in the third century. The noble lineages came into being during the Eastern Jin dynasty (316-420). These families controlled military power, along with a large amount of land and labor. Their existence seriously weakened the power of the emperor and the bureaucracy.

lineages occupied the high-ranking posts in the government and owned a large amount of land and labor. At the same time, in 485, the rulers of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) in North China enforced state landownership and established the equal land (*juntian*) system as a national institution.

The equal land (*juntian*) system incorporated both the land institutions of the earlier Han-Chinese dynasties and elements of communal practices derived from the nomadic tribal tradition (Tang 1956; Han 1984). Under the equal land system, the state controlled all farmland and allocated it equitably to commoners according to household size. As in the *zhantian* system in Western Jin, the household, headed by a married couple, was the unit of land allocation. Each adult man and woman received a plot, with the plots allocated to women being smaller than those given to men.<sup>12</sup> By farming their plots, households paid taxes and labor services to the state. Ultimately, however, these plots belonged to the state; couples were required to return their plots when they reached the age of 70.<sup>13</sup> This practice of land return derived from tribal tradition and thus differed from the practice under Han-Chinese dynasties, which allowed the peasants to pass down the allocated plots to their descendants. Land return intensified state control, and the implementation of this equal land system helped the nomadic rulers to consolidate their power in a central government. At the same time, the input from the nomadic tribal tradition also refreshed the ideal of equal wealth distribution. This institution not only became the land system of the Northern dynasties from 485 to 581, but also remained the national land system after the unification of China (in 581) and persisted until 780, a period

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<sup>12</sup> In Northern Wei, each male above the age of fifteen received 40 *mu* of uncultivated land and 20 *mu* of land with mulberry trees. Each married female received 20 *mu* of uncultivated farmland.

<sup>13</sup> On top of the basic land allocation policies, the *juntian* system also had supplemental regulations to define land allocation among landlords and officials. Some scholars argue that in fact the state could only allocate land without owners according to the *juntian* regulations (Jian 1983). Moreover, some scholars also argue that the *juntian* system did not weaken the power of large landlords.

of 300 years.

The equal land system also served as the basis for the *fubing* institution, a military system created by a Xianbei ruler named Yuwen Tai that drew soldiers from the state-created category of military households (Gu 1962). The Northern Wei dynasty, which had maintained unity in North China, collapsed in 535 A.D., leaving behind two competing regimes (the Western and Eastern Wei) and rising local military forces. In 542 A.D., Yuwen Tai, a general of Western Wei, recruited the private armies controlled by powerful warlords in North China and enrolled them into a centralized military system called *fubing*. All households under the *fubing* system were separately registered as hereditary military households and supplied the soldiers of the imperial guards and the central army. The *fubing* system was a historical precedent of the Eight Banners in the Qing.

Through Yuwen Tai's policies of homogenization, the *fubing* system finally turned the military households into a special population category. Yuwen Tai replicated the Xianbei tribal model to organize the army by three hierarchies: all armies were divided into twenty-four divisions, belonging to twelve generals, and these twelve generals were supervised by six noble chiefs, of which Yuwen Tai was one (Gu 1962, Tang 2006). Despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds, every general and soldier acquired a Xianbei surname; military divisions were thus organized as tribal clans. Through this constructed blood tie, Yuwen Tai consolidated his power and centralized military forces by enforcing soldiers' and generals' personal loyalty to the chief/ruler.

Alongside the tribal tradition, the practice of equal land distribution also contributed to Yuwen Tai's successful creation of the *fubing* system. Under the equal land (*juntian*)

system, each military household also received landed property like commoner households. In return for their military service, Yuwen Tai exempted the military households from the tax and labor service associated with their allocated land. The combination of state control and equal allocation of material resources weakened military households' dependence on their former lords and maintained uniformity in access to material wealth, thus eliminating alternative power structures.

The equal land (*juntian*) and *fubing* systems illustrate how the absolute power of nomadic rulers fostered centralization. A nomadic tribe usually consisted of three classes, nobles (including the tribal head and his families), commoners, and slaves. In contrast to Confucian teachings, which based a ruler's legitimacy on his ability to provide people with the necessities of life, tribal heads gained their absolute authority by organizing production and military battles. While Confucian teachings still emphasized a contractual relationship between rulers and the people, obedience to the tribal heads was absolute because it was the only way to survive in cruel military fightings. Ironically, in medieval China, the autocratic nature of the tribal tradition helped to reinstate the equal distribution of material wealth. In the remainder of Chinese history, the conquest dynasties, Liao (916-1125 A.D.) and Jin (1127-1234 A.D.) both governed the conquest elite separately from the rest of the population and awarded them equal access to material wealth.<sup>14</sup>

### **The evolution of egalitarian ideal in the Ming**

In the Ming (1368-1644 A.D.), the dynasty preceding Qing, neo-Confucian scholar-officials drew on all the Han and non-Han institutions of equal land distribution to

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<sup>14</sup> For the ethnic policies in Liao and Jin, see note 9 of chapter one.

advocate for equal distribution of material wealth. These scholar-officials celebrated equal distribution as an antidote to the high level of land concentration in the Ming. Qiu Jun, a neo-Confucian scholar-official, in his work *Daxue yanyi bu* (*The Supplement to the Elaboration of the Great Learning*), recounted all the historical institutions of equal land distribution, the *jingtian* in the pre-Qin period, the *zhantian* system in the Eastern Han and in the Wei state of the Three Kingdoms period, and the equal land (*juntian*) system in the Northern Wei. In contrast to these systems, he criticized land concentration for its harm to people's livelihood and state control:

“Ever since the Qin state adopted Shang Yang's proposal of abolishing the *jingtian* system and destroyed the boundaries between each plots, the state could no longer allocate land to people. Commoners could occupy land as they wanted. Wealthy people could buy land; powerful people could acquire land (by power); capable people could farm the land. Those who owned the land did not necessarily farm it, while the people who farmed it did not own it. The state could only extract ten percent of the output, while private owners received the majority of the output. Contemporary Confucian scholars always lamented that the rulers could not recover the principles of the three dynasties to administer the people ... If the wealth was not equally distributed, there was no way to educate and support the people.”<sup>15</sup>

According to Qiu Jun, land concentration jeopardized state income, thereby weakening state power. To prevent land concentration, He argued that, although it was not realistic to reinstate the *jingtian* and *juntian* systems, the state still should maintain an equal land distribution among the people. The equal distribution of material wealth was not only a way to support the population, but also a way to educate it.

Qiu Jun's vision of the state role in maintaining an equal land distribution represented the orthodox interpretation of Chinese history and official ideology of political economy in the Ming and Qing. In 1487, when Qiu Jun submitted his work to Emperor Xianzong, the emperor ordered the inclusion of this work in the textbook for the emperor's *jingyan* study,

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<sup>15</sup> See *Daxue yanyi bu*, juan. 13, book 2, 13a-13b.

the instruction system for the emperor to study Confucian classics and history.<sup>16</sup> From then on, this work remained a major textbook for the emperor's *jingyan* study not only in the Ming but also throughout the Qing dynasty. Moreover, this work was also soon published and widely studied by generations of scholars who prepared for the civil service exam.

The call for equal distribution not only persisted in theoretical teachings but also influenced policy discussions and practice in the Ming dyansty. Throughout the dynasty, some scholar-officials constantly advocated policies to reinstate the *jingtian* system on military state farms (Wang 1998). Although the state never succeeded in implementing the *jingtian* system, the military state farm still inherited some elements of the *jingtian* and *juntian* systems, equally allocating land and obligations to households (Wang 1965). Thus, by the Qing period, the rulers had created and sustained an elite institution, the Eight Banners, drawing reference not only from philosophical and institutional precedents but also from their own tribal traditions.

### **The Eight Banners**

The Eight Banners is an institution to organize a military elite population that characterized the rule of the Qing, dividing the people into bannermen and civilian commoners. Developed in the early seventeenth century in Northeast China, the Eight Banners was originally the institution the Manchu rulers used to organize and control the subject population of the early Manchu state in the Liaodong area. By 1644, when the Manchu conquered China, all the population in Liaodong – Manchu, Mongol, and Han as

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<sup>16</sup> In China, the tradition of emperors studying classics to learn the way of governance originated very early. By the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127 A.D.), the *jingyan* instruction system became institutionalized (Zhang 1991). The later dynasties in Chinese history all inherited and developed this institution.

well as some other ethnicities – had been enrolled into the Eight Banners. After the Manchu entered China Proper and established the Qing dynasty, the emperors preserved Eight Banners to organize the conquest elites. The Eight Banners thus served as the institution to distinguish the bannermen from civilian commoners; bannermen served the state as soldiers and officials (officers) and enjoyed state stipend and political privileges, while civilian commoners had nothing from the state. Therefore, the division between bannermen and civilian comprised the most important categorical inequality in Qing China.

Throughout the Qing period, the Manchu emperors invested huge efforts to maintain the Eight Banners. The emperors first did so to backup the minority Manchu ruling over the majority Han-Chinese. With the Eight Banners, the Manchu emperors managed to stay at the top of the ethnic hierarchy and thereby sustained their status as the ruling elite (Elliott 2001). Even after the Manchu emperors successfully strengthened their rule and mastered the Han-Chinese model of bureaucracy, the Eight Banners still remained an important tradition. In this section, I therefore analyze three key characteristics of the Eight Banners: the equal division of administrative units and material wealth, the bannermen as hereditarily bonded labor of the emperor, and the banner land as well as other types of material support that enforced the bond between bannermen and the emperor. These very characteristics of the Eight Banners were also the principles of the banner institution in Shuangcheng.

### **Equal division**

The development of the Eight Banners accompanied the transformation of Manchu

from a tribal society to a bureaucratic state (Meng 1960; Liu 2001). Nurhachi, the founder of the Qing, first created the Eight Banners to support an aristocratic monarchy. In 1600, Nurhachi started to transform Jurchen tribe's basic hunting unit,<sup>17</sup> *niru*, into the basic military unit of the Eight Banners. He formally created a system consisting of eight banners in 1615 to organize the military *niru*, proclaiming himself the "bright khan" in the next year. The Eight Banners therefore replaced previous tribal organizations, weakening the blood tie between the Jurchen tribes and helping to consolidate the khan's authority. In this sense, the Eight Banners combined social, economic, and military functions into one system. In this new system, those who had been commoners under the tribal system worked as peasants in peaceful periods and served the khan as soldiers during times of war. Each banner was headed by a commander who owned a number of *niru* and claimed loyalty to the khan. In addition to serving as the commander of two banners, Nurhachi tactically co-opted other banner commanders by bringing them into the state power structure, appointing them state counselors or awarding them noble titles.

After Nurhachi's death, his son Hong Taiji further consolidated the khan's authority. Hong Taiji undercut the powers of banner commanders by creating official positions within the Eight Banners that reported directly to the khan (Liu 2001). He also adopted the Han-Chinese model to establish Six Boards in the khan's government (Liu 2001; Elliott 2001). At the same time, Hong Taiji created Mongol (in 1635) and Han-Chinese Banners (in 1642) to organize the increasing Mongol and Han population in the Liaodong area, ultimately transforming the Manchu tribes into a bureaucratic state and turning the Eight Banners into an administrative system. Therefore, before the Manchu conquest of

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<sup>17</sup> The Manchu ethnicity was developed from an ethnic group named Jurchen, which had existed in Northeast China for centuries.

China proper, the Eight Banners served as the fundamental government institution of the Manchu state in Northeast China (Meng 1960).

The equal distribution of material wealth had been a founding principle of Nurhachi's Eight Banners. He ensured that plunder was always allocated equally among the eight banners (*bajia junfen*); regardless of the size of a banner's population, each banner had an equal share of material wealth.<sup>18</sup> To protect this egalitarian principle, Nurhachi established corresponding archival and judicial institutions to monitor distribution (Jiang 2007). The implementation and enforcement of equal distribution also strengthened Nurhachi's power. Before his death, Nurhachi reemphasized the importance of equal distribution in his last words to the nobles and ministers:

“In the past, my six grandfathers, together with Dongguo, Wangjia, Hada, Yehei, Wula, Huifa, and Mongol, all had an insatiable desire to wealth and goods. They pursued selfishness and neglected equity and justice. (Therefore) they fought with and killed one another, resulting in their failure. ... I took them as a warning and required that the eight families (banners), once acquired some material wealth, must share it for public use and equally distribute it. Each banner should not take more than its deserved share.”<sup>19</sup>

Nurhachi's descendents inherited this rule and complied with it so strictly that any material goods that could not be equally distributed whole were divided into pieces (Zhang and Guo 1988).

Equal distribution was also the guiding principle in organizing the banners themselves. Nurhachi not only trimmed the size of the military *niru* to three hundred soldiers each, but also equalized the number of *niru* in each banner and redistributed *niru* among the eight banners to balance their powers. He further established a population registration system to monitor and control the size of *niru*. Initially, the size of the eight banners varied

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<sup>18</sup> The distribution of material wealth within each banner, however, followed equitable principles, such that members with a higher political status gained more.

<sup>19</sup> *Taizu shilu*, juan. 10, QSL, book 1, p. 139b.

dramatically. For example, in 1632, the Bordered Blue banner had sixty-one *niru*, while the Bordered White banner had fifteen. By 1634, as a result of Nurhachi's and Hong Taiji's efforts in redistributing *niru*, the number in each banner ranged from twenty-five to thirty-two (Jiang 2007). In that year, Hong Taiji determined that the number of *niru* in each banner should be thirty. Equal distribution of both wealth and population was therefore a fundamental principle of the Manchu state.

The equal distribution of population and material wealth created uniformity in administration and helped to consolidate the khan's power, intensifying central authority at the expense of noble power. To enforce the rule of equal division among the eight banners, Nurhachi published a set of laws and established institutions to regulate and monitor the distribution of material wealth.<sup>20</sup> These institutions became part of a preliminary central bureaucracy independent of the banner commanders, whose individual power was held in check by the equal distribution of population under their control. Moreover, the equalized *niru* and banner size also produced uniformity in the social, administrative, and military units, which, as China's millennial history had shown, are essential to a centralized bureaucratic state.

After the Qing conquest of China proper, the nomadic tradition of equal distribution converged with Confucian ideologies and remained the philosophy of good governance. In order to adapt themselves to the task of ruling the Han-Chinese population, the Qing emperors inherited the government institution and ideology from the Ming; neo-Confucianism remained the orthodox philosophy, and the Manchu emperors also

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<sup>20</sup> For example, in order to ensure that all material wealth, including goods seized in the war, would be public property, Nurhachi required every general to immediately report the quantities and contents of their capture. Nurhachi and Hong Taiji developed this rule into a full set of institutions. By the time of Hong Taiji, even the emperor himself, when leading the army in war, had to fill out this report (Jiang 2007).

started to study Confucian classics. Confucian teachings that emphasized people's livelihood, provided the emperors with an alternative venue to interpret the principle of equal distribution. For example, the Kangxi emperor had paid close attention to the agricultural development and the livelihood of peasants (Wang 1993c).

At the same time, the Eight Banners became an institution of the elite population. As a minority group ruling over a massive geographic territory and the majority Han-Chinese people, the Manchu emperors largely used the Eight Banner forces to secure their control. The emperors not only brought the Eight Banner population into the inner capital city, but also established a national garrison system to police the Han-Chinese and other populations (Ding 2003; Elliott 2001). The banner population thus became an elite population, serving the state and enjoying economic and political privileges. Throughout the 268-year Manchu rule, the Eight Banners maintained sharp boundaries between bannermen and Han civilian commoners. The bannermen therefore acquired a distinct ethnic identity, the legacy of which led to the formation of the Man ethnicity in the 1950s.

### **Hereditarily-bonded labor (*shipu*)**

Qing contemporaries described the bannermen as “hereditarily-bonded labor (*shipu*),”<sup>21</sup> acknowledging that while the bannermen were elite, they were also personally

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<sup>21</sup> “*Shipu*” is a term that appeared in documents written in Chinese. The term “*shipu*” here is a general reference to the banner population, which is different from its usage to refer to *booi*, a specific category in the eight banners who were bonded labor to Manchu nobles. In 1780, the Qianlong emperor, in his order to move some Shengjing (Liaoning) bannermen to the Jilin banner garrison, used this term. He said: “Since you all are Manchu *shipu*, what would be the difference between [being in] Shengjing and Jilin?” (SCPTTJL, p. 228) In 1868, in his policy discussion on relocating bannermen from Beijing to state farms, the Governor of Shanxi Province Shen Guifen wrote: “Our emperor considered people vulnerable. Within the country, even when a single person was displaced, (our emperor) would help him with sympathy. Not to speak of the eight banner *shipu* and the descendents of those who made great contributions. They are close to our emperor. Can you tolerate their suffering in hunger and cold without finding a solution for them?” (SCPTTJL, p. 226)

bonded in labor to the emperors and hereditarily bonded to boot.<sup>22</sup> The term of “hereditarily bonded labor” reflects a feudal bond between the bannermen and the emperors. The state supported bannermen with material wealth and, at the same time, forbade them from taking occupations other than serving the state. This feudal bond had been in place since Nurhachi’s initial creation of the Eight Banners; Nurhachi himself had first enforced former tribal members’ personal bonds to the ruler. The bannermen were thus a subject population of the Manchu nobles; bannermen served their commanders and, in return, the commanders were responsible for their peoples’ livelihoods. In this sense, the banner commanders resembled feudal lords. After Hong Taiji succeeded in undercutting the banner commanders’ power, the emperor replaced banner commanders as the only authority. Consequently, the emperor became the lord of all the bannermen and was responsible for providing their living. The term “bonded labor” therefore justified the state’s support to and control over bannermen.

The Manchu emperors maintained the elite status of the bannermen by providing them both material support and opportunities for occupational mobility in the bureaucracy. According to their rank, the state provided banner officials and soldiers with two forms of material support: stipends consisting of silver and grain, and property grants consisting of land and housing. For example, in the first half of the Qing dynasty, a soldier of the lowest rank in Beijing received four taels of silver monthly, while a soldier of this rank in the provincial garrisons received three taels of silver. All banner households enjoyed land and housing grants exempted from tax and rent, which provided them with a permanent source of income (Elliott 2001). Moreover, in terms of occupational mobility, state

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<sup>22</sup> A direct translation of the Chinese term *shipu* is bonded servants. Many scholars used this direct translation. However, this translation does not reflect the precise meaning of the bannermen. Therefore, I use ‘bonded labor’ in my dissertation.

regulations that restricted certain positions to Manchu and Mongol bannermen increased their opportunities to enter state bureaucracy relative to those of civilian commoners.<sup>23</sup>

Although all bannermen belonged to the elite, the state created categories within the banner population to define hierarchical entitlements to state support. The state classified population by multiple criteria: ethnicity, service location, and population status. In terms of ethnicity, there were three categories, Manchu, Mongol, and Han-Chinese, corresponding to three sets of eight banners that organized these ethnic groups.<sup>24</sup> Manchu bannermen, who shared the ruler's ethnicity, and Mongol bannermen, who had an affinal relationship with the Manchu, enjoyed better material support and occupational mobility than did Han-Chinese bannermen. Moreover, Han-Chinese bannermen were also vulnerable to being expelled from the Eight Banners when necessary to relieve the fiscal burden of supporting bannermen.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of service location, bannermen in the capital differed from those in garrisons, and those in Northeast China differed from those in other regions of China proper.

Bannermen in the capital were called metropolitan bannermen (*jingqi*). They occupied the top layer in the hierarchy of state stipends and land grants. A metropolitan bannerman

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<sup>23</sup> In the Qing bureaucracy, in almost every level of government, the court stipulated that some posts could only be filled by Manchu and Mongol bannermen. Moreover, the state also arranged special examinations for Manchu and Mongol bannermen. For example, the court created a translation exam just for Manchu and Mongol bannermen, which only required candidates to translate Confucian classics from Chinese to Manchu or vice versa, a test much easier than a standard civil service exam (Elliott 2001). Despite the opportunities the court provided, bannermen's occupational mobility was also largely restricted to serving the emperor and state, either as soldiers/officers, or as government officials. As Mark Elliott has commented, the occupational privileges were in fact a double-edged sword to bannermen.

<sup>24</sup> The ethnic composition of bannermen was actually more complicated than this. In addition to the Manchu, Mongol, and Han-Chinese, there were also Xibe, Korea, and some other small ethnic groups in Northeast China. In terms of institutionalized population categories, however, there were mainly three.

<sup>25</sup> Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, in order to relieve the fiscal burden of supporting the banner population, the Qianlong emperor started to expel Han-Chinese bannermen from the banner system and turn them into civilian commoners (Sun 2005; Wang 1993b). This expulsion was accomplished both by asking regular Han-Chinese bannermen to decline their banner affiliations and by expelling Han-Chinese who had been adopted by Manchu bannermen. This movement lasted until the end of the eighteenth century.

with the lowest soldier's rank received two taels of silver as monthly salary, while a garrison bannermen of the same rank only received one tael of silver.<sup>26</sup> Bannermen in garrisons in Northeast China received the least material support. While bannermen in other garrisons received both silver and grain salaries, those in Liaoning had no grain stipend. Instead, they worked on state-allocated land to supplement their living (Ding 2003). Occupational mobility was also much more restricted for garrison bannermen than for metropolitan bannermen.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of population status, there existed regular bannermen (*zhengshen qiren*) and bondservants (*booi*). Regular bannermen served the Qing as soldiers, while bondservants served the imperial lineage as artisans and peasants or as servants of the regular bannermen. The regular bannermen and bondservants had completely different entitlements to political participation and economic support. In general, bondservants had very limited access to education and thus to official positions compared to regular bannermen. For a long time, royal peasants of the imperial lineage were not even allowed to take exams (Ding et al. 2004). Nevertheless, bondservants could occupy powerful positions and influence politics through their intimate relationships with the emperor. Bondservants also tended to have heavier economic burdens than regular bannermen because of their obligation to produce materials for the imperial lineage.

The state maintained separate registration to distinguish these different population categories and define their hereditary status. This practice had been in place since Nurhachi founded the Eight Banners. Once a banner household was classified into a

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<sup>26</sup> See Ding 2003, p.220.

<sup>27</sup> In the Qing, metropolitan bannermen had two occupational tracks: they could serve as soldiers or take exams to become officials. Opportunities for garrison bannermen, however, were largely restricted by state policy. Before the nineteenth century, they were not allowed to take exams in the provinces where the garrisons were located. To take exams, garrison bannermen had travel to Beijing, and this inconvenience prevented many from entering the government (Ding 2003).

certain category, its descendants would remain in the same category unless they acquired official permission to change categories. Officials updated the population registers every three years, noting the vital events that had occurred during the interval -- birth, marriage, death, and escape. Population registration therefore provided an official and reliable reference for a banner household's category and thus its entitlement.

Nevertheless, despite the sharp distinctions between these different population categories within Eight Banners and that between bannermen and civilian commoners, the boundaries of these categories were porous. Within the Eight Banners, the court's most loyal servants and the families of imperial concubines could change their status from a lower to a higher category through "banner elevation (*taiqi*)" (Elliott 2001; Wang 1993b).<sup>28</sup> Between bannermen and civilians, the membership of bannermen also changed along with the court policies. Before the eighteenth century, a large number of Han-Chinese households were included into the Eight Banners as a result of institutional expansion taking place in both the Northeast and Beijing. In the Liaodong area, not only were the previous Han residents enrolled into the Eight Banners in the early seventeenth century, but also the Han immigrants who moved into this area in the late seventeenth century became the bond servants of the imperial lineage and were organized by the Eight Banners (Ding et al. 2004). In North China, since the Manchu entered China Proper until the early eighteenth century, many Han-Chinese were admitted to the Eight Banners through their submission of land and material wealth (Wang 1993b). Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, however, when the court found it difficult to support the

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<sup>28</sup> In general, banner elevation took place in three forms, moving from the category of the bond servant to regular bannermen, from the lower five banners (Bordered White, Plain Red, Bordered Red, Plain Blue, and Bordered Blue) to the upper three banners (Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, and Plain White), or from a lower status banner to a higher status banner (Wang 1993b).

increasing banner population, it started to expel Han-Chinese bannermen from the Eight Banners and turn them into civilian commoners (Sun 2005; Wang 1993b). This expulsion was carried out both by asking regular Han-Chinese bannermen to decline their banner affiliations and by expelling Han-Chinese who had been adopted by Manchu bannermen. Therefore, throughout the Qing, the content of banner membership constantly changed as the rulers manipulated population categories.

### **Banner land: crises and responses**

Banner land – the state land allocated to banner soldiers as their material support – was a critical element in the Eight Banners.<sup>29</sup> The practice of allocating land to the conquest elite had existed in the Jin dynasty (1115-1234),<sup>30</sup> with whom the Manchu rulers shared the same ethnic origin. When building the Manchu state, Nurhachi reinstated this practice and institutionalized it. In the founding period of the Manchu state, when land was the only form of state support to banner soldiers, state ownership and allocation of banner land rendered the ruler power over the Eight Banners. In this sense, banner land came into being in 1621, when Nurhachi led his troops into the Liaodong Plain and enclosed 30,000 *shang* of land to allocate to banner soldiers (Zhao 1997). Each soldier received six *shang*;<sup>31</sup> by parceling out the land in this way, Nurhachi established the tradition of

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<sup>29</sup> Scholars have two points of view regarding the definition of banner land. One perspective defines banner land in a narrow sense, including only state land that was equally allocated to banner soldiers. The other perspective defines banner land more broadly, including not only land allocated to banner soldiers, but also farms owned by nobles and officials and pasture land designated especially for bannermen. Both opinions view land allocated to soldiers as the core of banner land.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter I, the note about *tuntianjun* in the Jin dynasty (Liu 1996b).

<sup>31</sup> Due to their different interpretations of Nurhachi's edict on the land allocation in 1621, scholars have not reached consensus on the recipients of the banner land. Most scholars maintain that the recipients included not only banner soldiers, but also the residents of the Liaodong area (Yi, Chen, and Li 1992; Zhao 2000). Some scholars, however, only considered residents in Liaodong the recipients of land (Guo 1982), while another point of view considered only banner soldiers the recipients (Wang 1993a). In his article on

allocating state land equally among bannermen.

The function of banner land and the Eight Banners, therefore, resembled that of the equal land (*juntian*) system and the *fubing* institution; the state provided material support, and, in return, the banner households provided specialized services to the state. The banner land system applied the principle of equal allocation. As early as 1621, in his edict to the residents of Liaoning on equal land allocation, Nurhachi criticized the Ming for allowing land concentration and expressed as an ideal the egalitarian distribution of wealth:

“In the past, you rich people of the Ming dynasty occupied a large amount of land and hired labor to farm it. (You) sold grains from the field which (you) could not consume. The poor people had neither land nor grain. They had to purchase the grain. Once they used up their money, they had to fall to beggars. ... The rich, rather than stocking up grains until they decay and thus wasting the effort to preserve them, would gain a great reputation if they [use the grains] to support poor people. ... Now, I allocate to each adult male five *shang* of land to grow grains and one *shang* of land to grow cotton. You people should not underreport the number of adult males. Otherwise the unreported [adult male] could not obtain his land. From now on, I also allocate land to all beggars and monks, so that beggars need not beg. Every three adult males work collectively on one *shang* of public land. Every twenty adult males should send one as soldier and one as laborer.”<sup>32</sup>

In this edict, Nurhachi designed a model resembling the equal land (*juntian*) system; every adult male received the same amount of land; in exchange for the allocated land, they either provided tax and labor service to the state or served the state as soldiers. Under this scheme, Nurhachi and Hongtaiji gradually enrolled all residents in the Liaodong area into the Eight Banners and allocated land and housing to the entire population (Zhao 1995).

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this question, Zhao Lingzhi used other historical sources to demonstrate that in 1621, Nurhachi only allocated land to banner soldiers (1997). Despite their different opinions, most scholars agree that the 30,000 *shang* of land specified in Nurhachi's edict was designated for allocation to banner soldiers only.

<sup>32</sup> See *Manwen lao dang*, 1621.7. (Chinese translation, trans. by the First Historical Archives and the History Institution of CASS. p.219)

After entering China Proper, the Manchu rulers maintained the banner land system as an important component of the Eight Banners. In both the surrounding areas of Beijing and the banner garrisons in the provinces, the Qing occupied a large amount of land to allocate to banner soldiers, officials, and nobles. The court acquired banner land from two sources; one source was land enclosed from waste land and land previously owned by Han-Chinese peasants; the other was land submitted by landlords who achieved admission to the Eight Banners upon the submission of their land. From 1644 to 1669, the Manchu emperors occupied a total of 15,346,716 *mu* of enclosed land and 3,276,463 *mu* of submitted land in the surrounding areas of Beijing (Peng 1992; Zhao 2002a).<sup>33</sup> The court then allocated this land to soldiers and officials according to their ranks; bannermen of the same rank received the same amount of land.<sup>34</sup> In 1647, the court granted bannermen permanent usufruct on their allocated land but prevented them from selling their land to civilian commoners (Zhao 2002b). The banner land system therefore became an important method to marking the boundaries of the elite institution of Eight Banners, as only bannermen were entitled to banner land.

Inside China Proper, however, the banner land system was soon threatened by changes in bannermen's lifestyle and the arising private land transactions. While in the past bannermen had been farmers during peaceful times, after the Manchu conquest of China, the majority of the banner population settled in Beijing and became city dwellers therefore becoming detached to their allocated land. At the same time, the state stipends to bannermen in the form of cash and rice salaries weakened the importance of banner land,

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<sup>33</sup> Of the 15,346,716 *mu* of enclosed land, 14,012,871 *mu* were for banner soldiers and officials, and 1,333,845 *mu* were for imperial lineages.

<sup>34</sup> The criteria for land allocation changed over time. For example, in 1645, each banner soldier had six *shang* of land, and each official with the rank of assistant commander-in-chief or higher had thirty *shang* of land. In 1650, the amount of land allocated to soldiers was reduced to five *shang* (See BQTZ, book 1, pp. 311-314).

which used to be the only material support. Therefore, the majority of bannermen in Beijing enjoyed city life, renting their banner land out to civilian commoners. By working on banner land as tenants, civilian commoners gradually came to occupy the land. Land transactions were frequent, both among bannermen and between bannermen and civilian commoners.<sup>35</sup>

Private land transactions threatened both banner landownership and equal land distribution. As early as the 1680s, some bannermen had sold their allocated land to civilian commoners (Zhao 2002b). By the 1730s, a considerable proportion of banner land belonged to civilian commoners.<sup>36</sup> This situation not only impoverished some bannermen, but also jeopardized the state control of banner land and thus the Eight Banners as an elite institution. To maintain banner landownership and the privileges of bannermen, in 1729, the Yongzheng Emperor (1723-1735) ordered the government to investigate banner landownership and redeem land sold to civilian commoners (Wei, Liu, and al. 1989). However, despite government efforts to protect banner landownership, bannermen continued to sell land to civilian commoners. From 1729 to 1762, the court repeatedly redeemed banner land from civilian commoners. For example, in the five-year period from 1757 to 1762, the court redeemed more than 1,800,000 *mu* of land from civilian commoners, at the cost of 2,380,000 taels of silver (Wei, Liu, and al. 1989). After 1762, due to fiscal difficulties, the court stopped redeeming banner land.

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<sup>35</sup> Land transactions included land rental, conditional sale, and land sale. The edited book by the Wei, Qingyuan and Liu, Shouyi et. al., *Qingdai de qidi*, collected rich materials on behaviors of land transaction (1989). Not only did bannermen sell their land to civilian commoners, but some capable bannermen also bought land from civilian commoners.

<sup>36</sup> About the proportion of banner land sold to civilian commoners, scholars often cite the memorials of two Qing officials, Hetai and Shuhede, who stated that about half of the banner land in the surrounding area of Beijing had been occupied by civilian commoners (Zhao 2002b). This stated proportion, however, did not draw from statistics but from general impression of the contemporaries. Therefore, the proportion of 50 percent is not reliable. Yet, from this stated proportion, we can tell that a considerable amount of banner land had been transferred to civilian commoners.

In addition to renting and selling land to commoners, bannermen also engaged in land transactions with one another, resulting in increasing stratification. In the Qing empire, the court did not approve free land transactions between bannermen until 1758 (Zhao 2002b).<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, land transactions between bannermen had been common since the late seventeenth century (Zhao 2002b). Through these transactions, some powerful bannermen became large landholders, while others became landless (Liu 1998a; Wei 1995). The rising inequality in the banner community seriously weakened the principle of equal distribution, threatening the Eight Banners as an elite institution.

Alongside the crisis in banner land, the court also identified challenges to the Eight Banners in terms of declining banner tradition and growing fiscal difficulty in supporting bannermen. After entering Beijing, bannermen were detached from the land and became a population that did not contribute to production. This urban lifestyle was the opposite of the traditional lifestyle of bannermen, who had lived as both farmers and soldiers back in Northeast China. Having become used to the leisurely city life, some bannermen gave up their warrior skills of archery and horse riding. Moreover, as the banner population increased, the state could no longer provide every banner adult male a post with a state stipend. The category of *xiansan* bannermen—bannermen without a banner post and thereby unemployed—emerged and grew in size (Wei 1995); in 1771, the court identified more than 6,000 widowers, widows, and orphans in the metropolitan banner population who could hardly make a living, of which some even became paupers (Liu 2008). Beginning in the 1730s, by which time this non-productive banner population had almost doubled in size since their arrival in Beijing (Elliott 2001), the court officials had a heated

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<sup>37</sup> Before 1758, the court only allowed land transactions between bannermen from the same banner institution.

discussion on policies to solve the livelihood problem of bannermen and save the Eight Banners.<sup>38</sup>

Among the suggested solutions to save the Eight Banners, sending banner population to state farms and reinstate their attachment to land was an especially appealing one, because it shifted bannermen's dependence on state stipend to state land.<sup>39</sup> In this way, the state was not only relieved from the fiscal burden of supporting bannermen, but also ensured the banner population stable income from their land. While land in the areas surrounding Beijing was occupied by rich bannermen and civilian commoners, many officials proposed to relocate bannermen to frontier regions and build up state farms there. Following this long-term policy discussion, in 1742, the Qianlong emperor ordered the relocation of metropolitan bannermen from Beijing to Lalin, a site southeast to Shuangcheng, to live on the state land there (Ding 1985). Between 1742 and 1758, the government used coercion to organize 3,000 households to Lalin and equally allocated land to them. However, many households failed to settle down, and soon abandoned the state farm to return to Beijing.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, by the time the court initiated the relocation of metropolitan bannermen to Shuangcheng, the Jiaqing emperor and court officials had faced both opportunities and

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<sup>38</sup> The court officials' discussions are collected in *Huangchao jingshi wenbian (the Imperial Collection of State-craft Writings)* juan. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Under the initiative of relocating metropolitan bannermen to state farms in Northeast China, the court had carried out several relocation projects since the mid-eighteenth century. Other than the relocation projects to Lalin (1742-1758) and to Shuangcheng in (1815-1830), in 1885, the court carried out another relocation project to move metropolitan bannermen to Hulan, a place in Heilongjiang Province (See the communications between the general of Heilongjiang, the local banner government of Hulan, and the central government on 1885.6.25, 1885.8.28, 1886.8.5, 1887.2.28, and 1888.4.10, QDHLJLSDAXB pp. 180-182, 257, 289-290, and 354-356). This relocation project, however, was a failure. Only nine households of 26 people moved to Hulan, and these nine households failed to settle there. One year after their arrival, only 17 of the 26 people survived, while the rest died of disease. In 1888, the court finally permitted the remaining metropolitan bannermen to return to Beijing.

<sup>40</sup> Ding Yizhuang studied in detail the 1742 relocation of metropolitan bannermen to Lalin (1985). Due to the lack of material source on this relocation project, it was not clear how many households returned to Beijing and what was the course for their leave.

challenges. In terms of opportunity, the long Chinese history had accumulated rich historical references in support of an institution of population categories. Moreover, the abundant uncultivated land in Shuangcheng provided the court an ideal ground to restore the genuine banner tradition. At the same time, however, the Qianlong emperor's failure in settling metropolitan bannermen indicated the difficulty in the organizational work. Furthermore, after the initial settlement, all the challenges the Eight Banners had encountered in China Proper could potentially challenge the Shuangcheng state farm. Therefore, the creation and maintenance of the Shuangcheng state farm was an experiment in many ways, settling an urban population in rural frontier, creating new population categories, and maintaining between-category and within-category equalities.

## **Part Two State Policy**

### **Chapter III Shuangcheng Settlement, 1815-1830**

Many nations have experiences of frontier settlement, but the Chinese state has distinguished itself from other nations by its ability to transform and eventually integrate frontier societies with the center. While frontier settlement carries the risk that these societies will eventually break away from the mother country (e.g. the German migration to Poland and Russia), China succeeded in maintaining ties with its various colonial cultures in such frontier regions as the Southwest (Lee Forthcoming), Northwest (Millward 1998; Perdue 2005), and even Taiwan (Shepherd 1993). China's ability to expand in this way can, in large part, be attributed to the active role played by the state, which not only organized migration to the frontier, but also invested huge amounts of effort and revenue to settle and develop frontier societies (Lee 1978, 1982). Moreover, these frontier developments were further supported by state revenue that regularly flowed from the center to the periphery, a uniquely Chinese model of governance (Lee Forthcoming).

The traditional view of the northeast frontier, however, identifies the late imperial and early modern state as weak. Scholarship on migration to this region began during the 1930s, a period when the Chinese state was indeed weak and fragmented, and such pioneers as Franklin Lian Ho (1931) and Owen Lattimore (1932), for example, may have thus overlooked state contributions to the early development of Northeast China.

Following the story line established by these influential studies, later scholars of the migration to Northeast China in the Qing dynasty described this movement as a largely voluntary migration of desperate Han-Chinese who encroached upon institutions established by a declining state. These narratives, however, neglect the role of that state in building and adjusting those institutions (Isett 2004, 2006; Lee 1970; Reardon-Anderson 2005).<sup>1</sup> Neither is there room for state institutions in the crystallized memory of the early immigrants. Rather, their descendants celebrate their ancestors' legendary lives as an example of the rule of the mighty in a setting free of state intervention. The common founding story repeated by every immigrant family was "running a horse to occupy a mountain (*paoma zhanshan*)."<sup>2</sup>

By the same token, the two major studies of the establishment of the Shuangcheng state farm also consider this settlement a failure (Ding 1985; Wei 2008).<sup>3</sup> On the topic of Shuangcheng relocation and settlement, Ding Yizhuang conducts a pioneer study in her master thesis on the relocation and settlement history of Shuangcheng state farm (Ding 1985). In a recent article, Wei Ying examines the process of the establishment of the state

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<sup>1</sup> In his synthetic history of Northeast China, Robert Lee attributed the development of the Northeast frontier to the Han-Chinese immigrants and described this process as the sinicization of the Northeast frontier (1970, 78). In this story, although the state created new institutions to maintain the frontier order, it only played passive roles. Although this narrative is correct in describing the general trend, it overlooked the role of the Qing government in strengthening the banner system and regulating the frontier orders. Later scholarship followed this general narrative, focusing on the practices of Han-Chinese immigrants and neglecting the state.

<sup>2</sup> Our research group led by Professor James Lee and Cameron Campbell has done extensive fieldwork among the descendants of immigrants who settled in Liaoning during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In our interviews of these descendants, almost every immigrant family stated that their family history started with the story of "running a horse to occupy a mountain." Coincidentally, during my visits to Shuangcheng in 2005 and 2007, even though the Qing documents provide abundant evidence of state intervention, the descendants of the banner immigrants told me the same story.

<sup>3</sup> On the topic of Shuangcheng relocation and settlement, Ding Yizhuang conducted a pioneer study in her master thesis on the relocation and settlement history of Shuangcheng state farm. In a recent article, Wei Ying examined the process of the establishment of the state farm, including the origins of the relocation policy and the recruitment of immigrants. Both studies considered the relocation a failure, judging by whether this settlement provided an effective solution for the livelihood problem of the Eight Banner population and whether the recruitment of metropolitan bannermen reached the original goal.

farm, including the origins of the relocation policy and the recruitment of immigrants (Wei 2008). Both studies consider the relocation a failure, drawing on the fact that this settlement did not provide an effective solution for the livelihood problem of the banner population in general.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, they characterize the entire project as failed because the state had originally intended to move 3,000 metropolitan banner households, but was only able to recruit 698 households.

In this chapter, I explore the early history of the Shuangcheng settlement to demonstrate that the Qing state was in fact capable of building and maintaining institutions in Northeast China. Shuangcheng was not only a successful state-organized migration, but also a successful instance of the creation of population categories. Compared to other frontiers where the state confronted indigenous populations outside of its control, the indigenous population in Northeast China had already been organized as a state population of bannermen. The state therefore had greater control in this area and was able to better manifest its will. Shuangcheng exemplifies the capacity of the Chinese state to settle a frontier and maintain control over the society. In Shuangcheng, the state organized and implemented the entire process of settlement - from site selection, residence planning, and immigrant recruitment to final settlement. In carrying out these steps, the state established an institution based on the hierarchy of metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen, and civilians. The state not only created these distinctive categories, but also eliminated other existing social organizations among and boundaries between the immigrants. The Shuangcheng settlement process in this regard provides an excellent opportunity to

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<sup>4</sup> Both studies also noted the positive role of the Shuangcheng relocation project. Ding maintains that through this project, the rural bannermen who settled in Shuangcheng contributed to the development of this area. Wei acknowledged that this project at least solved the livelihood problem of those metropolitan bannermen who settled in Shuangcheng.

observe the details of the design and creation of the institution of population categories.

By examining the process through which the state designed and created population categories in Shuangcheng, I also shed light on the state's role in immigrant settlement and the social consequences of state policies. As case studies on the social consequence of resettlement of involuntary migrants in Africa and Southeast Asia reveal, the improper settlement of these migrants can lead to poverty or the further displacement of population (Colson 1971; Scudder and Colson 1982). Therefore, the government's organizational work plays an especially important role in the successful resettlement of involuntary migrants. Yet despite its importance, current understandings of the state role in resettlement processes are largely restricted by limited access to adequate data. Many such relocation projects in the last half century were not successful, as immigrants failed to develop new communities and instead dissipated (Scudder and Colson 1982).

The Shuangcheng settlement was one of the numerous projects in China's long history of government-organized migration dating back to the eleventh century B.C. According to James Lee, from 225 B.C. to 725 A.D., the state directly or indirectly moved at least 16 million people for such purposes as political and social integration, economic development, and control of the rich and powerful (1978). Through these migration projects, the government developed a wealth of techniques for planning and financing migration and for settling migrants. The government often provided housing, transportation, and food to the migrants to assist the settlement. Despite the Chinese state's renowned reputation in organizing migration, however, it rarely kept detailed records on the planning and settlement process, preventing a better understanding of the state's role in the development of immigrant societies.

The successful settlement of bannermen in Shuangcheng, accompanied by exceptionally complete records, thus serves as a good case for the analysis of state performance in the resettlement of involuntary migrants and institution building in local societies. In this chapter, I therefore reconstruct the early history of the relocation to analyze the key characteristics that contributed to the successful settlement of the bannermen. I begin my narrative with the planning of the relocation in 1812. Even at this early stage, the state had manifested its will to create population categories and differentiate their entitlements, as evidenced by site selection and residence design. The state relocation plan, however, met its biggest obstacle in the recruitment stage (1815-1828), as few metropolitan bannermen were willing to move. In the second section, I analyze the recruitment of immigrants to illustrate the efforts of the emperor and court officials to carry out the relocation project despite the resistance of metropolitan bannermen. Finally, I examine the settlement of the banner immigrants in Shuangcheng from 1815 to 1830. Drawing on historical records both from this period and from the 1870s, I reveal the huge state investment in the settlement and the creation of new population categories on the one hand, and in the elimination of old categories on the other.

### **Initiating the relocation**

In 1812, the Qing court initiated the relocation of bannermen to Shuangcheng, subsequently engaging the emperor, central government officials, the provincial government, and local officials. In that year, the Jiaqing emperor (1796-1819) issued an edict to establish a state settlement in Northeast China to relieve the state's fiscal obligation

to support metropolitan bannermen.<sup>5</sup> This move was the result of long-term policy discussions and experiments that started in the mid-eighteenth century,<sup>6</sup> and was intended to shift the banner population from state-dependency to self-support. This edict motivated several enthusiastic provincial governors experienced in establishing state farms in frontier regions, including notably: Fujun, the vice president of the Board of Works of Shengjing (today's Liaoning) and later general of Jilin; Saichong'a, the general of Jilin (1809-1813);<sup>7</sup> and Songyun, the minister of the Department of Personnel (1811-1812).<sup>8</sup> From 1812 to 1814, these officials investigated all the proposed sites (from western Liaoning to northern Jilin) to look for an ideal place to settle the metropolitan bannermen.<sup>9</sup> After each investigation, they sent back memorials discussing the conditions of the site and the plausibility of relocation. The emperor and ministers in the Grand Council discussed these official recommendations and, in 1815, finally settled on Shuangcheng as the relocation destination.

Fujun, the general of Jilin (1814-1817, 1818-1822, and 1824-1827), was the major

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<sup>5</sup> In 1817, the Jiaqing Emperor issued an edict, stating that "due to the increasing banner population in Beijing, it is harder and harder for bannermen to make ends meet. Now, it is impossible to increase the quota of banner posts thus to provide those unemployed bannermen stipend. Those bannermen are still young but have nothing to do. Some of them even wander around and incur troubles. It is such a pity. ... Now if we follow the old way to send the unemployed bannermen in Beijing to Jilin and allocate the vast land to them, they can either farm the land by themselves or have tenants and live on the rent. By all means, they can make a sufficient living." (SCPTTJL, p.1)

<sup>6</sup> Most policy discussions were collected in *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (the Imperial Collection of State-craft Writings) juan. 35, and *Huangchao dao xian tong guang zouyi* (The Imperial Memorials of the Reigns of Daoguang, Xianfeng, Tongzhi, and Guangxu), juan. 31.

<sup>7</sup> QSG, book 37, juan.342, p.11212.

<sup>8</sup> Before working as the Minister of the Board of Civil Office, Songyun had worked at the post of general of Yili (1802-1808, 1813-15), in present Xinjiang Province (QSG, book 37, juan. 342, pp11115-11117). Songyun's major achievement at the post of general of Yili was the successful settlement of several state farms in Xinjiang. After a short period in the Central government, Songyun returned to his post of general of Yili again. Therefore, Songyun was experienced in planning state farms.

<sup>9</sup> In these three years, the officials investigated the pasture land in western Liaoning, Shengjing, and Shuangcheng and Lalin in northern Jilin. See the court memorials by Saichong'a, Cheng'an, Songyun, and Fujun et al on 1812.5.6, 1812.7.6, 1812.7.12, 1812.8.12, 1812.8.25 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm reel 138, 1875-10; 1875-41; 1875-43; 1875-52; 1875-56.)

figure who pushed through the entire relocation and organized the state settlement.<sup>10</sup>

Fujun was born under the Mongol Plain Yellow banner in Beijing, gained his *jinsshi* degree in 1779 through the translation exam for bannermen, and started his official career as the Assistant Secretary (*zhushi*) of the Board of Rites.<sup>11</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Fujun was trained in a tradition of statecraft (*jingshi*) that emphasized pragmatic manipulation of institutions and organizations in the pursuit of wealth and good governance.<sup>12</sup> Before becoming the general of Jilin, he had worked at a variety of other posts in such frontier provinces as Xinjiang and Liaoning, and had gained a good reputation for maintaining order in local societies.

When the Jiaqing emperor initiated the relocation project in 1812, Fujun was the Vice President of the Board of Works in Shengjing, and devoted himself immediately to this project. Together with Songyun and Hening, the commander-in-chief of Rehe, he proposed the banner pasture land in western Liaoning as the site of relocation and even managed to acquire the emperor's approval to start test farming in this area. Their foray into western Liaoning, however, affected the interests of the old authorities, including the Pasturage Director (*muzhang*), Lamas, and the Mongol banner officials in charge of this region. As a result, the emperor and the Grand Council decided to stop the test farming

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<sup>10</sup> See Fujun's biography in QSG, book 37, juan.342, p. 11119.

<sup>11</sup> For the date when Fujun gained his *jinsshi* degree, see the biographical materials of Fujun collected in Zhu Pengshou's manuscript on biographic materials of Qing people, book 6, p.593 (2002).

<sup>12</sup> In his study of Chen Hongmou, an exemplar of the statecraft tradition, William Rowe examined the content of statecraft in the Qing dynasty (2001). The term and tradition of statecraft originated from the Neo-Confucian school in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1276). Compared to the traditional Confucian teachings that emphasized moral exhortation, the thoughts of statecraft emphasized a more practical adaptation of institutions for the purpose of improving people's livelihood. From the eighteenth century on, quite a few high officials were influenced by the thoughts of statecraft and exhibited a pragmatic attitude in solving problems in governance. The trend of statecraft was especially celebrated from the 1820s to the mid and late nineteenth century. While previous studies of statecraft mainly focus on the Han-Chinese officials of the Qing, Fujun's performance also exhibited the pragmatic characteristics of statecraft. Having studied the Confucian classics, Fujun was of course influenced by the thoughts of statecraft. At the same time, however, as he was of Mongol ethnic background, Fujun's pragmatic way of governance might also have come from his non-Han origin.

two years later, and punished the three officials. Fujun, who by that time had advanced to the post of the general of Jilin, still insisted on continuing this project because he considered it a waste to discard the previous preparations. His insistence irritated the emperor and the Grand Council and he thus received a punishment that downgraded his salary rank by three grades.<sup>13</sup>

Under Fujun's close supervision, the final planning and initial settlement of the Shuangcheng state farm occurred over the next fourteen years, from 1814 to 1827. After accepting the post of the general of Jilin in 1814, Fujun continued the site investigation left by the preceding General Saichong'a. In 1815, Fujun finally decided to recommend Shuangcheng as the site of relocation and acquired the approval of the Jiaqing emperor and the Grand Council. In that year, the first 1,000 bannermen from four garrisons in Jilin Province were moved to Shuangcheng to prepare the land and housing. In order to ensure that the relocation proceeded smoothly, Fujun even moved his office to Shuangcheng. From then until 1827, he followed every important step of the relocation.

### **Planning the landscape**

Fujun and the Jiaqing emperor selected Shuangcheng because of its natural conditions and political advantages. First, Shuangcheng beat other proposed destinations by virtue of its flat topology and vast quantity of fertile and uncultivated land. Shuangcheng is in

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<sup>13</sup> About the opening of pasture land in western Liaoning, see the court memorials by Songyun, Hening, and Fujun on 1812.8.12, 1812.8.25, 1813.9.26, 1814.9.8 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm reel 138, 1875-52, 1875-56, 1875-86, 1876-74, 1878-20), and the court memorial by the Grand Council on 1814.11.22 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm reel 138, 1878-51). This event is related to the relocation project initiated by the Jiaqing emperor in 1812. By 1813, the three officials had started to recruit labor to farm the land and established preliminary regulations. In the end, the emperor and Grand Council decided to stop this project and punished the three officials. Songyun and Hening received the punishment of having their salary ranks downgraded by two grades. Fujun, because of his insistence in continuing this project, received a harsher punishment.



Second, in order to facilitate political control, the emperor also emphasized the site's proximity to administrative centers. The most ideal site, as Emperor Jiaqing stated, would be five to six kilometers from Jilin, the seat of the general of Jilin, and from Ningguta, a major banner garrison in Jilin, because "the site that accommodates the relocated bannermen has to be supervised by the general or vice commander-in-chief (*fu dutong*), so that bannermen would settle down and make their livings."<sup>17</sup> Combining all the above considerations, Shuangcheng was an optimal site, located only 46 kilometers from Alchuka and Lalin, two major banner garrisons in Jilin.<sup>18</sup>

In 1815, Fujun carefully laid out the boundaries of the state farm and the banner villages. Fujun first built several hundred big tamped mounds (*fengdui*) to mark the borders of the state farm (map 3.1).<sup>19</sup> With this move, Shuangcheng became a formal administrative area. The Shuangcheng seat was centered in the south, 11 kilometers from the south border and 34 kilometers from the north border. Surrounding the Shuangcheng seat, Fujun established the first forty banner villages. As map 3.1 shows, these forty villages, known as the central *tun*, were grouped into eight banners, with five villages in each banner. The eight banners of the central *tun* were lined up in two columns. To the west of the county seat, from north to south, were the Plain Yellow, Plain Red, Bordered Red, and Bordered Blue banners, which comprised the left wing of the banner

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<sup>17</sup> See the edict of Jiaqing Emperor in 1917.7.19 (SCPTTJL, p. 2). Under this consideration, the officials rejected some other locations in Jilin, which, although remaining unpopulated, were too far away from the banner garrisons (SCPTTJL, p.2). Even Shuangcheng at first glance did not meet the emperor's expectations. Voicing this concern in 1813, the court waited another two years before approving Shuangcheng as the site of relocation (JJCLFZZ, Saichong'a, 1813.5.8, microfilm reel 138, 1896-14).

<sup>18</sup> Alchuka and Lalin are two banner garrisons that were established in response the 1742 relocation of metropolitan bannermen to Lalin (Ding 2003).

<sup>19</sup> SCPTTJL, p. 57. In the Qing dynasty, the state widely used tamped mounds (*fengdui*) as border markers on the unpopulated Northeast frontier. Every so often, the government would send a group of officials and soldiers to patrol around the tamped mounds to check the maintenance of borders.

administration. Symmetrically opposite to the east of the county seat were the Bordered Yellow, Plain White, Bordered White, and Plain Blue banners, which comprised the right wing of the banner administration. This distribution of the eight banners was standard in every banner city in China proper.<sup>20</sup>

In 1819, Fujun expanded the state farm and designed two further sets of banner villages, known as the right and left *tun* respectively.<sup>21</sup> As map 3.1 shows, the right and left *tun* were respectively located to the west and east of the central *tun*, distinguished by some small tamped mounds.<sup>22</sup> Like the central *tun*, the right and left *tun* each had 40 villages, organized by the eight banners. In the centers of the right and left *tun*, Fujun established corresponding banner administrations. Probably because of geographic constraints, Fujun did not align the wings of the right and left *tun* vertically but instead aligned them horizontally; If facing out from the Shuangcheng seat, one would find the right and left wings of either *tun* correspondingly lined up to the right and left of the seat of either *tun*. Upon the planning of these banner villages, Fujun drove the civilian commoners out of the designated areas. This early planning laid out the basic landscape of Shuangcheng.

Interestingly, when designing the state farm villages, Fujun deliberately left the areas surrounding the seat of each *tun* to accommodate civilian commoners (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009).<sup>23</sup> As map 3.1 shows, while the 120 banner villages were distributed in

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<sup>20</sup> The alignment of the eight banners followed the standard set up at the beginning of the Qing dynasty: the Bordered Yellow, Plain White, Bordered White, and Plain Blue banners comprise the Left Wing, and the Plain Yellow, Plain Red, Bordered Red, and Bordered Blue banners comprise the Right Wing. Their alignment followed the order from the north to south. The Qing emperors arranged the banner locations according to the Chinese philosophy of the Five Elements, *wuxing*. See BQTZ, book 1, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1818.8.27, SCPTTJL, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> See Fujun's report to the Jiaqing emperor on 1822.7.4, SCPTTJL, pp.56-57.

<sup>23</sup> In their paper on the development of the civilian division in Shuangcheng, Ren Yuxue has a detailed discussion on Fujun's rationale in keeping civilian commoners in the areas surrounding the *tun* seat.

an orderly way over the entire Shuangcheng area, the natural settlements of civilian commoners were scattered in the empty land around the Shuangcheng seat and the seats of the right and left *tun*, and along the northern border of Shuangcheng.<sup>24</sup> The empty areas around the seats of the right and left *tun* were especially large. The government later developed these areas as salary land for soldiers and officials (*suique di*), on which civilian commoners worked as tenants.<sup>25</sup> Apparently, Fujun intended this arrangement from the beginning.

With this design, Fujun residentially segregated the haves, metropolitan and rural bannermen, and the have-nots, civilian commoners. Fujun separated the banner immigrants from civilian commoners to prevent commoners from encroaching on banner land, a major concern of the state in maintaining the Eight Banners. In Shuangcheng, the state stipulated that civilian commoners should not reside in the areas of banner villages. Even those civilian commoners hired by bannermen as laborers could not bring their families into banner villages.<sup>26</sup> With this residential segregation, Fujun established a remarkable boundary between banner immigrants, who were entitled to state land, and civilian commoners, who were not.

At the same time, however, Fujun also kept civilian commoners as laborers and therefore an indispensable population category in the state farm. While the state was cautious about the potential threats civilian commoners posed to banner landownership, the state needed laborers in Shuangcheng to farm not only the land allocated to banner immigrants but also land set aside to generate revenue for office expenditures and official

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<sup>24</sup> The civilian division in the northern border of Shuangcheng developed in 1820 (SCPTTJL, p. 56).

<sup>25</sup> See the six articles of the *Regulation of Shuangcheng Relocation (Shuangcheng tunwu zhangcheng)* compiled by Songlin 1823.6.5 (SCPTTJL, pp.70-74).

<sup>26</sup> See Fujun's report to the Jiaqing emperor on 1822.7.4, SCPTTJL, pp.56-57.

salaries. Therefore, Fujun and his colleague Songlin pointed out that “(we) should not allow civilian commoners to reside inside the small tamped mounds [note: boundaries of the banner villages]. (However, we) cannot do well without allowing civilian commoners to reside within the big tamped mounds [note: boundaries of the state farm] and farm the *suique* land as tenants.”<sup>27</sup> By keeping civilian commoners on the salary land, the government secured both labor supplies and rent, which comprised a major source of local government revenue prior to the mid nineteenth century (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009). Fujun’s early planning of the state farm thus laid the ground for the institution of population categories in Shuangcheng: the banner immigrants were designated as the haves and allowed to reside in banner villages, while civilian commoners were designated as the have-nots and permitted only to work as state tenants.

## **Recruiting banner immigrants**

### **The recruitment**

Compared to planning the Shuangcheng state farm, recruiting banner immigrants was a much harder and lengthier task. In order to prepare Shuangcheng for the settlement of metropolitan bannermen, Fujun recruited banner immigrants from the rural Northeast provinces of Jilin and Liaoning to pave the way.<sup>28</sup> In 1815 he arranged to move the first 1,000 bannermen from four banner garrisons in Jilin to the central *tun* of Shuangcheng.<sup>29</sup> The recruitment soon seemed to reach a deadlock, however, as many bannermen abandoned the state farm shortly after their arrival. Fujun attributed their departure to the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Fujun’s purpose was to prevent a repeat of the failure of the earlier relocation of 3,000 metropolitan bannermen from Beijing to Lalin, an area southeast to Shuangcheng in 1748. The bannermen relocated there ended up escaping from the state farm because of their lack of knowledge and ability to farm the land.

<sup>29</sup> The four banner garrison in Jilin are Ningguta, Alchuka, Jilin, and Bodune.

fact that their families were not allowed to follow them to Shuangcheng, and further blamed the inadequate material compensation provided by the government.<sup>30</sup>

Learning from these setbacks in recruiting Jilin bannermen, Fujun soon turned to Liaoning for solutions. In 1817, Fujun accepted the post of the general of Shengjing. Although the official history does not explain his rationale, it appears that he went to Liaoning to recruit more banner immigrants for Shuangcheng. In 1818, as the general of Shengjing, Fujun proposed to recruit 2,000 more banner immigrants from Liaoning and Jilin Provinces to fill the empty land in Shuangcheng. In this memorial, Fujun claimed that 1,739 bannermen from Liaoning were already willing to move to Shuangcheng.<sup>31</sup> After the emperor approved this proposed relocation, Fujun returned to his post as general of Jilin in the same year to supervise their settlement in 1819 and 1820.

At the same time, Fujun also revised the policy that only allowed the northeast bannermen move to Shuangcheng as individuals and instead required the bannermen to move with their families. The Liaoning bannermen responded enthusiastically to this recruitment. As Fujun described in his memorial: “I checked the bannermen who were relocated to (Shuangcheng) one by one. A lot of them moved with their entire family. Some of them even moved their entire kin group, and, some even retired from active banner service in order to move.”<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, a total of twelve banner garrisons in Liaoning and five banner garrisons in Jilin sent 3,000 households of bannermen to Shuangcheng (map 3.2).<sup>33</sup> These northeast banner households were classified as “rural

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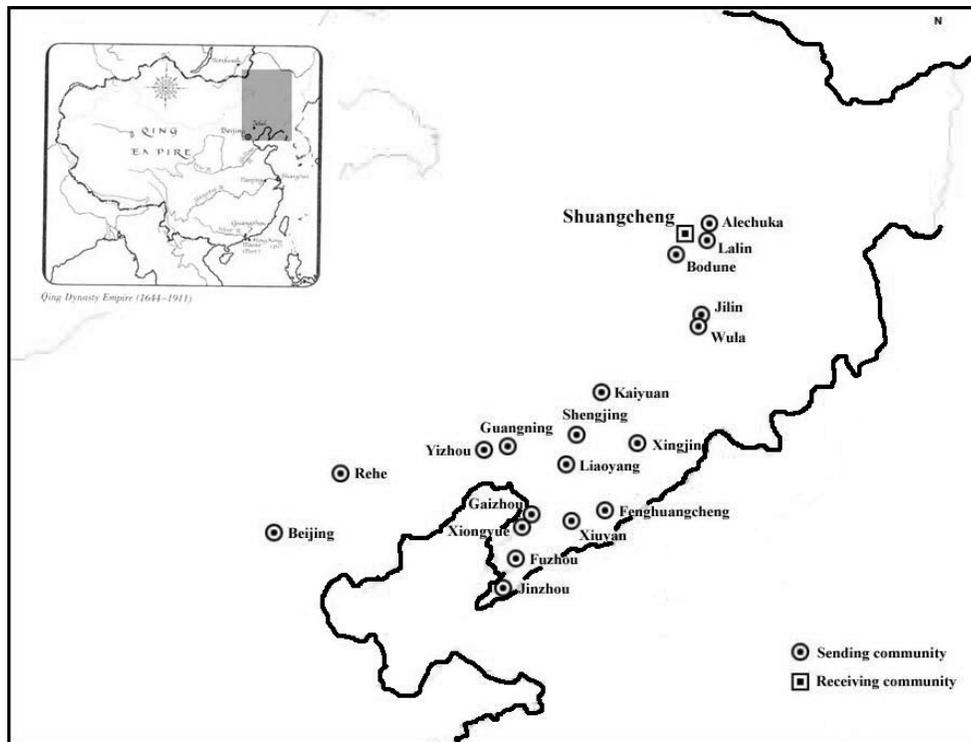
<sup>30</sup> See the memorial by Fujun on 1816.9.6 (SCPTTJL, p.19).

<sup>31</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1818.8.27 (SCPTTJL, p.23). In this memorial, Fujun said: “Of the 2,000 banner adult males designated to the two newly established *tun*, 1,739 are banner adult males from the various locations in Shengjing, who had obtained written guarantees from [their lineage members and village authority] of their intention to move.”

<sup>32</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1821.1.6 (SCPTTJL, p.44).

<sup>33</sup> The number of banner households sent by each province differed from the original plan. Originally,

bannermen” (*tunding*). The success of the later settlement of metropolitan bannermen depended significantly on the contributions of this “rural” advance team.



Map 3. 2 Sending communities of banner immigrants to Shuangcheng.  
Sources: the Shuangcheng banner population registers. See SCPGBTDHKDM.

Overall, rural bannermen from Liaoning performed better than those from Jilin because they had prior farming experience. While both groups served the state as soldiers, when soldiers were not needed, the Jilin bannermen mainly served as hunters and lumberjacks,<sup>34</sup> while the Liaoning bannermen worked mainly as farmers (Ding 2003). Notably, bannermen from Jinzhou, Fuzhou, and Gaizhou (map 3.2) accounted for a large

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Fujun planed to relocate 1,000 households from Liaoning and a total of 2,000 households from Jilin. The Jilin bannermen, however, were passive and escaped from the state farm. Finally, Fujun had to fill the quota left by Jilin bannermen with Liaoning bannermen. Therefore, in the end, the Liaoning bannermen outnumbered Jilin bannermen. See Songlin’s memorial on 1822.5.15, SCPTTJL, p.55.

<sup>34</sup> See Songlin’s memorial, Ibid.: “All of the one thousand adult males in the central *tun* were from the various garrisons in Jilin. They have been working as soldiers to serve the state and hunting and lumbering for a living. (Thus), they are not familiar with agriculture and often escaped after arriving at the villages.” (SCPTTJL, p.55).

proportion of those from Liaoning and were especially active. These bannermen responded favorably to the move because their garrisons were mainly located in coastal areas with hilly land, important for military purposes but not ideal for farming.<sup>35</sup> Shuangcheng, in comparison, provided these Liaoning bannermen much better conditions for farming. Songlin, who served as general of Jilin when Fujun was in Liaoning, described the enthusiasm of the Liaoning bannermen to emigrate to Shuangcheng:

“(These bannermen) were originally farmers who could not find land to farm because there were many people but little land. Once they arrived in Shuangcheng where there is abundant land but few people, and where the land is fertile, they were all happy to work on the land.”<sup>36</sup>

By the fifth month of 1820, all the 3,000 rural banner households had settled in Shuangcheng.<sup>37</sup>

With the successful settlement of rural bannermen concluded, Fujun started to recruit metropolitan bannermen in 1821.<sup>38</sup> Six days after the New Year, Fujun submitted a memorial to the Daoguang emperor, along with a well-planned task list and timetable for relocating metropolitan bannermen to Shuangcheng.<sup>39</sup> According to Fujun’s plan, the court would move two hundred households every year from 1824 on, so that after fifteen years, 3,000 metropolitan banner households would have moved to Shuangcheng. The

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<sup>35</sup> The Qing state settled the banner population in different parts of Liaoning according to their different functions. The bond servants of the Imperial Household Agency, who worked as farmers and provided the imperial lineage members with produce from land, were located on the alluvial plains of the Liao River. The banner soldiers of the outer Eight Banners were located in banner garrisons which were important for military control. The bannermen who were relocated from Liaoning to Shuangcheng mainly consisted of bannermen from the outer Eight Banners.

<sup>36</sup> See the memorial by Songlin on 1822.5.15. In this memorial, Songlin included a description of the bannermen from Fuzhou and Gaiping, two banner garrisons close to the coastal area (SCPTTJL, p.55).

<sup>37</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1820.5.17 (JJCLFZZ, reel 138, 1883-15.)

<sup>38</sup> Because of the active response from the Liaoning bannermen, the 3,000 quota of rural banner households was soon reached in 1820. Interestingly, this active response was not the result of a bad harvest. According to James Lee and Cameron Campbell’s research, hard years for farmers in Liaoning began in the period 1820-1822, right after the recruitment in Liaoning was completed (Lee and Campbell 1997).

<sup>39</sup> See the memorial of Fujun on 1821.1.6 (SCPTTJL, pp.42-47).

three-year interim between 1821 and 1824 would allow banner officials in Beijing time to recruit metropolitan bannermen, and provide rural bannermen time to prepare their land and housing. Fujun expected that, by 1824, rural bannermen would have developed enough land to produce surplus crops, which could help subsidize the costs of relocating metropolitan bannermen. The relocation project would then be self-sufficient and self-sustaining, a major achievement both for the state and for the bannermen because “their relocation, can relieve the burden of supporting the banner population in our interior; while it strengthens the frontier on our borders.”<sup>40</sup>

The actual results of recruitment, however, threw a damp cloth over plans made by the emperor and Fujun. In early 1822, the emperor found that after one year of recruiting efforts, only 28 metropolitan banner households had volunteered to move to Shuangcheng. By the end of 1823, two years later, the number of metropolitan banner volunteer households had only increased to 53. As table 3.1 shows, after these first 53 households moved to Shuangcheng in 1824, another 77 households volunteered to move in 1825. Disappointed at this result, the imperial court put more effort into recruiting unemployed bannermen. In a court discussion, Yinghe, the Assistant Grand Secretary, proposed that banner captains in Beijing circulate an order among the unemployed bannermen who had no property (*jia wu chanye nian yi cheng ding zhi xiansan*), listing all the benefits of moving to Shuangcheng, and threatening them with cancellations of their banner registration if they refused to move.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps as a result of such efforts, 189 households

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<sup>40</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1821.1.6 (SCPTTJL, p.43).

<sup>41</sup> See *Huangchao jingshi wenbian (the Imperial Collection of State-craft Writings)*, book 18, juan. 35, pp. 33-36. In this memorial, Yinghe proposed to explicate to metropolitan bannermen the benefits of moving to Shuangcheng as follows: first, these bannermen could have free state land and change their property status from have-nots to haves; second, the move was easy because the government would provide immigrants with stipends and accommodations; finally, by farming the land in Shuangcheng, these bannermen would eventually live a good life. At the same time, Yinghe also threatened these bannermen

volunteered to move to Shuangcheng in 1826, followed by another 49 households in 1827. However, in the years after 1827, the number of households moving to Shuangcheng again significantly dropped, with only 27 households moving in 1828.<sup>42</sup> By the end of that year, a total of 378 metropolitan banner households had settled in Shuangcheng.<sup>43</sup>

Table 3. 1 Number of metropolitan banner households migrating to Shuangcheng and their household income at the time of move, 1824-1826.

Date of relocation	Total # of households		Monthly stipend*					
			Three taels or more		Two or one and a half taels		No stipend	
			N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
1824	53	100	31	58.5	11	20.8	11	20.8
1825	77	100	37	48.1	31	40.3	9	11.7
1826	189	100	111	58.7	54	28.6	24	12.7
Total	319	100	179	56.1	96	30.1	44	13.8

Sources: The memorial and attached name lists of the metropolitan banner immigrants to Shuangcheng. NGTFD TYMDA, 1824.1.3, microfilm reel 52, volume 289; 1824.12, microfilm reel 52, pp. 559. JJCLFZZ, on 1825.10.27, microfilm reel 232, 3388-25.

\* Information of monthly stipend is from BQTZ, *juan* 29, 549-553. The monthly stipend in the year 1824 is calculated by adding up all the stipends the household members received because the name list for 1824 contains detailed information on every household member, including banner posts. The name lists for 1825 and 1826, however, only include the banner post of the household head. Therefore, monthly stipends in 1825 and 1826 are calculated based on the household head's monthly stipend.

Government recruitment of metropolitan bannermen for Shuangcheng ended after 1828. In 1827, Fujun advanced to the post of the Assistant Grand Secretary and left Jilin.<sup>44</sup> Although he still tried to continue the relocation project and to recruit more metropolitan banner households, the emperor and court officials shifted the bulk of their interests from this campaign. In 1828, Fujun proposed allowing the banner captains to use

that if they refused to move to Shuangcheng and violated the law later because of their poverty, then their banner registers would be cancelled.

<sup>42</sup> XZSL, *juan*. 131, QSL, book 34, p. 1178b.

<sup>43</sup> XZSL, *juan*. 146, QSL, book 35, p. 244a. The number of households volunteering to move to Shuangcheng, according to the annual reports, sums to 389. However, some bannermen died on their way to Shuangcheng, and some changed their minds and escaped (for an example, see JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3388-8). Therefore, only 376 households ultimately settled in Shuangcheng.

<sup>44</sup> XZSL, *juan*. 121, QSL, book 34, p. 1037a.

coercion to secure enough banner migrants to fill the annual quota of two-hundred households.<sup>45</sup> It seems that the emperor and other officials did not follow up on Fujun's coercive recruitment plan. Instead, the emperor started to recruit bannermen in Rehe, a garrison north of Beijing, to fill the relocation quota.<sup>46</sup> In 1829, Boqitu, the general of Jilin and Fujun's successor, memorialized to reduce the quota of metropolitan banner households from 3,000 to 1,000. The emperor approved Boqitu's proposal and moved his attention away from the relocation project. In 1830, more than one hundred banner households moved from Rehe to Shuangcheng. After 1830, banner households still sporadically arrived in Shuangcheng from both Beijing and Rehe, with a total of 598 metropolitan banner households settling there by 1843.<sup>47</sup> By 1852, the local government reported that the number of metropolitan bannermen households in Shuangcheng had reached 698.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1828.10.19 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm reel 232, 3388-47). Fujun's plan was as follows: every year, twenty banner captains under each of the Manchu banners and five banner captains under each of the Mongol banners should send one household from their subordinates to Shuangcheng. Thereby, the eight Manchu banners would have 160 households and the eight Mongol banners would have 40 households, which, together, would fill the quota of 200.

<sup>46</sup> In 1829, Chengge, the Minister of the Grand Council, mentioned the situation of the bannermen in Rehe, saying that a banner soldier had to use his stipend to raise eight to nine household members (XZSL, book 35, p. 508a.). Then in 1830, the vice commander-in-chief, *duotong*, of Rehe Yu'en memorialized to relocate some of the Rehe bannermen to Shuangcheng. The Daoguang emperor approved this request and the planning for relocation started in the fifth month of 1830. See XZSL, juan.167, 1830.4, book 35, pp587b. and juan.169, 1830.5, book35, pp629b.

<sup>47</sup> See Jing'ebu's proposal on 1844.5.7. "Last year, we checked the five hundred and ninety-eight households of Metropolitan bannermen in this state farm." (SCPTTJL, p.240)

<sup>48</sup> For the number of metropolitan banner households, see SCPZGYMDA, reel 163, vol. 653, pp. 191-195. While most of these metropolitan banner households were recruited in their place of origin and relocated to Shuangcheng, some households settled through different ways. For example, in 1823, the Board of Revenue memorialized to keep a metropolitan bannerman named Qingde and his families, who settled in Shuangcheng in 1821, to fill the quota of metropolitan banner households (JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3387-32; also see SCPTTJL, pp. 119-120). According to this memorial, Qingde was imprisoned as a criminal and was sent to Jilin to serve the sentence in 1818, accompanied by his families. In 1821, Qingde volunteered to go to Shuangcheng and therefore settled in the Central *tun*, where Qingde learned farming skills. In 1822, Qingde was released and should come back to Beijing. However, Qingde claimed that he had become used to farming and would not like to quit his land in Shuangcheng. The Board of Revenue therefore requested the emperor's permission to keep Qingde's household in Shuangcheng, treating it as a metropolitan household. The 1866 population register shows that Qingde's descendants resided in the second village of the Bordered Red banner in the Central *tun*, forming a household of ten which was

State efforts to recruit more metropolitan bannermen failed in face of their unwillingness to move. By the 1820s, these descendants of the banner warriors had lived in Beijing for more than 150 years. Moreover, with the state stipend, they had already become used to luxurious city life. Without any knowledge of farming, Shuangcheng to them meant a cold and remote land with a boring life on the wild frontier. As Fujun vividly depicted:

“[The metropolitan bannermen] are not willing to move because of the following reasons. They think there is no opera house nor tea house or bar in Shuangcheng. (They) therefore have no place for entertainment. Moreover, there is also no place for them to ask for loans. They have gotten used to a life of leisure and do not care about the sense of honor and livelihood, considering farming drudgery.”<sup>49</sup>

From the above quotation, we can see that, although the Qing officials described the unemployed bannermen as extremely poor people without property and occupation, their life style was actually leisured and relatively well off.

### **Immigrant socioeconomic profiles**

Previous studies on the social status of the Shuangcheng immigrants describe them as poor bannermen who had neither land nor the means to make a living. For example, Ding Yizhuang describes the metropolitan bannermen who volunteered to move to Shuangcheng, even those who had banner posts and government stipend, as “penniless (*chipin*)” (Ding 1985). This view mainly derives from an intuitive understanding of the purpose of this relocation: to relieve the problem of supporting bannermen. In fact, not only contemporary scholars but also the organizers of the relocation project, the emperor and

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headed by Qingde’s grandson Yingwu (the 1866 population register: SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834686, vol. 218; and the 1897 three generation register of metropolitan bannermen, SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834666, vol. 68).

<sup>49</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1828.10.19 (JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3388-47).

the officials, identified the target population as “penniless” bannermen. Previously, the government had in fact tended to assign bannermen with lower socioeconomic status to provincial garrisons. As the Jiaqing emperor stated: “At times of sending bannermen in Beijing to banner garrisons in provinces, by all means there is no reason to first select those who are law-abiding and ambitious.”<sup>50</sup>

The status of the rural bannermen recruited to Shuangcheng, however, reveals a different pattern. Initially, the banner officials followed the traditional practice, selecting lower-status bannermen for relocation to Shuangcheng.<sup>51</sup> In the first years of settlement, however, Fujun noticed that these immigrants were more likely to abandon the state farm and return to their places of origin because they were incapable of farming. Therefore, when recruiting the Liaoning and Jilin bannermen in 1819, Fujun adjusted the recruitment policy to instead focus on relatively higher-status households.

Fujun required banner officials to screen immigrants on their age and family background, ordering them to “select those from a large and affluent descent group with many adult males, so that they will not escape.”<sup>52</sup> Fujun also required that the recruited bannermen in Jilin and Liaoning obtain a signed guarantee from their descent group, ensuring that they would not flee. Consequently, quite a few bannermen from Liaoning

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<sup>50</sup> RZSL, juan. 260, QSL, book 31, p. 519a.

<sup>51</sup> Sending bannermen with lower economic status out is a convention in the history of the relocation of bannermen, and was followed in the 1819 recruitment of banner immigrants in Liaoning. Fujun found that some of the immigrants sent to Shuangcheng were indeed too young or too old to farm. Moreover, some immigrants were not serious farmers but people without a stable occupation and likely to seek trouble. For example, in 1820, the banner government in Shuangcheng sent Yichong’e, a bannerman from Fuzhou, and his families back and asked the general of Shengjing to punish Yichong’e (SCPTTJL, p. 113). The Shuangcheng government did this because Yichong’e would not follow the official assignment to move to a separate village and attempted to sue the banner captain. When the officials checked Yichong’e’s history, they found that Yichong’e had a bad reputation as a trouble-maker in his place of origin and was sent to Shuangcheng because of this. In 1818, Yichong’e committed a minor crime and received the punishment of wearing a cangue for one month. However, Yichong’e escaped and went to the office of the general of Shengjing to sue his banner officials. The banner officials then decided to send Yichong’e and his families to Shuangcheng.

<sup>52</sup> See the order from the office of the general of Jilin on 1820.5.13 (SCPTTJL, p.146).

and Jilin were from at least the middle of the social spectrum. The settlement experience later verified the wisdom of these screening policies. In 1822, when Songlin, the new general of Jilin, investigated the state farms, he found that the most successful settlers and farmers were immigrants from the coastal areas of Liaoning. These households were generally large and affluent, with estates and land in their places of origin: “Every principal adult male [household head] had one to three assistant adult males to help with the farming. Some of them even cashed in their estates [in their place of origins] and bought cows and horses themselves, so that (they) could cultivate more land.”<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, in the recruitment of metropolitan bannermen, Fujun also found out that, contrary to his original plan to recruit poor bannermen without occupation or property, bannermen with banner posts and state stipends were actually more likely to move. Originally, Fujun and the court planned to move unemployed *xiansan* bannermen – those without state stipends – to Shuangcheng. After one year of recruitment, however, Fujun found that the majority of the twenty-eight banner households who first volunteered to move to Shuangcheng were in fact headed by bannermen with such posts as tax preceptor (*lingcui*), foot soldier (*bubing*), and *yangyubing*,<sup>54</sup> earning monthly stipends of one and a half to four taels of silver plus annual grain salaries.<sup>55</sup> Fujun concluded that the relatively high status of these families was due to a regulation that unmarried bannermen did not qualify as households and thus could not move to Shuangcheng (*zhishen buzhun suan hu*).

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<sup>53</sup> See Songlin’s memorial on 1822.5.15 (SCPTTJL, p.55).

<sup>54</sup> The post of *yangyubing* was created in the mid-eighteenth century to accommodate the increasing unemployed banner population, See BQTZ, book 1, pp 550-551.

<sup>55</sup> Bannermen with a banner post usually had two forms of salary, silver and grain. The silver was distributed monthly, and the grain salary was distributed twice every year. A vanguard (*qianfeng*), tax preceptor, military protector (*hujun*), and horse-soldier (*mabing*) had a monthly stipend of four taels of silver and an annual grain salary of forty-six *hu* (about 2,461 liters) of rice. A foot-soldier had a monthly stipend of three taels of silver and an annual grain salary of twenty-two *hu* (about 1,177 liters) of rice. Only the post of *yangyubing* had a monthly stipend of two taels of silver without a grain salary (See BQTZ, book 1, pp 550-551). Also see DQHDSL, juan. 202.

This regulation excluded those who were too poor to get married from the recruitment pool.<sup>56</sup> In order to accommodate unmarried bannermen, Fujun moved to loosen the criteria of recruitment to allow any combination of three relatives to move as a household. In 1825, Yinghe supported Fujun's proposal, as it would help fill the annual quota of two hundred households.<sup>57</sup> For Yinghe, the ideal recruits were Manchu and Mongol bannermen with monthly stipends of less than three taels.<sup>58</sup>

Despite government efforts to recruit poor bannermen, relatively higher-status still accounted for the majority of metropolitan immigrants. As table 3.1 shows, in 1824, 31 of the 53 initial banner households (59 percent) from Beijing had banner posts with monthly stipends of three *taels* or more plus grain salaries. 11 households had the post of *yangyubing*, which had a monthly stipend of one and a half tael of silver. Only another 11 households were *xiansan*, without any kind of state support. Among the 31 households with monthly stipends of three or more taels of silver plus grain salaries, the grain salary of the lowest rank alone could feed a family of two adults and two children, and that of the highest rank could feed a family of six adults and one child.<sup>59</sup> None of the metropolitan banner households moving to Shuangcheng had more than seven members, so those with grain salaries could have even saved some grain and used their monthly stipends for other purposes. In addition to monthly stipends and grain salaries, metropolitan bannermen also received housing. The state followed the banner housing standard of the eighteenth

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<sup>56</sup> See Fujun and Fudeng's memorial on 1822.2.11 (SCPTTJL, p.51).

<sup>57</sup> See Yinghe's memorial on 1825.7.11 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm, reel 232, 3388-21).

<sup>58</sup> See *Huangchao jingshi wenbian (the Imperial Collection of State-craft Writings)*, book 18, juan. 35, pp. 33-36.

<sup>59</sup> This calculation is based on the food rationing standard of the Qing granary system. The Qing food ration followed a rate of 0.3 *shi*/month for adults and half this figure for children (Will and Wong 1991). Therefore, the 22 *hu* (11 *shi*) grain salary for a *bubing* could feed 3 adults for a whole year. The 46 *hu* (23 *shi*) grain salary for a *lingcui* or *hujun* could feed about six adults and one child for a whole year.

century, allocating two rooms to each bannerman with a cavalry post or higher.<sup>60</sup> By the nineteenth century, some banner soldiers had sold their estates for money and become impoverished through extravagant spending. While most were still able to afford a fair living in Beijing,<sup>61</sup> bannermen with monthly stipends of only one and a half taels of silver might have found it difficult to support large households. In the 1820s, one and a half taels of silver could purchase 0.7 to 0.8 *shi* of wheat or millet in Zhili, which was enough to feed a family of three (two adults and a child).<sup>62</sup> Yet their situation was still better than the situation of unemployed *xiansan* bannermen without state stipends, who, nonetheless, accounted for only 21 percent of the first group of metropolitan banner households moving to Shuangcheng.

Even after the court revised the relocation regulation in 1825, the pattern of high SES composition of the metropolitan immigrants persisted. As table 3.1 shows, in that year, 37 of the 77 households (48 percent) had a monthly stipend of three taels or more plus grain salary, and 31 households (41 percent) had a monthly stipend of one and a half taels of

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<sup>60</sup> DQHDSL, juan. 136, pp 10-11. Also see Liu Xiaomeng's research on housing transaction of the bannermen in Beijing (Liu 1998c).

<sup>61</sup> While previous studies on the livelihood problem of the eight banners have identified the pauperization of the banner soldiers, it is still not clear that beginning in which period this pauperization became a really serious issue. As Wei Qingyuan and Mark Elliott summarized, the poverty of bannermen was reflected in four major developments: government cuts and restrictions on their financial support, the increase of the banner population, the loss of landed property for some bannermen, and the corruption of some banner officials, which caused some banner soldiers not only to sell their gain salaries in exchange for instant money, but also to mortgage their future salary for loans (Elliott 2001; Wei 1995). Some bannermen also sold their allocated banner land, and some even sold their weapons and equipment. The above phenomena, although reflecting the deterioration of the financial status and living conditions of some bannermen, did not necessarily mean they were poorer than the average population of Beijing. As the Qing emperors and officials described, most of these bannermen fell into poverty through extravagant spending and the pursuit of a luxurious life. Moreover, in his recent research on the life of bannermen in Beijing, Liu Xiaomeng provided more detailed evidence and analyses on the povertization of the banner population (2008). However, most evidence of the hardship of banner soldiers' life only emerged after the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, in the 1820s, the banner soldiers probably could still live a better life than average people in Beijing.

<sup>62</sup> Data for grain prices come from Lilian Li's research on famine relief in North China (Li 2007). In 1822, the price for wheat was 2.25 taels of silver per *shi* and the price for millet was 1.9 taels of silver per *shi*.

silver. Only 9 households in that year had no state stipend. In 1826, the socioeconomic composition of the Beijing immigrants remained the same as in 1824 and 1825; 111 of the 189 households had a monthly stipend of three or more taels of silver plus grain salary. Moreover, 9 households even had a total of thirteen servants. Therefore, from 1824 to 1827, of the 389 households that moved to Shuangcheng, 56 percent could have continued to live a decent life in Beijing.

These higher-status bannermen, mainly middle- to low-rank banner officials and soldiers, chose to move to Shuangcheng to enjoy greater social mobility. Although they were assured a living, the banner hierarchy and wealth stratification in Beijing significantly restricted their social mobility. In contrast to the high-rank officials, imperial lineage members, and rich people who owned several thousand hectares of land in the suburbs, these bannermen were nobody.<sup>63</sup> The city life in Beijing was therefore a golden cage to those who were ambitious and desirous of greater power and prestige. Moving to Shuangcheng provided these bannermen with opportunities to rise to the top of society. Although Shuangcheng was a backward rural frontier, these metropolitan bannermen enjoyed life as managerial landlords, with abundant land, state-supplied housing, and rural bannermen to serve as laborers.

When recruitment concluded in 1830, the 3,698 households of banner immigrants included bannermen with a wide variety of backgrounds in terms of place of origin, lifestyle, and social status. Their places of origin ranged from urban Beijing to rural Liaoning and Jilin. In terms of socioeconomic status, metropolitan bannermen were in general better off than their rural counterparts. Situated inside the metropolis, they

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<sup>63</sup> The wealth stratification among metropolitan bannermen had intensified since the mid-eighteenth century. While many banner officials and soldiers sold their land and housing, other bannermen managed to accumulate more landed wealth and become large landlords (Liu 1998a).

enjoyed all the cultural and economic benefits a big city could provide. Despite the Qing document that described the unemployed *xiansan* bannermen in Beijing as destitute paupers who could not make ends meet, these bannermen were still able to have leisurely city lives, with, if not their own money, borrowed money.

At the same time, differences in lifestyle and social status not only divided metropolitan and rural bannermen, but also persisted within each of the two population categories. For example, the Liaoning bannermen were often experienced farmers, while most of the Jilin bannermen were still unfamiliar with farming. Moreover, metropolitan bannermen included both former banner officials with monthly stipends of four taels plus grain salaries and *xiansan* without banner posts. The next challenge for Fujun and the court officials, therefore, was to settle this heterogeneous population in rural Shuangcheng.

### **Settling the population**

The work of settling the immigrants in Shuangcheng lasted more than thirty years from 1815 to 1844 and beyond. Beginning with the settlement of the first 1,000 individual Jilin bannermen in 1815, the state closely inspected every stage of the process. Especially after the arrival of metropolitan bannermen in Shuangcheng in 1824, the Daoguang emperor frequently sent imperial envoys to investigate the site to ensure their smooth transition to rural life. As late as 1844, court officials were still discussing policies to relieve the hardships faced by metropolitan bannermen in adjusting to their lives as landlords in rural Shuangcheng. Under the intense care of enthusiastic officials, the settlement of the Shuangcheng state farm included elements of both state-organized frontier settlements and on-site innovations.

## Financing

To settle these banner immigrants, the state invested huge amounts of money in preparing the basics of housing, farming and living, and paying relocation stipends. The two generals of Jilin, Fujun and Songning, carefully planned the relocation budget, which included not only the cost of building new houses, but also the cost of farming tools, draft animals, and such basic living goods as pots and bowls. In addition to the expense of preparing homes and farms, each metropolitan banner household was also given thirty taels of silver with which to hire laborers on the state farm. In comparison, each Liaoning rural banner household received only eight taels of silver, and each Jilin rural banner household received just four taels of silver as relocation stipend. As table 3.2 shows, the total moving expenditure for a metropolitan banner household was 200 taels of silver, while expenditures for banner households from Rehe, Liaoning, and Jilin ranged from 45 to 49 taels of silver. According to Fujun's budget, moving 2,000 Liaoning and Jilin banner households in 1820 alone cost 94,090 taels of silver, and relocating all 3,698 households would cost about 272,000 taels of silver,<sup>64</sup> which was even greater than the budget of some populous provinces inside China Proper.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the expenses paid to and for the immigrants, establishing the local government cost 46,364 taels of silver.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1818.12.6 (SCPTTJL, pp. 33-37).

<sup>65</sup> The provincial budget of Anhui in 1729 was 179,244 taels of silver (Zelin, 1984, 158-159), about 100,000 taels less than the budget of relocating bannermen to Shuangcheng. Even after taking the possible rise in price in the nineteenth century into consideration, the expense on the relocation project is still extraordinary.

<sup>66</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1818.12.6 (SCPTTJL, pp. 33-37).

Table 3. 2 Government budget for relocation and settlement, *per* household.

	The places of origin of banner immigrants			
	Beijing	Rehe	Liaoning	Jilin
Housing	120	6	6	6
Farming and living basics	50	35.045	35.045	35.045
Moving stipend	30	8	8	4
Total	200	49.045	49.045	45.045

Sources: The budget attached to Fujun's memorial on 1821.1.6 (SCPTTJL, 43) and the budget attached to Fujun's memorial on 1818.12.6 (SCPTTJL,35). XZSL, juan. 167, 1830.4, book 35, pp587b.

The state counted on both government revenue and the rent collected from state land in Shuangcheng to finance the relocation. As Fujun planned, the settlement and farming costs for the first ten years came from the tax collected from ginseng merchants, a major source of revenue for the Imperial Household Agency.<sup>67</sup> Three years after its opening, rural bannermen would begin to pay rent for part of the land they farmed. Thereby, in ten years, rent income would offset settlement expenses. Moreover, from the eleventh year on, the state farm would become self-sufficient and even generate a surplus.<sup>68</sup>

The huge investment in government care indicates the importance of the Shuangcheng state farm. First, compared to other state farms in Qing history, the Shuangcheng relocation was better financed. In the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the state had tried to establish a series of state farms on the wastelands of North, South, and Southwest China. In these projects, the government did not provide farmers with stipends, but only promised loans to finance the acquisition of farming basics. The financial sources of promised

<sup>67</sup> In the Qing, the Imperial Household Agency (*neiwufu*) controlled the collection and sale of ginseng. Jilin Province is a major site for ginseng collection. The Jilin provincial government therefore controlled one important source of the revenue of the Imperial Household Agency. The type of money Fujun used to subsidize the relocation expense was "*shenyu yin*," a special tax collected from merchants who bought ginseng from the collectors. Depending on the quality of the ginseng they bought, merchants had to pay up to 20 taels (760 grams) of silver for each tael of ginseng. The estimated income from "*shenyu yin*" in Jilin Province was 30,000 to 40,000 taels of silver (Song and Wang 1991).

<sup>68</sup> See Songling's summation of an earlier memorial of Fujun on 1818.10.20 (SCPTTJL, p.28).

loans, however, were such unstable revenue streams as fines from official salaries (Guo 1997). Moreover, in other military state farms established in Xinjiang and Sichuan, the state only invested in one-time funding for the purchase of farming basics (Wang, Liu, and Guo 1991). The settlement of the Shuangcheng state farm, in contrast, had solid financial support from the revenue of the Imperial Household Agency (*neiwufu*).

Second, compared to other Qing immigration projects, the banner immigrants to Shuangcheng had much better governmental care.<sup>69</sup> In the government-organized migration to the Southwest frontier in the eighteenth century, the government gave each immigrant household only twelve taels of silver as start-up funds. This twelve-tael stipend was expected to equip a family of four for over a year.<sup>70</sup> In Shuangcheng, however, the government provided immigrants with housing and basic living and farming essentials together with transportation and accommodation on their route to Shuangcheng.<sup>71</sup> In addition to all the above, the immigrants were given relocation stipends to start their lives in Shuangcheng. The state treated metropolitan bannermen especially well. While rural bannermen only had thatched houses worth six taels of silver, metropolitan bannermen were given four-room houses with walled yards, which cost 120 taels of silver (table 3.2). While every four households of rural bannermen shared a set of farming supplies, consisting of four cows and a plow, each metropolitan banner household

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<sup>69</sup> The only comparable immigration is the relocation of 3,000 metropolitan banner households to Lalin from 1742 to 1758. In this relocation, the government provided housing for the Metropolitan bannermen, but did not provide living and farming basics. Instead, the government gave each household forty taels of silver as a relocation stipend, and, after their arrival, fifty taels of silver as start-up funds to buy farming and living essentials (Ding 1985).

<sup>70</sup> Cite from James Lee's manuscript on southwest China (Forthcoming).

<sup>71</sup> All the Metropolitan bannermen and most of the Liaoning and Jilin bannermen moved to Shuangcheng in groups under government supervision. Each Metropolitan banner household was provided a wagon. Several officials accompanied the wagon trains and provided accommodation along the way. The memorial of Jiang Jikuo, 1824.2.2, JJCLFZZ microfilm reel 232, 3387-38; Lucheng, 1825.3.7, JJCLFZZ microfilm reel 232, 3388-4, 3388-6.

had its own set of farming supplies. Moreover, the Metropolitan bannermen had relocation stipends of thirty taels of silver, with which they were expected to hire two rural bannermen as long-term laborers.<sup>72</sup> In addition, for the first five years in Shuangcheng, each metropolitan banner household also had a stipend of twelve strings of copper coins with which to purchase clothes.

## Settlement

The major settlement of these banner immigrants took place from 1815 to 1830. The 3,000 rural banner households arrived in Shuangcheng in three waves in 1815, 1819, and 1820. The first 1,000 individual rural bannermen from Jilin who arrived in 1815 were assigned to villages in the central *tun*; the additional 2,000 rural banner households from Jilin and Liaoning who arrived in 1819 and 1820 were assigned to villages in the left and right *tun*. Upon arrival, the state allocated a plot of village land to each banner household. Fujun sized the villages to accommodate 24 to 28 rural banner households each. Villages for 24 households spread about 0.25 square kilometers, and those for 28 households spread 0.3 square kilometers. Surrounding the villages, the bannermen built entrenchments to mark their borders. From 1824 on, the government assigned metropolitan bannermen into the 40 villages of the central *tun*. Rural bannermen ultimately settled in all 120 villages, while metropolitan bannermen settled only in the 40 villages of the central *tun*.

As early as the planning stage, Fujun had designed the villages to include both rural

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<sup>72</sup> In 1822, Songlin, the general of Jilin, had planned to hire rural bannermen as laborers to farm the land for metropolitan bannermen. The wage for the hired labor was 3,000 copper coins each year (the memorial of Songlin on 1822.7.12, SCPTTJL, p 58). In 1825, Fujun reported that the Jilin Provincial government changed the thirty taels of silver into copper coins and used the money to hire labor for the Metropolitan bannermen. The thirty taels of silver hired two long-term laborers with 12,100 copper coins left over. See the memorial of Fujun and Wolengtai on 1825.3.8 (JJCLFZZ, microfilm, reel 232, 3388-8).

northeastern and urban Beijing banner immigrants. In the 40 villages of the central *tun*, he paired residences of rural bannermen with those of metropolitan bannermen.<sup>73</sup> The living area for each pair of rural and metropolitan banner households occupied 4,444 square meters, of which the rural banner household had 2,000 and the metropolitan banner household had 2,400 square meters.<sup>74</sup> Fujun matched rural and metropolitan bannermen in this way because he hoped that the experienced farmers from Northeast China would help the metropolitan bannermen farm and settle down.<sup>75</sup>

The early planning produced a remarkable heterogeneity in the Shuangcheng banner villages. When settling rural bannermen, the government scattered households from the same banner administration and descent group and thereby destroyed most previous social ties among rural bannermen. In most resettlement projects, the government settled immigrants in homogeneous groups by place of origin, village, and descent group, using the authority of these organic units as a convenient way to organize and control immigrants. The settlement experiences in other parts of the world also demonstrate that settlement is more likely to succeed if new social organizations are quickly established at the destination (Colson 1971; Guggenheim and Cernea 1993). The settlement of bannermen in Shuangcheng, however, ignored not only immigrants' previous lineage organizations, but also their previous banner affiliation. As table 3.3 shows, only two of the 120 villages had

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<sup>73</sup> Fujun had planned to mix the residences of rural and metropolitan bannermen in the right and left *tun* as well. Yet due to the topographical constraints, the villages in the right and left *tun* were not as regularly shaped as those in the central *tun*. The pairing of the residences of the rural and metropolitan bannermen was not carried out. In the end, because the quota of metropolitan bannermen was cut to 1,000, no metropolitan banner households settled in the right or left *tun*.

<sup>74</sup> In addition to the space Fujun planned for the Liaoning and Jilin bannermen's housing, he also reserved extra space for each household to expand its residence in the future to accommodate the increasing population. See the memorial of Fujun on 1822.7.4, SCPTTJL, p.61.

<sup>75</sup> In his initial planning of the Shuangcheng state farm, Fujun had planned to mix rural bannermen with metropolitan bannermen: "Indenting the metropolitan bannermen's [residence] with that of rural bannermen in Shuangcheng makes it easy [for metropolitan bannermen] to learn farming and work with rural bannermen. [This arrangement] especially benefits the relocation of [metropolitan bannermen]." (SCPTTJL, p.13).

homogeneous populations; the households of these two villages belonged to the same banner captain at their places of origin. In contrast, 76 villages (63.3 percent of the 120) contained households from 11 to 22 different banner captains. Thus, on average, in each village only two or three households were from the same banner administration back in their places of origin. The state apparently used this heterogeneous residential arrangement intentionally to undercut rural bannermen's previous social organizations.

Table 3. 3 The diversity of Shuangcheng banner villages, measured by rural bannermen's banner affiliation in their places of origin, 1866-1869.

N. of banner captain in each village	N. of villages	Percent
1	2	1.7
2-5	19	15.8
6-10	23	19.2
11-15	58	48.3
16-20	17	14.2
21-22	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0

Sources: the 1866 rural banner population registers (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834661, vol. 3 and 4; reel 1834686, vol. 209, 210, and 216) and the 1869 banner population register of the rural bannermen of the left wing of the Central *tun* (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834662, vol.17). I chose the population registers in the 1860s in the analysis because the distribution of households in this period was most close to the situation in the early stage of the state farm.

\*In this table, the number of different banner administration was identified by immigrants' place of origin, immigrants' original banner affiliation, and the name of the captain the household originally belonged to.

Although not directed by government intentions, metropolitan banner households were also diffused across the forty villages in which they settled. This diffusion initially resulted from slow progress in land opening. In 1822, Songlin, the general of Jilin, found that the land cleared by the rural bannermen in the central *tun* was limited, and the land cleared by a single rural banner household alone could not support one metropolitan banner

household.<sup>76</sup> Songlin thus memorialized to assign the first 53 metropolitan banner households evenly among the 40 villages of the central *tun*, with one or two households in each village, so that all the rural banner households in a village could work together to clear enough land to support the one or two metropolitan banner households. However, Fujun allowed the 77 metropolitan banner households who arrived in 1825 to settle in the same village as their relatives and friends who had moved to Shuangcheng in 1824, hoping to strengthen social ties among metropolitan bannermen and smooth the transition to their new lives.<sup>77</sup> Despite Fujun's effort, due to their relatively small number, the metropolitan banner households were still scattered. As table 3.4 shows, in 1866, with only one exception,<sup>78</sup> the metropolitan bannermen in each village came from at least five different banner administrations. In 30 villages, the metropolitan immigrants came from 6 to 10 banner administrations, which accounted for 73.2 percent of the 41 villages that contained metropolitan banner households. The metropolitan bannermen in another 8 villages came from 11 to 15 different banner administrations. Given the fact that the mean of metropolitan banner households in each village was 12, the settlement of metropolitan bannermen was also heterogeneous.

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<sup>76</sup> See the memorial of Songlin on 1822. 7.20 (SCPTTJL, p.60).

<sup>77</sup> In Fujun's memorial on 1825.3.9, he reported that in 1825, when settling the metropolitan bannermen who arrived that year, the officials asked the newcomers whether they had relatives or friends who had arrived in the previous year and, if there were any, the officials would settle them into the same village. However, because each banner administration in Beijing only sent a handful of immigrants, there was no strong social organization among metropolitan banner immigrants.

<sup>78</sup> The only village of which the metropolitan banner households came from the same banner captain in their place of origin is an exceptional case. While, according to the official document, all metropolitan bannermen were settled to the 40 villages of the central *tun*, in the 1866 population registers, two households with a place of origin of Beijing resided in the third village of the Bordered White bannermen of the Right *tun* (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834661, vol. 4). These two households, headed by Jizhang and Jizeng, were from the same descent group (see the 1903 three generation register of the Bordered Red banner, SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834712, vol. 428). Although these two households were noted with a Beijing origin, each only had 18.33 *shang* of *jichan* land, the standard amount of rural bannermen (see the 1876 land register, SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834696, vol. 285). Therefore, these two households were actually treated as rural bannermen.

Table 3. 4 The diversity of Shuangcheng banner villages, measured by metropolitan bannermen's banner affiliation in their places of origin, 1866.

N. of banner captain in each village	N. of villages	Percent
1	1	2.4
5	2	4.9
6-10	30	73.2
11-15	8	19.5
Total	41	100.0

Sources: the 1866 metropolitan banner population registers (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834661, vol. 4; reel 1834686, vol. 218).

This heterogeneous settlement in Shuangcheng favored metropolitan bannermen. In contrast to rural bannermen, who had been used to a homogeneous social environment, metropolitan bannermen had been familiar with this heterogeneous residential arrangement back in Beijing. Although the Qing government had initially assigned Beijing residents into zones on the basis of their ethnicity and banner affiliation, the residential boundaries had been blurred since the early eighteenth century (Liu 1998b). By the early nineteenth century, metropolitan bannermen in Beijing had grown accustomed to residing not only with bannermen of different banner affiliations but also with civilian commoners. For metropolitan bannermen, the social setting in Shuangcheng was no more heterogeneous than that in Beijing and thus was easy to adjust to.

Moreover, dismantling preexisting social organizations among rural bannermen was an indispensable step toward preventing potential resistance from the rural bannermen to the hierarchical population categories that established metropolitan bannermen as the top elite. For the state, the purpose of the Shuangcheng settlement was not to simply transport immigrants from their places of origin to the state farm, but also to build a new social order

on a hierarchy of state-designed population categories, with metropolitan bannermen at the top and rural bannermen providing continuous support to the top elite. The previous social organizations – lineage and banner community – comprised potential threats to the hierarchy of state categories, as these organizations could generate powerful resistance to joining metropolitan bannermen, who were neither familiar to the rural environment nor backed up by strong lineage organizations. Therefore, dismantling previous social organizations among rural bannermen excluded any power structure that could generate potential resistance to the state-created social order.

By the same token, the banner villages also had a heterogeneous ethnic composition. Banner immigrants to Shuangcheng included a total of six ethnic groups: the four common ethnicities in the banner system (Manchu, Mongol, Han, and Xibe) and two small ethnic groups (Taimanzi and Baerhu).<sup>79</sup> As table 3.5 shows, Manchu and Han were the two biggest ethnic groups; the Manchu accounted for 48.5 percent and the Han accounted for 32.2 percent of the banner households. The Xibe and Mongol, which respectively accounted for 11 percent and 7.5 percent of the banner households, were relatively smaller ethnic groups in Shuangcheng. In addition to the above four common ethnic groups, the two small ethnic groups of Taimanzi and Baerhu were represented by only a handful of households.

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<sup>79</sup> Baerhu was a Mongol ethnic group originating in the area of today's Mongolia. In 1691, the Baerhu chief submitted to the Kangxi emperor and was enrolled into the Eight Banners. In 1692, 5,000 Baerhu people, including 1273 adult males, were moved to Liaoning and resided in the banner garrisons (Du 1994).

Table 3. 5 Ethnic composition of the metropolitan and rural banner households, 1866-1869.

	Metropolitan bannermen		Rural bannermen		Total	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
Manchu	406	81.0	1,335	43.2	1,741	48.5
Mongol	91	18.2	178	5.8	269	7.5
Xibe	4	0.8	390	12.6	394	11.0
Han			1,157	37.5	1,157	32.2
Taimanzi			4	0.1	4	0.1
Baerhu			16	0.5	16	0.4
Unkown			9	0.3	9	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,590</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: the 1866 rural banner population registers (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834661, vol. 3 and 4; reel 1834686, vol. 209, 210, 216, and 218) and the 1869 banner population register of the rural bannermen of the left wing of the Central *tun* (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834662, vol.17).

While in other regions of China Proper the banner administration organized bannermen of different ethnicities separately, the Shuangcheng settlement mixed different ethnicities in the same village. As table 3.6 shows, most banner villages in Shuangcheng consisted of two or more ethnic groups. If we consider the four common ethnic groups, only 11 villages had a unitary ethnic component, accounting for 9.2 percent of the 120 banner villages. 50 villages (41.7 percent) had three ethnic groups, and 41 villages (34.2 percent) had four ethnic groups. Moreover, if we take Taimanzi and Baerhu into consideration, the number of villages with four ethnic groups increased to 44 (36.7 percent). The heterogeneous ethnic composition of banner villages, if not a state design, at least indicated that ethnicity was not a principle in organizing bannermen in Shuangcheng, a departure from the Eight Banner tradition.

Table 3. 6 Number of ethnicities in the banner villages of Shuangcheng, 1866-1869.

N. of ethnicities in each village	The four major ethnicities		All ethnicities	
	N. of villages	Percent	N. of villages	Percent
1	11	9.2	11	9.2
2	18	15.0	18	15.0
3	50	41.7	43	35.8
4	41	34.2	44	36.7
5			4	3.3
<u>Total</u>	120	100.0	120	100.0

Sources: the 1866 rural banner population registers (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834661, vol. 3 and 4; reel 1834686, vol. 209, 210, 216, and 218) and the 1869 banner population register of the rural bannermen of the left wing of the Central *tun* (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834662, vol.17).

The heterogeneous settlement of Shuangcheng banner immigrants exemplified the state's efforts to clear the existing social boundaries between immigrants and thereby to enforce the new boundary between the state-created categories of metropolitan and rural bannermen. In this sense, this designed heterogeneity in fact marked a process of homogenization. By mixing immigrants from various descent groups, banner administrations, and ethnicities, the state intentionally extenuated all previous social boundaries and delivered the message that in Shuangcheng the previous social categories – lineage, banner community, and ethnicity – were no longer important. Within the frame of the metropolitan-rural hierarchy, all immigrant households were equal. This state action was thus intended to create a “great commonality” among metropolitan and rural bannermen.

## Governance

In order to complete the process of homogenization and successfully settle the banner

immigrants, Fujun focused on building new social organizations and institutions. When planning the state farm villages, he intentionally built the five villages in each banner as new communities that would replace the immigrants' old social organizations. Fujun evenly distributed the five villages over the land allocated to each banner. As map 3.1 shows, the first village in each banner was located in the center; the other four villages surrounded the first village at the four corners. This distribution of banner villages resembled the shape of a plum blossom. Fujun designed this distribution to ensure that the distances between these villages were equal; each village was 5 *li* (2.9 kilometers) away from its neighbors. This even spacing facilitated both state control and self-surveillance between villages. With the efforts of Fujun and subsequent officials, close bonds developed in these five-village units. Not only have the village distributions sustained themselves to the present day, but the close bond of the five villages in each banner created a broader sense of community among the villagers. In 1934, the Japanese field investigator Komekura Jirou reported that in Shuangcheng, on occasions of local sacrifices and festivals, the five villages in each banner participated in celebrations together as a community (1941).

In addition to creating new communities, Fujun also worked hard to establish a reliable and capable local government. In 1819, Fujun found that the banner officials assigned to Shuangcheng were incapable of settling and controlling the immigrants; by then, four years after the settlement of the first 1,000 individual bannermen from Jilin, these bannermen had neither cleared enough land nor built enough houses to accommodate themselves. He therefore asked the Jiaqing emperor to assign some cashiered Han-Chinese officials to Jilin to assist the settlement. Fujun especially preferred the

former magistrate Dou Xinchuan. Dou Xinchuan, a native of Shanxi Province, was a typical Han-Chinese official who had attained his position through the civil service exam.<sup>80</sup> Since 1801, Dou had worked in the posts of magistrate in Jiangxi, Shengjing, and Hebei provinces and was experienced in local governance. When Fujun worked as the general of Shengjing, he had worked with Dou and trusted his ability. Fujun therefore requested to send Dou to Shuangcheng to supervise the settlement.<sup>81</sup> In 1820, Fujun also demoted and removed some banner officials in Shuangcheng for their inability to organize the settlement.<sup>82</sup>

With Dou's assistance, the settlement of rural bannermen made significant progress, ensuring the subsequent smooth settlement of metropolitan bannermen. Instead of assigning Dou to a formal official post in the local government, Fujun appointed him to work as Fujun's representative. Dou took charge of all the basic settlement work, including residential construction for the immigrants, building the granary system, and recruiting merchants to Shuangcheng to produce construction supplies and thereby reduce government expenditure. Moreover, Dou also diligently visited all 120 villages to investigate and resolve any problems the immigrants faced in living or farming. When the first group of metropolitan bannermen arrived in Shuangcheng in 1824, they found a total of 1,164 households of rural bannermen from Jilin and 1,836 households of rural bannermen from Liaoning.<sup>83</sup> These rural bannermen from Northeast China had already opened a total of 22,841 *shang* (42,027.4 hectares) of land. In contrast to the barren

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<sup>80</sup> QSG, book 37, juan 342, p. 11122. Also see Fujun's memorials on 1819.8.1 and 1822.1.11, in which Fujun introduced Dou's career history (SCPTTJL, pp. 38, 46).

<sup>81</sup> In 1818, Dou was dismissed from his position because he failed to maintain a good road condition for the emperor's tour. Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> See the memorial of Fujun on 1820.5.17, SCPTTJL, p.41.

<sup>83</sup> See the investigation report by Rongzhao and Qiying on 1824.3.25, (JJCLFZZ, microfilm reel 232, 3387-41).

landscape of 1815, by 1824 the three *tun* of Shuangcheng had seen the erection of forty shops, including four wineries and seven grocery stores. Moreover, the government also built one charity granary (*yicang*) in each *tun* and an additional public granary (*gongcang*) in the central *tun*.<sup>84</sup> These granaries loaned seeds to the farmers, ensuring timely farming in good times and providing famine relief in bad times.

The government offered even more attention and assistance to the settlement of metropolitan bannermen. In 1832, the government established a separate wing, the Metropolitan Banner Wing (*jingqi yi*), to administer them.<sup>85</sup> It took an especially long time for metropolitan bannermen to adjust to the rural environment. In 1844, Jing'ebu, the imperial envoy sent by the Daoguang emperor, completed a site investigation and reported that, of the 598 metropolitan households, only 228 households had sufficient food but no clothes and could thus be considered poor. The remaining 370 households were better off and could afford both food and clothes.<sup>86</sup>

These state efforts finally succeeded. By 1869, while 225 of the 698 metropolitan banner households had died out or abandoned the state farm, 473 households had survived and settled in for the long term. In 1869, 225 new households were created from the existing 473 households to fill the quota of 698. In 1878, another 302 households were created from the existing metropolitan banner households. The population of metropolitan bannermen almost doubled from 2,359 in 1869 to 4,599 in 1912. This growth rate was higher than that of the rural bannermen, whose population increased from

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> See the report of survey of the Shuangcheng area on 1864.6.28 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 158, vol. 628, p.155).

<sup>86</sup> See the memorial of Jing'ebu in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6b.

27,028 in 1869 to 43,948 in the 1910s, a 62.7 percent increase.<sup>87</sup>

The success of Shuangcheng continues to the present day. By 1985, Shuangcheng had a population of 800,000 people and had become an important site of grain production. In 1982, when Nestle Inc. sought to invest in a dairy in China, the Chinese government included Shuangcheng as one of the proposed sites. In 1986, the county government signed an agreement with Nestle to jointly invest in a dairy in Shuangcheng, which became the first dairy Nestle established in China and its largest dairy outside of Europe. Since 2000, Shuangcheng has been among the top 10 counties in China in grain production.

### **Conclusion: the state role in settlement**

Shuangcheng's settlement history illustrates the state's determination to relocate the bannermen and organize them into new population categories. The state faced tremendous difficulties at all the three stages – planning, recruitment, and settlement. Despite all the difficulties, the state succeeded in settling the population. Even the failure in the recruitment of metropolitan bannermen did not prevent the state from bringing the state farm to reality.<sup>88</sup> The Shuangcheng settlement represented the state's ambition in institution building: this settlement brought in bannermen with diverse origins and contrasting lifestyles; while settling this population, the state simultaneously eliminated the previous social boundaries between these immigrants and built a new social order on the hierarchy of metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen, and civilian commoners.

The ambitious plan created its own challenges, making the settlement of Shuangcheng

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<sup>87</sup> The population data for the rural bannermen come from population registers in 1909-1912.

<sup>88</sup> While previous studies characterized the Shuangcheng settlement as a failure because of the inability to meet the recruitment quota for metropolitan bannermen, my study reveals that failure in recruitment did not prevent success in settlement. From the perspective of settlement, the small number of metropolitan households in fact reduced the government's burden in settling these urban families, which was obviously the most difficult task in the settlement process and long-term development.

a unique case in population resettlement history both for its planned heterogeneity and for its intentional mix of urban-rural and rural-rural immigrants. From the perspective of the classic framework of resettlement studies, the difficulties of the Shuangcheng resettlement should have been overwhelming. First of all, the metropolitan bannermen's transition from an urban lifestyle to a rural one was stressful. In contrast to most other resettlement projects in the world, which involve only rural-to-rural migration, the metropolitan bannermen had to move to a frontier region more than one thousand kilometers away and moreover from a city to an unpopulated countryside. Even in rural-to-rural migrations, anthropologists and sociologists have identified tremendous stress created by the relocation on immigrants' adjustment to new social and physical environments (Colson 1971; Scudder and Colson 1982). Therefore, as urban-to-rural migrants, the metropolitan bannermen faced an even harder adjustment to rural life.

The metropolitan bannermen's adaptation to their new environment did take a long time. In 1870-1890, half a century after their initial settlement, male mortality rates were still higher for metropolitan bannermen than for rural bannermen in all age groups except the old (Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2006). The infants and children of metropolitan bannermen were especially vulnerable; the mortality rate for metropolitan banner children at ages 1-2 was three times that of their rural counterparts, and their mortality rate at ages 3-10 was 1.7 times that of rural banner children. In the period 1890-1912, the long-term adaptation process closed the gaps in infant mortality rates between metropolitan and rural bannermen; mortality rates for children aged 1-5 were eventually the same for both groups. The metropolitan bannermen's mortality deficit, however, persisted in other age groups.

The state-designed heterogeneity of banner villages was also a challenge to settlement.

Scholars studying resettlement processes have agreed on the importance of immigrants' original social organizations in helping them adjust to their new environments (Scudder and Colson 1982; Guggenheim and Cernea 1993). According to Scudder and Colson's classic framework of resettlement processes, all immigrants will go through a "transition" stage. In this stage, immigrants tend to behave conservatively and turn inwardly to such social organizations as household or lineage for support. The whole community forms a closed social system (Scudder and Colson 1982; Scudder 1985). In the settlement of the Shuangcheng state farm, however, none of these supporting organizations existed. The immigrants to Shuangcheng were not only a mix of urban and rural populations from various locations, but also were moved and settled by household rather than lineage or village. From the inception of the relocation, the state had intended to create a "great commonality" in the banner villages by eliminating the previous social boundaries of lineage, banner administration, and ethnicity. In so doing, the state cleared the ground for its own institution of population category. This ambitious move, however, challenged the state's ability to organize and control the heterogeneous population as the sole authority.

Yet, from a long-term perspective, the resettlement of the Shuangcheng state farm was indeed successful. Scudder and Colson consider a resettlement successful if the immigrants manage to adapt to the environment, seeking new opportunities and exhibiting more individualism and, accordingly, if the authority of previous social organizations weakens. This successful settlement, characterized as "potential development," usually occurs after the "transition" stage (Scudder and Colson 1982; Scudder 1985). In Shuangcheng, the state weakened the authority of previous social organizations far in advance of the immigrants' adaptation to the environment and thus forced the immigrants

to confront the “potential development” directly. Both metropolitan and rural bannermen stayed and prospered in Shuangcheng. The population grew and, beginning in the 1840s, the immigrants privately opened more land for themselves on top of what had been allocated to them by the state. Stratification had emerged in the villages themselves. As I will show in the following chapters, the Shuangcheng immigrants managed to tactically manipulate the state institution to pursue their own interests. Moreover, Yan Yunxiang, in his study of village life in Shuangcheng during the 1980s and 1990s, identified a strongly pronounced individualism and weak family and lineage control (2003). This weakened family and lineage control is probably the legacy of the government’s breaking down of kinship organizations.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, while most resettled communities in Africa and Southeast Asia have never reached the fourth stage of “handling over or incorporation,” where the resettled community achieves long-term success and is incorporated into a larger territorial framework and plays a role in production and commerce, Shuangcheng has been an important locus of grain production in Northeast China since the mid-nineteenth century.

Three factors contributed to the success of Shuangcheng resettlement: the rich natural environment, the state’s tremendous efforts in planning, and the state’s power in institution building and population control. First, Shuangcheng’s geographical conditions and fertile land made it a good site for resettlement. Compared to other involuntary migrations where immigrants settled barren land, the high quality of land in Shuangcheng provided an incentive to immigrants to move and stay. These benefits were especially attractive to the

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<sup>89</sup> In Yan Yunxiang’s research on changes in village life in one village in Shuangcheng from 1949 to 1999, he identified a strong individualism and weak patriarchal control during the socialist reform period (Yan 2003). He therefore concludes that it is the socialist state in its early stages that destroyed the traditional culture and values and patriarchal power. Yet he neglected the historical roots of the lack of traditional values. As the Qing government dispersed the immigrants’ descent groups during the settlement period, patriarchal control was never strong in this frontier region.

rural bannermen in Liaoning, a hilly region without enough arable land. Shuangcheng's spacious landscape provided the raw materials necessary for them to prosper and achieve upward mobility. For metropolitan bannermen, although the settlement experience was intimidating, the attention paid them by the government established them as the elite in the state farm. The promise of life as what China calls managerial landlords ensured the loyalty of metropolitan bannermen and the success of those who survived the initial resettlement stage.

Second, before the settlement began in earnest, the emperor and officials had carefully planned the site selection, residential arrangements, and financial support. Although the Chinese state had a long tradition of planning settlements, Shuangcheng has, by far the most detailed documentation of state efforts. Shuangcheng thus serves as an example of how much the state could do and had done in many places. It took three years (1812-1815) for the government to identify the site of relocation and eight years (1815-1823) to prepare the farming and living conditions for metropolitan bannermen. In the eight years from 1815 to 1823, the state successfully settled the rural bannermen and prepared land and housing for the metropolitan bannermen. Therefore, by the time the metropolitan bannermen arrived, Shuangcheng was no longer an empty land but a well-organized rural society with constant supplies of labor provided by the rural banner population.

Finally, the well-organized village institution and the dedication and experience of local officials also ensured the proper control of immigrants as well as their transition to state farm life. Current theoretical frameworks fail to include the type of resettlement experience found in Shuangcheng because scholars of resettlement studies generally neglect the positive role of the state. Since most studies on involuntary migration today

are initiated by such non-governmental organizations as the World Bank, the conventional view in this field presumes an oppositional relationship between the state and the involuntary migrants. The presumption of an oppositional relationship is often accurate, as state-organized national construction projects are a major cause of involuntary migration (McDowell 1996). The Shuangcheng resettlement, however, demonstrates that state authority could provide a major contribution to the successful settlement of involuntary migrants.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Land Allocation, Population Registration and the Creation of Categories**

Throughout its history, the Chinese state's use of political power to differentiate populations through resource distribution has been well known. A contemporary example is the urban-rural division created by the state in the 1950s. From the 1950s to the 1980s, in order to speed up the pace of industrialization, the state privileged the urban sector. Consequently, urban employees enjoyed stability in their wages, housing, pensions, and medical care, while the rural population had to depend on local farming for its livelihood. The state also established a strict household registration system to segregate urban and rural populations. This registration system not only prevented free migration to urban areas, but also differentiated the entitlements of urban and rural dwellers; those with an urban registration had the benefits. Despite the economic reforms launched in the late 1970s that allowed greater geographic mobility, this urban-rural inequality has persisted to the present day (Solinger 1999; Wang 2008; Wu and Treiman 2004).<sup>1</sup>

The Shuangcheng state farm offers a well-documented historical example of this governmental practice. In 1814, the state established policies that would determine land allocation and social structure in Shuangcheng for the next century. A total of 90,000 *shang* (165,888 hectares) of uncultivated land was assigned to the official banner

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<sup>1</sup> This urban-rural division is the institutional background for the study of contemporary Chinese society. This household registration system not only created persistent inequality in access to education, medical care, and housing, but also resulted in the “floating population” phenomenon in China.

immigrants, metropolitan and rural bannermen.<sup>2</sup> Designating this land *jichan* (private property), the state allowed the banner immigrants to use their allocated plots as private property; they paid neither rent nor taxes and could pass the land down to their descendants. Through land allocation, the state endowed the banner immigrants with an elite status. Civilian commoners and floating bannermen, who entered this area later, were not eligible for *jichan* land. Entitlement to this type of land, which accounted for 54 percent of registered farmland in Shuangcheng during the Qing dynasty,<sup>3</sup> was an important marker of immigrants' social and economic status.

In this chapter, I examine the population categories created under the state land allocation policy to explore the social structure of Shuangcheng. In so doing, I place metropolitan and rural bannermen, the focus of my analyses in this dissertation, in their social context. While metropolitan and rural bannermen held the majority of landed wealth, floating bannermen and civilian commoners, by working as laborers on the land, were also important members of Shuangcheng society. Moreover, I study the four population categories with the intention of testing an influential assumption in scholarship on the history of Northeast China. Studies of the demographic and institutional history of Northeast China show that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the increasing civilian immigrant population outnumbered the banner population (Liang 1980), and that,

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<sup>2</sup> When measuring the land in Shuangcheng, the government used the standard of 720 *bu* as one *mu* and five *chi* (one *chi* in the Qing equals 0.32 meter) as one *bu*. See the order from the local banner government to the banner immigrants on 1822.10.10 (SCPTTJL, p.201). Therefore, in Shuangcheng, one *shang* equals about 1.84 hectares.

<sup>3</sup> There were three major categories of land: individual-property land (*jichan di*), rent-paying land (*nazu di*), and salary land (*suique di*). The *jichan* land was designated along with the establishment of the state farm. The *nazu* land was the land the immigrants farmed and registered under the government to pay rent. The majority of *nazu* land was allocated in the 1850s. The salary land was allocated to officials and soldiers with active banner posts. In 1870, there were 90,000 *shang* of *jichan* land, 665,638.9 *shang* of *nazu* land, and 92,20 *shang* of salary land. If we only consider the land within the borders of Shuangcheng, *jichan* land accounted for 54 percent of the farmland. Throughout the history of Shuangcheng, *jichan* remained the largest land category.

beginning in the late nineteenth century, the administration gradually transformed from the Eight Banner system to a civilian government (Fan 2007). Drawing on the aggregate data that demonstrate this shift, some scholars assume that the history of Northeast China in the late nineteenth century is a history of the triumph of civilian immigrants; their narratives thus neglect the existence of banner populations (Diao and Yi 1994; Isett 2004, 2006; Yi 1990). In this chapter, by examining the shifting balance of population between the four categories in the history of Shuangcheng, I assess whether the civilian population outnumbered the banner population in this specific society.

I base my analyses largely on the banner population registers and other archival documents. In Shuangcheng, population registration went hand in hand with resource allocation to create population categories, differentiating populations and maintaining the boundaries between them. The government kept separate registers for the four population categories: metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen, floating bannermen, and civilian commoners. Registration defined an individual's membership in the corresponding category. The population registers served as official references for land allocation; only those on the metropolitan and rural banner registers had access to *jichan* land. I begin with a brief introduction of population registration in Chinese history, and then analyze the formation of the four population categories and their changing sizes over the history of Shuangcheng.

### **Population registration in Chinese history and in Shuangcheng**

As early as the sixth century B.C., China had developed a systematic population registration system, treating the household as the basic social unit and registering its

members and property (Liang 1980; Xin 2007; Yang 2007).<sup>4</sup> This practice emerged in response to rulers' needs for taxation and control. Between the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., as the feudal relationship between the king of Zhou and the lords of the various states started to dissolve, those lords began to strengthen their own power and compete with one another. Accompanying this transformation, the importance of clans as a major factor in controlling population declined, allowing rulers to control the population by households, registering them and collecting taxes (Yang 2007). This population registration system continued to develop in the Qin (221 B.C.-206 B.C.) and Western Han dynasties (202 B.C.-25 A.D.). By then, household registration involved not only recording biographical information about the household head and his dependents – including name, occupation, residence, the rank of nobility, and age – but also registering household property, including house, land, slaves, and livestock (Song 1991; Yang 2007).

The state maintained a population registry not only to collect taxes but also to define entitlement rights by population category. Population registration is closely associated with rights. By registering its subject population, the state built up a contractual relationship with the people: the registered population provided tax and labor services to the state; in return, the state acknowledged the rights of the registered. Moreover, the Chinese state not only differentiated the rights of the registered from those of the unregistered, but also maintained separate registers for different registered population categories. For example, in the Qin and Han dynasties, the state kept separate registers for

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<sup>4</sup> Scholars have different opinions about the earliest practice of population registration in China. Some maintain that, as early as the eleventh century B.C., the king of Zhou had a registered population (Song 1991; Chen 2007a). Others argue that the records about population registration in the Zhou are not reliable and therefore the population registration system did not come into being until the seventh to sixth centuries B.C. (Xin 2007; Yang 2007). Despite the debate about its emergence, all scholars agree that only after the sixth century did the population registration system become systematic enough to function as a meaningful tool in population control and taxation.

imperial lineage members, officials, peasants, merchants, and government students, differentiating their entitlements: imperial lineage members and officials enjoyed political and economic privileges; peasants were the major population category who paid tax and labor services; merchants were discriminated against and were at one time not allowed to become officials; government students were exempted from labor services and enjoyed better access to government positions (Song 1991). The dynasties following the Qin and Han inherited this practice of classifying people's rights and obligations.<sup>5</sup>

The Eight Banner registration system in the Qing was a particularly efficient example of this practice. Since bannermen did not pay tax and instead served the state as soldiers, the Eight Banner population registers defined each bannerman's membership and concurrently differentiated the obligations and privileges of banner populations (Ding 2009). Initially, the banner population registers only recorded adult males, excluding children, the elderly, and the disabled. Beginning in 1727, the banner administration revised the registration system to register population by household, and to record every male household member.<sup>6</sup> Every three years, each banner captain would update the registry data and send the updated register to the banner commander. Inclusion in the

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<sup>5</sup> For example, from the second to the sixth century, although China fell apart and various dynasties ruled different parts of China Proper, the categories of population registration were more or less the same. The state kept separate registers for noble lineages, clerks, peasants, military households, monks, and ethnic minorities (Song 1991). A notable phenomenon during this period is the emergence of specialized population categories, such as clerks and military households. Specialization resulted mainly from the migration caused by wars during this period, which significantly reduced the size of the population controlled by the state. In order to ensure the necessary supply of manpower, the state created special population categories to fix occupations. In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the state kept separate registers for officials, peasants, military households, artisans, merchants, and paupers. In the Qing, the state kept separate registers for bannermen and civilian commoners, and further separated merchants from the rest of the civilian commoners (Song 1991).

<sup>6</sup> See QDBQTZ, juan. 31, pp538-539. In 1727, the court ordered the registration of all males. In the registers, the captain recorded every adult male as one household and wrote down his name, age, and occupation and then noted the names and occupations of his father and brothers. The captain then recorded the name and age of the adult male's sons and younger brothers separately, with the note of "*linghu*, another household."

banner registers thus became the prerequisite for securing banner posts and their associated state stipends. In order to maintain strict population tracking, the banner administration stipulated in 1729 that each bannerman had to register newborns with his captain within one month of the child's birth.<sup>7</sup>

Banner population registration in Shuangcheng was the most important instrument with which the state controlled banner immigrants. Beginning in the recruitment and settlement stages, the state paid close attention to transferring the registration records of banner immigrants from their places of origin to Shuangcheng. Once a household volunteered to move to Shuangcheng, the banner captain would transfer its records to a separate register, listing in sequence each household's place of origin, banner affiliation, and ethnicity, and then each member's banner post, name, and age.<sup>8</sup> When these households set off for Shuangcheng, the banner governments of the immigrants' places of origin would hand a copy of the register to the Shuangcheng banner government. The Shuangcheng banner government then compiled these immigrants' records into the local register by their residence and new banner affiliation, preserving all information transferred from their place of origin. Throughout the history of the Shuangcheng state farm, the state inscribed metropolitan and rural bannermen into different registers.

Upon the establishment of the initial registration, population registers in Shuangcheng served as the official reference for land allocation, differentiating the rights and obligations of each population group. The state used three types of criteria to define population categories in Shuangcheng: banner affiliation, official immigration status, and place of origin. Civilian commoners were have-nots because they were not members of the Eight

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<sup>7</sup> QDBQTZ, juan. 31, p.540.

<sup>8</sup> Only a few of these early registers are still preserved. For an example, see the register of bannermen from the garrison of Xiuyan in Liaoning province (LNGBHK, reel 1932015, vol. 2882).

Banners and thus were not on the banner population registers; floating bannermen were likewise compromised because they had moved to Shuangcheng on their own – without state sponsorship – and thus were not on the original registers compiled for the official immigrants. Among the haves, metropolitan bannermen were granted twice as much land as rural bannermen because they came from the capital. Due to the importance of population registers in land allocation in Shuangcheng, the state paid special attention to their maintenance; while banner captains in other parts of China only updated population registers every three years, in Shuangcheng they did so annually. In the following sections, I will draw on information from the population registers and other archival documents to examine the formation and development of the four population categories in Shuangcheng.

### **The haves: metropolitan and rural bannermen (*jingqi and tunding*)**

As early as the planning stage, Fujun had defined the haves as two separate population categories: metropolitan bannermen (*jingqi*) and rural bannermen (*tunding*).

Metropolitan bannermen – bannermen from Beijing and Rehe – were those for whom the state farm had been established; they were thus the top elite. Rural bannermen – bannermen from Liaoning and Jilin – were the designated laborers for metropolitan bannermen. In his plan for the Shuangcheng state farm, Fujun decided to allocate 20 *shang* (36.8 hectares) of *jichan* land to each metropolitan banner household and only 10 *shang* (18.4 hectares) to each rural banner household. The 3,000 metropolitan banner households therefore occupied two thirds of the 90,000 *shang* of *jichan* land. Moreover, to ease the transition of metropolitan bannermen to their new rural environment, the state

required rural bannermen to open land for the metropolitan bannermen prior to their arrival. Consequently, all *jichan* land was first farmed by rural bannermen and then passed to metropolitan bannermen.

From 1815 to 1820, the state allocated equally-sized plots of 30 *shang* (55.2 hectares) of *jichan* land to rural bannermen. Each village held between 24 and 28 plots, one for each settled rural banner household. To separate these plots, the government intentionally left between them a waste area of less than two meters (five to six *chi*).<sup>9</sup> In addition, the rural bannermen also built several mounds along the borders of the plots and waste area to mark boundaries. In each plot, the banner officials stuck a peg of wood denoting banner and village affiliations to indicate the property's provenance. The Captain's Offices then drew a map showing the location of each plot and assigned the plots to the rural bannermen according to the name order on the household registers.<sup>10</sup>

After the initial allocation, the Captain's Office then compiled land registers to document the results, indicating which households had been assigned to which plots. The land register followed a structure similar to the population register. The principal bannerman, or household head, was recorded as the owner of the allocated plot. The register organized landowners by their residential banner affiliation and village. Following the name of the landowner was the type and amount of land. In some instances, the registers also recorded the location and boundaries of the plot.<sup>11</sup> While the population register officially proved individuals' eligibility to acquire state land, the land register officially documented their ownership of a specific plot.

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<sup>9</sup> See the order from Fujun to the Shuangcheng government on 1819.9.23 (SCPTTJL, p. 104).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> In the land registers preserved in the local banner government archives, the 1876 and 1889 registers recorded the four boundaries of each plot.

In accepting their land allocation, the rural bannermen simultaneously became landlords in their own right and laborers to metropolitan bannermen. The thirty-*shang* plot a rural banner household received included both the land to be kept for itself and the land to be allocated to an adjacent metropolitan household. Before the arrival of metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen had to work exclusively as laborers to open these plots. The government gave rural bannermen a three year cushion during which each household was required to first clear twenty *shang* of land. Upon the arrival of the metropolitan bannermen to Shuangcheng, these rural bannermen would pass these 20 *shang* (36.8 hectares) of land, 15 *shang* (27.6 hectares) cultivated and 5 *shang* uncultivated, to their metropolitan neighbors. They could then enjoy the remaining 10 *shang* of land, 5 *shang* (9.2 hectares) cultivated and 5 *shang* uncultivated, as their own property.

In 1829, as the state adjusted the relocation and land allocation policy, metropolitan and rural bannermen had an opportunity to increase their land holdings. In that year, Boqitu, the former general of Jilin (1827-1828), sought to amend the settlement plan and land allocation policy in Shuangcheng to solve two problems: first, the relocation quota of 3,000 metropolitan banner households could not be met; second, current settlers in Shuangcheng had reported that the allocated land was not sufficient to support an entire family.<sup>12</sup> Boqitu therefore proposed reducing the quota for metropolitan households to 1,000 and allocating the land prepared for the additional 2,000 metropolitan households to the current settlers. The emperor approved Boqitu's proposal. The government then divided the 40,000 *shang* of *jichan* land into 4,000 plots for the rural and metropolitan households, granting an additional 8.33 (15.33 hectares) *shang* to each of the 3,000 rural households and an additional 15 *shang* (27.6 hectares) to each of the 1,000 metropolitan

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<sup>12</sup> HCZDLZ, juan 13, 12b-13a.

households. Each rural household then had a total of 18.33 *shang* (33.7 hectares) of *jichan* land, and each metropolitan household had a total of 35 *shang* (64.4 hectares), which was still about twice the size of the plots held by rural bannermen.

In Shuangcheng, the household was the unit of land allocation; the number of households is therefore closely associated with land allocation policy. Upon adjusting the land allocation policy in 1829, the government fixed the number of rural banner households at 3,000 and the number of metropolitan banner households at 1,000, corresponding to the number of *jichan* plots. Thereafter, throughout the history of the Shuangcheng state farm, the number of metropolitan and rural banner households did not change significantly. In 1847, local officials registered 3,000 households of rural bannermen and 598 households of metropolitan bannermen, a total of 3,598 (table 4.1). By 1866, 698 metropolitan banner households had settled in Shuangcheng. However, due to the extinction of some households, the total number of metropolitan and rural banner households in that year in the population registers dropped to 3,525 (table 4.1). Between 1866 and 1878, the government set 698 as the standard number of metropolitan banner households, and tried to reach this standard number by dividing the existing households to create new households and assigning them the *jichan* plots left behind by the extinct households.<sup>13</sup> Thus, before 1878, the number of metropolitan and rural banner households fluctuated around 3,698. In 1878, in response to requests from some metropolitan bannermen, the government finally allocated the 302 additional plots of *jichan* land reserved for metropolitan bannermen to new households created from existing

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<sup>13</sup> See the local government order regarding allocating the land from extinct households to existing metropolitan bannermen (SCPZGYMDA, reel 163, vol. 653, pp. 191-195).

metropolitan banner households, making the number of metropolitan households 1,000.<sup>14</sup> From then on, the number of metropolitan and rural banner households fluctuated around 4,000. Despite their fixed number, from the 1820s to 1890, the metropolitan and rural banner households always accounted for the majority of the registered households in Shuangcheng (table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Number of registered households under the Shuangcheng administration by population categories, 1816-1890.

	Civilian Commoners		Metropolitan and rural bannermen		Floating bannermen		Total	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
	1816-20	190*	6.0	3,000	94.0	0	0.0	3,190
1844-47	565	7.9	3,598	50.0	3,026	42.1	7,189	100.0
1864-66	1,272*	18.6	3,525	51.5	2,049	29.9	6,846	100.0
1890	1,831	23.2	4,053	51.3	2,023	25.6	7,907	100.0

Sources: The government admonishment to rural bannermen on 1816.6.28 (SCPTTJL, p.194); the local government order to civilian commoners residing in the designated areas of the Right and Left *tun* (SCPTTJL, pp. 197-198); Jing'ebu's memorial in 1844 on policies in Shuangcheng (HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6b); the government report on the establishment of *baojia* system in 1866 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 160, vol. 636, pp. 354-360); SCXZ (1990), p.829; the 1866 and 1890 banner population registers; local government's retrospective summary of floating banner registration in 1879 (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 202, vol. 838-3, pp.337-341).

\* The number of households was estimated based on various sources.

Although the numbers of households were more or less fixed, the sizes of these two population categories – metropolitan and rural bannermen – significantly increased over time. As figure 4.1 shows, based on the available data, the population of metropolitan bannermen started at 187 in 1824. As a consequence of immigration and natural increase, the metropolitan banner population reached 2,324 in 1866 and then further increased to 4,838 in 1912, an average annual growth rate of 2.4 percent.<sup>15</sup> The population of rural bannermen increased from 14,670 in 1824 to 27,028 in 1869, and then to 43,948 in 1910,

<sup>14</sup> (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 833-1, pp. 53-66).

<sup>15</sup> Since the population increase between 1824 and 1866 was the result of a combination of immigration and natural increase, the measure the rate of natural increase, the annual growth rate of the metropolitan banner population was calculated from the population data of 1866 and 1910.

an average annual growth rate of 2.3 percent.<sup>16</sup> The total population of metropolitan and rural bannermen therefore grew from 14,857 in 1824 to 48,721 in 1910.

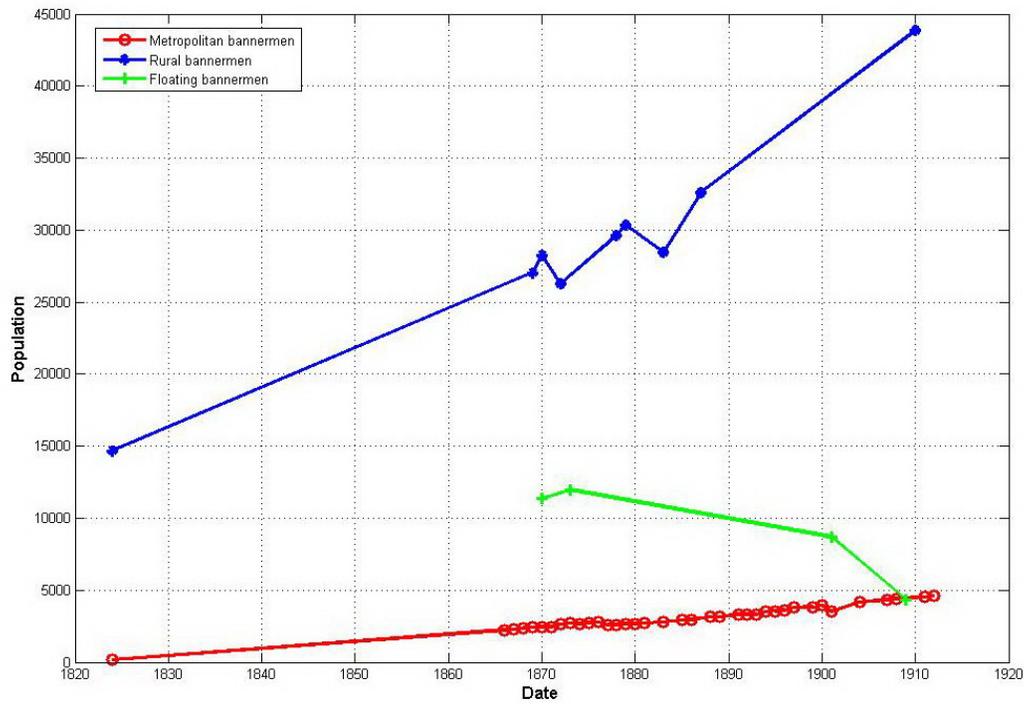


Figure 4. 1 Size of registered population in Shuangcheng (by population category), 1866-1912.\*

Sources: see sources of table 4.1.

\* The size of the metropolitan and rural banner populations in 1824 were derived from Fujun's memorial on 1824.11.26 (JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3387-55). The sizes of the banner populations after 1866 are calculated from the banner population registers.

### The have-nots

Upon the allocation of *jichan* land in Shuangcheng, the two categories of have-nots – floating bannermen and civilian commoners – also came into being. Although Fujun did not include these two populations in his original blueprint for the state farm, floating bannermen and civilian commoners soon found their position as laborers there. Although excluded from land allocation, the great demand for labor in Shuangcheng still provided

<sup>16</sup> The annual growth rate of rural banner population was calculated from the population data of 1824 and 1910, since by 1824, the majority of rural bannermen had settled in Shuangcheng.

opportunities for these have-nots.

### **The precondition of the existence of have-nots**

In his original proposal to the emperor, Fujun designed Shuangcheng as a self-sufficient society for metropolitan and rural bannermen only. According to Fujun's plan, rural bannermen would provide all the labor in the early years. Upon receiving their land, rural bannermen not only would clear and farm the land for both metropolitan bannermen and themselves, but also would help finance the relocation of metropolitan bannermen; once a rural bannerman cleared 20 of the 30 *shang* of land, he would keep 5 *shang* for his own household and then pay rent on the 15 *shang* designated for a metropolitan banner household during the short interval before its owner's arrival.<sup>17</sup> At a rate of one imperial *shi* (128.3 kilograms) of grain for each *shang*, the government collected this rent to subsidize relocation costs for metropolitan bannermen.<sup>18</sup> According to Fujun's plan, rural bannermen could open the first twenty *shang* within three years, and thus the government could begin to collect rent in the fourth year, 1819 for the central *tun*

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<sup>17</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1818.10.20 (SCPTTJL, pp. 25-28).

<sup>18</sup> In Shuangcheng, two measurements of grain existed, the market *shi* and the imperial *shi*. Both measurements referred to the volume of grain. The standards for the two measurements, however, were different. One market *shi* equaled to two and a half imperial *shi* (HCZDLZ, book 3, p.14b; SCPZGYMDA, reel 335, vol. 1488, p.9). However, Wang Lvtai, in his report to the assistant commandant of Shuangcheng on 1821.8.4, gave an opposite conversion of the two measurements, indicating that one market *shi* equaled to 0.4 imperial *shi* (SCPTTJL, p.165). Wang's information was probably wrong. Therefore, I follow the conversion standard of one market *shi* to two and half imperial *shi*. The weight of one *shi* of grain was the average of three kinds of grains: millet, sorghum, and soybean (SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 873, p. 113). In Shuangcheng, the grain rent usually consisted of a mix of the three kinds. According to Yi Baozhong, one imperial *shi* of millet weighs 126.9 kilograms, one imperial *shi* of sorghum weighs 127.9 kilograms, and one imperial *shi* of soybean weighs 130.1 kilograms (1990). Therefore, the averaged weight of one imperial *shi* of the three grains is 128.3 kilograms (231 pounds). One market *shi* of grain in Shuangcheng therefore equals 320.8 kilograms (577 pounds). Compared to the imperial *shi*, the market *shi* was a more commonly used measurement in local society. The '*shi*' used in this dissertation, unless otherwise specified, refers to market *shi*.

As for the beginning date of rent collection, the government postponed it to the seventh year, due to the rural bannermen's failure to clear enough land.

and 1823 or 1824 for the right and left *tun*.<sup>19</sup>

The progress of land opening, however, was much slower than Fujun had planned. As table 4.2 shows, by 1823, eight years after the establishment of the state farm and one year before the arrival of the first group of metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen had only cleared 21,497.6 *shang* of land, which accounted for about one fourth of the 90,000 *shang* of *jichan* land. The 1,000 rural households in the central *tun*, who had begun to settle in 1815, were the slowest; in eight years, they only cleared 7,006.5 *shang* of land, an average speed of 850 *shang* each year. The 2,000 rural households in the right and left *tun* who settled later in 1819 and 1820 were faster; in three to four years, they cleared 12,669.1 *shang* of land, with each thousand households annually clearing 1,800 *shang*. Thus, by 1823, each rural household had, on average, cleared 7.15 *shang* of land, which was far below the government requirement of 20 *shang* and was only slightly more than the 5 *shang* of cultivated land allocated to rural banner households. The government therefore not only failed to collect enough rent to subsidize the relocation cost, but also began to worry that the state farm would not have enough land to allocate to metropolitan bannermen upon their arrival.<sup>20</sup>

Table 4.2 The amount of *jichan* land cleared by rural bannermen before 1824 (unit: *shang*).

Time	Central <i>tun</i>	Right <i>tun</i>	Left <i>tun</i>	Subtotal
Settlement-1821	5,552.1	3,796.5	2,931.9	12,280.5
1822	1,000.0	1,231.5	1,546.5	5,600.0
1823	454.4	1,122.0	2,040.7	3,617.1
Total	7,006.5	6,150.0	6,519.1	21,497.6

Source: Songlin's memorial on 1822.5.15 (SCPTTJL, PP. 54-56) and on 1823.6.5 (SCPTTJL, pp. 71).

<sup>19</sup> See Fujun and Lucheng's memorial on 1816.10.26 (SCPTTJL, p. 20) and Fujun's memorial on 1818.10.20 (SCPTTJL, p. 28). Fujun originally planned to collect rent on land in the central *tun* beginning in 1819. However, due to harvest failure, the initial rent collection was postponed by one year to 1820.

<sup>20</sup> See Songlin's memorial on 1823.6.5 (SCPTTJL, pp. 69-74).

This slow progress of land clearing was mainly due to a shortage of labor, from which the central *tun* suffered most. According to Songlin, the general of Jilin (1822-1824), of the original 1,000 rural bannermen from Jilin who settled in the central *tun*, 209 fled and 241 died or became disabled because of illness. The government had to fill these vacancies with latecomers, which delayed the farm work.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, only 96 of these 1,000 households had additional adult males to help the household head with farming, and only 24 households had hired labor, which means that the majority of rural households in the central *tun* only had one adult male to do the farming. Being concerned that the slow progress of land opening would hinder the relocation of metropolitan bannermen, in 1823 and 1824 the government provided funds to rural bannermen who cleared more than eight *shang* of land to hire laborers.<sup>22</sup>

This labor deficit among metropolitan and rural bannermen probably persisted in the state farm for at least two generations. According to Songlin, an adult male could clear and farm 6 to 7 *shang* of land on average and 12 or 13 *shang* at most.<sup>23</sup> At this average rate, clearing and farming the full 90,000 *shang* of land would require about 13,000 adult males. In the early years, immigrant households were relatively small: according to Songlin, the majority of rural banner households in the central *tun* in the 1820s had only one adult male; only some households in the right and left *tun* had additional adult males, but none had more than four. The average number of adult males per household can thus be estimated at two,<sup>24</sup> suggesting a total of 6,000 adult males in the rural banner population.

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<sup>21</sup> See the memorial of Songlin on 1822.5.15 (SCPTTJL, p.54).

<sup>22</sup> See the memorial of Songlin on 1822.7.20 (SCPTTJL, p. 58). In order to facilitate the farming work, he then proposed in the two years of 1823 and 1824 that the government would provide 3,000 copper coins to enable households farming more than eight *shang* of land to hire one laborer.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> In chapter five, I will show that Fujun divided some of the relatively large rural banner households into

Therefore, to farm all the *jichan* land, the state farm needed an additional 7,000 adult males. The arrival of metropolitan bannermen did not remedy this labor deficit, as they had little farming experience. It would have thus taken at least two generations' time to fill the labor gap with metropolitan and rural bannermen. Consequently, floating bannermen and civilian commoners became an important source of laborer.

### **Floating bannermen (*fuding*)**

The term floating bannermen (*fuding*) referred in general to any bannermen who moved to Shuangcheng without a state order. In Shuangcheng's history, floating bannermen came mainly from Liaoning.<sup>25</sup> As early as 1820, when rural bannermen from Liaoning began to move to Shuangcheng, the general of Shengjing had noticed that, because of the poor organizational work of the banner officials, some bannermen not listed on the rosters had also moved to Shuangcheng along with the official immigrants.<sup>26</sup> Between 1822 and 1829, Liaoning suffered from harvest failure due to a drought, and more and more bannermen moved to Shuangcheng on their own.<sup>27</sup> In 1835, Yijing, the general

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smaller households. Therefore, the estimated number of adult males per household could be 2 or even less.

<sup>25</sup> In the floating banner population registers, households originated from Liaoning accounted for 99.94 percent of the total number of households, and those from Jilin only accounted for 0.06 percent.

<sup>26</sup> See the reply from the office of the general of Jilin to the office of the general of Shengjing on 1820.2.18 regarding the assignment of rural bannermen from Liaoning who did not move to Shuangcheng under the government organization (SCPTTJL, pp.139-142). The office of the general of Shengjing had reprimanded the official of Jinzhou, a garrison in Liaoning, for letting the banner immigrants move to Shuangcheng individually, resulting in the move of bannermen not listed on the official roster: "In principle, all the principal adult males who move to Shuangcheng should be first verified with the rosters and handed to the Tax Preceptor (*lingcui*) and soldiers who escort them. Only after the Tax Preceptor and soldiers see them in person, can they set off for [Shuangcheng]. [Now] although we have a fixed quota, [you] go so far as to let them move to Shuangcheng by themselves, resulting in extra households." (SCPTTJL, p.139)

<sup>27</sup> According to the grain price data collected by James Lee and Cameron Campbell (1997), between 1822 and 1829, the monthly low grain price significantly increased, which pointed to a harvest failure during this period. The peak of the crisis occurred around 1825 and 1826. Moreover, in 1870, the local banner government investigated 12 floating bannermen for the authenticity of their banner affiliation. The

of Shengjing, also noticed the increasing number of Liaoning bannermen who had moved to Shuangcheng individually and without state orders. He therefore proposed at the court to investigate these unassigned banner migrants.<sup>28</sup>

In 1845, while this unassigned banner population grew, the state formally accepted them as residents in Shuangcheng and classified them with the term “floating bannermen (*fuding*).” In that year, each Captain’s Office surveyed all the floating bannermen who resided in its administrative precinct and registered them in separate registers. In 1847, the government followed up on its initial survey to capture more floating bannermen, and registered a total of 3,026 households.<sup>29</sup> After the initial registration, the Captain’s Offices would check their administrative areas every three months to identify any additional floating bannermen who were not registered.

The registers organized the floating bannermen by population type and household. Like the registers for metropolitan and rural bannermen, those for floating bannermen recorded, for each household, the head’s place of origin and original banner affiliation, ethnicity, name, and age; the records for each of his family members followed. Due to the status of these people as the Eight Banner national elite, the state paid close attention to the accuracy of their registration. The government not only recorded the floating bannermen’s self-reported information, but also verified it against the records in their places of origin. In 1870, the state farm government investigated 12 floating bannermen who misreported their original banner affiliations, so as to ensure the authenticity of their membership in the Eight Banners. As the local officials commented:

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deposition of those floating bannermen who came to Shuangcheng in the 1820s also indicated that there had been a drought in that period, which caused these bannermen move to Shuangcheng (SCPZGYMDA, reel 312, vol. 1400, pp.1-8).

<sup>28</sup> JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3389-13.

<sup>29</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel. 202, vol. 838-3, pp.337-341.

“Most of these floating bannermen are farmers. They do not understand that the banner affiliation is the most important thing ... The reason we investigate them is that we are afraid that these floating bannermen have left their places of origin for years and will lose their banner registration. This is against the state’s kindness of raising the banner population.”<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, although floating bannermen were unofficial immigrants, the state still considered them members of the Eight Banners and felt obliged to control them and ensure their livelihood.

In addition to sharing their places of origin with rural bannermen, floating bannermen mainly came from the same descent groups as their rural banner counterparts. Each Captain’s Office classified the floating bannermen into five to eight types, demarcated by reasons for staying, relationship to the rural bannermen, or occupation. As table 4.3 summarizes, there were mainly six types of floating bannermen: close kin of rural bannermen, assistant farmers and hired laborers who had relatives among the rural bannermen, hired laborers without relatives to depend on, floating bannermen engaging in commerce, widows or widowers and orphans raised by the state, and laborers hired by metropolitan bannermen. As table 4.3 shows, in terms of their relationship to rural bannermen, floating bannermen can be labeled as kin, non-kin, and kin relationship unknown. In 1870, 67 percent of the floating banner households were kin of rural bannermen. Only 14 percent of the floating banner households were explicitly noted as non-kin. Even 30 years later, the composition of the kin relationship between the registered floating bannermen and rural bannermen remained the same; in 1901, 66 percent of the floating banner households were kin of the rural bannermen and 14 percent were non-kin. Therefore, the floating bannermen were allowed to reside in the banner villages.

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<sup>30</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 312, vol. 1400, pp. 1-8.

Table 4. 3 Types of registered floating bannermen, by their reasons to stay in Shuangcheng and their relationship to the rural bannermen, 1870 and 1901.

Relationship to the rural bannermen	Types of floating bannermen	Date			
		1870		1901	
		Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Kin	Close kin of rural bannermen	783	40.0	779	42.0
	Those who would like to stay to assist farming or as hired labor	537	27.4	442	23.8
Non-kin	Hired labor without relatives to depend on	277	14.1	253	13.6
	Those who were engaged in commerce	61	3.1	62	3.3
Kin relation not specified	Those who were vulnerable and looked after out of generosity	196	10.0	178	9.6
	Those who farmed land for the metropolitan bannermen	104	5.3	141	7.6
Total		1,958	100.0	1,855	100.0

Sources: The registers of the floating bannermen, 1870 and 1901 (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834668, vol. 87; reel 1834674, vol. 137; reel 1834688, vol. 226; reel 1834700, vol. 345; reel 1834707, vol. 399; reel 1834715, vol. 444; reel 1834672, vol. 124; reel 1834705, vol. 387; reel 1834719, vol. 476).

Despite sharing a geographical and family background with the rural bannermen, the floating bannermen were excluded from the local elite system of the state farm and thus were not eligible for land allocation. The only reason for their exclusion from land allocation was that they were not official migrants.<sup>31</sup> Floating bannermen could therefore only work in Shuangcheng as hired laborers or commercial personnel. Not only did metropolitan and rural banner households individually hire floating bannermen to farm

<sup>31</sup> The government exclusively used the immigrants' registers compiled by the banner administrations in the immigrants' places of origin to identify official immigrants. In his communication with the general of Shengjing on 1819.11.24, Fujun mentioned that some relatives of the rural bannermen who accompanied the official immigrants to Shuangcheng petitioned in front of him, asking to become rural bannermen (SCPTTJL, p. 111). Fujun, however, rejected their request because they were not on the rosters of official immigrants sent by the banner administrations in Shengjing.

their land, but the government also officially used them to farm land for the metropolitan bannermen. As table 4.3 shows, in 1870, 104 floating banner households comprised a separate type, designated “floating bannermen assigned to farm the land of the metropolitan bannermen (*chengzhong jingqi di fuding*).” In 1901, although the number of households in the other types decreased, this type of household increased to 141. The existence of this type of floating banner household reveals that the government kept a constant population of laborers to assist in the farming of the metropolitan bannermen’s land.

Among the have-nots, floating bannermen had an even lower level of entitlement to land than civilian commoners; while civilian commoners were still able to farm some land as state tenants, the official denial of land use rights to floating bannermen was so strict that they could not even work as state tenants.<sup>32</sup> This refusal of land entitlement persisted even as the social status of floating bannermen in the state farm improved. Starting in the 1850s, due to the state’s needs for military power to suppress the various rebellions that arose in China proper, the government allowed floating bannermen to serve as soldiers or enter the examination system.<sup>33</sup> However, the government still clearly stated that “(these floating bannermen) still shall not interfere with the livelihood of those local bannermen (*bendi qiren*).”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 9-17. Although the official policy prohibited floating bannermen from working as state tenants, some floating bannermen managed to rent land from the government. For example, in 1881, the local government identified an illegal land rental between a floating bannerman named Wang Shiqiang and the post-house of Shuangcheng (SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 860, pp. 173-181). In 1863, the clerk of the post-house rented 69 *shang* of land, which belonged to the post-house, to Wang and collected rent from Wang to subsidize the office expenditure. In the land registers, other than metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen, and civilian commoners, there was a category of “banner tenants (*qidian*).” These banner tenants mainly consisted of bannermen in Lalin, the banner garrison adjacent to Shuangcheng, and probably some floating bannermen. The population of banner tenants, however, was small.

<sup>33</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 9-17.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1879, the petition of Wulintai, a floating bannerman who had earned honorific titles for fighting the local revolts, best illustrated the unfortunate situation of floating bannermen. Wulintai's family moved from Liaoning to Shuangcheng in 1843, registering under the Plain Red banner. In 1866, he, together with other floating bannermen, defended the city from a revolt led by a civilian commoner.<sup>35</sup> Because of his significant contribution, Wulintai's eldest son was enlisted as a soldier, and his second son passed the entrance exam to the government school and became a student. Although Wulintai's family had a decent occupational status in the state farm, they had no landed property. He therefore compared his situation with that of metropolitan and rural bannermen and lamented:

“Although all my sons serve the state, my entire family has not even an inch of land to make a living. I am not a metropolitan bannerman who can (have family members) replace the extinct households (and take their land) to support their descendants. Neither am I a rural bannerman who at least has *jichan* land.”<sup>36</sup>

Due to their lack of fixed property in Shuangcheng, floating bannermen were free to migrate away from the Shuangcheng area. After 1869, despite the fact that more bannermen had arrived in Shuangcheng, the state stopped their large-scale registration, and instead called those who were not registered “floating bannermen not on the registers (*bu zai ce fuding*).” Beginning in the 1850s and 1860s, the state finally opened land in northeastern China to free immigration. Abundant land in such places in Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces as Bodune, Wuchang, Hulan and Bayansusu attracted both banner and civilian immigrants.<sup>37</sup> While in the past, Shuangcheng was the only site that provided

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<sup>35</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 841, p. 294.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Beginning in the 1850s, the court finally decided to open the state land in Jilin and Heilongjiang, using

employment to floating bannermen, the opening of northeast China allowed them more opportunities for both employment and landed property.<sup>38</sup>

Shuangcheng therefore saw a decrease in the registered floating banner population. Between 1847 and 1866, 977 of the original 3,026 floating banner households moved to other places or died out, leaving only 2,049 households in the population registers (table 4.1). Moreover, between 1866 and 1879, another 510 households moved out of Shuangcheng; of these, 243 listed their new destinations with the government, and 267 moved out without giving notice of their new destinations (*buzhi quxiang*). Therefore, in 1879, only 1,903 registered floating banner households remained.<sup>39</sup> In 1890, the number of households in the floating banner population register had increased slightly, to 2,023 (table 4.1). By 1901, however, the number of floating banner households in Shuangcheng had decreased to 1,855. Consequently, the overall size of the floating banner population decreased from 11,364 in 1870 to 8,711 in 1901, and then to 4,359 in 1909 (figure 4.1).

### **Civilian commoners (*minren*)**

In the Qing, the division between bannermen and civilian commoners marked the

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the rent collected from the land to subsidize military expenditure. In the floating banner population registers, Bodune, Wuchang, Hulan, and Bayansusu were the most common destinations of those who migrated away from Shuangcheng. The court originally designed Bodune as another site to settle metropolitan bannermen relocated from Beijing and started to recruit registered civilian commoners to farm the land in 1824 (JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3387-55). Wuchang, a site south to Shuangcheng, was first opened in the 1860s. Hulan and Bayansusu, locating in Heilongjiang Province, were first opened in 1857 and 1860 respectively (QDHLJLSDAXB (1875-1881), pp.335-338).

<sup>38</sup> With the opening of other regions of Jilin, the government also intentionally provided floating bannermen with opportunities for employment and landed property. For example, in 1867, when establishing the local government in Wuchang, the officials proposed to register all 1,800 households of unregistered floating bannermen who farmed the land there and recruit 200 adult males from among them as soldiers and government personnel (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 163, vol. 651, pp. 20-27). In 1881, the Shuangcheng state farm government circulated among the floating bannermen an announcement about the opening of state land in Sanxing, a garrison in Jilin, hoping to recruit those floating bannermen who were willing to cultivate the land to work in Sanxing as state tenants (SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 865, pp.9-17).

<sup>39</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 838-3, pp. 337-341.

most prominent categorical boundary, reflecting the national priority of privileging the banner population. Bannermen enjoyed state stipends and housing and, in return, served the state as officials and soldiers. Civilian commoners, in general, were not eligible for any of the above economic and political privileges. By the mid-eighteenth century, when civilian commoners had encroached on more and more banner land inside China Proper, the state especially considered civilian commoners the major threat to the Eight Banners.

Therefore, as early as the planning stage of the Shuangcheng state farm, the state had prioritized the prevention of civilian commoners from occupying banner land and made careful plans to circumscribe their activities. Before the settlement of bannermen, several hundred households of civilian commoners had resided in Shuangcheng.<sup>40</sup> These civilian commoners were mainly Han-Chinese immigrants who had surreptitiously migrated to this area, and were later identified and then registered by the government. Upon their registration, these civilian commoners became legal residents (*ruding chenming*), paying taxes and farming the land. For example, in 1816, Fujun identified 321 civilian farmers who farmed a total of 8,250 *shang* (15,180 hectares) of land in the area designated for the central *tun*.<sup>41</sup> To establish the Shuangcheng state farm, the government enclosed the planned area for banner villages and expelled these pre-existing residents, prohibiting them and their families from residing in the banner villages. The emperor and central government was especially concerned with preventing civilian commoners from occupying banner land. In 1822, when the Daoguang emperor learned from Songlin that civilian commoners occasionally resided inside the banner villages together with their families, he immediately sent an edict to Fujun, asking him to strictly prohibit this

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<sup>40</sup> See Fujun's communication with the local banner government in Shuangcheng on 1815.5.10 (SCPTTJL, p. 190).

<sup>41</sup> See Fujun's public admonishment to Shuangcheng bannermen on 1816.6.28 (SCPTTJL, p. 194).

arrangement.<sup>42</sup> In 1824, when Daoguang emperor learned from the imperial envoy investigating Shuangcheng that some civilian commoners still resided in Shuangcheng, he further required Fujun to follow a hard line of “only allowing the extra adult males from the bannermen to help farm the land and not hiring laborers from civilian commoners.”<sup>43</sup>

However, as the resettlement proceeded, the local government gradually loosened the restrictions on civilian commoners, allowing them to farm land as state tenants. Although the central government formed a hard line to prevent civilian commoners from entering bannermen’s territory, both Fujun and the local government understood the importance of the civilian commoners as laborers and as a source of revenue. Especially in the early stage of the state farm, when the local government was in need of revenue sources but the *jichan* land provided little rent income, civilian commoners were the only population from which the government could extract labor and money. Therefore, Fujun intentionally kept civilian commoners on the empty land between the banner villages and the seats of Shuangcheng, the right *tun*, and the left *tun* (map 3.1).

By the time Fujun established the right and left *tun*, he and the local government had decided not to expel all civilian commoners from these areas, instead allowing them to stay and collecting rent from their land for local use.<sup>44</sup> For example, in 1819, Fujun ordered the captain of the left *tun* to collect rent from the land farmed by civilians in that area and

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<sup>42</sup> See the edict of Daoguang emperor on 1822.6.16 (SCPTTJL, p. 8). Also see Fujun’s memorial on 1822.7.4 that replied Daoguang emperor’s edict (SCPTTJL, pp. 56-57). Beginning in 1836, the Captain’s Office would check the villages every three months to make sure this stipulation was met (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 174, vol. 717, pp.119-127).

<sup>43</sup> See Fujun’s summation of Daoguang’s edict on 1824.3.25 in his memorial filed on 1824.4.27 (JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3387-42).

<sup>44</sup> For example, in 1871, a lawsuit between a civilian commoner Cheng De and two bannermen revealed that the Cheng family had remained within the banner division, occupying a plot adjacent to that of a bannerman (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 174, vol. 717, pp.119-127). According to the local government, the Cheng family was allowed to stay in the banner division because it had lived there for a long time.

allocate the rent income equally among the newly settled bannermen as a stipend.<sup>45</sup>

Gradually, civilian divisions developed within the bannermen's territory (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009). As map 3.1 shows, however, these divisions were still separate from the banner villages; while all banner villages were located at some distance from the administrative center of each *tun*, the civilian divisions were adjacent to the administrative centers. By keeping them close, Fujun was able to control these civilian commoners and utilize their labor.

Prior to the 1840s, rent paid by civilian tenants comprised an important source of local government revenue (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009).<sup>46</sup> Civilian commoners mainly registered three categories of land: *gongzu* (public rent) land; *suique* land, which was the land allocated to banner officials and soldiers as part of their salary; and *hengchan* (constant property) land. In 1822, the government officially registered 3,284 *shang* (6,042.6 hectares) of land farmed by civilian commoners under the category of *gongzu* land, collecting a rent of 0.5 market *shi* (160.4 kilograms) for each *shang* of land.<sup>47</sup> This rent income supplied the local government with money for routine administration. Beginning in 1820, the local government consecutively opened the categories of *suique* and *hengchan* land, which civilian commoners could claim and pay rent for.<sup>48</sup> While the rent from the *suique* land was allocated to banner officials and soldiers as part of their salary, the rent

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<sup>45</sup> See Tuning's report to Fujun on 1819.11.7 (SCPTTJL, p. 136).

<sup>46</sup> Beginning in the 1840s, the state registered a large amount of land which was privately cultivated by bannermen and civilian commoners and collected rent on it.

<sup>47</sup> See the 1891 government report on the land types and amounts in Shuangcheng (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel. 1834732, vol. 676). The Cheng family, who later had land disputes with two bannermen, was an example of civilian commoners who managed to stay within the bannermen's territory. The Cheng family arrived in Shuangcheng in 1802. After their arrival, they cleared and farmed 13.6 *shang* of land, which the government later registered as *gongzu* land (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 174, vol. 717, pp.119-127).

<sup>48</sup> The *suique* land was opened in 1820 (SCPTTJL, pp. 198-199), and the government began to collect rent on it in 1822 (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel. 1834732, vol. 676). In 1820, Fujun also planned the opening of *hengchan* land (SCPTTJL, p. 56). Although Fujun claimed that the rent income from the *hengchan* land was designated to support the officers and soldiers, the local government in fact used this rent income for local government expenditure (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009).

from the *hengchan* land was mainly used to run the local government (Ren, Lee, and Campbell 2009).

By working as state tenants, civilian commoners also officially acquired land use rights in Shuangcheng, an outcome of the pragmatic policy of Fujun and his successors. In contrast to the central government's hard line, which insisted on expelling all civilian commoners from the bannermen's territory, the local government's use of civilian commoners solved the demand for labor and revenue. Moreover, by granting land use rights to civilian commoners, the government could directly manage them and reduce the likelihood of their simply taking the land allocated to bannermen. In 1844, Jing'ebu, the general of Jilin (1840-1848), justified this practice in front of the Daoguang emperor as follows: "When we recruited tenants to open land, the amount of land was fixed. Moreover, since they rent the land directly from the government, it is impossible for the civilian commoners to embezzle the land."<sup>49</sup> According to Jing'ebu, allowing civilian commoners to work as state tenants in fact enforced the state's control over them. The civilian commoners not only acquired land use rights, but could also pass these rights down to their descendants. Under this government policy, by 1876, civilian commoners had managed to register 32,658 *shang* (60,090.7 hectares) – 16.5 percent — of the 198,326 *shang* (364,919.8 hectares) of registered farm land in Shuangcheng.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the equal distribution of *jichan* land among metropolitan and rural bannermen respectively, which was produced by the state's land allocation policy, the distribution of land among these civilian tenants was very unequal. The 1876 civilian land register reveals that the amount of land held by individual tenants ranged from 776.8

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<sup>49</sup> See the memorial of Jing'ebu in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6b.

<sup>50</sup> This percentage is calculated based on the land registers.

*shang* (1,429.3 hectares) at the largest to 2.6 *shang* (4.8 hectares) at the smallest.<sup>51</sup> This huge variance in land distribution indicates that some civilian commoners in fact claimed large amounts of land and acted like rent contractors, controlling numerous farmers on these lands.

The difference between the state's management of *jichan* land and land in the civilian divisions indicated its differential interests in bannermen and civilian commoners; while the state mainly paid attention to resource allocation among metropolitan and rural bannermen, with civilian commoners the aim was to create a new channel of rent income. The government therefore applied different principles of land distribution to the two populations; among the bannermen, the egalitarian principle of equal allocation determined the pattern of land distribution, whereas among the civilian commoners, stratification created huge inequalities in land holding.

Due to the state's different interests in bannermen and civilian commoners, the registration system for these two groups differed. Prior to 1866, when the state established a *baojia* system in Shuangcheng, it did not keep records for the civilian population; instead, civilian commoners were registered by tax-paying units, i.e. adult males (*ding*), or rent-paying units, i.e. households. Therefore, before 1866, the government only registered civilian commoners who held land in Shuangcheng and paid rent. In 1866, as Shuangcheng gradually developed into an important settlement in Jilin, more and more civilian commoners entered this area and become involved in commercial activities. The population of Shuangcheng increased, especially at its seat. In order to control the increasing population and maintain social order, the state organized all

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<sup>51</sup> See the 1876 land registers of the civilian division, SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834731, vol. 658. The tenant with the largest land holding was Yang Fengshui, and that with the smallest land holding was Liu Fugui. Moreover, the sources of these large land holdings were mainly *suique* and *gongzu* land.

households that were not located in the banner villages into a *baojia* system.<sup>52</sup> The 1,876 households, including merchants, civilian tenants, and some bannermen who resided in the seat of Shuangcheng, were organized into 20 *bao* and 185 *jia*.

Despite the growth of the civilian population over the course of Shuangcheng history, it remained smaller than the banner population. As table 4.1 illustrates, from 1816 to 1820 the government registered about 190 civilian households in the Shuangcheng area. Therefore, when the 3,000 rural banner households settled in Shuangcheng, the registered civilian households accounted for only 6 percent of total households.<sup>53</sup> In the following 25 years, the number of registered civilian tenant farmers did not significantly increase; in 1844, 565 registered civilian households farmed land in Shuangcheng, accounting for 7.9 percent of total households.<sup>54</sup> In 1866, the number of civilian tenant households increased to 668;<sup>55</sup> after taking the population residing in the seat of Shuangcheng into account, the estimated total number of civilian households was 1,272, comprising 18.6 percent of the total registered households.<sup>56</sup>

Even after the state permitted free migration to Jilin in the 1860s, the registered civilian population remained smaller than the banner population. In 1890, eight years

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<sup>52</sup> See the local government report to the general of Jilin on the *baojia* organization in Shuangcheng in 1866 (SCPZGYMDA, vol. 636, pp. 354-360). In the Qing, the *baojia* system was an administrative system to watch and check the number, movements, and activities of civilian commoners (Hsiao 1960). In theory, every 10 households constituted one *jia*, and every 10 *jia* constituted one *bao*. In practice, however, the number of households in each *jia* and *bao* varied according to context. Due to its function of controlling population, the *baojia* would maintain a complete registration of the people.

<sup>53</sup> Although there were no individual-level population records for the civilian commoners in Shuangcheng, from the extant sources, we can estimate that their average household size was seven, which was not big.

<sup>54</sup> These 565 civilian households, located in the area outside the banner villages, contained 1,500 adult males and a total of 3,000 to 4,000 people (HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6b)

<sup>55</sup> See the local government report to the general of Jilin on the *baojia* organization in Shuangcheng in 1866 (SCPZGYMDA, vol. 636, pp. 354-360).

<sup>56</sup> The civilian commoners, however, comprised the majority of the merchant population in Shuangcheng. In 1867, of the 156 major shop owners in Shuangcheng, 109 were civilian commoners from Zhili (today's Hebei Province), Shandong, and Shanxi (SCPZGYMDA, reel 163, vol. 647, pp. 8-36). Some of the remaining 47 shop owners, whose places of origin were listed either as Shuangcheng or as other parts of northeast China, were probably also civilian commoners.

after the establishment of a civilian government in Shuangcheng, the government surveyed the civilian population, which included the civilian population that had previously belonged to the administration of Lalin.<sup>57</sup> The civilian population of that year was 1,831 households (table 4.2).<sup>58</sup> By contrast, the rural and metropolitan banner populations in the registers of that year totaled 4,053 households of 36,398 people.<sup>59</sup> In addition, there were 2,023 households of 10,375 floating bannermen.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, by 1890, civilian commoners accounted for only 23.2 percent of the Shuangcheng population.

### **The unregistered population**

The 1910 Shuangcheng census, conducted by the civilian government, significantly increased the size of the registered population. This complete population census, covering residents of both Shuangcheng and Lalin, identified a total of 34,697 households of 227,321 Manchu and 27,950 households of 214,223 Han.<sup>61</sup> Since this census identified households not by their banner affiliation but instead by their ethnicity, it was unclear how many households who reported themselves to be Han were actually Han-Chinese bannermen. Nonetheless, the sizes of both the Manchu and Han populations far exceeded what we have observed in the population registers; the Manchu population was 4.7 times the sum of the metropolitan and rural banner populations in the equivalent period, and the Han population was about 15 times that in 1890.

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<sup>57</sup> In 1882, when the civilian government was established, the administrative area was accordingly expanded. The civilian government administered not only Shuangcheng, but also the area previously belonging to Lalin.

<sup>58</sup> SCXZ (1990), pp. 829. These 1,831 households included 26,237 civilian commoners.

<sup>59</sup> The size of the metropolitan and rural population was calculated from the banner population registers of 1889 and 1890.

<sup>60</sup> The information on floating bannermen was drawn from extant registers of 1888 and 1894, whenever the date was closest to 1890. As the estimate of the floating banner population only reflected those who were captured by the population registers, it may have actually been larger.

<sup>61</sup> SCXZ (1990), p. 829.

This apparently large increase in the Shuangcheng population suggests the existence of a large, previously unregistered population of both bannermen and civilian commoners. For the Manchu population, three factors can explain the huge increase in the registered population: the expansion of the registration area from Shuangcheng to both Shuangcheng and Lalin, the influx of immigrants, and the under-registration of floating bannermen. For the Han population, since the 1890 data already included the civilian population of Lalin, its huge increase can only be explained by the influx of immigrants and the existence of an unregistered population. If we consider the population increase in the entire Jilin Province in the same period, we can see a large volume of immigration between the 1890s and 1912; according to Liang Fangzhong's study, in 1897, the total population of Jilin province was 779,000, but by 1912, there were 5,538,405 civilian commoners plus 52,017 banner households. This estimate suggest a more than eight-fold increase since 1897 and an even greater increase since 1890 (1980). Alongside immigration, the under registration of population in Shuangcheng was also an obvious cause of this increase.

Lacking detailed data, we can only estimate the size of the unregistered population according to the land-labor ratio in the Shuangcheng area. By 1891, when all the arable land in Shuangcheng was reclaimed, the local government had registered a total of 225,473 *shang* (414,870.2 hectares) of land.<sup>62</sup> If an adult male in the 1890s could farm 10 *shang* of land,<sup>63</sup> farming these 225,473 *shang* of land required about 22,548 adult males. In 1891,

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<sup>62</sup> See the government report on types of land and their amounts (SCPGTDHKDM, reel 1834732, vol. 676). The total amount of land here included 24,766 *shang* of *sanwangshang* land, which was not on the land list reported by the government in 1891, as it belonged to Lalin and was not controlled by the Shuangcheng banner government. I include this type of land in the total amount of land because the count of registered civilian households in 1890 included those residing in Lalin.

<sup>63</sup> In the 1820s, the officials estimated that an adult male on average could farm six to seven *shang* of land, and the most capable adult male could farm 12 to 13 *shang*. Since in the early stage of the state farm, the farming conditions could be poorer, in 1890, an average adult male would probably farm more land. So, I take 10 *shang* as the average amount of land an adult male could farm in 1890.

a total of 12,617 adult males were listed in the banner population registers, including metropolitan bannermen, rural bannermen, and floating bannermen. After excluding those with official posts and government student titles as well as floating bannermen engaging in commerce, the total number of adult males drops to 12,183. As for civilian commoners, since about half of the 1,831 registered households in 1890 resided in the seat of Shuangcheng,<sup>64</sup> the number residing in rural areas was probably 900. If the average number of adult males in each civilian household was 2.5, the estimated number of adult males in these registered civilian households would be 2,250.<sup>65</sup> The total number of adult males in the registered banner and civilian populations was therefore probably about 14,433. Nonetheless, not all these 14,433 adult males were engaged in farming, as those civilian commoners registering massive amounts of land were more likely to be managers and some metropolitan bannermen lived as landlords.<sup>66</sup> Thus, to meet the minimum requirement of 22,548 adult males, at least 9,000 additional adult males had to work on the land in Shuangcheng, which, after the inclusion of their families, led to at least 20,000 unregistered bannermen and civilian commoners.<sup>67</sup> Since this unregistered population of 20,000 was only the minimum requirement to meet the demand for labor, it could have been even larger, as the land in Shuangcheng had the capacity to accommodate more people.

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<sup>64</sup> In 1866, when the local government established the *baojia* system, a total of 1,208 households resided in the seat of Shuangcheng. According to my estimation, at least a half of them were civilian commoners. By 1890, the government had begun to permit free immigration, so there could have been more civilian commoners residing in the seat of Shuangcheng.

<sup>65</sup> According to the 1910 census, the mean household size among the Han was 7.6. Given this household size and the fact that immigrant populations usually had younger age structures and lower dependency ratios, the estimated average number of adult males per household was 2.5.

<sup>66</sup> See Jing'ebu's description of metropolitan bannermen in his memorial on adjusting policies in Shuangcheng in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 7a.

<sup>67</sup> Since these unregistered residents mainly worked as tenants and hired laborers, they probably had smaller families. Hired laborers in particular could be single males. Thus, I estimate their average household size to be 2.2.

The government was aware of the existence of these unregistered bannermen and civilian commoners, as various government documents frequently mentioned “itinerant civilian commoners (*liumin*)” and “floating bannermen not on the registers.” According to the local government archives, the Captain’s Office would check every three months for “itinerant civilian commoners” and “floating bannermen not on the registers” residing in the banner villages.<sup>68</sup> However, the large unregistered population revealed by the 1910 census indicates that these reports were only routine paperwork and that the government did not actually track the unregistered populations.

While the existence of this large unregistered population can partly be explained by geographical mobility, which made it difficult to track people,<sup>69</sup> it also suggests the government’s intention to delay their registration. On the one hand, the government allowed these civilian and banner populations to reside in Shuangcheng and provide local residents with labor. On the other hand, the government also used registration to manipulate people’s rights. Since only the registered population had rights to officially register land and receive government support in Shuangcheng, by not registering those “itinerant civilian commoners” and floating bannermen, the state also denied their rights and protected the rights of the registered banner and civilian populations. Consequently, the unregistered floating bannermen and civilian commoners could only work as private tenants and hired laborers for Shuangcheng residents. This practice especially benefitted metropolitan and rural bannermen; by not registering all floating bannermen and civilian commoners, metropolitan and rural bannermen were always the ‘majority’, at least in the official records.

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<sup>68</sup> See SCPZGYMDA.

<sup>69</sup> This is also true for the floating banner population, as many floating bannermen who were not registered claimed to be visiting relatives in Shuangcheng.

### **Conclusion: categorical inequalities and opportunities**

Although the land allocation policy in Shuangcheng privileged metropolitan and rural bannermen by granting them entitlement to *jichan* land, it did not universally disfranchise floating bannermen and civilian commoners. Two administrative systems—the banner and the civilian—organized the four populations in Shuangcheng. The banner and the civilian system both provided the have-nots—floating bannermen and civilian commoners—with opportunities for upward mobility. However, due to the different natures of the two systems, floating bannermen and civilian commoners had different channels of upward mobility; belonging to the banner system, floating bannermen had no official rights to land but only political rights to serve the government as soldiers and to become government students, whereas civilian commoners did not have political rights but did have opportunities to claim land from the government and become state tenants. Thus, although the institution of population categories fundamentally defined entitlement rights and social status, it did not determine every aspect of social life.

The existence of large land holders among the civilian commoners demonstrates that the government used different principles to control banner and civilian populations in Shuangcheng. The banner population was highly institutionalized. The state land allocated to bannermen gave equivalent importance to within-category equality and between-category inequality. To achieve its goal of equal land allocation among metropolitan and rural bannermen respectively, the state established regulations to monitor land allocation and its future transfer, preventing land concentration. Such measures, however, did not exist in the procedures for handling civilian tenants' claims to *gongzu* and

*suique* land, thus allowing powerful civilian commoners to hold massive amounts of land. Interestingly, although civilian commoners as a category were excluded from state land allocation, the land holding of some civilian tenants, totaling more than 700 *shang*, far exceeded that of most of the metropolitan and rural bannermen,<sup>70</sup> revealing that while metropolitan and rural bannermen were privileged by the state institution, they were also constrained by the same system.

However, despite the existence of alternative institutions and opportunities for the have-nots, the state institutions that generated the unequal population categories were still the most influential institution. Over the history of the Shuangcheng state farm, metropolitan and rural bannermen accounted for the majority of the registered population. This finding is contrary to the assumption that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the civilian population dominated Northeast China, and that Northeast society simply transformed from banner to civilian society. While this assumption is probably true in some regions of the Northeast – as Liang Fangzhong shows, in 1912, there were 800,099 Han-Chinese households but only 52,017 banner households in Jilin Province (1980) – it is not true in Shuangcheng. In the Shuangcheng area, before the fall of the Qing, the civilian population never outnumbered the banner population; even in 1910, after taking into consideration the unregistered population and the possibility of overrepresentation, Han-Chinese households still comprise less than half of the total (48.5 percent).<sup>71</sup> Even by the end of the Qing, Shuangcheng was still largely a banner society

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<sup>70</sup> According to government land registers, in 1876, only two households among the metropolitan and rural bannermen had a land holding exceeding 700 *shang*. This is after the government registration of the land privately cultivated by Shuangcheng residents.

<sup>71</sup> See SCXZ (1990), p. 829. Han-Chinese accounted for 45 percent of the total households and 48.5 percent of the total population. Since the population data in 1910 only provided ethnicity but not the banner affiliation of the population, it is not clear how what proportion of the Han-Chinese population were actually bannermen. Given that there were considerable numbers of Han bannermen in Shuangcheng,

with all the categorical boundaries and privileges this implied.

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their percentage of the civilian population should be much lower than the above figures.

## **Chapter V**

### **Banner Organization and Register Compilation**

For more than half a century, scholars have paid considerable attention to the nature of the interaction between the state and local society in late imperial and modern China; on the one hand, some scholars have identified a centralized, bureaucratized, and increasingly autocratic Chinese state that culminated in the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949;<sup>1</sup> on the other, scholars have also revealed the persistence and increasingly autonomous nature of local society and local elites, culminating in the emergence of "civil society" beginning the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Seeing these developments as being at odds with one another is, however, inaccurate, and results from the direct superimposition of a binary model of state-society relations developed under the Western tradition onto Chinese history. Under this binary model, society is considered a rival of the state; the empowerment of social organizations undermines state authority. This model, however, misrepresents the relationship between the state and local society in China, as the Chinese state, throughout numerous regimes, intentionally used and empowered institutions developed in local society to fulfill its administrative goals.

While this western-framed view of the Chinese state-society relationship remains influential, China scholars have attempted to rectify this binary model by studying local

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<sup>1</sup> While numerous studies have revealed the increasingly autocratic nature of the Chinese state during the late imperial period (Bartlett 1991; Fu 1993; Huang 1981), Karl Wittfogel especially explored its characteristics and summarized this autocracy with the term "oriental despotism" (Wittfogel 1957).

<sup>2</sup> In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a trend of searching for civil society and a public sphere in China arose in Chinese studies. These discussions and debates are best summarized in the "Public Sphere"/ "Civil Society" in China Symposium, *Modern China*, Vol.19, No.2, April 1993.

government and local society in detail (Ch'u 1962; Esherick and Rankin 1990; Fei 1948; Huang 1993, 1996; Hsiao 1960; Jones 1979; Reed 2000; Rowe 2001; Shue 1988; Scogin 1994).<sup>3</sup> As early as the late 1940s, Fei Xiaotong pointed out that Chinese society was founded on a series of social relationships and interlocking yet “self-sufficient” social networks (1948). As he put it, the rulers of China “really rule by allowing people in rural society to manage their own affairs.”<sup>4</sup> Ch’u T’ung-tsu and Hsiao Kung-chuan, in their pioneer studies on local government and local society in Qing China, revealed that, below the county level, the government relied heavily on such local social organizations as village and lineage to carry out administrative tasks (Ch'u 1962; Hsiao 1960).

Along with this trend, later scholarship has revealed a more complex picture of state-society interaction in China. Local social organizations led by local elites played a major role in maintaining social order, fulfilling administrative tasks, and mitigating conflicts and disputes (Esherick and Rankin 1990; Huang 1993, 1996, 2001; Jones 1979; Reed 2000; Scogin 1994). Moreover, these local powers also overlapped and collaborated with state power. These studies suggest that, while the Chinese state maintained tight political control over society, it intentionally stayed away from local social affairs, leaving local social organizations tremendous space to govern everyday life. Contrary to the conviction that this local autonomy was an encroachment on state authority, the state in fact was able to disseminate its ideology in local society through policies, thereby enforcing its control (Scogin 2001).

Following the path laid out by the above-mentioned scholarship, in this chapter I examine the local banner organization in Shuangcheng to explore the nature of

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<sup>3</sup> Although these scholars have attempted to rectify the western-facing view, many of them were still more or less influenced by the same framework. This process of rectification is slow and still incomplete.

<sup>4</sup> This quotation is from Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng’s translation of Fei’s work (Fei 1992).

state-society interactions under the institution of population categories. Since previous scholarship on state-society relations has focused largely on civilian societies, few studies have fully explored local governance in the banner society.<sup>5</sup> Compared to civilian societies, banner societies were more institutionalized. In the creation of the Eight Banners, for example, Nurhachi had modified the tribal unit of *niru*, which was based on blood ties, turning it into military and administrative units. Moreover, in the Shuangcheng banner society, social organizations were especially weak. During the recruitment and resettlement stages, the state deliberately corroded all existing or potential social organizations to clear the ground for state institutions. State authority became the sole power in this immigrant society, and arranged households and villages according to its own interests. Given this instance of an unusually strong state presence in a local society, I am especially interested in exploring how state policies shaped Shuangcheng society.

I study the local banner organization in Shuangcheng through the lens of the compilation of population registers. I focus on population registration because it was the basic institution that enabled both state control of local society and the creation of population categories, and also because it provides my major source for information about banner organization. In my analysis, I consider the compilation of population registers to be an interactive process between households, villages, and the state. In Shuangcheng, the information recorded in population registers moved from household to village head and then to local banner government: the household head was responsible for reporting any vital events occurring to household members – including death, birth, and marriage – to the

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<sup>5</sup> On this topic, James Lee and Cameron Campbell have studied in detail the family organization of the banner immigrant society in Daoyi, Liaoning (Lee and Campbell 1997). In their recent study on local banner immigrant societies in the Liaodong area, Ding, Yizhuang, Songyi Guo, James Lee, and Cameron Campbell explored the immigrants' lineage organizations (2004). However, no study has looked at local government institutions and social institutions in banner society as a whole.

village head; the village head in turn reported these events to the local banner government, which updated the register. Thus, through register compilation, the basic units of local societies—household and village—interacted and negotiated with state interests. On the one hand, by registering and organizing households, the state controlled them for administrative purposes. On the other hand, households and villages, by providing information for the registers, also acquired the autonomy to express their own interests. In the following sections, I track the process of register compilation to analyze, in sequence, households, villages, and local government in Shuangcheng. I start my analysis with households in order to explore the meaning of this basic social unit in Shuangcheng. I then move to the village level to examine the local social organizations and their role in the life of the state farm. Finally, I analyze the structure of the local banner government and its function in the registration system to explore the model of local governance in Shuangcheng.

### **Household**

In China, the population registration system came into being as a consequence of the growing importance of the household as the basic organizational unit of social life. Prior to the sixth century B.C., Chinese society was built on feudal relationships that emphasized blood ties and lineage organization; rulers therefore mainly controlled the population through clans and lineages. Beginning in the seventh to sixth centuries B.C., however, this feudal relationship gradually dissolved, and the household emerged as the basic unit of social organization. Therefore, with population registration, the state directly tackled the smallest social unit, the household, and registered its members for the purposes of

population control and tax collection (Xin 2007). From then on, the household has been a unit of consumption, production, and residence, as well as a unit of administration, allocation, and categorization.

Due to its multiple functions, in government documents the meaning of ‘household’ varies according to context. For registration purposes, the household was the major unit to carry the rights and obligations associated with the category to which it belonged. Therefore, in the population register, both the government and household members could manipulate the household organization to accommodate their own interests. As rulers mainly paid attention to those who fell within their interests, registration often omitted those who did not.<sup>6</sup> Households themselves could also maneuver to secure benefits and avoid disadvantages. One notable example of this phenomenon is the persistent practice of “hiding households (*yinhu*)” in Chinese history, wherein households faked household divisions to reduce their size and property, and thus avoid higher levels of taxation and labor service.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, while a household on the registers sometimes reflected a residential reality, sometimes it did not. Households in the Shuangcheng banner population register also shared this inherent flexibility.

When planning the Shuangcheng relocation, Fujun defined the household as both a real residential group and a unit of land allocation. In 1819, Fujun ruled that only a married adult bannerman could move to Shuangcheng, and that he could only do so along with his wife, children, and other household relatives. In 1822, although Fujun allowed

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Liaoning bannermen belonging to the imperial household agent registered boys mainly for state positions. Moreover, these Liaoning bannermen only registered daughters in the first half of the Qing dynasty for the selection of court ladies. From 1735 on, when the court stopped selecting court ladies from the families of bannermen under the imperial household agent, their population registers stopped the registration of daughters (Ding et al. 2004).

<sup>7</sup> While such phenomena existed in many dynasties, it was especially prominent in the Song dynasty (960-1125), as the state decided the tax rate by household property (Wang 1986, 1996).

unmarried metropolitan bannermen to move to Shuangcheng, he still required that a household must consist of at least three individuals, an adult man and his relatives.<sup>8</sup> Initially, this regulation proved effective. In the first two years of recruitment in Beijing, some single bannermen were excluded, even though they were willing to move to Shuangcheng.<sup>9</sup> Fujun intended this regulation to promote both the stability of the settlement and the equitability of land allocation. In 1822 and 1824, Fujun explained his exclusion of single metropolitan bannermen as follows: “I am especially concerned that these single bannermen, if settled in Shuangcheng, had to farm the land alone, without families cooking for them and doing housework. [Moreover,] I am also concerned that these single bannermen are more likely to abandon the state farm and escape.”<sup>10</sup> “Because these *xiansan* will be given 15 *shang* of cultivated land and 5 *shang* of uncultivated land, a house, and one set of draft animals as well as farming tools, if we count a single bannerman as one household, it is a bit too munificent.”<sup>11</sup>

Upon receipt of the allocated land, an immigrant household also became an administrative unit of the state farm. Every male member in the household was assigned to a state farm position. The principal adult male (*zhengding*), who was the main farmer of the allocated plot, usually earned the title of household head. Accordingly, in the land registers, the principal adult male owned the plot. The Qing standard required the

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<sup>8</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1822.3.2, JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3386-48.

<sup>9</sup> See Yinghe’s summation of an earlier memorial by Fujun on 1825.7.11, JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3388-21. In the memorial, Fujun listed some cases in which single bannermen could not count as households to move to Shuangcheng. In 1824, Changqing, a *yangyubing* in the Manchu Plain White banner in Beijing, wanted to move to Shuangcheng but was rejected because he was not married. Moreover, Hafeng’a and his nephew Qingfu, two bannermen in the Manchu Plain Red banner in Beijing, applied to move as one household. Their request was declined because both men were single, and they therefore could not be counted as a household.

<sup>10</sup> See Fujun’s memorial on 1822.3.2, JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3386-48.

<sup>11</sup> See the cited memorial of Fujun by Yinghe on 1825.7.11, JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3388-21.

principal adult male to be healthy and capable and between the ages of 20 and 50 *sui*.<sup>12</sup> In 1819 and 1820, the Shuangcheng local government rejected dozens of households for their lack of any man qualified to serve as the principal adult male.<sup>13</sup> In households with a qualifying principal adult male, any remaining men assumed the position of assistant adult male (*bangding*). The assistant adult male's duty was to aid the principal adult male in farming the land; in addition, they could also work for any household short of labor.<sup>14</sup>

Given these roles and assignments, the population register recorded a Shuangcheng household as both a domestic and an administrative unit. It first recorded information about the principal adult male: his place of origin, ethnicity, original banner affiliation, occupation, name, age, and any vital demographic event that had happened since last update. The registers subsequently recorded the name, age and, occupation of the principal adult male's immediate family members (parents, wife, and children) and then of any other relatives living with him. The register indexed all household members by their relationship to the principal adult male.<sup>15</sup> This household, as an administrative unit, closely corresponded to land allocation. As the number of plots was fixed in the state farm, so were the number of principal adult male positions and thus the number of households. When a principal adult male retired or died, the official document would note that "a vacant position is available (*quechu*)." Banner officials would then select an assistant adult male to adopt the position of principal adult male. In the household

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<sup>12</sup> See the order disseminated by the Board of Revenue on 1819.2.16 (SCPTTJL, pp. 85-89).

<sup>13</sup> See the local government report on 1819.9.15, SCPTTJL, pp. 100-103.

<sup>14</sup> See the memorial by Songlin on 1822.7.20, SCPTTJL, pp. 58-59. In this memorial, Songlin advocated assigning every extra man in the banner villages to the position of assistant adult male and asking them to assist in the farming of their own household or those without sufficient labor. This plan had the advantage of solving the shortage of labor in households in the central *tun* without recruiting too many civilian commoners as labor.

<sup>15</sup> The population register for the metropolitan bannermen followed the same structure even though, as the elite, they were not assigned to these state farm positions.

registers, an assistant adult male could only establish his household by inheriting the principal adult male's position and his plot. Therefore, in the state farm, the processes of land inheritance and land transfer were not private behaviors; rather, they occurred through the official assignment of the position of principal adult male, as determined by state farm officials.

At the same time, Fujun and the local officials showed flexibility and adaptability in the registration of unusual household structures, so as to accommodate any unexpected issues that arose during the recruitment and settlement processes. The first of these issues was the excessive household size of some rural bannermen. In 1819, when checking the population register, local officials found that rural banner households ranged in size from the standard four members to sometimes more than twenty.<sup>16</sup> Since the government had built only one thatched house for each rural banner household, the local official speculated that these government-allocated houses could not accommodate households with more than ten people, nor could one plot of land and one standard set of livestock support them. In order to ensure the settlement's stability, local officials divided these large households by assigning additional principal adult male positions and allocating additional plots to all married adult males in these households; in 1919, 134 new households were thus separated from their original households.<sup>17</sup> This adaptation resulted in household divisions made quickly upon arrival in Shuangcheng. Consequently, some families with three or four principal adult males were thus divided into three or four households in the population registers.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See the report of the local government of the Shuangcheng state farm on 1819.5.18, SCPTTJL, pp.98-99.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> See the memorial of Fujun on 1821.1.6, SCPTTJL, p. 44.

Secondly, in order to recruit more metropolitan bannermen (and especially the poor), beginning in 1822 Fujun stretched the definition of a 'household' that was qualified to move. Instead of recruiting only married bannermen, Fujun stipulated that henceforth all single bannermen without state stipends from the Manchu and Mongol banners would be counted as separate households. At first, Fujun required that households include at least three members; any combination of three relatives could move as a household.<sup>19</sup> This policy change produced households with fragmentary structures; for instance, households with only single adult males were relatively common, as well as combinations of single adult male with widowers and widows. As recruitment proceeded, in 1825, Fujun further loosened the definition of household to allow one single bannerman to be counted as a household by himself.<sup>20</sup> This expedient measure, however, resulted in high escape and extinction rates among the metropolitan banner households. As the supply of unmarried women in the newly settled frontier was usually insufficient, single bannermen were likely to remain single in the state farm. This may be why only 473 of the initial 698 metropolitan banner households survived until 1869; the other 225 households had either died out or escaped from the state farm.<sup>21</sup>

These early household registration policies documented how the government intervened in immigrant household formation and reorganized immigrants' residential and production groups. For rural bannermen, the allocation of additional plots and housing to large households expedited the process of household division. In rural China, sons usually co-resided with parents for a long time before finally establishing their own

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<sup>19</sup> See Fujun's memorial on 1822. 3.2, JJCLFZZ, reel 232, 3386-48.

<sup>20</sup> See Yinghe's summation of an earlier memorial by Fujun on 1825.7.11, JJCLFZZ, 3388-21.

<sup>21</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp.70-85. While previous studies on Shuangcheng resettlement used this high die-out rate as evidence of the failure of this project (Ding 1985), it is probably not a reflection of failure, but rather of the high proportion of single-male households.

households, usually after their parents' death. Multiple-family households were therefore the most common type. For instance, in Daoyi, a banner village in Liaoning Province, from 1792 to 1873, 47.2 percent of households were comprised of multiple families, and 79.7 percent of the population in Daoyi lived in a multiple-family household (Lee and Campbell 1997). Household division, when it occurred, usually took place after sons were married. The settlement of Shuangcheng, however, favored stem households with only one conjugal unit. While rural banner households moved as large but cohesive units, the government's land allocation policy broke up these large household organizations.

At the same time, as the policies of household registration were fixed in the early stage of the state farm, a household in the population registers more and more resembled an administrative unit for land allocation rather than a residential and production unit in real terms. When the relocation project concluded in the 1830s, the quota of immigrant households was 3,000 for rural bannermen and 1,000 for metropolitan bannermen.<sup>22</sup> Once this quota had been met, the number of households in the Shuangcheng banner population registers was fixed, regardless of subsequent changes in household size. Over time, this policy led to a great variance in household size among Shuangcheng banner immigrants. As table 5.1 shows, in 1866 (about 40 years after the establishment of the state farm), the rural banner households ranged in size over a wide span from 1 member to over 50. In that year, about 5.4 percent of rural banner households included more than 20 living persons. In 1904, the average household size among rural bannermen further expanded; the percentage of households with more than 20 living persons had increased to

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<sup>22</sup> By then, the quota of 3,000 rural banner households had been fulfilled, and 698 of the quota of 1,000 metropolitan banner households had been fulfilled. The remaining 302 households were finally created in 1878, when the government allocated the 302 plots to those metropolitan bannermen who contributed money to subsidize the military expenses of Jilin Province.

16.7 percent.<sup>23</sup>

Table 5. 1 Household size of metropolitan and rural bannermen in 1866 and 1904.

Number of living persons	Metropolitan bannermen				Rural bannermen*			
	1866		1904		1866		1904	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
0	30	6	63	6.3	43	1.7	37	1.4
1-3	221	44.4	392	39.2	385	14.9	268	10.1
4-8	196	39.4	474	47.4	1,047	40.4	884	33.3
9-15	44	8.8	65	6.5	746	28.8	728	27.4
16-20	4	0.8	5	0.5	230	8.9	297	11.2
21-30	3	0.6	1	0.1	115	4.4	268	10.1
31-40					23	0.9	111	4.2
41-50					2	0.1	43	1.6
50 and above					1	0	22	0.8
Total	498		1,000		2,592		2,658	

Sources: the Eight Banner population registers of metropolitan and rural bannermen in 1866 and 1904.

\*The series of rural banner population registers is missing one register in 1866 and one in 1904. Therefore, the total number of household in both years was less than 3,000.

The large variance in household size inevitably resulted in an equivalent variance in residential arrangements, and thus allowed the immigrant households some flexibility in managing themselves. For the large households (with more than 20 people), household members decided residential and production arrangements on their own. As I will show in detail in chapter seven, by the mid-nineteenth century, some households had divided their land independently and established new households, a phenomenon not captured by the population registers.

Moreover, in the process of register compilation, households also maintained some

<sup>23</sup> At the same time, metropolitan banner households showed the opposite tendency. In 1866, there were only 498 Metropolitan banner households, 502 less than the quota of 1,000. In 1869 and again in 1878, the government divided the metropolitan banner households in Shuangcheng to make the number of households reach the quota. The household size of the metropolitan bannermen, therefore, remained relatively small and stable. As table 4.1 shows, throughout the history of the state farm, metropolitan banner households did not exceed 30 living persons. Moreover, the majority of households had between one and eight members.

autonomy in deciding when and whether to register their new members. Although the state required household heads to report vital events immediately after their occurrence, most heads delayed the report. In Shuangcheng, the mean ages of first registration for the children of metropolitan bannermen were 3.02 *sui* for the boys and 3.73 *sui* for girls,<sup>24</sup> and the mean ages of first registration for rural bannermen were 4.38 *sui* for boys and 4.45 *sui* for girls. The difference in the mean ages of first registration between metropolitan and rural bannermen indicates that bannermen's registration behavior was closely associated with institutional incentives. In Shuangcheng, population registration was associated with land allocation. The size of a metropolitan banner household especially influenced its landed property, as the state stipulated that a household with six to seven people but no land had precedence in the state reallocation of land from extinct households.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, metropolitan bannermen registered their sons much earlier than rural bannermen. Furthermore, compared to banner communities without land grants, the mean ages of first registration for both metropolitan and rural bannermen were low, as the banner royal peasants in Liaoning registered their sons at an average of 5.8 *sui* and daughters at 6.1 *sui*. Although banner households maintained this autonomy, it was often achieved with the cooperation of the village head.

### **Village**

In rural China, the village organization exemplifies both local autonomy and state control. The state did not establish formal government institutions at the village level.

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<sup>24</sup> *Sui* is a traditional way for Chinese people to calculate age. An infant is counted as one *sui* at birth and two *sui* at age one. So, on average, a mean age measured in *sui* is one and a half years higher than the actual mean age.

<sup>25</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp.70-85.

Instead, it largely relied on the lineage head and other local elites (or gentry), consisting of degree holders and wealthy families, to manage village affairs and maintain social order.<sup>26</sup> While allowing tremendous space for local elites to manage their own affairs, the state also supervised them to ensure that their activities were in accordance with the state's interests. Therefore, while the state stayed away from local affairs, it also attempted to institutionalize local elites by appointing lineage heads or gentry as sanctioned village leaders. Throughout the entire late imperial period and even until the present day, control and autonomy defined the power dynamic between the state and the local elites in village life (Chang 1955; Duara 1988; Hsiao 1960; Huang 1985; Shue 1988).<sup>27</sup>

Compared to villages in other regions of China proper, banner villages in Shuangcheng experienced much stronger state control, as the power of local elites had been diluted by relocation. While most villages were established with the settlement of their populations, Shuangcheng's banner villages were well planned by the state long before the arrival of immigrants. When planning his banner villages, Fujun applied the principle of equal distribution to keep the villages at an equal size of 24 to 28 rural banner households plus the same number of metropolitan banner households. These initiatives

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<sup>26</sup> In the 1950s, scholars defined Chinese local elites as gentry and mainly included those who held degrees from the government exam (Chang 1955). The term gentry, however, referred to a large and significantly stratified group. During the past half century, scholarship on state-society relations has enriched the definition of local elites. In addition to degree holders, local elites or gentry also include wealthy families and even families with strong military backgrounds (Esherick and Rankin 1990; Hsiao 1960). Social status, landed wealth, and power often worked together to mark a family's gentry status. Moreover, some gentry families were also lineage leaders.

<sup>27</sup> In the voluminous literature on the nature of Chinese villages, scholars agree that villages were subject to the control of two types of power, the state and the local elite. These scholars, however, do not totally agree with one another on the position of the local elite in the village power structure. Hsiao Kung-ch'uan and Chang Chung-li use a binary framework to describe the village power structure and consider the local elite and the rest of the village commoners as an entity, as opposed to being completely subordinate to state power (Chang 1955; Hsiao 1960). Later scholars Philip Huang, Prasenjit Duara, and Vivienne Shue consider the local elite/gentry as a group independent of the rest of the common villagers, thus positing a triangular framework of state-gentry-villagers to explain the power structure of Chinese villages (Duara 1988; Huang 1985; Shue 1988). This triangular framework helps to clarify the different interests of the three parties: state, local elites, and villagers.

translated banner villages into forms more like administrative units. During the settlement stage, the state scattered the immigrants' original kinship organizations and equally allocated land to metropolitan and rural bannermen respectively. Consequently, at least during the first half of Shuangcheng's history, all the characteristics that defined local elites – lineage head, degree holders, and wealthy families – were missing.

In most of China, village society was run by local kinship groups (Fei 1948). In the history of migration in China, the *zu*, or descent group, was one of the major means by which immigrants and their settlements have been organized.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, most Chinese villages originated with the settlement of only a few descent groups.<sup>29</sup> By looking at the surname distribution of Chinese villages, we can identify that this pattern occurred widely not only among civilian commoners but also among the immigrants to Liaoning, who were organized into the Eight Banners in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. For example, from 1749 to 1909, in about 350 banner villages in Liaoning, villages of a single descent group were dominant; villages with a single male surname accounted for more than 50 percent of households. Throughout this period, only about 10 to 18 percent of villages had more than five surnames (Tso 2004).

By contrast, during the settlement process in Shuangcheng, the government scattered rural banner immigrants from the same descent group, thereby eliminating a potential

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<sup>28</sup> There are different translations of the term *zu* or *zongzu* in previous scholarship. The most commonly used terms are “clan” and “lineage.” In his research on imperial control in rural China, Hsiao Kung-chuan used the definition of Hu Hsien Chin, who defined *zu* as “a group descended from one ancestor who settled in a certain locality or neighborhood.” (1967, 323) James Watson stipulated that a lineage should have four characteristics: “corporate base, group consciousness, ritual unity, and demonstrated descent” (Watson 1982). Watson also gave a similar definition to clans, which were organized as corporations, with collectively-owned property and joint activities. Due to the specific meanings to which the terms lineage and clan refer, here I use the term “descent group” to include a larger variety of kinship structures.

<sup>29</sup> For example, during the immigration to Sichuan Province in the second half of the seventeenth century, immigrants usually settled with their descent groups. The same situation also happened in Fujian and Guangdong (Hsiao 1960).

disruptor of state power. For example, the Zhao family from Fuzhou, Liaoning, was originally under the administration of a banner captain named Xiteku. After moving to Shuangcheng in the early years, the Zhao family formed nine households.<sup>30</sup> These nine households, however, were scattered in all three *tun*: two in the central *tun*, six in the right *tun*, and one in the left *tun*, expanding across a distance of more than 35 kilometers.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, even within the same *tun*, they were settled in different villages, and only four households were in the same village.

Consequently, banner villages in Shuangcheng consisted of clusters of households from a variety of different descent groups. As table 5.2 shows, in each of the 120 villages, the rural banner households came from at least five different descent groups. 49 villages (41 percent) contained households from eleven to fifteen different descent groups, and the households of another 43 villages represented 16 to 20 different descent groups. Given the fact that each banner village included only 24 to 28 rural banner households, the large number of households from different descent groups meant that, in these villages, only a handful of households could be drawn from the same descent group. In the extreme cases, the rural banner households in nine villages came from 21 to 24 different descent groups, which meant that almost every individual household in these villages represented a distinct descent group. At the same time, the metropolitan bannermen, who mostly moved as individual households, also lacked kinship organizations.

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<sup>30</sup> I draw this example from the 1870 population registers. I identify descent groups by households' places of origin, original banner affiliations, the names of original banner captains, and family surnames. In the analysis, I only counted those households with a notation of "*yihu* (one household)," which means they were the original households formed at the settlement stage. In Shuangcheng, new households formed through household division after the settlement usually have a notation of "*linghu* (another household)."

<sup>31</sup> The village where the household of the Zhao family in the left *tun* resided was located at the upper-right hand corner of the Shuangcheng map (map 3.1), while five households of the same family resided in villages located in the lower-left hand corner of the Shuangcheng map. The distance between the two villages was more than 35 kilometers.

Table 5. 2 Number of different surnames among the rural bannermen of each village, 1866.

Number of surnames in each village <sup>32</sup>	Number of villages	Percent
5-7	5	4.2
8-10	14	11.7
11-15	49	40.8
16-20	43	35.8
21-24	9	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: the banner population registers in 1866.

Given the traditional importance of kinship organizations in the administration of banner populations, the government's dispersion of these organizations in the Shuangcheng experiment represents an aggressive departure from prior governance. Descent groups or clans in the banner population originated from the tribal tradition of the Jurchen people. Along with the development of the Eight Banners, these tribal organizations became highly institutionalized, such that clan heads often served the court as officials. The court gradually established a clan-head (*zuzhang*) system and appointed clan heads as the official agents to control bannermen (Li 2008). In the structure of banner population registers, the clan also became a formal unit; an individual bannerman was organized hierarchically from highest to lowest: captain, clan, and household (Ding et al. 2004). The Qing emperors also paid much attention to the genealogies of bannermen as points of official reference when assigning official positions and noble titles as well as determining adoption and inheritance. The government's dispersion of descent group organizations thus indicated that, instead of relying on familial and familiar social organizations to control the immigrants, the government was determined to manage

<sup>32</sup> The unique surnames here are identified by the immigrant's place of origin, original banner affiliation, original banner captain, and surname. Thus one unique surname represents a unique descent group origin.

households with state institutions alone. This policy resulted in weak kinship bonds in the Shuangcheng area, which has had a lasting legacy, even to the present day.<sup>33</sup>

Like lineage groups, other local elites, or gentry, were also absent from banner villages in Shuangcheng. The Chinese gentry were usually distinguished from other members of local society by their degrees acquired from government exams, wealthy land holding, and ability to organize such public works as schools, granaries, and charities. In Shuangcheng, however, the number of degree holders was small, and in the banner population registers, the highest level of degree was *shengyuan*, or “government student.” From 1866 to 1912, households with a *shengyuan* title only accounted for 0.48 percent of both the metropolitan and rural banner households.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, of the 120 banner villages, 46 villages never had a single *shengyuan* in this forty-six-year period and perhaps in the entire history of the state farm. Moreover, even the few *shengyuan* title-holders were soon absorbed into the Banner institution and therefore did not become a local elite; they started their official careers by working as clerks or soldiers, either of which would lead them to future promotions through the banner system. This situation contrasted with that characteristic of civilian society, which had a large body of local elites with earned degrees but no active official titles.

By the same token, such wealthy families as were identified by scholars of the Chinese gentry were also missing in Shuangcheng. As Shuangcheng was an immigrant society, banner families did not have accumulated wealth. Moreover, through equal land allocation and the enforced within-category equality, the state prevented wealth

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<sup>33</sup> See my introduction of Yan, Yunxiang’s work in note 89 in chapter three.

<sup>34</sup> According to Chang Chung-li, at the national level, the total size of the degree-holding gentry class represented about 1.3 percent of the Chinese population (Chang 1955). The *shengyuan* degree holders made up 87 percent of this degree-holding gentry population, thus accounting for 1.13 percent of the Chinese population. Although the proportion of *shengyuan* degree holders was probably smaller in the rural area, it should be still greater than that in Shuangcheng.

concentration; wealth accumulation in Shuangcheng, if any, was therefore slow, thereby preventing a small number of families from distinguishing themselves as an elite.

The absence of influential bannermen in public works also indicated weak gentry power in the banner villages themselves. In 1866, the Shuangcheng government decided to rebuild the city wall of the seat of Shuangcheng. In order to do so, it collected monetary contributions from the residents. The 557 contributors to this project consisted of 304 officials and soldiers of the local banner government and 253 merchants and shop owners in the Shuangcheng area.<sup>35</sup> The majority of the 253 merchants and shop owners were Han-Chinese from Zhili and Shanxi provinces.<sup>36</sup> In 1868, the government awarded 66 honorific titles to those who had contributed in an exceptional way to the city wall construction project, either in labor or monetarily.<sup>37</sup> Of the 66 awardees, only three were bannermen without official or soldier titles.

The general absence of kinship organizations and gentry in the banner villages made the state-appointed village head, or *tunda*, the only authority at the village level. In each banner village, the banner government appointed only one village head, accompanied by two appointed precinct heads, or *shijia zhang*, each in charge of about ten households. The five villages of each banner had a chief village head (*zong tunda*). The duties of the head and chief head included supervising the population in the village, updating the population registers in a timely way, checking the progress of production, and, by the end of each year, collecting rent for the government. Besides these regular duties, village heads were involved in every aspect of the village's public life, including adoption,

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<sup>35</sup> See the report and attached list sent by the local government to the Provincial government in 1866, 12 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 161, vol. 640-1, pp.125-173).

<sup>36</sup> The places of origins of the shop owners can be identified by a separate list of the shop owners, filed in 1867.3 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 163, vol. 647, pp.8-36).

<sup>37</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 154, vol. 654, pp.116-124. The awardees were those who contributed more than 150 strings of copper coins, or those who provided great labor service in the construction project.

inheritance, and property transfer. In cases of adoption and inheritance, village heads and precinct heads were the key witnesses to ensure the legitimacy of the procedures. In land transfer, a bannerman reported his intention to relinquish the allocated plot, first to the village head and then to the Captain's Office in the presence of the village head. The village head would then participate in the process of selecting another qualified adult male to take the returned plot. Because of his familiarity with the villagers, the village head was usually the most authoritative figure in deciding the heir.<sup>38</sup> Once the heir was decided, the village head and precinct heads would sign a guarantee stating that this heir was capable of farming.

Although the village head was not an official position, the appointment of the chief village head followed a strict official procedure. A central figure, the chief village head connected the banner government and the villagers, and, like many typical state-appointed village heads in Chinese history, he had to travel to the Captain's Offices repeatedly to report important events. Therefore, with the requirement of tremendous energy, the work of a village head was, in fact, drudgery.<sup>39</sup> It was quite common that a chief village head resigned his position due to an illness that limited his physical mobility and thus prevented him from fulfilling his tasks.<sup>40</sup> Because of the troubles associated with the role, each chief village head wore a hat with a golden tip, an honor equivalent to that given to the *jinshi* and

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<sup>38</sup> The authority of the village head in selecting heirs was especially pronounced in selecting the person who would succeed an extinct metropolitan banner household. (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 834-1, pp. 85-98).

<sup>39</sup> This model of governance also has a counterpart in the civilian societies. For example, the tax head (*liangzhang*) in the Ming dynasty had a similar relationship with the government (Liang 1957). The tax head enjoyed a stipend but had to fulfill the heavy duty of collecting taxes among the villagers; he also gained authority in other village affairs.

<sup>40</sup> For example, in 1866, the chief village head of the Plain Red banner, Wang Zhili, and the chief village head of the Plain Blue banner, Zongfu, both resigned their positions because of illnesses that rendered them physically incapable of fulfilling their tasks. (SCPZGYMDA, reel 162, vol. 643, pp.81-82, 129-131).

*juren* degree holders.<sup>41</sup> In addition, each chief village head also earned a monthly stipend of one tael of silver. However, if the Captain's Offices grew dissatisfied with the work of a chief village head, the government would remove him from his post.<sup>42</sup> When a chief village head resigned or was removed from his post, the village head and precinct head in his banner automatically became candidates for the position.<sup>43</sup> The banner captain then would send these candidates' resumes, written in the Manchu language, to the state farm government to review and appoint a new chief village head.<sup>44</sup>

While fulfilling their government duties, however, village heads in Shuangcheng, like those in other parts of China, also had the autonomy to exercise their power to accommodate the villagers' interests. For example, in a legal case from 1866, the state farm government found that Baocheng, the chief village head of the Bordered Blue banner, had not promptly reported the death of the eldest son of Wang Fushou, a metropolitan bannerman, to the Captain's Office to update the population register. Instead, Wang's wife Née Yang used her illegitimate son, named Zhao Zhu, to impersonate the deceased eldest son. By this chicanery, Née Yang acquired for Zhao Zhu a banner identity and thus entitlement to state land. Through investigation, the captain determined that, although Wang had reported his eldest son's death immediately to the chief village head Baocheng, Née Yang had surreptitiously persuaded Baocheng not to report the death to the Captain's

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<sup>41</sup> See the addendum of the settlement plan Fujun submitted to the Jiaqing emperor on 1820.4.17 (SCPTTJL, p. 40).

<sup>42</sup> The most common reasons for the governmental removal of chief village heads were their intentional resistance to government tasks or irresponsibility in fulfilling their duties. Interestingly, in 1879, the chief village head of the Plain Red banner was removed because he seldom showed up in the banner offices for routine reports and other tasks (SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 839, pp.171-175).

<sup>43</sup> In 1866, when the chief village head of the Plain Red banner Wang Zhili resigned his position, the banner office then submitted the names of the *tunda* and *shijia zhang* to the state farm government as candidates for this position (SCPZGYMDA, reel 162, vol. 643, pp. 89-90).

<sup>44</sup> The resumes of the candidates for chief village head were preserved in the local archives. For examples, see SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 839, pp.219-226 and pp.271-278.

Office. Although this event occurred in 1854, it was not brought up to the government until 1866, when Wang's other sons sued Zhao Zhu after he had grown up and acquired property.<sup>45</sup>

The case, in which Baocheng helped Née Yang to acquire a banner identity for Zhao Zhu, revealed that, despite strong government control, banner villages in Shuangcheng still had autonomy. Although the state undercut the power of kinship organizations and local elites, it still stayed out of local affairs, instead appointing a village head as its local agent to manage them. With the official appointment, the state in fact empowered village heads. With this power from the state, a village head was able to work not only for the state's interests but also for those of the villagers. In this way, the state adhered to the traditional model of allowing local societies to manage themselves. This state design of Shuangcheng society will be more explicit after we examine the structure of the local banner government.

### **Local banner government**

The banner government in Shuangcheng had a dual nature as both a banner garrison and a county government. Belonging to the Eight Banners, the structure of the local government followed the standard of a banner garrison; not only was the population organized into Eight Banners, but the government personnel also assumed military titles and served the state as officials and soldiers. At the same time, as the first local authority established in the state farm, the banner government also functioned as a civil government to administer the banner immigrants; one of its primary functions was to produce and

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<sup>45</sup> See the documentation of the investigation on Wang and his sons as well as the government report in 1865, 1866, and 1868, SCPZGYMDA, reel 158, vol. 629-1, p.28; reel 160, vol. 634, pp.12-16; reel 162, vol. 643, pp. 133-136; and reel 164, vol. 658, p. 18-26.

maintain the population and land registers. The state therefore adopted principles of traditional Chinese local government in organizing the local banner government. This fusion of military and civilian administration thus generated fundamental consequences for local governance in Shuangcheng.

The history of the Shuangcheng banner government can be divided into three stages: establishment (1820-1851), growth (1852-1882), and concession (1883-1929). In 1815, upon the creation of the state farm, the state established a small-scale administration, equipped with a conditional assistant commandant (*wei xieling*), two conditional captains (*wei zuoling*), and two conditional banner lieutenants (*wei xiaoqi xiao*), to administer the first 1,000 immigrants from Jilin.<sup>46</sup> This small banner administration was only a prototype government; without independent adjudication and fiscal rights, it was supervised by the banner government in Alchuka. Under these circumstances, the power of the banner government was scattered; by 1820, when 2,000 rural banner households arrived from Liaoning, the state had established a total of three sets of eight banners, respectively located in the central, right, and left *tun*.

As the immigrant population increased, the scale of government continued to expand. In 1851, the banner administration in Shuangcheng finally achieved independent adjudication and fiscal rights. In that year, the rank of the government was upgraded to vice commander-in-chief (*fudutong*) and the chief official had the title of area commander-in-chief (*zongguan*).<sup>47</sup> Consequently, two departments were established: the Left Department, in charge of military-related affairs, including public security, criminal

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<sup>46</sup> SCPXLYMDA, item no. 4506.

<sup>47</sup> See the official communications between the Shuangcheng government and other governments regarding the regulations of adjusting Shuangcheng banner administration on 1855.5.14 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 1, vol. 3, p. 35)

cases, personnel, and the military itself; and the Right Department, in charge of civil-related affairs, including finance, taxation, education, and population.

Correspondingly, the government also consolidated the banner offices scattered in the central, right, and left *tun* into the Shuangcheng seat located in the central *tun* (map 3.1). As the only government authority, the banner government administered the entire area of Shuangcheng, including not only the 120 banner villages but also the areas where civilian commoners resided. The area under the administration of the banner government thus was equivalent to that ruled by a county government.

In 1882, when a civil government was established in Shuangcheng, the power of the banner government shrank to the 120 villages only (the area of banner division in map 3.2). Consequently, its administrator's rank was downgraded to assistant commandant (*xieling*). Yet, the banner government maintained authority, adjudication, and taxation among the banner villages.<sup>48</sup> Even after 1911, when the Qing dynasty was overthrown, the banner administration remained active as an office under the republican government. Banner government in one form or another thus persisted in Shuangcheng for more than a century.

### **The office of the area commander-in-chief**

Despite the military titles of its personnel, the structure of the Shuangcheng banner government after 1851 was in many ways analogous to that of a civil county government.<sup>49</sup>

As figure 5.1 shows, the local banner government was equipped with an area commander-in-chief analogous to the magistrate, two assistant commandants analogous to

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<sup>48</sup> For a short period from 1882 to 1889, the banner government had handed the taxation of the banner land over to the civil government, but the banner government soon regained control of taxation.

<sup>49</sup> In this chapter, I mainly analyze the structure of the banner government after 1851, when it was upgraded to a formal government analogous to a county government.

the assistant magistrate, and six clerks. The area commander-in-chief – the primary official of the banner government – acted as magistrate to supervise the running of the government, judged legal cases, made decisions on local affairs, and communicated with the general of Jilin. Three departments comprised the core of the office of the area commander-in-chief: the Right Department, the Left Department, and the Seal Office, in charge of official seals and important documents. Each of the two assistant commandants supervised one of the Right and Left Departments.<sup>50</sup> The two assistant commandants also concurrently acted as the chief official of the respective wing divisions to supervise the banner captains.<sup>51</sup>

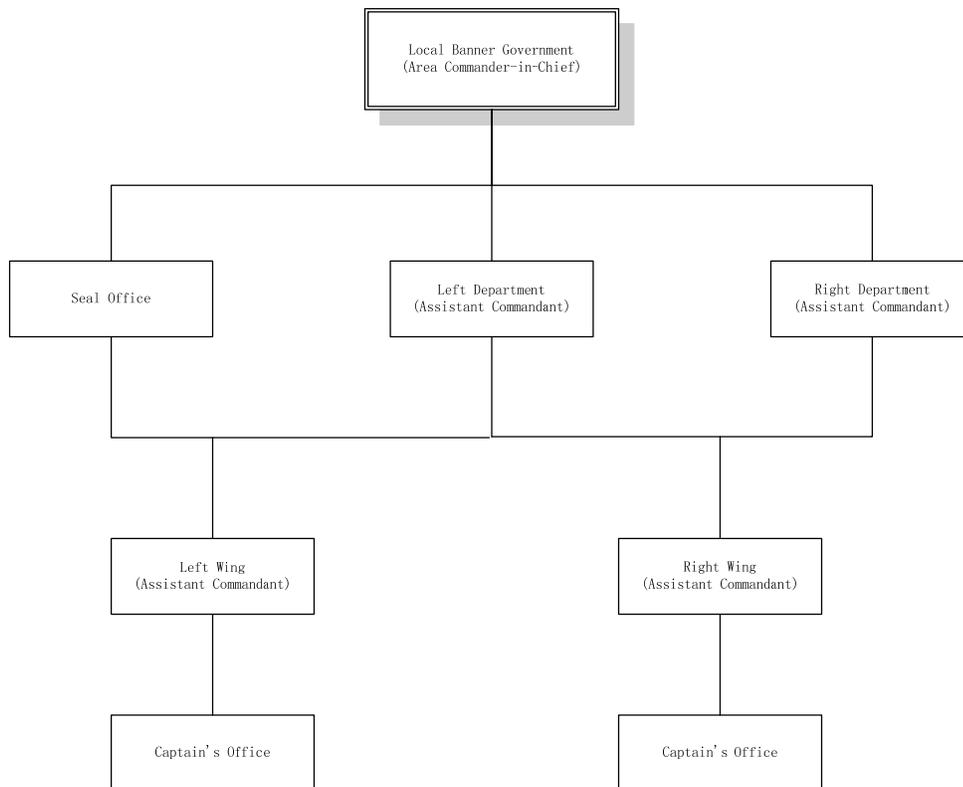


Figure 5. 1 The structure of Shuangcheng local banner government.

Sources: The regulations on adjusting the Shuangcheng banner administration in 1855.5 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 1, vol. 3, pp. 34-54); in 1856.2 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 1, vol. 1, pp. 34-47); and on 1870.2.5 (SCPXYMDA, item no. 4506).

<sup>50</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 1, vol. 3, p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> All banner organizations in Shuangcheng were divided into two wings, right and left. Each of the assistant commandants supervised one wing.

Like the civil county government, the Shuangcheng banner government also operated within a centralized bureaucratic system. Under the Qing civil government system, the Board of Civil Office controlled the appointment of provincial and local officials, from the provincial governor general and governor to the magistrate. Under the banner system, the central government also controlled the appointment of the chief officials in banner garrisons; only the emperor had the authority to appoint the general, commander-in-chief, and assistant commander-in-chief. From the 1830s on, the Qing rule stipulated that all generals, commanders-in-chief, and assistant commanders-in-chief of banner garrisons should be nominated to the Grand Council by the Board of War, so that the emperor could conduct an audience interview (*yingjian*) with each nominee. The Grand Council would then record the names of those who did sufficiently well in the audience interview in the “noted names” (*jiming*) lists, reserved for those who waited for job openings. When a vacancy appeared, the Grand Council would then consult the “noted names” lists to choose an appropriate candidate and wait for the emperor’s special approval (Bartlett 1991). This procedure, however, still left space for the general to nominate candidates with whom he had close personal connections. In 1784, the Qianlong emperor further required the various banner organizations in Beijing to nominate qualified officials as candidates for the assistant commander-in-chief (Ding 2003).<sup>52</sup> This policy thus ruled out the general’s control of the nomination for the Assistant Commander-in-chief and tightened the emperor’s control over the banner garrisons.

The appointment of the area commander-in-chief of Shuangcheng followed the same procedure. For example, Qingrui, the area commander-in-Chief of Shuangcheng

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<sup>52</sup> GZSL, juan. 1214, QSL, book 24, p. 284a.

(1879-1882),<sup>53</sup> was a Manchu bannerman from the Bordered Yellow banner in Beijing.<sup>54</sup> He started his career as a clerk (*bitieshi*) and after fourteen years ascended to the position of colonel of the Guards' Division in 1872. In the same year, the captain-general of the Guards' Division nominated him for promotion. In 1877, Qingrui was recommended to the emperor by the Board of War and was approved for the nomination of assistant commander-in-chief. Then, in 1879 the emperor appointed him to the post of area commandant-in-chief of Shuangcheng. Given this close connection with the emperor, the banner government of Shuangcheng had as little autonomy as any civil county in Chinese history.

The appointment of the assistant commandants, however, was controlled by the area commander-in-chief. According to Qing rules, the chief official in banner garrisons held the authority to nominate the assistant commandants and any subordinate official posts to be reviewed by the Board of War. At the same time, the banner administration in Beijing would send another nominee to compete with the nominee sent by the banner garrisons. The Board of War usually ended up choosing the one nominated by the banner garrisons (Ding 2003). The personnel file (*jingzhi ce*) of Shuangcheng officials indicated that the appointment of the assistant commandant in Shuangcheng followed the same procedure as stipulated by national regulation.<sup>55</sup>

The localization of the appointment of assistant commandant created space for two types of local autonomy: the power of the area commander-in-chief to appoint the assistant commandant, and the empowerment of local society under a native official. Under the

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<sup>53</sup> See SCXZ (1926), book 1, p.107.

<sup>54</sup> For Qingrui's career path, see the resume of Qingrui reported on 1880. 6, SCPZGYMDA, reel. 93, vol. 364, pp. 201-202.

<sup>55</sup> For an example, see the personnel file compiled by the local government in 1880.8 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 93, vol. 364, pp.199-373).

civil government system, the magistrate had no authority to appoint his subordinate officials; the Board of Civil Office appointed all officials, including the assistant magistrate. This measure restricted the power of the magistrate and ensured centralization. At the same time, China had long practiced strict rules of avoidance which forbade local officials from taking posts in their places of origin. This measure prevented the usurpation of political power by a hereby-empowered local society. The absence of such measures as the rule of avoidance in the banner system has led such scholars as Ding Yizhuang to conclude that, within banner garrisons, close familial ties were built among officials/officers and soldiers (Ding 2003).

Despite the localization of the assistant commandant, the banner government applied a set of mechanisms to prevent the development of local autonomy. For the appointment of subordinate officials, the candidates' personnel files were their most important qualifications to the posts (Ding 2003). The area commander-in-chief had to send the resume of the nominee to the Board of War for approval. Every year, the local government would compile a personnel file for all active officials and send them to the Board of War for the emperor to review. This institution, by emphasizing experience instead of ability, restricted the power of the area commander-in-chief to choose anyone he might like.

Moreover, the banner government of Shuangcheng also applied a rule of avoidance at the local level; the supervisor of any banner institution had to be an outsider to that specific institution. For example, all banner captains in Shuangcheng were organized into two wings, right and left.<sup>56</sup> The two assistant commandants, when supervising the Wing

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<sup>56</sup> The number and scale of the Wing office changed several times over the course of state farm history due to reforms to the bureaucratic system in Shuangcheng. Prior to 1832, there were a total of six wings, two

divisions, had to avoid the wing in which he had worked as a banner captain. In 1869, the official rule stipulated that the assistant commandant supervising the Right Wing should be selected from banner captains of the Left Wing, and vice versa.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Captain's Office**

Below the Wing division was the Banner Captain's Office, analogous to a sub-county civilian government. The banner organization in Shuangcheng fundamentally differed from that of the standard Eight Banner administration in the way it classified the population. Standard banner administrations categorized populations by ethnicity, separating Manchu, Mongol, and Han-Chinese bannermen (*hanjun*) into different banners.<sup>58</sup> In Shuangcheng, however, the government mixed immigrants with various ethnicities under one administration and only differentiated metropolitan bannermen from rural bannermen. When rural bannermen arrived in Shuangcheng, the state established six captains to supervise the 120 villages, with each captain in charge of 20 villages.<sup>59</sup> In

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in each *tun*. When metropolitan bannermen settled in the villages, a separate Metropolitan Banner Wing was established to supervise their affairs. In 1852, corresponding to the upgrade of the local government, the state cut the Metropolitan Banner Wing and combined all the wings into two.

<sup>57</sup> SCPXLYMDA, item no. 4506.

<sup>58</sup> In the founding stage of the Eight Banners, Nurhachi and Hongtaiji had established three sets of eight banners – the Manchu eight banners, Mongol eight banners, and Han eight banners – to separately administer the three major ethnicities. After entering Beijing, the Qing rulers continued this practice and residentially separated these three sets of eight banners. Even in banner garrisons, where the banner populations of different ethnicities resided in the small Manchu cities, bannermen with different ethnicities still belonged to different captains. For example, in the banner garrison in Ningxia and Liangzhou, the state established separate banner captains for Manchu bannermen and Han bannermen.

<sup>59</sup> In the history of Shuangcheng state farm, the structure of the banner organization underwent a significant reform in 1869. Before 1869, there were three sets of eight banners, organizing villages in the central, right, and left *tun* respectively. Every five villages comprised a banner. A banner captain, by administering 20 villages, actually took charge of four banners. In 1869, the administrative reform in Shuangcheng consolidated the three sets of eight banners into one. To do so, the state added one more layer of organization, *jiala*, between village and banner. The previous banners formed by the five-village clusters were renamed *jiala*, and every four *jiala* comprised a banner. Consequently, the previous four banners under the left wing of the central *tun* were renamed Plain White banner, the four banners under the right wing of the central *tun* were renamed Plain Red banner. The left and right wings of the right *tun* were renamed Bordered Red banner and Bordered Blue banner respectively, and the left and right wings of

1832, the government established a separate Metropolitan Banner Wing to administer metropolitan bannermen.<sup>60</sup> In 1851, when the banner administration was consolidated under the Area Commander-in- chief, the government dissolved the Metropolitan Banner Wing and merged the administration of the metropolitan bannermen with that of the rural bannermen.<sup>61</sup> This mixed administration, however, only lasted for nineteen years. In 1870, the local government again established two captain's posts to administer exclusively the affairs of metropolitan bannermen.<sup>62</sup> The two assistant commandants worked concurrently as captains of the two metropolitan banners. Therefore, in essence, the banner organization in Shuangcheng was geographically defined.

As the lowest-level state institution, the Captain's Office was responsible for rent collection, land allocation, population and land registration, and security maintenance. In pursuit of these tasks, each Captain's Office was staffed by one banner lieutenant (*xiaoqixiao*) in charge of public security, one or two clerks to process official documents, three tax preceptor (*lingcui*) to collect rent, and a team of 33 to 34 soldiers led by two vanguards (*qianfeng*). Every three months, the Captain's Office would routinely check its administrative area and send a report on such security issues as unofficial immigrants living inside the banner villages and the illegal production of explosives. In addition, without juridical rights, the Captain's Office would forward disputes to the assistant commandant and then to the area commander-in-chief for judgement.

Interestingly, a large proportion of the major personnel in the Captain's Office were

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the left *tun* were renamed Bordered White banner and Plain Blue banner. The metropolitan bannermen were administered by the Plain Yellow banner and the Bordered Yellow banner. Despite the administrative reforms that changed the number and structure of banner organizations, the number and structure of villages supervised by a captain remained the same.

<sup>60</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 158, vol. 628, p. 155.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> SCPXLYMDA, item no. 4506.

non-local. In table 5.3, a comparison of the banner population register and official/soldier register shows that in 1874, among the three most important officials – captain, lieutenant, and clerks – not one of the captains or lieutenants was from a village under the banner office in which he worked. Of the eight captains, three were from villages other than those administered by the banner office in which they worked, and the other five were not found in the population registers of the banner villagers at all, indicating that they probably resided in the Shuangcheng seat. Similarly, of the seven lieutenants, five were from villages other than those under the banner office in which they worked, and the other two were not from the banner villages at all. The composition of clerks was slightly more localized than that of captains and lieutenants; four of the twelve clerks were from villages under the banner in which they worked. Yet two thirds of the clerks were still from outside; four clerks were from villages outside the administration of the banner for which they worked, and four were not from the banner villages at all. The composition of banner captains in 1880 reveals a similar pattern. Six of the eight captains were from villages outside the administration of the banner for which they worked, and two were not from the banner villages at all.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See the career record book of the officials and soldiers in 1880 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 93, vol. 364, p199-220).

Table 5. 3 The location of the government personnel’s residence relative to the banners in which they worked, 1874.

	Relationship of home to the banner they worked		
	Inside	Outside	
		In the state farm	Not in the state farm
Captain	0	3	5
Lieutenant	0	5	2
Clerk	4	4	4

Sources: The salary book of the officials and soldiers in Shuangcheng in 1874 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 184, vol. 759, pp. 21-39) and the 1874 population registers (SCPGTBDHKDM reel 1834668, vol. 92; reel 1834675, vol. 145; reel 1834695, vol. 282; reel 1834700, vol. 351; reel 1834715, vol. 449; reel 1834724, vol. 537, vol. 539; reel 1834663, vol. 31).

This “foreign” or outside composition of the personnel in the Captain’s Office reveals that the structure of the Shuangcheng banner government still followed the principle of separating the state institution from the society it governed. Although the banner system had no clearly stated rule of avoidance in official appointment, the Shuangcheng government apparently incorporated an equivalent principle. Even at the sub-county level, the appointment of the major officials, the captain and lieutenants, followed a rule of avoidance that prevented the localization of government power. This rule not only facilitated the centralization of state control, but also distinguished the state from the local society.

The military nature and the structure of the Shuangcheng banner government, moreover, increased this separation of state and society. First, the banner officials sometimes had to respond to the state’s call for military force on the battlefield, and thus periodically left the Shuangcheng administration with insufficient personnel. By definition, the officials and soldiers in Shuangcheng were part of the national Eight Banner army. Therefore, in times of peace, they were local officials; in times of war, they were soldiers. Throughout the history of the Shuangcheng state farm, the local government

constantly sent soldiers to fight various rebellions in China proper.<sup>64</sup> For example, in 1880, the Left Department reported that, although there were seven lieutenant posts and one conditional lieutenant post in Shuangcheng, two were on active battlefield duty and one was in charge of the training of armies.<sup>65</sup> Thus, only four lieutenants could work on local administration. In the same year, the captain of the Plain White banner also reported a personnel shortage for the same reason.<sup>66</sup> Of the three tax preceptors in charge of the farming affairs, one was on active battlefield duty and one had to fulfill multiple tasks in the Shuangcheng seat. Thereby, only one tax preceptor was available to collect rent and handle farming affairs for all twenty villages under the Plain White banner. To solve the above personnel shortage, the local government had to petition the provincial government to use temporary personnel for reasons of expedience.

Second, since all Captain's Offices were located in the seat of Shuangcheng, there was a considerable distance between the formal seat of local government and the villages located in the right and left *tun*. In 1851, the government moved all Captain's Offices in the right and left *tun* to the seat in the central *tun*, requiring that the captains and their subordinates work in the county seat. Only at times of rent collection and for special tasks would the tax preceptor and clerks set up temporary offices in locations close to the villages they administered.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, even in the banner administration, in other words, geographic and administrative practices were designed to protect rural society from 'excessive' direct

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<sup>64</sup> Experience on the battlefield was an important qualification for these officials and soldiers in promotion. The career record books of Shuangcheng officials reveals that almost all officials above the rank of lieutenant in Shuangcheng had fought in battles before they were appointed to their current posts (SCPZGYMDA, reel 93, vol. 364, pp.199-220).

<sup>65</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 95, vol. 371, p.181.

<sup>66</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 93, vol. 364, pp.143-146.

<sup>67</sup> See the government expenditure on stipends for tax preceptors and clerks who traveled to the villages to collect rent.

government rule. As had long been true in China proper, the state made the chief village head a central intermediary in all communication between village society and local government.<sup>68</sup> The geographic distance between the seat of Shuangcheng and the villages increased the difficulty of communication. The nearest village in the right *tun* was 16.7 kilometers away from the county seat, and the farthest village was 35.7 kilometers away. Similarly, the nearest village in the left *tun* was 16.1 kilometers away from the county seat, and the farthest village was 44.3 kilometers away.<sup>69</sup> To travel from the farthest villages to the county seat, therefore, could take more than a day.<sup>70</sup> The distance between the Captain's Office and the villages therefore limited the "reach" of the state and left space for local autonomy.

Since the population registers were compiled centrally in the Captain's Office, the distance between the Captain's Office and the villages had fundamental consequences for the production and maintenance of registers. The tax preceptor and clerks, the major personnel who processed the population registers, first created the registers according to the records transferred from the immigrants' places of origin. Then, once the chief village head reported any vital demographic events occurring to villagers, the Captain's Office would promptly update the registers. Occasionally, the tax preceptor would conduct a site

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<sup>68</sup> Despite the Chinese state's high level of centralization, the rulers of Chinese dynasties were also careful not to put rural societies under excessive government control. For example, in the Ming dynasty, the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang laid out the basic regulation of local government: local officials must live and work in the county government; without a sufficient excuse, officials should not leave the county government. Thereby, the locally-recruited runners carried out most of the government policy and administrative tasks (He 2006). Zhu Yuanzhang established these rules with the goal of protecting the local society from the officials' exploitation and excessive extraction. To the extreme, he even executed a Provincial Administration Commissioner (*buzhengshi*) for constantly going to the countryside to extort money from the people (*Daogao xubian*, no. 17, p. 275). In his study on Chen Hongmou, William Rowe analyzed Chen's view of the state-society relation and revealed that some local officials in the Qing consciously restricted the scope of government behavior and provided society with autonomy (Rowe 2001).

<sup>69</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel 158, vol. 628, pp.148-194.

<sup>70</sup> According to the Qing regulation, the standard traveling speed of the government post office when sending official documents was 28.8 kilometers a day. Therefore, traveling more than 30 kilometers a day even exceeded the standard speed of government personnel with a horse.

investigation to get more accurate information about the villagers.<sup>71</sup> In the eleventh month of each year, the Captain's Office would send an updated copy of the population register to the area commander-in-chief. Given the work of the Captain's Office, the area commander-in-chief then totally relied on the records in the population registers as references in judging legal cases. The Captain's Office was required to check and provide accurate information to the state government whenever asked to do so. By the end of each year, the local banner government would have "cleaned up" the registers submitted by the Captain's Office and sent them to the general of Jilin to review and archive. The insufficient personnel in the Captain's Office and the distance between the office and villages therefore determined that the production of population registers was still largely controlled by the local societies. As Baocheng's case illustrated, the chief village head and even the villagers themselves thus had the autonomy to pursue their own interests.

Consequently, the population registration process presented an ironic relationship between superiors and inferiors. On the one hand, in institutional terms, the immigrant households and village heads were controlled by the registration system, as the area commander-in-chief and the general of Jilin crafted registration policy. On the other hand, in terms of the production of population registers, the immigrant households, village heads, and Captain's Office produced the population registers, while the area commander-in-chief and the general of Jilin mainly consumed those registers. Since the population registers were formed from the reports of villagers and their heads, along with the work of the clerks, these "inferiors" gained control over the production of the records. Ironically, the policy

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<sup>71</sup> In the Shuangcheng population registers, the registration of such vital demographic events as deaths and births were not evenly distributed over the years. The distribution of vital demographic events in the registers suggests that the Captain's Office probably conducted a site investigation to check the quality of population registers once every three years.

makers had no control over the actual processes of documentation and maintenance. These dynamic relationships therefore nurtured the flexibility of the state institution and the agency of its alleged subordinates.

### **Conclusion: control and autonomy**

The banner institutions in Shuangcheng presented an ironic confluence of state control and local autonomy. At first glance, the Shuangcheng state farm represents a successful case of state control over local society. First, the settlement not only equalized the physical residence of the banner immigrants, but also successfully disassembled organic units like descent groups, thus eliminating potentially competitive organizations. The state's equal allocation of land also prevented the emergence of wealthy and powerful families as local elites. Through these arrangements, the state institution was able to directly tackle these immigrant households. Consequently, all banner immigrants in Shuangcheng were exposed to state power and became equally subordinate – equal because they were uniformly displaced and organized by household, and equal because they had identical rights and entitlements defined by the state.

Moreover, the state-managed population registration system succeeded as the most important instrument for organizing life in the state farm. As the official record that defined the immigrants' entitlement rights, the population registers intertwined social elements and state institutions, uniting everything from the household to the provincial government. These immigrant households actively responded to population registration because it marked the official guarantee of their land ownership. The village head and the Captain's Office updated population registers to fulfill their duties. The area commander-in-chief relied on population registration as a reference for governance, e.g.

judging property disputes to protect the haves. The provincial government documented population registers to supervise the work of the local government.

However, despite these forms of strong state control, the design of the local banner government still prohibited the state from directly managing local affairs. When planning the state farm government, the central government apparently incorporated principles that prevented the localization of the county and sub-county government and thus distinguished the state from local society. The separation between state and society was subsequently reinforced by the banner government's inherent military inadequacy. The foreign composition of major officials, the insufficient personnel, and the distance between banner offices and the villages therefore rendered much space for local society to manage its own affairs.

These limitations on state control, together with the absence of a local gentry in Shuangcheng generated an unusual model of local autonomy—an autonomy with limited control. While in the civilian world, the separation of state and society left space for kinship groups and local gentry to function as an indispensable power in maintaining social order, in Shuangcheng the state eliminated the power of gentry and kinship organizations, thereby creating a power vacuum in the banner villages. The interaction between the state and local society therefore differed from the traditional framework, where the state faced a society represented by an authoritative local gentry. Instead, in Shuangcheng, the state directly faced individual families who tried to manipulate state policies to pursue their own interests. The absence of an authoritative local power thus rendered individuals and households greater autonomy. As I will show in part three, this local autonomy provided each level of local society—village, household, and individual—with opportunities to use

its own methods to accumulate landed wealth and manage landed property. Thereby, the within-category equality established by the state land allocation was vulnerable to various local practices that could introduce stratification within the population categories of Shuangcheng.

## **Part Three Local Practice**

### **Chapter VI Land Acquisition**

The Qing dynasty saw both increasing autocracy and growing flexibility in the imperial rule. On the one hand, policy-making became highly centralized. Beginning in the 1730s, the emperor established a Grand Council and moved the decision-making center from the outer court to the inner court to enforce his control over it (Bartlett 1991). On the other hand, the procedures of policy implementation and institutional operationalization at local society were highly flexible. Officials enjoyed flexibility in adapting state policies to local contexts (Huang 2001; Rowe 2001). With this flexibility, local elites also empowered themselves and played an important role in local governance, mediating disputes, running charity organizations, and even organizing local militia (Huang 2001; Kuhn 1980; Liang 1997). This flexibility thus allowed the Chinese bureaucratic system to constantly develop new institutions while maintaining its core.

Although previous studies have thoroughly documented this institutional flexibility, its implications for Qing Northeast China still need to be better understood. Because of state hegemony over land ownership in Northeast China, the court strictly prohibited private land transactions to protect state control. Therefore, customary practices of land transfer acceptable under private ownership became ‘illegal’ under the state ownership system. For a long time, scholars studying Northeast China have over-emphasized the antagonistic relationship between state regulations and forbidden customary practices (Diao and Yi 1994; Ding 1985; Isett 2004, 2006; Lee 1970; Yi, Chen, and Li 1992), which continued despite their illegality. This scholarship emphasizes the antagonistic

relationship between state regulation and local practice because they mainly focus on the central government as the representation of state while neglecting the ramification of government's interests at the local level; in local governance, the provincial and local governments do not necessarily share the same interests as the central government. In fact, even in Shuangcheng, where the state had a stronger dominance over social lives, the local government never eradicated local practices that contradicted official rules. Instead, it not only tolerated these practices but also formalized some of them to achieve its goal of governance. In this sense, Shuangcheng and Northeast China were similar to other regions of China Proper.

The history of land acquisition in Shuangcheng illustrates the flexibility of state policy to accommodate the needs of both government and local society. In Shuangcheng, alongside formal state land allocations to metropolitan and rural bannermen, residents developed informal practices to accumulate landed wealth. These practices included the private cultivation of unassigned land, land rental, and land sales. While these methods of land acquisition initially developed outside the state's purview, beginning in the 1840s, the state eventually formalized and regulated them, thereby expanding its control and sources of revenue. Residents of Shuangcheng were thus able to accumulate landed wealth both through formal state policies of land allocation and through informal practices of land acquisition.

In this chapter, I explore three types of informal land cultivation and land transactions among the bannermen of Shuangcheng: the residents' cultivation of *nazu* land, the metropolitan bannermen's exchanging money for 302 *jichan* plots in 1878, and private land transactions between bannermen. In the following section, I examine the history of

the reclamation of the category of *nazu* land beginning in the 1840s. While the category of *nazu* land was mainly opened by Shuangcheng residents' private cultivation of unassigned land, the state finally registered this land to increase revenue. In section two, I study the 1878 government allocation of 302 *jichan* plots to metropolitan bannermen. In contrast to previous land allocations that emphasized equity, this time the state allocated land for money and therefore enabled stratification. Finally, in section three, I disentangle the private land transactions between bannermen from the official practices of land transfer; most private land transactions between bannermen took the form of official land transfers, and moreover, this was with connivance of local officials. Through these studies, I show the process by which state representatives at various levels gradually adjusted government policy to accommodate local practices, and, at the same time, how state policy deeply influenced local practice and wealth stratification.

### **The cultivation of *nazu* land**

In Shuangcheng, the category of *nazu* land, or rent-paying land, included three types of farmland—*baqianshang*, *ziken*, and *maohuang*—for which landowners paid rent to the government.<sup>1</sup> As table 6.1 shows, these three types of land emerged between 1845 and 1856. By 1856, the state had registered a total of 58,320.22 *shang* (107,309.2 hectares) of *nazu* land. In 1883, the amount of *nazu* land in Shuangcheng reached 79,344.24 *shang*

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<sup>1</sup> I followed the names used by the Shuangcheng government to classify categories of land. In the land registers, the category of *nazu* land referred to three types of land—*baqianshang*, *ziken*, and *maohuang*—which the government registered and started to collect rent for during the period 1845-1856. In addition to *nazu* land, the government also collected rent from several other types of land—*gongzu*, *suique*, *hengchan*, *sanwanshang* (please refer to Appendix 1). The two categories—*jichan* and *nazu*—comprised the majority of registered farmland in Shuangcheng and the majority of landed wealth for metropolitan and rural bannermen. The other types of land were either small in amount or temporary in administration. In addition, farmers who cultivated the other types of land were mainly civilian commoners and bannermen whose population category was not specified. Therefore, in this dissertation, I mainly analyze the two major land categories, *jichan* and *nazu*.

(145,993.4 hectares). By then, *nazu* land accounted for 47 percent of registered farmland, ranking second among the five major land categories in Shuangcheng (preceded only by *jichan* land).<sup>2</sup> For each *shang* of *nazu* land, the government collected an annual rent of 660 copper coins. Therefore, *nazu* land constituted not only an important part to the Shuangcheng residents' landed wealth but also an important source of local government revenue.

Table 6. 1 Land types and amount under the category of *nazu*.

Time of first reclamation	Type	Amount in Shang	Cumulative amount in Shang	Cumulative amount in hectares
1845	baqianshang	8,000.00	8,000.00	14,720.00
1853	ziken	42,502.32	50,502.32	92,924.27
1856	maohuang	7,817.90	58,320.22	107,309.20
1881	fuduo	19,528.82	77,849.04	143,242.23
1883	fuduo	1,495.20	79,344.24	145,993.40

Sources: The government reports of land types and amount in 1891 and 1904. SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834732, vol. 676; reel 1834733, vol. 688.

In contrast to the allocation of *jichan* land, which the state dominated, the opening of *nazu* land occurred under a combination of forces from both state and society. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the worsening fiscal crisis pushed the state to open land in Northeast China in order to increase revenue. However, the Shuangcheng residents' private cultivation of unassigned land continued unabated. In response, the state adjusted its policy to register the unassigned land, thereby meeting the needs of both government and residents. Thus, while the allocation of *jichan* land demonstrated the state's domination, the development of *nazu* land revealed the flexibility of state policy.

<sup>2</sup> The five major categories of land in Shuangcheng were *jichan*, *nazu*, *suique*, *gongzu*, and *hengchan* (See Appendix One).

## The development of *nazu* land

The government first opened *nazu* land in the 1840s in order to increase revenue. In 1844, Jing'ebu, the general of Jilin (1840-1848),<sup>3</sup> proposed to open about 8,000 *shang* of unassigned land around the banner villages to the metropolitan and rural bannermen, and collect rent on this land.<sup>4</sup> These 8,000 *shang* of land, named *baqianshang* (eight thousand *shang*), became the first type of *nazu* land. For each *shang* of land, the government collected 500 copper coins (0.5 string) as rent. *Baqianshang* land generated an annual rent income of 4,300 strings of copper coins, which was equivalent to 1,869 taels of silver,<sup>5</sup> and could purchase 4672.5 market *shi* (345,765 pounds) of grain in the local market.<sup>6</sup> According to Jing'ebu, the government would use this rent as a special fund to support the metropolitan bannermen's farming.<sup>7</sup>

The residents' private cultivation of unassigned land in Shuangcheng predated the government's action of opening it. Conflicts over the private cultivation of unassigned land emerged as an issue for the state in the 1840s. Between the late 1840s and early 1850s, quite a few discontented bannermen traveled to Beijing and filed capital appeals, disclosing that bannermen in Shuangcheng were cultivating unassigned land without

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<sup>3</sup> See Li 2004, p. 23

<sup>4</sup> See Jing'ebu's memorial in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6a.

<sup>5</sup> The exchange rate of silver in 1845 in the capital was 2 strings of copper coins for 1 tael of silver; in the provinces, the exchange rate was 2.2 to 2.3 strings of copper coins for 1 tael of silver. In Shuangcheng in 1867, the exchange rate of silver was 2.6 strings of copper coins for 1 tael of silver (SCPZGYMDA, reel. 162, vol. 645, pp. 57-58). Since the price of silver was increasing in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the silver price in Shuangcheng in 1845 would have been around 2.2 to 2.3 strings of copper coins per tael.

<sup>6</sup> According to Jing'ebu, the lowest grain price in contemporary Shuangcheng was 0.3 tael of silver. Here I use a higher price of 0.4 tael of silver, which frequently appeared as the grain price in the 1860s.

<sup>7</sup> The government not only provided the initial farming supplies for the metropolitan bannermen, but also continued to provide funds for the maintenance of their farming and living essentials [more specificity or less].

official permission.<sup>8</sup> In response to these capital appeals, the provincial government sent personnel to investigate and re-measure the land cultivated by metropolitan and rural bannermen. This re-measurement identified a total of 42,502 *shang* (78,204 hectares) of unassigned land under cultivation by Shuangcheng residents.

The Shuangcheng bannermen had acquired the unassigned land by both encroaching on the area surrounding their *jichan* plots and clearing land at new locations. The farmers first began to blur the plot boundaries and encroach on the waste areas between plots to expand their land holding. Moreover, some banner villagers even organized themselves as an entire village to appropriate unassigned land. For example, in a lawsuit concerning a land dispute in 1882, a metropolitan bannerman named De'an recounted a collective action of private land cultivation by his grandfather and the fellow villagers.<sup>9</sup> In the early years, the villagers in the first village of the Plain White banner in the central *tun* (later the first village of the first *jiala* of the Bordered Yellow banner), where De'an's family resided, collectively cleared about 400 *shang* (736 hectares) of unassigned land northwest of their village. De'an's grandfather and another metropolitan bannerman organized this action.

The universal practice of private land cultivation in Shuangcheng finally pushed the state to officially recognize the farmers' ownership of these plots. In 1853, the state formally registered the 42,502 *shang* of unassigned land and collected rent on it.<sup>10</sup> In the land register, this land was titled *ziken* land (additionally cultivated land). Under the household heads' name, the state recorded the number of plots and their sizes to indicate ownership. In return, the household head would pay an annual rent of 660 copper coins

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<sup>8</sup> See the government report to the provincial government regarding the tracking of *fuduo* land in 1880.6 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 849-2, p. 195).

<sup>9</sup> See the closing report of the case regarding the land disputes between De'an and Shuanzhu (SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 871-2, pp. 135-141).

<sup>10</sup> See the government report to the provincial government regarding the tracking of *fuduo* land in 1880.6 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 849-2, p. 195) and SCXZ (1990) p. 15.

for each *shang* of land, a standard rate that had applied to all rent-paying land in Jilin Province since 1852. Of the 660-cooper-coin rent, 600 were allocated to government revenue, and 60 were used to cover expenses incurred in rent collection, including office supplies and a stipend for government personnel.

The development of *ziken* land illustrated how the state adjusted policies to accommodate national and local changes, and thus to strengthen control. In this scenario, the force of change originated in local society. While Shuangcheng residents had long cultivated land privately, prior to 1853, the government had never tried to officially manage privately-cultivated land. Previously, officials who discovered private cultivation simply ordered the farmers to abandon their plots. For example, the 8,000 *shang* of land the government opened to the bannermen in 1845 had been previously cultivated and then abandoned.<sup>11</sup> The government, by denying farmers' official rights to cultivate land privately, tried to maintain the authority of the state as the sole power in land distribution. However, the pervasiveness of unregulated cultivation eventually overwhelmed the capacity of the old state policies. In order to effectively control the land and the people, the state then chose to turn unofficial land cultivators into official tenants; by giving people official rights, the state gained control.

The fact that it was not the local government but the central and provincial government that initiated the registration of *ziken* land also reveals the different interests of the central and local governments. Although the local government was well aware of the residents' private land cultivation, it did not provide any effective solution. Only when Shuangcheng residents filed capital appeals, did the state pay attention to this local issue. In this case, the local and central governments did not cooperate with each other because

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<sup>11</sup> See Jing'ebu's memorial in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6a.

they did not share the same interest. Therefore, when discontented Shuangcheng residents failed to secure their interests under the local government, they turned to the central government for institutional support.

Through capital appeals, Shuangcheng residents placed the central and local governments in an antagonistic position toward one another. In the Qing, any local legal cases first went through the county government for an initial judgment. The county government would then send the case, along with the initial judgment, to its supervising institution for review. In Shuangcheng, the provincial government reviewed and finalized the judgment in all cases except death sentences. Only when the involved parties were dissatisfied with the judgment of local and provincial governments, would they appeal directly to the capital. In most capital appeals, the plaintiffs not only appealed their original cases, but also complained about local officials' unjust judgments (Zhao 1998). Although the central government usually chose to support the local government, in the case of Shuangcheng, the central government acted from the top to correct the local officials' behavior.

The registration of *ziken* land in Shuangcheng also reflected the national trend toward state recognition of the private ownership of banner land in the early 1850s. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the increasing military expenditure necessary to quell foreign invasion and inner rebellions aggravated the state's fiscal crisis. To ameliorate this crisis, the state turned to banner land, which had previously been allocated to bannermen for free, as a new source of revenue. In 1852, the state started to collect rent on banner land in Beijing and North China.<sup>12</sup> In a related move, the state accepted land

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<sup>12</sup> WZSL, juan 62, QSL, Book 40, pp. 830b-831a. In 1852, the state allowed land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners in Beijing and Zhili, but still restricted free land transactions between

transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners and recognized civilian commoners' ownership of banner land in other regions of China proper. In Shuangcheng, although the state still strictly prevented land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners, its recognition of the private cultivators' ownership of *ziken* land met the need for rent income.

From 1853 to 1860, the state took more proactive steps to open unassigned land in Shuangcheng as *nazu* land. When checking the amount of registered *ziken* land, the Board of Revenue decided to open all unassigned land in Shuangcheng in order to prevent future private cultivation and conflicts. By calculating the acreage of Shuangcheng, the board officials determined that 7,817.9 *shang* (14,385 hectares) of land remained unassigned, and should be opened for Shuangcheng residents to claim.<sup>13</sup> Receiving this order, the provincial government again sent personnel to survey the land and identify the unassigned plots. In 1856, the government classified this 7,817.9 *shang* as *maohuang* land, or raw and uncultivated land, and opened it to Shuangcheng residents in return for rent. By then, all the farmland in Shuangcheng had been opened. The rent from *nazu* land constituted an important source of provincial revenue. In 1867, in addition to supporting the local government's regular administrative expenses, the rent also covered 30 percent of the salaries of local government officials and soldiers.<sup>14</sup> In 1882, the percentage of officials' and soldiers' salaries paid by the rent increased to 60.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, as a portion of

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the two population categories in Liaoning Province. The archive in Jilin and Shuangcheng shows that in Jilin and Shuangcheng, land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners were still prohibited.

<sup>13</sup> See the government report to the provincial government regarding the tracking of *fuduo* land in 1880.6 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 849-2, p.195).

<sup>14</sup> See the official report regarding the distribution of the officials and soldiers' salaries (SCPZGYMDA, reel 162, vol. 645, pp.40-43). In 1867, 70 percent of the salaries came from the provincial government, and the other 30 percent, amounting to 2,657.25 strings of copper coins, came from the rent income preserved in Shuangcheng.

<sup>15</sup> See the notice of distributing the soldiers' and clerks' salaries on 1882. 8.9 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol.

provincial revenue, Shuangcheng also regularly provided 10,000 taels of silver from its rent income to Sanxing, a banner garrison in Jilin, to pay officials' and soldiers' salaries.<sup>16</sup>

After the initial registration of the above *nazu* land types, the state continued to track the land in Shuangcheng to identify further unregulated cultivation. Once identified, the government could register the privately-cultivated land and collect rent.<sup>17</sup> Since all arable land in Shuangcheng had been opened by 1856, further private cultivation mainly took two forms: the encroachment of plot boundaries and the reclamation and cultivation of previously-waterlogged land. In 1879, driven by the urgent demand for revenue, the state made another large-scale survey of land in Shuangcheng.<sup>18</sup> The officials measured the size of each plot and compared it to the registered size. If the actual size exceeded the registered size, the officials registered the extra size under the category of *fuduo* land, or extra land. From inception to completion, this survey took two years. In 1881, the government registered a total of 19,528.82 *shang* (35,933 hectares) of *fuduo* land.<sup>19</sup> In 1883, an additional 1495.2 *shang* (2751.2 hectares) of *fuduo* land was registered. In a related move, the government started to issue a certificate to the owner of each *nazu* plot, stating the plot size and boundaries. This certificate served as official proof of the

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874, p. 31). The salary of high officials came from the provincial government, while 60 percent of the salaries of soldiers and clerks, amounting to 7,846.2 strings of copper coins, came from local rent income.

<sup>16</sup> See the notice from the provincial government regarding the distribution of salaries in the locations in Jilin province (SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 846, pp. 220-225).

<sup>17</sup> See the government report to the provincial government regarding the tracking of *fuduo* land in 1880 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 849-2, p. 197).

<sup>18</sup> See the order of the Shuangcheng government regarding checking extra land in the local area (SCPZGYMDA, 202, vol. 838-1, pp.39-43). In this document, the provincial government emphasized the importance of rent income for provincial revenue. Moreover, the government especially stated the difficult situation faced by the government: the drought affected grain yield, assistance from other provinces had not arrived yet, and it was time to recruit and train the army. Thus, the government urgently needed money. Although the government had been ordering the residents to voluntarily report their extra land for a year, few people had done so. Therefore, the government had to send personnel to conduct a large-scale investigation.

<sup>19</sup> See the government-reported list of land types and amounts in Shuangcheng in 1891.4 (SCPGTBDHKDM, vol. 676).

farmer's ownership. In order to acquire a certificate, a bannerman paid a one-time certificate fee (*zhaofei qian*) of 200 copper coins for each *shang* of land.<sup>20</sup> By 1904, the Shuangcheng banner government maintained a total of 605,468.6 *shang* (1,114,062.2 hectares) of *nazu* land.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to providing state revenue, *nazu* land also constituted an indispensable part of Shuangcheng residents' landed wealth. Compared to the typical yield from the land, the rent paid was low. In the mid-1820s, the estimated yield of one *shang* of land was 6 market *shi*. If the yield remained the same in the 1850s, at the grain price of 0.4 taels of silver per *shi*, a farmer could receive 2.4 taels of silver (about 5,000 coins) from one *shang* of land. The 660 coins of rent therefore only amounted to one sixth of the typical yield of the land. Compared to the rate of rent in the Yangzi delta, which was usually half of the yield from the land, this rent was indeed low. Moreover, even landowners who rented out their *nazu* plots still made a considerable gain. The estimated fee for private land rental was 2.3 market *shi* of grain,<sup>22</sup> which equaled about 2,000 coins. After paying the 660-coin rent, the landowner could still net 1,200 coins of income for each *shang* of land.

### **Principles of *nazu* land distribution**

The opening of *nazu* land not only provided a new source of landed wealth to Shuangcheng residents but also introduced the principle of stratification by ability.

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<sup>20</sup> See the order of the Shuangcheng government in 1880.9 regarding the issuing of land certificates (SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 850, p.202). Regarding the amount of the certificate fee, see the government judgment of a land dispute in 1880.6 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 844, pp. 319-321).

<sup>21</sup> See the government list of land types and amounts in 1904 (SCPGTDHKDM, vol. 688). The total amount of registered *nazu* land was 609,554.7 *shang*. Due to the construction of the railway, which occupied 4090.35 *shang*, the actual amount of *nazu* land was 605,468.6 *shang*.

<sup>22</sup> SCPMGDA, item no. 270

Beginning with the initial opening of *nazu* land, the government allowed stratification in its distribution. As Jing'ebu proposed in 1844, assistant banner adult males in Shuangcheng could claim as much *baqianshang* land as their abilities allowed; there was no restriction on the amount a household could claim.<sup>23</sup> The principle of stratification in *nazu* land possession distinguished *nazu* land from *jichan* land and revealed the different purposes the two types of land served: while the state allocated *jichan* land to bannermen as welfare, it relied on the rent from *nazu* land for revenue; while the state gave out *jichan* land to secure loyalty from metropolitan and rural bannermen, it distributed *nazu* land in exchange for money. Therefore, the state's purpose of rent collection determined that the most important trait of *nazu* landowners was their ability to produce rent.

By the same token, in principle, metropolitan and rural bannermen and civilian commoners enjoyed equivalent entitlement to *nazu* land. Since ability was the most important trait in allocating *nazu* land, state policy did not discriminate among different population categories, with the one exception of floating bannermen. Therefore, in *nazu* land ownership, there was no preordained inequality between metropolitan and rural bannermen. While in *jichan* land possession, metropolitan bannermen enjoyed more favorable land grants than did rural bannermen, in *nazu* land possession, opportunities for rural bannermen were equal to those of metropolitan bannermen. The amount of *nazu* land owned by rural bannermen was equivalent to their share of the population. As table 6.2 shows, in 1870, rural bannermen possessed a total of 314,858.6 *shang* (579,339.8 hectares) of *nazu* land, which accounted for 82.6 percent of all *nazu* land owned by

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<sup>23</sup> See Jing'ebu's memorial in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6a: "This part of uncultivated land should be designated to generate rent for the government and thus should not be designated as constant property (*hengchan*). Let the brothers and sons of the officials, soldiers, and principal adult males claim [this part of land] according to their ability. There is no need to restrict on the number of *shang* [a household could claim], neither the number of households [who could claim this part of land]."

bannermen. This percentage was about the same as the rural banner households' 81.8 percent share of total banner households, demonstrating equality of opportunity in *nazu* landownership between metropolitan and rural bannermen. Moreover, as time passed, the rural bannermen's share of *nazu* land even gradually increased. In 1889, while the rural banner households accounted for 75.9 percent of the banner households, they possessed 339,274.9 *shang* (624,265.8 hectares) of *nazu* land, which accounted for 87.9 percent of the total *nazu* land owned by metropolitan and rural bannermen.

Table 6. 2 The distribution of *nazu* land by household and population category, 1870-1889.

	1870				1889			
	Household		Land		Household		Land	
	N.	Percent	Amount ( <i>shang</i> )	Percent	N.	Percent	Amount ( <i>shang</i> )	Percent
Metro.	696	18.2	66,493.0	17.4	1,000	24.1	46,901.3	12.1
Rural	3,133	81.8	314,858.6	82.6	3,141	75.9	339,274.9	87.9
Total	3,829	100.0	381,351.6	100.0	4,141	100.0	386,176.2	100.0

Sources: The 1870 and 1889 population and land registers of metropolitan and rural bannermen.

Not only did rural and metropolitan bannermen have equal access to *nazu* land, but civilian commoners and the floating bannermen, though excluded from *jichan* land allocation, also enjoyed opportunities to own *nazu* land. Civilian commoners had official rights to *nazu* land. In 1876, of the three types of *nazu* land—*ziken*, *baqianshang*, and *maohuang*—civilian commoners possessed 902.5 *shang* (1,660.6 hectares). Although this was a small fraction of all *nazu* land, it indicates civilian commoners' official ownership of *nazu* land. Moreover, civilian commoners also enjoyed considerable ownership of some other land categories, farming the land and paying rent to the

government.<sup>24</sup> In total, civilian commoners owned 21,132.2 *shang* (38,883.2 hectares) of land that was regularly under the administration of the Shuangcheng government.<sup>25</sup>

The right of floating bannermen to own *nazu* land was less clear. On one hand, the state policy that prevented floating bannermen from officially owning land remained in effect. In land disputes involving floating bannermen, metropolitan and rural bannermen frequently used this policy to defend their interests; and reference to this policy placed floating bannermen in a disadvantaged position. On the other hand, however, the government's restrictions on landownership by floating bannermen did loosen. In official documents, government officials never used this policy to deny land registration to any individual floating bannerman. Instead, it was the metropolitan and rural bannermen who frequently used the policy to prevent floating bannermen from registering land. Moreover, the recorded population status of *nazu* land owners included a category separate from metropolitan and rural bannermen and civilian commoners, titled 'banner tenants (*qidian*).' The title 'banner tenants' revealed the landowners' banner affiliation and their distinction from the metropolitan and rural bannermen. These 'banner tenants' were probably floating bannermen who managed to register *nazu* land as individuals. In 1876, individuals listed as 'banner tenants' owned a total of 5,624.4 *shang* (10,348.9 hectares) of *nazu* land.

Interestingly, however, despite the fact that stratification characterized the distribution of *nazu* land, egalitarian principles still influenced state and local people's practices of land distribution. In the distribution of *baqianshang* land, the government divided the land equally into 20.6-*shang* (37.9-hectare) plots to prevent land concentration. Each

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<sup>24</sup> All *hengchan* and *gongzu* land, half of *sanwanshang* land, and majority of *suique* land.

<sup>25</sup> This total amount of land did not include that of the *sanwanshang* land, since the Shuangcheng banner government did not control it for a long time.

individual could only claim one plot. Therefore, the majority of Shuangcheng households that claimed this land still owned only one plot. As the 1876 land registers reveal, of the 164 households that owned *baqianshang* land, 111 households, or 67.7 percent, owned only one plot; 22 households, or 13.4 percent, owned two plots; 31 households, or 18.9 percent, owned three or more plots.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, in villager-organized private cultivation, the villagers also emulated the government's allocation of *jichan* land to distribute privately-opened land, maintaining between-category inequality and within-category equality. For example, in the collective opening of the 400 *shang* of land by De'an's grandfather and his fellow villagers, the villagers allocated more land to metropolitan bannermen than to rural bannermen, but equally divided the land among the bannermen within each category: each metropolitan household had a share of 13.1 *shang* (24.1 hectares), and each rural household had a share of 8.4 *shang* (15.5 hectares).<sup>27</sup> After this equal land division, 16 *shang* (29.4 hectares) of land remained. The villagers then agreed to give this 16 *shang* to the two organizers, 8 *shang* for each, as compensation for their work. This distribution of the 400 *shang* of land strictly followed the egalitarian model established by the state; the metropolitan bannermen enjoyed better entitlement than the rural bannermen, and the land distribution within each population category was equal. Therefore, the egalitarian principle in wealth distribution had been a norm not only of state practice but also in the practice of local social organizations.

The allocation of *nazu* land revealed both the autonomy of local society and the effectiveness of government control. The residents' organized or individual activities of

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<sup>26</sup> Calculation based on the linked population and land database.

<sup>27</sup> See the closing report of the case regarding the land disputes between De'an and Shuanzhu (SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 871-2, pp. 135-141).

private land cultivation reveal local agency that remained beyond state control. These activities of private land cultivation constituted an important force in the distribution of *nazu* land. The opening of *nazu* land thus provided Shuangcheng residents an opportunity to overcome the limits of state categories and exhibit and benefit from their ability. In this process, not only did the metropolitan and rural bannermen increase their landed wealth, but some capable civilian commoners and floating bannermen also acquired *nazu* land. At the same time, however, the principles of between-category inequality and within-category equality in state land allocation deeply influenced social behavior. Not only did bannermen voluntarily maintain this state-designed social structure in their privately-organized land cultivation, but metropolitan and rural bannermen also constantly used the official policies to shoulder out floating bannermen in the process of *nazu* land acquisition. Therefore, opportunities for the possession of *nazu* land were limited for civilian commoners and floating bannermen. Thus, despite the opening of *nazu* land, the Shuangcheng social structure still largely followed the state's design.

### **Exchanging money for land**

As the state exhausted *nazu* land in Shuangcheng after more than twenty years of opening and registration, in 1878, it distributed 302 remaining *jichan* plots, totaled 10,570 *shang* (19,448.8 hectares), to the metropolitan bannermen. Since ultimately only 698 metropolitan households arrived in Shuangcheng, the government left the 302 plots, which remained from the 1,000 plots of land designated to metropolitan bannermen, with the rural households that had originally cleared and farmed them. These rural households continued to farm the plots, paying an annual rent of 660 copper coins per *shang*. In 1876,

the court planned to relocate more metropolitan bannermen to Northeast China to solve their livelihood problem and thus ordered Ming'an, the general of Jilin (1877, 1879-1883), to investigate the reserved plots in Shuangcheng.<sup>28</sup> Upon hearing this news, in 1878, the existing metropolitan bannermen in Shuangcheng expressed their great need for these plots in order to secure landed property for themselves rather than the possible newcomers. The state finally allocated these plots to them. However, contrary to the previous practice of equal allocation, the state allocated these plots in return for monetary contributions from the metropolitan bannermen.

The bannermen themselves first proposed contributing money in exchange for these *jichan* plots. In the second month of 1878, when the provincial government sent personnel to investigate these plots, the assistant adult males in the metropolitan banners filed a petition to the provincial officials to request the 302 remaining *jichan* plots:

“Our grandfathers and fathers are all banner servants from the capital. Starting from the fourth year of Daoguang [1824], (they) were relocated to Shuangchengpu in groups. Each household received a plot of thirty-five *shang*. Other than this [land grant], [we] had no additional property. To date, fifty years have passed and our households grow larger and larger. In each village, there are more than five hundred households of assistant adult males who used to work as wage labors to make a living. Many of the elderly and young children are suffering from cold and hunger. Since there are still 10,570 *shang* of land which have been allocated to the Metropolitan bannermen, [we] sincerely supplicate [you] to allocate the land to us assistant adult males as private property without rent and thus support [our living].”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In 1876, the court planned to relocate more metropolitan bannermen from Beijing to Northeast China and ordered the various banner governments in Northeast China to report unassigned farmland within their administration to accommodate these metropolitan bannermen. Four places—Ningguta, Huichun, Bodune, and Shuangcheng—reported unassigned farmland. The court thus ordered officials to investigate these sites for a detailed plan of relocating metropolitan bannermen. See the communication between the general of Jilin and the Ningguta assistant commander-in-chief on 1876.11.5 (QDHLJLSDAXB (1875-1881), pp. 123-125). Also see the attached official documents in the note from the general of Jilin regarding allocating the reserved metropolitan *jichan* plots in Shuangcheng and Bodune to the original farmers in return for monetary contributions (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 833-1, pp. 53-66).

<sup>29</sup> This petition was filed on 1878.2.25. See the petition filed by the metropolitan bannermen from the Plain Yellow banner (SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 826-3, pp. 360-366). The metropolitan bannermen from the Bordered Yellow banner also filed a petition with similar language (SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 826-3, pp. 398-402).

In order to secure government approval, these metropolitan bannermen relieved the government of its economic obligation to *jichan* landowners. In previous land allocations, the government had not only granted land to the metropolitan bannermen, but had also provided them with all of their living and farming essentials, including housing, farming tools, and livestock. In their petition, the metropolitan bannermen stated that this time the government need not provide them with living and farming support. Moreover, they even offered the government economic benefits for allocating these plots:

“Having received the heavenly kindness that fed us for years, (we) all have consciences. (Since) it is currently the time of putting down the bandits, we are happy to contribute three strings of coins for each *shang* of land to subsidize military expenses. This monetary contribution adds up to more than 30,000 strings of coins. (We do this) with the intention of rendering service to repay the heavenly kindness.”<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the military subsidy, these metropolitan bannermen also agreed as a group to contribute a total of 1,000 taels of silver as reward funds to the armies.<sup>31</sup>

Ming’an enthusiastically received the metropolitan bannermen’s proposal and carried it out in spite of the central government’s reservations. In the third month of 1878, Ming’an sent a memorandum to the emperor, stating that relocating more metropolitan bannermen to Northeast China was a difficult task with a huge cost. He therefore requested that the emperor allocate the reserved plots to the original farmers and collect the money the bannermen contributed to support military expenditures.<sup>32</sup> The emperor

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> SCPXLYMDA, items no. 10543 and no. 10557.

<sup>32</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 833-1, pp. 95-110. Ming’an’s plan to allocate the *jichan* plots to the original farmers included plots in both Shuangcheng and Bodune. While in Shuangcheng, it was still the bannermen who farmed these plots, in Bodune, the majority of the farmers of these plots were civilian commoners. Therefore, Ming’an’s proposal to allocate these plots to the original farmers in Bodune indicated official recognition of civilian commoners’ landownership, which might have sounded radical to

agreed to Ming'an's general proposal. However, the Board of Revenue still had reservations about the request to allocate these reserved plots to the original farmers, and thus ordered Ming'an to hold off on this action until the board had deliberated on it. In the same month, upon receiving the emperor's edict of approval, Ming'an immediately began to allocate these plots. In the ninth month of 1878, when the Board of Revenue turned down Ming'an's request, Ming'an claimed that he was not aware of the Board's earlier order; by that time the bannermen had already taken these plots, and it was impossible to retrieve them.

Ming'an was determined to allocate these plots to relieve the provincial government's fiscal difficulties. Like many other provincial governments in China, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Jilin provincial government faced serious obstacles to making ends meet. In order to fight various rebellions throughout the nation, the provincial government recruited a large number of armies. Every year, the officials' and soldiers' salaries alone came to 400,000 taels of silver.<sup>33</sup> Given this situation, following the practice of the 1820s and relocating metropolitan bannermen from Beijing would have been a huge burden for the provincial government. At the same time, the existing bannermen's offer to contribute money was attractive; by allocating the 302 remaining *jichan* plots, the government could collect a one-time donation of 31,710 strings of coins, equivalent to 10,000 taels of silver. The officials in the Board of Revenue also discerned Ming'an's rationale and summarized it as follows:

“Since the salary assistance from other provinces has been delayed, this province has a large number of armies and is thus short on salaries. [The provincial government] wanted this monetary contribution just to solve the [fiscal problem] for the time being... Thus, [the provincial government] ignored

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some Board officials.

<sup>33</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel 161, vol. 639, pp. 155-162.

the order from the Board of Revenue and insisted on [allocating the land to present residents].”<sup>34</sup>

Due to the emphasis on the monetary contribution, in this land allocation, the local government gave up the egalitarian principle that had characterized previous practices and allocated land only to those who were able to pay. In the history of Shuangcheng, after the initial allocation, the state had engaged in two other large-scale *jichan* land (re)allocations: the 1869 reallocation of 225 plots from extinct households, and this 1878 allocation of the 302 remaining plots. In contrast to the 1869 reallocation, in which the government still equitably allocated the plots to those with larger households but less land, in the 1878 reallocation, a monetary contribution qualified a household for a plot. When offering their opinions on the land allocation procedure, the two assistant commandants Mukedeng’e and Wuexingbao, who were in charge of the metropolitan banners, described how this procedure differed from the previous practice:

“This time each of the assistant adult males who acquires a plot should pay more than one hundred strings of coins as salary-aid. Although they claimed that they would not delay [the monetary contribution], this contribution adds up to more than 31,700 strings of coins and is indeed a huge amount. Therefore, it is impossible to follow the previous practice. [Instead,] any households, regardless of household size, must be able to pay the money to acquire the plots. If we carry out the allocation in this way, not only will the assistant adult males eagerly contribute money but [we] can also finish collecting this salary-aid money in no time.”<sup>35</sup>

To assure the government officials, every chief village head in charge of metropolitan bannermen pledged to see that every bannerman who received a plot made the donation.

The collection of monetary contributions in exchange for land proceeded smoothly.

By the fifth month of 1878, the local government had collected 21,710 strings of coins and

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<sup>34</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 833-1, pp. 59-60.

<sup>35</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 826-3, pp. 360-366.

had started to transport the collected revenue to the Provincial government.<sup>36</sup> In the fourth month of 1879, the government completed the allocation of 285 *jichan* plots to 285 metropolitan bannermen.<sup>37</sup> The government signed a contract with each individual bannerman to finalize the transaction. The contract noted the size and location of the allocated plot, which were verified by the recipient, the officials, and a group of villagers as witness.<sup>38</sup> If a household received a plot but failed to make the contribution on time, the government would retrieve the plot and assign it to another household. For example, in 1870, the government retrieved a plot from Yisengbao, a metropolitan bannerman from the Plain Yellow banner, because of Yisengbao's failure to pay.<sup>39</sup> In the seventh month of 1879, the local government finished this allocation and transported the remaining 1,000 taels of silver to the provincial government.<sup>40</sup>

The 1878 allocation of *jichan* plots benefited rich households, as only metropolitan bannermen of relatively substantial means had the resources to acquire them. First of all, these bannermen had to be well-equipped with housing and farming essentials, in order to do without government support in living and farming. In addition, they also needed extra money to pay the required contribution. At the rate of three strings (3,000) of coins per *shang* of land, to acquire one plot of *jichan* land, a family needed to pay 105 strings (105,000) of coins as military subsidy and 3.3 taels of silver as reward funds to the armies.

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<sup>36</sup> For the amount of money collected, see SCPXLYMDA, item no. 10557.

<sup>37</sup> See the name list of bannermen who signed the paperwork to take the 1878 rent from their allocated plot (SCPGTBDHKDM, vol. 665). 285 bannermen took the *jichan* plots in the fourth month of 1879. The government also allocated the remaining 17 plots later in the same year. As Mingshan, the principal clerk in charge of this allocation, later recounted, some plots remained unallocated because their lower elevation made them vulnerable to flooding. The government then issued a deadline and ordered the personnel in charge of this allocation to complete the allocation by all means, following which Mingshan completed the allocation in the same year (SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 845, pp. 92-98.)

<sup>38</sup> These signed contracts were preserved in the collection of Shuangcheng Land and Household registers. SCPGBTBDHKDM, vol. 666).

<sup>39</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 870, pp.197-203.

<sup>40</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 829, p. 135.

This amount of money was equivalent to the rent on 159 *shang* (292.7 hectares) of *nazu* land, or twelve months' salary for a tax preceptor (*lingcui*) or a vanguard (*qianfeng*), who ranked the highest among soldiers, or more than six months' salary for a colonel, a middle level official.<sup>41</sup>

The sizes of the households that successfully acquired these plots also confirm the government's departure from equitable allocation. I have identified 261 of the first 285 bannermen who acquired *jichan* plots in the 1878 population registers, and 278 of the 285 bannermen in the 1879 population registers.<sup>42</sup> As table 6.3 shows, the 261 metropolitan bannermen in the 1878 registers belonged to 206 households, of which 159 had only one plot, 39 had two plots, and 8 had as many as three plots. Although the households acquiring more plots were, on average, slightly larger than those acquiring fewer plots, household size did not determine the distribution of these *jichan* plots; some households with only four members acquired three plots, while some households with thirteen members acquired only one plot.

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<sup>41</sup> In the 1870s, twelve months' salary for a Tax Preceptor or a *qianfeng* was 36 taels of silver, and six months' salary for a colonel was 30 taels of silver. See the 1878 salary book of the Shuangcheng officials and soldiers (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 833-1, pp. 95-110). The Qing government usually converted soldiers' salaries into copper coins at a rate of three strings of coins for one tael of silver. Therefore, the 105 strings paid as the monetary contribution for one plot of *jichan* land was equivalent to 35 taels of silver. Including the 3.3 taels of reward funds, each bannerman had to pay a total of 38.3 taels of silver.

<sup>42</sup> The name lists were acquired from the pledges of metropolitan bannermen who obtained land in the 1878 *jichan* land allocation (SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834732, vol. 665 and 666). More bannermen are identified in 1879 than in 1878 because some of the bannermen who registered the new plots were young children who had not yet registered in 1878. Their parents registered them in the following year to take the land from government.

Table 6. 3 Stratification of metropolitan banner households in the 1878 *jichan* land allocation.

N. of <i>jichan</i> plots acquired	N. of households	Mean household size	Minimum household size	Maximum household size
0	490	2.97	0	10
1	159	5.25	2	13
2	39	6.92	4	12
3	8	7.5	4	11

Sources: The name lists acquired from the pledges of metropolitan bannermen who obtained land in the 1878 *jichan* land allocation (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834732, vol. 665 and 666), which were linked to the 1878 and 1879 population and land database.

This land allocation also differed from previous practices of *jichan* land distribution in that the ages of the plot owners deviated from the official range of 20-50 *sui*, and many young children were registered as independent land owners. As table 6.4 shows, the majority of new plot owners were children or adolescents younger than 20 *sui*. Of the 278 plot owners I identified in the 1879 population registers, 88 were between 1 and 9 *sui*, and 104 were between 10 and 19 *sui*. Altogether, young children and adolescents accounted for 69.1 percent of the bannermen who acquired *jichan* plots in 1878. Only 81 plot owners were between 20 and 50 *sui*, accounting for 29.1 percent of all plot owners.

Table 6. 4 The age of land owners who acquired *jichan* land in the 1878 land allocation.

Age ( <i>sui</i> )	N. of plot owner	Percent
1-9	88	31.7
10-19	104	37.4
20-50	81	29.1
51+	3	1.1
Missing	2	0.7
Total	278	100.0

Sources: The name lists acquired from the pledges of metropolitan bannermen who obtained land in the 1878 *jichan* land allocation (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834732, vol. 665 and 666), which were linked to the 1878 and 1879 population and land database.

The large proportion of child owners in the 1878 land allocation revealed that many families who acquired these *jichan* plots in fact did not have additional adult males, other

than the household head, who could register them. Since only males could register land and head households, and as official regulations allowed a principal adult male to register only one plot of *jichan* land, families without additional adult males could only register their new plots in the names of their underage children. After the land allocation, in 1879, the government followed the rules of registration and registered these young plot owners as separate households. Yet, these young children, especially those under 10 *sui*, continued to live with their parents due to their inability to manage their plots and live alone. Therefore, after the 1878 land allocation, some families in fact owned two or more plots of *jichan* land.

The 1878 allocation of the 302 plots of *jichan* land differed from other land allocations in Shuangcheng in its deviation from the egalitarian principle of land allocation. The process of this land allocation reveals the varying interests of representatives of the state. In this case, the central government represented the egalitarian ideal, while the provincial government and local society represented inequality. The force of change not only originated in local society, but also emerged from within the government. General Ming'an played an especially important role in carrying out the allocation, as he was willing to resist the central government and succeeded in doing so. This story reveals that, as a result of the mounting fiscal crisis, government policies gradually left space for increasing inequality in local society.

## **Land transactions**

### **Types of land transaction**

Shuangcheng residents practiced land transactions at two levels: official land transfers,

which resulted in ownership change; and customary practices of land rental and conditional sale, in which the original owner retained ultimate ownership while the tenant acquired usufruct. These two levels of land transaction complemented one another to shape residents' economic life on the land. Official land transfers formally secured residents' land ownership. However, the official land transfer was segmented; since the state population categories corresponded to different levels of entitlement to land, land could only be transferred between people from the same population category. In this process, civilian commoners and floating bannermen were disadvantaged by their limited rights to land.

Customary practices of land rental emerged in response to low labor-to-land ratios in banner households. In Shuangcheng, the majority of metropolitan and rural bannermen owned more land than they could farm on their own. In 1876, including both *jichan* and *nazu* land, per-adult-male (aged 20-50 *sui*) land holdings ranged from 0.8 to 434.1 *shang* for metropolitan bannermen and 0.3 to 276.8 *shang* for rural bannermen. In Shuangcheng, one adult male could farm approximately 10 *shang* of land.<sup>43</sup> As table 6.5 shows, only 2.7 percent of metropolitan and 34.9 percent of rural banner households held fewer than 10 *shang* per adult male, while 69.2 percent of metropolitan and 53.3 percent of rural bannermen held more than 10 *shang* per adult male. A further, 11.8 percent of rural and 28.03 percent of metropolitan households owned land but had no adult male. Therefore, 97.3 percent of metropolitan and 65.1 percent of rural banner households needed farming assistance from either hired labor or tenants. If we take disability into consideration, this proportion could have been even higher.

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<sup>43</sup> See note 63 in chapter four for the explanation of estimation.

Table 6. 5 The household *per*-adult-male land holding of metropolitan and rural bannermen who had land, 1876.

	Metropolitan		Rural	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
No adult male	164	28.0	272	11.8
0.1-10 <i>shang</i>	16	2.7	806	34.9
10.1-25 <i>shang</i>	58	9.9	738	31.9
25.1 and above	347	59.3	494	21.4
		0.0		
Total	585	100.0	2,310	100.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Land rental not only met the metropolitan and rural bannermen's demand for laborers, but also provided the have-nots with land usufruct. Since the settlement stage, the state had allowed land rental and designated the metropolitan bannermen as landlords. In 1844, Jing'ebu had pointed out that the metropolitan bannermen with higher standards of living were those who rented all their land out.<sup>44</sup> Because it was officially sanctioned, land rental existed widely across population categories. Not only did floating bannermen and civilian commoners constitute an important proportion of the tenant population, but a considerable number of rural bannermen also rented land from others. In addition, some civilian commoners with large amounts of registered land also rented their land out.<sup>45</sup> This land rental relationship took the form of permanent tenancy, which secured the tenants' usufruct.<sup>46</sup> In the late imperial period, permanent tenancy became common

<sup>44</sup> See Jing'ebu's memorial in 1844, HCDXTGZY, juan 31, 6a.

<sup>45</sup> For example, a lawsuit in 1879 involving two civilian commoners in a land dispute revealed that some civilian commoners took a large amount of land in the settlement stage and became landlords (SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 844, pp. 9-25). In this case, a civilian commoner named Yu Yuanxun registered a total of 183.2 *shang* of land during the period 1820-1852. Due to his inability to farm all the land, he rented out 50 *shang* to a civilian commoner named Xun Yongzhi. This land rental later resulted in disputes between their descendants.

<sup>46</sup> For example, in a legal case regarding land disputes between two bannermen in 1881, the plaintiff stated that the defendant recruited him as tenant and signed a contract with him, affirming that the landlord would never increase the rent and retrieve the land from his tenant (SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 865, pp.123-136).

throughout China proper (Jiang 2000).<sup>47</sup> Under the permanent tenancy system, as long as the tenants paid their rent on time, the landlords had no right to withdraw the plot (Huang 1990). This permanent tenancy system not only secured land usufruct for tenants, but also granted them partial property rights (Jiang 2000).

The customary practice of conditional sale (*dian*) also provided civilian commoners and floating bannermen with opportunities to possess land. The term ‘conditional sale’ referred to land sales in which the seller still held ultimate ownership of the plot. Consequently, the buyer (*dian*-holder) only paid part of the value of the land. By reserving ultimate ownership, the seller could not only redeem the land but also could ask for additional money when land values increased (Huang 2001). In research on customary practices on banner land in Liaoning and southern Jilin Provinces, Christopher Isett identified the existence of conditional sales and noted that they were conducted outside formal institutions and supported by customary laws (Isett 2004, 2006). The same was true of conditional sales in Shuangcheng.

Shuangcheng residents used contracts to protect their private land transactions. The Chinese use of contracts to protect property rights in transactions had a wide temporal and geographical span; contracts had appeared in property transactions since the third century B.C. and in both inland and frontier regions (Scogin 1990; Zelin, Ocko, and Gardella 2004). Contracts not only played an important role in protecting transactions and mitigating land disputes, but also had legal power in litigations (Scogin 1994, 2001; Allee 2004). In Shuangcheng, villagers also established contracts in land transactions and, at times of litigation, presented them in court as proof. For example, in 1871, two bannermen

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<sup>47</sup> The region with the best preserved records about permanent tenancy is Yangzi delta, but scholars have also identified the existence of permanent tenancy in Gansu, Rehe, and Taiwan (Jiang 2000).

brought their land dispute to the court because both claimed that they had ownership over a plot. To defend his property rights, the plaintiff provided the court with the contract of land rental signed between his father and the civilian tenant who farmed this plot. This contract clearly stated the time and reason of land rental, the size of land, and the rate of rent, signed by the landlord and tenant as well as witnesses.<sup>48</sup>

However, although customary laws supported land rental and conditional sale in Shuangcheng, in litigation, officials sometimes overrode customary practices to enforce state regulations. In regions where private land ownership was honored, contracts were legal proof of land transactions; in Shuangcheng, however, the state still dominated land ownership. For example, in 1881, the government overrode a contract regarding a conditional land sale between a bannerman and a civilian commoner.<sup>49</sup> In that year, a bannerman named Changfa sued a civilian commoner named Liang Zhongwen for not allowing him to withdraw land his father had conditionally sold to Liang's father. Between 1820 and 1850, Changfa's father had registered a total of 291 *shang* of land, including 100 *shang* of *suique* land and 191 *shang* of *ziken* land. Changfa's father then conditionally sold 10 *shang* of *suique* land to Liang's father. The two established a contract, stating that Liang's father paid 200 strings of coins to Changfa's father and took over payment of the government rent. The contract also stated that Changfa's father could never withdraw the plot. When judging this case, the government admonished both Changfa and Liang for their fathers' illegal behavior; Changfa could not privately sell state land, and Liang was in fact an unregistered civilian commoner who could not own any land in Shuangcheng. Following this judgment, the government retrieved the ten-*shang* plot

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<sup>48</sup> SCPXLYMDA, item no. 5239.

<sup>49</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 206, vol. 859, pp.233-241.

from the two parties and rented it to somebody else.

Thus, in Shuangcheng, officially-sanctioned land ownership was still the most authoritative form. The state's principle of maintaining banner land ownership and state categories had priority in judging land-related cases. Although the government allowed land rental and conditional sales, it only honored customary practices that did not violate official rules. The dominance of state rule in Shuangcheng therefore pushed official residents – metropolitan and rural bannermen and registered civilian commoners – to formalize their transactions through official channels of land transfer. Formalization of customary transactions served to entangle official land transfers and private transactions. In the rest of this section, I will analyze official land transfers to reveal their relationship with private land sales and to examine the consequences of the interaction between government and local society for land ownership.

### **Official land transfers**

In Shuangcheng, the government was the only authority to grant land ownership. Official regulations prevented land transactions not only between bannermen and civilian commoners, but also among bannermen. The government had laid out the rules in the initial allocation of *jichan* land in 1820: although a *jichan* plot was considered a household's property, the household could not sell it. When the government identified a land sale, it would retrieve the plot, require the seller to forfeit the land and land price, and punish any parties involved in the transaction.<sup>50</sup> In 1868, the government also decreed that all changes in *nazu* land ownership should follow the procedures set out for *jichan*

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<sup>50</sup> See the order of Shuangcheng banner government on 1815.2.16 (SCPTTJL, pp. 75-55)

land.<sup>51</sup>

Any changes in land ownership therefore had to go through the official procedures of “returning land (*tuidi*)” and “selecting a replacement (*jianbu*).” According to the official report on landownership change, these procedures consisted of four steps. First, when a bannerman decided to give up ownership of a plot, he and the chief village head went to the Captain’s Office to report his decision and file a petition. The petition followed a standard format, summarizing the types and amount of land and the reasons the owner gave for relinquishing it. For example, in 1880, in a report regarding a landownership change between two rural bannermen, Wulibu and Yongcheng, the Captain’s Office of the Bordered Blue banner first cited Wulibu’s petition as follows:

“A *zhengding* Wulibu, who resides in the fifth village of the first Jiala of my banner, sincerely petitioned [at the office]: ‘I originally farmed thirty *shang* of *dingque* land,<sup>52</sup> thirty *shang* of *ziken* land, and thirteen *shang* and seven *mu* of *maohuang* land. Now, I am suffering from diseases on my waist and legs. Although I sought to cure them for a long time, there was no improvement at all and I ended up being disabled. Nobody in my household can help me farm (the land). Moreover, I have exceeded the age range of (principal adult male) and indeed have no ability to farm the land. In the fear of delaying the government rent, I would like to give up my *dingque* plot as well as my *ziken* and *maohuang* plots and allow the government to select a capable adult male to replace me. Thereby, the land will not be wasted and the government rent will not be delayed.’”

Following the petition of the original plot owner, in the second step, the Captain’s Office then selected the replacement and allocated the returned plot to him. In Wulibu’s case, the Captain’s Office selected a bannerman from the same village as Wulibu:

“According to this petition, [the office] verified that Wulibu is willing to

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<sup>51</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 164, vol. 656, pp.158-161.

<sup>52</sup> *Dingque* land was the title for the 30 *shang* of land each rural banner household received from the government upon arrival at Shuangcheng. Thus, for the rural bannermen in the right and left *tun*, each plot of *dingque* land consisted of 18.33 *shang* of *jichan* land, which belonged to the rural household, and 11.67 *shang* of land that belonged to the central-*tun* residents but was farmed by the right and left *tun* residents.

give up his *dingque*, *ziken*, and *maohuang* plots, a total of 73 *shang* and 7 *mu* of land and allow the government to select an adult male to replace him, because he is disabled and exceeded the age of principle adult male, without an assistant adult male in his household. [Wulibu's proposal] seems reasonable. These plots concern both the *dingque* and rated *nazu* land, and thus, it is not appropriate to let [the ownership] remain unassigned. Thus, [the office] followed the rules to select the *bangding* Yongcheng, who is registered under the household of the *zhengding* Chengxi in the second village of the second *jiala*, to replace [Wulibu]. [We] verify that the selected adult male Yongcheng is really strong and capable of farming. Therefore, [we] handed all the farming tools Wulibu originally acquired from [the government] to Yongcheng.”

The third step was to document the landownership change. First, the original owner of the plot and his kin would sign a statement confirming that they had given up the plot. Next, the selected bannerman and the village head and precinct head, from his village would sign a written guarantee, attesting to the take-over of the plot and the capability of the selected bannerman to farm it. If the ownership change involved *nazu* land, the selected bannerman also needed to state his willingness to pay the rent on time. Finally, the Captain's Office completed the paperwork and reported the result of the ownership change to the area commander-in-chief:

“In addition to obtaining a written guarantee from Wulibu's relatives, stating that there is no dispute regarding this change in landownership, and a guarantee from the *zong tunda*, *tunda*, and *jiazhang* [or], stating that the replacement adult male Yongcheng will not waste the land and delay the rent, [we] also attach a sealed verification. Here we submit all the paperwork and report to your office.”<sup>53</sup>

The above procedures in the official report convey the impression that the Captain's Office controlled the selection of the replacement bannerman and thus made the land transfer an official act. According to the sequence of land transfer, in which the plot first went back to the Captain's Office before the selection of a replacement bannerman, the

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<sup>53</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 847, pp.54-55.

Captain's Office acted as both authority and intermediate in the land transfer. The standard language used in the official report also signaled the government's firm control over the land. Almost every petition from an original owner used the standard phrase, "allow the government to select a replacement (*jiao guan ling ding buchong*)." Similarly, every Captain's Office reported that the office "followed the rules to select (*zhaozhang jian de*)" the replacement bannerman. In addition, the official document did not mention any payment involved in the land transfer. It thus appeared from the official report that the Captain's Office selected the replacement bannerman, for whom land acquisition was free.

The state controlled the selection of replacement bannermen to maintain the stability of local society. According to the official rules, the replacement bannerman should be one of the assistant adult males in the original plot owner's four-household unit (*tongtun tongju*), which had formed in the settlement to share draft animals and farming tools.<sup>54</sup> This rule reflected customary land-transfer practices in other regions of China proper, in which the plot owner's relatives and neighbors had priority (Wang 2004). Local Chinese society favored relatives and neighbors in land transactions because kinship and geographical ties played major roles in village life. State laws also accommodated this customary practice. In Shuangcheng, since the state had scattered descent groups in the settlement, the official rules gave priority to the geographical residential unit.

The state also evaluated the replacement bannerman's physiological and economic conditions in order to maintain equity in land distribution. The state would first verify that the replacement bannerman was of prime age and capable of farming (*nianli jingzhuang kanneng wunong*). Moreover, in the transfer of a *jichan* plot, the state would make sure

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<sup>54</sup> See the admonishment of the Area Commander-in-chief in 1882.2 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 869, pp. 151-157.) This is only applied to the rural bannermen.

that the replacement bannerman was an assistant adult male who had no land. These measures ensured that the land was assigned to a capable farmer who could sustain its cultivation. At the same time, by monitoring the replacement bannerman's wealth status, the state prevented land concentration.

### **Official transfers and private transactions**

Despite the seemingly dominant role of the state, in reality, villagers who wished to give up land had considerable influence over the selection of replacement bannermen. Given the limited government personnel and the geographical distance between the office and the villages, it was impossible for the Captain's Office to do the detailed work of identifying a replacement bannerman. Instead, the original plot owner, along with his *tunda* and fellow villagers, played a major role in selecting his replacement. Once the original plot owner or the villagers had identified a replacement bannerman, the Captain's Office usually accepted the replacement and legitimized the transfer.

In some cases, the original owner identified a replacement bannerman before he reported his desire to relinquish land to the government. For example, in 1879, two official reports from the Bordered Blue banner regarding land transfer differed from the standard text and revealed that the actual land transfer had probably taken place before the Captain's Office recorded it. One of the two cases concerned an ownership transfer between a rural bannerman, named Qifa, and his plot neighbor (*dilin*), named Dekun, on 15 *shang* of *maohuang* land. In this report, following Qifa's petition to give up his plot, instead of displaying the office's authority to select a replacement bannerman, the Captain's Office cited Dekun's petition to acquire Qifa's plot:

“My plot neighbor Qifa originally had a plot of land located north of the city of Xisuo. This plot is next to my plot. Due to his poverty and inability to farm the land, Qifa gave up the ownership of 15 *shang* of land from his plot, allowing the government to select another tenant. I would like to take this plot and pay the government rent annually, so that the rent payment will not missing or be delayed.”<sup>55</sup>

The appearance of Dekun’s petition right after Qifa’s revealed that Qifa and Dekun had negotiated the land transfer beforehand and probably went to the Captain’s Office together to file their petitions. In this case, as Qifa’s plot neighbor, Dekun had the advantage in acquiring and managing the land. Similarly, in another land transfer, two rural bannermen, Jinxiang and Wang Shangqian, filed their petitions requesting the transfer in sequence.<sup>56</sup> In both cases, the Captain’s Office simply verified the selected persons’ ability to farm the land and assigned this plot to him.

Villagers’ control over the selection of replacement bannermen indicates that official land transfers left space for private land sales and conditional sales. For example, in 1879, a land dispute between two rural bannermen, Ren Shicheng and Li Sheng, reveals that some land transfers were in fact sales.<sup>57</sup> In 1879, Ren filed a lawsuit with the local government, suing Li for surreptitiously taking the ownership of his *dingque* land. Ren claimed that he originally had a 30-*shang dingque* plot and, in the 1860s, conditionally sold it to Li Sheng, still preserving his ultimate ownership. In this conditional sale, Li paid Ren 60 strings of coins without any rent obligation. However, Ren later found that Li had changed the landownership status at the Captain’s Office, and he ended up owning no land. Yet, according to Li Sheng, in 1867, Ren had given up his landownership at the Captain’s Office because of his poverty and disability, and the Captain’s Office had reassigned the

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<sup>55</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 839, pp.339-344.

<sup>56</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 839, pp. 321-328.

<sup>57</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 844, pp. 245-251.

plot to his younger brother Li Ming. In this land transfer, Li had paid Ren 120 strings of coins as “plow and spade money (*lihua qian*).”

The original report on the ownership transfer between Ren and Li from the Captain’s Office resolved the two bannermen’s disputes. The official record showed that, in 1868, Ren had gone to the Captain’s Office together with another bannerman to report their decision to give up their *zhengding* positions and the associated *dingque* plots,<sup>58</sup> citing disability as the reason. The Captain’s Office had then selected Li Sheng’s younger brother, Li Ming, as the replacement. At the same time, both the *tunda* and precinct head, as witnesses, had verified the existence of the official land transfer between Ren and Li. Ren finally lost this lawsuit when official proof of the ownership transfer was produced.

Ren and Li’s case reveals that, behind the scenes of an official land transfer, the original owner and the replacement bannerman engaged in more complicated negotiations and land transactions. The official process of land transfer only served as the final step in legitimizing private transactions between bannermen. Before they completed the official land transfer, Ren had sold his land to Li. The “plow and spade money,” which refers to the monetary compensation paid to the original owner for his efforts in clearing the plot, was in fact the land price.<sup>59</sup> The government was also aware of the private land transactions behind official land transfers. In 1867, the Shuangcheng area commander-in-chief ordered the Captain’s Office to place a hold on all land transfer cases during the spring ploughing period to make sure farmers focused on farming.<sup>60</sup> In this document, the area commander-in-chief clearly pointed out that, among the various

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<sup>58</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 164, vol. 659, pp. 8-15.

<sup>59</sup> Although in Ren and Li’s case, whether the “plow and spade money” was actually the land price was not explicated, in another case involving a land transaction between two civilian commoners, the “plow and spade money” clearly referred to the land price (SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 844, pp.9-21).

<sup>60</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 163, vol. 647, pp. 158-162.

land-transfer cases, “some must be farmers selling off their plots to pay their debt.”

Therefore, “it is hard to avoid the situation that [some people] set up others to extort the land. I assume all [captains] have discerned this situation.” This statement indicates the state’s awareness that bannermen used land transfers as a source of income.

While the standard language in official reports usually concealed private land transactions, in 1882, the official of the Bordered Yellow banner misinterpreted the state policy and wrote the terms “sell” and “buy” into an official report.<sup>61</sup> In the second month of 1882, Tinghe, the lieutenant of the Bordered Yellow banner who had temporarily taken over the captain’s duty, processed two land-transfer cases: one between two metropolitan bannermen, Qinglin and Chengshun, and the other between three metropolitan bannermen, Qingxiang and Qingde as the original owners and Shuangquan as the replacement. In both cases, after summarizing the types and amounts of land they intended to relinquish, the original owners stated that they had sold these plots to the replacement bannermen. For example, in Qinglin’s petition, he wrote: “Now, [I] have sold [these plots] to Chengshun, who resides in the same village as mine, and handed the original land certificates to him, so that Chengshun could acquire new certificates with his name on them.” The other petition used the same language.

Interestingly, Tinghe approved these land transactions according to the official instructions on the land certificates.<sup>62</sup> The instructions stated that “in the future, if the owner had no ability to farm [this plot] and would like to sell it to others, [he] must report it to the local government and acquire a new land certificate.” Tinghe was therefore under the impression that the land transactions between these metropolitan bannermen were in

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<sup>61</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 869, pp. 151-157.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

accordance with the official rules. Accordingly, Tinghe sent personnel to the villages to verify the capability of the two replacement bannermen and completed the paperwork.

However, the area commander-in-chief returned Tinghe's report and admonished him for deviating from the rules of land transfer and writing the terms "sell" and "buy" into the official report.<sup>63</sup> The area commander-in-chief explained that the official instructions on land certificates in fact only allowed for sales of *nazu* land between civilian commoners. Civilian commoners constituted the majority of *nazu* land owners in other parts of Jilin Province, so the provincial government used a uniform land certificate to accommodate their needs. Thus, the official instructions on the certificate only applied to civilian commoners. While pointing this out, the area commander-in-chief reemphasized the prohibition on land transactions between Shuangcheng bannermen.

Having received the admonishment, in the fourth month of 1882, Tinghe submitted a revised report.<sup>64</sup> In this report, the parties involved in the land transfers remained the same as before. Following the standard format, the original owners, Qinglin, Qingxiang, and Qingde petitioned to relinquish their ownership over those plots and allow the government to select replacements. The report then stated that the Captain's Office followed the rules to respectively select Chengshun and Shuangquan as the replacements. Obviously, Tinghe still accepted the fact of the transactions between these metropolitan bannermen and only changed the language in the report to bring them into accordance with the law.

The above case reveals that, although the state was aware of the persistence of private land sales, it was only willing to formalize them using the instrument of the official land

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 870, pp. 97-103.

transfer. Both the area commander-in-chief and Tinghe understood that, in the above land transfers, the original owners had sold their plots to the replacement bannermen. Interestingly, what the area commander-in-chief was discontented about was not the private transaction itself, but the way Tinghe wrote the report, which officially sanctioned the transaction. The state prohibited private land transactions between Shuangcheng bannermen not only to maintain equity in land distribution among the bannermen but also to protect banner landownership. In his admonishment to Tinghe, the area commander-in-chief explained that the state prohibited the terms “sell” and “buy” in official land transfers out of a concern that such language would open the door for land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners. He therefore pointed out that allowing land transactions would not benefit the bannermen in the long-term<sup>65</sup> and, in local governance, the state and citizens reached a consensus on formalizing private land sales.

### **The consequences**

The government and residents’ use of official land transfers to formalize private land sales revealed that official rules and local practices in fact formed a reciprocal relationship in local governance. Some scholars have identified this reciprocal relationship in regions where private ownership was the norm (Scogin 1994, 2001; Huang 2001). For example, Hugh Scogin points out that, in local governance, the state relied on the customary use of contracts to “receive the administration convenience of regularization and control,” and that private parties benefited from the use of contracts in “the clarification of their relationships and the protection of their arrangements” (Scogin 2001). In regions where

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<sup>65</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 208, vol. 869, pp. 151-157.

state land ownership was predominant, traditional opinions still over-emphasize the antagonistic relationship between private practices and state rules. For example, in his study on customary practices of conditional sale in Liaoning and southern Jilin Provinces, Chris Isett generally considered a conditional sale a deviance from state rules (Isett 2004, 2006). The stories in Shuangcheng, however, reveal that, even in regions where the state was more dominant, official rules and private practices still interacted with one another to achieve the goal of local governance.

Official procedures of land transfer still accommodated local customs that prioritized the land owner's kin. Since the state had scattered immigrants' descent groups in the settlement, the original official rules only prioritized geographic proximity, requiring that the replacement bannerman be selected from the four-household unit that shared farming tools and draft animals. However, by the 1870s, descent groups had grown as a result of two generations' reproduction. Therefore, the success of an actual land transfer depended on the consent of the original owner's descent group. In the third step, in which government functionaries obtained written guarantees from the two parties involved in the land transfer, the descent group members also had to sign a guarantee, stating that they were willing to give up the land and attesting that they would not engage in future disputes over the plot. For example, in Wulibu and Yongcheng's case, both Wulibu and his grandson Zhao Jingchun signed a written statement of their decision to give up the land.<sup>66</sup> In another land-transfer case in 1882, a rural bannerman named Dahu directly requested to transfer his plot to his cousin's son, who resided in a different village.<sup>67</sup> The government honored his request.

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<sup>66</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 847, pp.52-56.

<sup>67</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 870, pp.109-117.

Just as private land transactions imparted the principle of kinship to official land transfers, the official land transfer also disseminated the state principle of population categories into private land transactions. By using official procedures to formalize their private land sales, Shuangcheng residents in fact enforced state population categories. Since the official land transfer provided better protection for land ownership, residents were willing to formalize their private land sales as long as they agreed with the basic principle of the law. In Shuangcheng, this basic principle was to protect banner land ownership and maintain the differential entitlements embedded in state population categories. Therefore, only private sales between members of the same population category could be formalized through official land transfers. Thus, in the selection of buyers and sellers, the two parties had to calculate the possibility of acquiring official protection for their transaction and the gains and losses of doing or not doing so. Buyers and sellers who wanted official protection would have been more willing to keep their private land sales within their own population categories.

Moreover, the official requirement that a replacement bannerman be “strong and capable of farming” was also the norm in selecting the buyers in private land sales; the majority of replacement bannermen were of prime age or had large households to provide farming assistance. Of the 21 replacement bannermen who completed the official procedures of land transfer between 1880 and 1881, 11 aged between 20 and 40 *sui* and 5 aged between 41 and 50 *sui*.<sup>68</sup> Only 3 of these 21 replacement bannermen were aged below 20 *sui*, and 2 aged above 50 *sui*. In contrast, the bannermen who gave up their

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<sup>68</sup> Cases collected from the local banner government archives between 1880 and 1881 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 844, pp. 237-242; reel 204, vol. 845, p. 154; vol. 847, pp.44-48, 52-56, 212-216; vol. 848, pp. 10-14; reel 205, vol. 851, pp. 16-23, 82-87, 194-200, 206-209, 210-215; vol. 852, pp. 56-63; reel 206, vol. 859, pp. 105-110; reel 208, vol. 866, pp. 229-233, 353-357; vol. 869, pp. 83-87; vol. 870, pp. 97-103, 109-117, 141-146, 149, and 151). The age information of these bannermen was acquired from the corresponding banner population registers.

ownership between 1880 and 1881 were generally old and disabled. Poverty, disability, and illness were the three major reasons cited by bannermen who gave up their plots. Of 15 plot owners whose age information was collected, 9 were aged above 60 *sui*, and two aged between 50 and 60 *sui*. Only 4 of these plot owners were aged below 40 *sui*. The accordance between the official requirement and the results of private selection on the age of replacement bannermen revealed that, after economic conditions, physiological suitability was also an important determinant of land acquisition.

### **Conclusion: state, market, and stratification**

From the mid-nineteenth century on, the state's fiscal crisis intersected with local practices of land cultivation and transaction to open the door to stratification in landed wealth in Shuangcheng. The opening of *nazu* land provided opportunities for Shuangcheng residents to expand their household wealth. Contrary to the allocation of *jichan* land, which featured an egalitarian distribution within each population category, the acquisition of *nazu* land allowed for stratification. A household could own more than one hundred *shang* of land or none at all. The government's simultaneous allocation of *jichan* plots to metropolitan bannermen in exchange for monetary contributions also resulted in the stratification in landed wealth. The existence of *nazu* land therefore posed a challenge to the egalitarian elite system.

The persistence of private land transactions alongside official allocations also nurtured a land market in Shuangcheng. Transactions in the land market took various forms, including land rental, conditional sale, and sale, all of which were supported by customary laws. Individual ability and economic and biographical conditions were important determinants of failure and success on the market. The existence of a land

market thus provided a new venue for increasing land stratification. Private transactions not only offered successful metropolitan and rural bannermen greater mobility in land acquisition, but also provided floating bannermen and unregistered civilian commoners with opportunities for land usufruct. The land market in Shuangcheng thus played a crucial role in maintaining the Shuangcheng social structure. While the system privileged metropolitan and rural bannermen, floating bannermen and unregistered civilian commoners were willing to stay and provide their labor because the land market offered them an opportunity for partial ownership.

However, despite the emergence of a land market in Shuangcheng, state control only left a limited space for its development. Laws prohibited private land transactions and enforced strict procedures of official land transfer. Yet in local governance, the state allowed enough flexibility in official land transfers to accommodate private land transactions. Both the government and Shuangcheng residents were willing to use official land transfers to formalize land sales that adhered to the rules of the state population categories. Government practice thus significantly influenced the functioning of the market. The market was largely segmented; official registration only formalized and protected land sales within the same population category. Through this practice, the government privileged the metropolitan and rural bannermen in the market. Since the metropolitan and rural bannermen owned the majority of registered farm land in Shuangcheng, prohibiting land transactions between population categories effectively protected banner ownership and the privilege of the haves. Floating bannermen and unregistered civilian commoners, despite access to partial land ownership under customary laws, were still disprivileged by their lack of government protection.

Moreover, state policies also shaped the metropolitan and rural bannermen's land acquisition practices. In general, rural bannermen were more active in land acquisition than were metropolitan bannermen. As table 6.6 shows, during the 20-year period of 1870-1889, 55 percent of the rural banner households were involved in activities of *nazu* land acquisition that resulted in changes to their household *nazu* land size. In contrast, only 13.7 percent of the metropolitan banner households engaged in activities of *nazu* land acquisition during the same period. The differential scale of land acquisition between the metropolitan and rural bannermen resulted from state policies of differential land allocation. As the elite members of the state farm, the metropolitan bannermen had as much as twice the *jichan* land allocated to rural bannermen. This inequality in land holding was even greater because metropolitan bannermen in general had much smaller households than did rural bannermen. Given the abundant land, the majority of metropolitan bannermen were less likely to desire more land. On the contrary, with larger households and less *jichan* land, rural bannermen had a more pressing need for additional land. Therefore, state rules and private behaviors reached a 'harmony' in Shuangcheng. Despite the increasing stratification brought about by private land cultivation and transaction, state principles of between-category inequality and within-category equality were deeply embedded in Shuangcheng residents' behaviors.

[Table 6.6 on the next page]

Table 6. 6 Changes in the amount of *nazu* land of the metropolitan and rural banner households, 1870-1889.

Changes in <i>nazu</i> land amount	Metropolitan bannermen		Rural bannermen	
	N. households	Percent	N. households	Percent
Constantly increased	0	0	12	0.58
No change at all	830	86.28	926	45.08
Constantly reduced	3	0.31	2	0.1
Size changes in both ways	129	13.41	1,114	54.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,054</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: The linked population and land database.

\* The analysis presented in this table only considered households existed in the entire period from 1870 to 1889.

## **Chapter VII**

### **Land Transfer: Kin and Non-kin Inheritance**

Inheritance, or the intergenerational transmission of wealth, has been an essential tool for the reproduction of social status across a wide variety of historical and contemporary human societies.<sup>1</sup> By transferring property to descendants, families maintain their wealth, provide their members with material support, and transmit their social status to future generations. The richer a family, the more wealth its offspring can acquire. In his research on wealth distribution throughout the world, Schneider reveals that inherited wealth has accounted for a major source of inequality, as the inequality in wealth distribution is far greater than that in income distribution (Schneider 2004). Therefore, understanding inheritance patterns in a society is important to understanding how social inequalities are transmitted.

Shuangcheng is no exception to this understanding; state regulation of inheritance practices was crucial to the maintenance of within-category equality in land distribution. In allocating land, the state granted metropolitan and rural bannermen permanent land use rights. Bannermen were, therefore, allowed to transmit their landed property from generation to generation. In the early years, when the settlement scattered descent groups, inheritance was a relatively simple practice among brothers. However, beginning in the

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<sup>1</sup> There are two types of inter-generational wealth transmission: inheritance, which keeps property within families; and wealth redistribution, through which individuals return property to the society (or village commune) for redistribution upon aging or death. Although the practice of social redistribution persists in contemporary societies in the form of donation, only in communal societies was the practice of wealth redistribution a norm. In most Chinese dynasties with a written record, land was inheritable. The only exception was the Northern Wei, the emperor of which, under the equal land system (*juntian*), required farmers to return their land to the state at the age of seventy *sui* (Han 1984).

mid-nineteenth century when families grew in size, inheritance became more and more complicated. By the 1870s, after a half century's reproduction, most immigrant families included two or three generations and therefore formed small descent groups. With the production of new generations, descent groups began to re-emerge as a form of social organization among these immigrants. As family structures grew more complex, inheritance became an increasingly contested tool with which family members pursued their diverging interests; while some followed either state or customary rules to carry out peaceful inheritance, others considered inheritance a means of wealth accumulation and sought to acquire more land by taking advantage of their relatives. Inheritance-based strategies of wealth accumulation posed a potential threat to the equal distribution of land, which ensured each household one *jichan* plot.

In this chapter, I examine inheritance practices in Shuangcheng to explore how the equality of land distribution within population categories was passed down to the descendants of banner immigrants. To do so, I focus on the interaction between state regulations and local practices. On the one hand, due to the importance of inheritance in determining wealth distribution, the state established regulations to prevent land concentration. In Shuangcheng, the state used population and land registration to closely monitor land transfers and ensure that each household possessed exactly one plot of *jichan* land. On the other hand, the state also granted tremendous autonomy to local society in the realm of inheritance, resulting in the persistence of customary practices that differed from state regulations. In inheritance, therefore, bannermen could follow either state regulations or customary practices. Moreover, in adjudicating disputes over inheritance, local officials also used both state regulations and customary laws to make decisions.

State regulations and customary practices thus interacted with one another to shape inheritance outcomes in Shuangcheng.

I organize my narrative into four sections to delineate the coexistence of state regulations and customary practices, and to demonstrate how the multitude of representatives of state and local society—local officials, villagers, and household members—used this system to pursue their own interests. In the next section, I first situate inheritance practices in Shuangcheng in the context of Chinese history to briefly review the patterns of inheritance that existed in China. Then, in sections two and three, I examine the state regulations and local practices surrounding inheritance respectively. I reveal that, although the state stipulated primogeniture inheritance, partible inheritance still persisted in some banner families, and I show how some individuals used the discrepancy between state regulation and local practice to pursue their personal interests in wealth accumulation. Finally, in section four, I explore how local officials thoughtfully used both state regulations and customary practices to achieve their goals in local governance.

### **Primogeniture and partible inheritance in China**

Inheritance practices in late imperial China reflected both state control and local autonomy, a typical Chinese pattern of governance. On the one hand, from very early on, the state had established rules to direct inheritance practices that supported two conflicting principles of inheritance: non-partible primogeniture and partibility. Regarding the inheritance of noble and official titles, the state always followed the rule of primogeniture, in which only the eldest son could inherit a father's titles. In terms of property transmission, however, the state always tried to implement partible inheritance, through

which family property was divided among children.<sup>2</sup> The state supported both principles because it sought to sustain and protect its rule through the concentration of political privilege and the diffusion of private wealth. For example, in the second century B.C., the rulers of the Western Han dynasty tried to weaken the political and economic power of the kings by dividing their property. In 129, emperor Wu of the Western Han dynasty finally succeeded in forcing the kings to equally divide their territories and material property among all of their sons. In the *Decree of Tang*, it is clearly stated that all property should be equally divided among brothers (Niida 1964).<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, however, the state also left tremendous space for families to determine the results of inheritance. The codified civil law only provided general guidelines, while the actual process of inheritance was largely controlled by families and local communities.<sup>4</sup> David Wakefield, in his study of household division cases, reveals that the household division process took place in five stages: making the decision, calling in the witnesses, negotiating the division of property, writing the household division document, and concluding ceremonies (1998). In these five stages, while kinship members and neighbors played important roles as witnesses and mediators, helping to publicize and legitimize the results of the household division, family members remained largely in charge. In the Qing Code, only two statutes addressed inheritance, and they did

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<sup>2</sup> In the practice of partible inheritance in China, in general, all sons had inheritance rights, but daughters' inheritance rights varied from dynasty to dynasty. In the Ming and Qing, daughters did not have inheritance rights.

<sup>3</sup> See Niida, 1964, p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> This degree of local autonomy is a very typical Chinese pattern of governance. Early scholars of Chinese civil law observed that Chinese legal code emphasized administrative and criminal issues over civil affairs (Bodde and Morris 1973), and that most civil disputes were resolved under a combination of the formal legal system based on the imperial code and an informal justice system based on customary laws (Huang 1996, 2001; Scogin 1994). While previously scholars have attributed this duality to the imperfect nature of Chinese institutions, recent studies reveal that in fact the state intentionally left space for local society to operate civil affairs (Scogin 2001; Zelin, Ocko, and Gardella 2004).

so in very general terms.<sup>5</sup> When various disputes arose in practice, therefore, local magistrates usually could not find applicable rules in the code and had to make case-by-case decisions that reflected both the principles of the code and customary practices (Zhang 2002).

By late imperial times, state regulations and family practices surrounding the inheritance of private property prescribed more or less the same outcome: all patrilineal sons equally inherited family property with the eldest son keeping up the ancestral sacrifice. Following the rules of partibility, inheritance was largely carried out within families and descent groups under customary laws. Unless serious disputes arose among family members, the government stayed away from household division procedures.<sup>6</sup>

However, for state property, primogeniture inheritance, in which property was not partible, took precedence over partible inheritance as the official form of wealth transfer. For example, in the Ming dynasty, the military state farm (*juntun*) recognized the family/household as the basic unit of land allocation and production. Each family had one plot of land and had a principal adult male who was responsible for production, while other men in the family worked as assistants. This plot of land could not be divided, so its transfer took the form of primogeniture inheritance (Wang 1965). In Shuangcheng, the government followed the same regulatory procedure in land inheritance; *jichan* plots were to remain intact upon the death or retirement of a household head, so only one member of the family, usually the eldest son, could officially become the new household head and the

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<sup>5</sup> The two statutes are Statute 78, “Violating the Law of Establishing a Son of the Official Wife [as One’s Successor],” and Statute 87, “Establishing Separate Household Registration and Dividing [the Family] Property.” (DQLL, pp. 195-197 and p. 201) The two statutes addressed respectively the selection of an heir and the division of family property. However, with the statutes stating the principles and the sub-statutes stating exceptions, the regulations themselves were, in practice, quite flexible.

<sup>6</sup> According to Wakefield’s research, none of the household division cases he studies were reported to the government. Nor did any of the cases indicate the involvement of the government. (1998 p. 62)

registered land owner. At the same time, however, as a statute in the *Great Qing Code*, partible inheritance persisted as a “legal” practice within families.

### **State regulations**

In Shuangcheng, under state regulations, inheritance followed the principles of primogeniture, with the eldest son having the first right to inherit. These principles dictated two modes of land transfer: inheritance by close kin, where a son or other available patrilineal relative in the household inherited the land after the death or retirement of the household head; and inheritance by non-kin, wherein the government transferred land from extinct households – households in which all members had died without heirs – to indirect kin or other fellow villagers. In each of these two ways, family land was transferred in its entirety and without any division. These inheritance procedures were carried out under a combination of formal and informal institutions that involved the local government, the village community, the kinship network, and the family.

### **Close kin**

Because the household in Shuangcheng was considered the basic unit of administration and land allocation, state regulations stipulated that only one household member at a time could become the household head through inheritance. The quota of 4,000 households and the number of plots on the official land registers remained unchanged throughout the history of the state farm. Therefore, from the state’s perspective, household head succession and property inheritance were one and the same – the administrative task of replacing a state position: principal adult male (*zhengding*). When a household head died or retired, an heir from the same household would fill the

vacancy, becoming the new household head and principal adult male. At the same time, the government kept all members of the original household intact on the population registers, maintaining their rights to share the family's plot.

Under this state regulation, headship succession in the household registers followed the form of primogeniture. Whenever the eldest son was available, he had the first rights to succeed the household headship. As Table 7.1 shows, when the eldest son was eligible, 94.9 percent of deceased or retired household heads were succeeded by their eldest sons. If grandsons of the eldest son's descent are taken into consideration, the percentage was as high as 97.7. Instances in which other sons or relatives in the household took the headship only accounted for a very small percentage. Moreover, the same table also shows that, when the eldest son was not eligible but other sons were, 45 percent of household headships were transmitted to second sons and 20 percent of headships were transmitted to other sons. At the same time, however, some families stuck to the rules of primogeniture so strictly that, even when other sons were eligible, in 30.6 percent of the cases, the grandson from the eldest son inherited the headship. Only when no son was eligible did such family members as brothers, nephews, or cousins have a significant chance to inherit the household headship.

Table 7. 1 Heir's relationship to previous household head, 1866-1912.

	Eldest son eligible		Sons other than the eldest eligible		No son eligible	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eldest son	1656	94.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Second son	15	0.9	153	45.0	0	0.0
Other sons	5	0.3	68	20.0	0	0.0
Widow	10	0.6	3	0.9	54	12.6
Grandsons of the eldest son's descent	48	2.8	104	30.6	111	26.0
Other grandsons	1	0.1	11	3.2	8	1.9
Brothers and Nephews	5	0.3	1	0.3	224	52.5
Cousin or cousin's children	5	0.3	0	0.0	28	6.6
Daughters	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5
Total	1,745	100.0	340	100.0	427	100.0

Source: The linked database created from the Shuangcheng metropolitan and rural banner population registers.

Other assistant adult males in the household, however, could still become heads of their own households by inheriting land from extinct households. State land ownership facilitated the transfer of land between households without kinship ties. Assistant adult males could therefore officially become household heads when vacant principal adult male positions became available due to the death or infirmity of principal adult males from other households without heirs. Each time an assistant adult male successfully filled a vacant principal adult male position, he and his immediate family would appear on the official record as a new household, next to his original *yihu* but annotated as “*linghu*”, or separate household.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the original *yihu* on the population register would appear as being divided into two households. The descriptive results in table 7.2 reveal that, although most of the families still adhered to primogeniture when inheriting land from

<sup>7</sup> The family members registered under *linghu* varied from family to family. Usually, if the new household head was married, his wife and children would also be listed under the separate household. Sometimes the new household head's brothers or sisters and uncles also appeared under the separate household, which probably did not reflect actual residential arrangements.

other households, the chances for adult males other than the eldest son to inherit land greatly increased. In 37.1 percent of the 642 cases where the eldest son was eligible, heirs other than the eldest son or grandson inherited the land; comparing this figure to the rate of 2.3 percent for inheritance by these relatives from their own household heads suggests much better chances when inheriting from another household.

Table 7. 2 The *linghu* household head's position in his original household, 1870-1912.

	Eldest Son eligible		Sons other than the eldest eligible		No son eligible	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eldest son	379	59.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Second son	71	11.1	71	53.0	0	0.0
Other sons	30	4.7	30	22.4	0	0.0
Grandsons of the eldest son's descent	25	3.9	9	6.7	8	7.8
Other grandsons	0	0.0	6	4.5	0	0.0
Brothers and Nephews	97	15.1	12	9.0	73	71.6
Cousin or cousin's children	40	6.2	6	4.5	21	20.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: The linked database created from the Shuangcheng metropolitan and rural banner population registers.

Moreover, under the state regulations, families and individuals could still exercise considerable power over this process, as the formal regulations did not stipulate the specific family member who would inherit the headship. The selection of an heir therefore involved competition and negotiation among family members. The descriptive results displayed in Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 illustrate a full range of power dynamics in families. On one hand, the patrilineal rules of seniority exerted a strong influence. To conform to state policy, the majority of families chose the primogeniture form of inheritance. On the other hand, some family members other than the sons of the household heads still managed to inherit headships. This was especially true in the

establishment of *linghu*. Even when the eldest son of the household head was eligible, in 15.1 percent of cases, brothers and brothers' children inherited the land. The percentage for cousins was 6.2 (table 7.2).

Despite the flexibility that families enjoyed in land inheritance, the local government policed the accumulation of property within families. As the local representative of state interests in land management, the local government upheld the principle of equitable distribution of land by forbidding the holding of more than one plot of *jichan* land by any adult male (“*yiren buzhun chengling liangfen dingque*”). This rule even, at times, prevented the biological kin of household heads from inheriting land.

The following inheritance case exemplifies both the opportunities inheritance presented to families and the government's restrictions on land inheritance. In 1866, a rural bannerman named Jiushizi filed a lawsuit against his cousin Shuangzhu for fraudulently taking the *jichan* land belonging to Jiushizi (see figure 7.1 for illustration). Jiushizi's father and elder uncle had arrived in Shuangcheng from Jilin in 1815, and received one plot of *jichan* land. The elder uncle was the household head, while Jiushizi's father worked as assistant adult male. When Jiushizi's elder uncle and father both died in 1838, Jiushizi was the only heir in the household.<sup>8</sup> In theory, Jiushizi would inherit the land and the position of principal adult male. However, Jiushizi temporarily left Shuangcheng to send his father's and elder uncle's coffins back to their place of origin. While Jiushizi was away, his father's cousin Duiyinbao, a principal adult male, fraudulently obtained this plot for his own son Shuangzhu by claiming the extinction of Jiushizi's household. Therefore, Duiyinbao's family held two plots of *jichan* land: the

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<sup>8</sup> It is also very interesting that Jiushizi filed the lawsuit 27 years after Shuangzhu possessed the plot. The archive did not indicate when Jiushizi came back from his hometown in Jilin. It is possible that Jiushizi stayed in his hometown for a relatively long time, which allowed Duiyinbao to successfully take his land.

one originally allocated to Duiyinbao and the one allocated to Jiushizi's elder uncle.

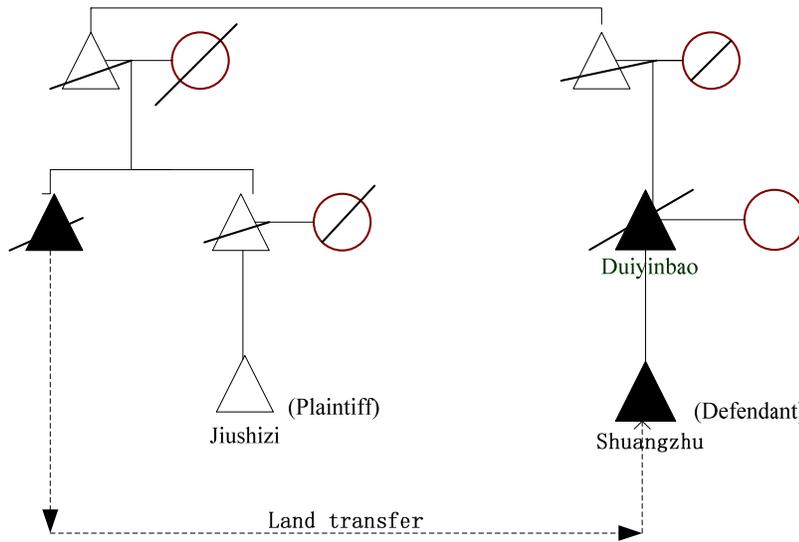


Figure 7. 1 Lawsuit between Jiushizi and Shuangzhu.

Source: SCPZGYMDA, reel 162, vol. 643, pp.374-375 and reel 164, vol.657, pp. 6-15.

Ironically, when Duiyinbao died in 1848, his son Shuangzhu, the only heir in the household, failed to officially inherit Duiyinbao's land because of the rule prohibiting one person from taking two plots of *jichan* land. As a result, Duiyinbao's position of principal adult male, together with the ownership of his land, remained unassigned for eighteen years, until Jiushizi finally filed the lawsuit to reclaim his elder uncle's land. In their depositions, Jiushizi and Shuangzhu agreed that Shuangzhu should return the land held under his name back to Jiushizi; Shuangzhu would then be allowed to officially inherit the land left behind by his father Duiyinbao. The court sanctioned this solution, commenting that it fit the principle of the "son inheriting his father's property and the nephew inheriting his uncle's property."<sup>9</sup>

This case illustrated both the agency of the individual in accumulating property for his

<sup>9</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 162, vol. 643, pp.374-375 and reel 164, vol.657, pp. 6-15.

family and the local government's use of state regulations to maintain local governance. In the beginning, Duiyinbao managed to use the state regulation to officially obtain land for his family. Although Shuangzhu finally lost the extra plot of land, the irony is that what caused the loss of the land was not the exposure of his father's initial fraud but the state's interest in preventing land concentration, and the fact that Shuangzhu was the only heir in the household. If Duiyinbao had had more than one son, his family could have succeeded in keeping both plots. On the other hand, even though Duiyinbao had manipulated the state's regulations to acquire more land, the local government was able to use its authority as state representative and the principle of equitable distribution to successfully prevent the concentration of land. Although it may seem odd that a biological son failed to inherit his father's property, the official rules were faithfully followed. As we see from this case, the state regulation preventing land concentration effectively precluded excessive individual wealth accumulation.

### **Fictive kin**

The use of fictive kinship is a common strategy in China that allows households without heirs to continue their lineages and transfer household property through adoption. Qing legal regulations followed the patrilineal rules in choosing adoptive heirs for households without sons: according to Qing Code, for these households the preference of inheritance should go first to relatives of the same father, and then, in order, to the cousin's families, to the second cousin's families, and to cousins of the same clan; only if none of the above relatives were available could the household choose its heir from remote

relatives or other people of the same surname.<sup>10</sup> Despite these general principles of adoption, however, the Qing code also left flexibility to the adoptive parents. Under the same statute, another sub-statute allowed adoptive parents to select other heirs if the designated heir did not get along with the adoptive parents; moreover, as long as the adoptive son was a worthy person and followed the ethics of generational order, other members of the clan could not use their proximity to the household to claim inheritance rights.<sup>11</sup> Such competitive rules opened spaces both for tension within families and for individual agency. In reality, there were examples in which the adoptive parents selected an indirect relative instead of a nephew (Zhang 2002).

In most regions of China, adoption took place through a series of customary practices. First, the adoptive parents made the decision to adopt an heir and negotiated his selection among kinship members. After the adoptive parents and the heir's parents reached an agreement, the adoptive parents would invite kin and neighbors to the formal announcement of adoption. Accompanying the announcement, the adoptive parents wrote a verification of adoption (*guodan*) to define the rights and obligations of the adoptive son. Kinship members and neighbors present at the announcement would serve as witnesses, and the completion of these procedures legitimized the adoption. Unless disputes rose and escalated to lawsuits, the government would not interfere in either the process or the results of adoption.

However, due to the privileges of bannermen in accessing government stipends and land grants in the Qing dynasty, adoption in banner communities required not only consensus among kinship members, but also government recognition. In the population

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<sup>10</sup> DQLL statute 78, sub-statute 317, p.195.

<sup>11</sup> DQLL statute 78, sub-statute 319, p.195.

registers, the government recorded adopted children with the annotation of “adopted in (*ji ru*).”<sup>12</sup> In theory, no adoption was legitimate until the government reviewed and recorded it following the clan head’s (*zuzhang*) report. Moreover, the government also regulated adoption among bannermen. In the early years of banner history, bannermen enjoyed more flexibility in adopting children from either within or outside their descent groups. Some even adopted the children of their Han-Chinese bond-servants (Elliott 2001). Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, however, in response to the increasing fiscal burden of the banner budget, the government enforced ethnic and patrilineal rules in adoption.<sup>13</sup> In 1823, the Daoguang emperor issued a decree forbidding inheritance by sons adopted from outside the descent group of a banner family, and the Qing government also forced out a large number of sons of civilian commoners who had previously been adopted by bannermen (Lai 2005).

Therefore, in Shuangcheng, according to the national regulation, adoptive children could only inherit property after the government reviewed and recorded the adoption in official registers; adoption in Shuangcheng thus had to go through two procedures, the customary process among kin and neighbors, and the government review. After the completion of the customary process, the adoptive parents in theory were to report to the local banner government to update the record. Before updating the household register, the government would go through a rigorous procedure to verify that the adoption had occurred between male patrilineal relatives generally from the same generation.

According to local archival sources, the complete paperwork for adoption included a

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<sup>12</sup> In the Liaoning and Shuangcheng banner population registers we have collected so far, the government annotated all the adoption cases with “adopted in.”

<sup>13</sup> In 1730, Batu, a captain in the imperial guard, had expressed such caution by suggesting that if a bannerman would like to adopt heirs, they should adopt children from within the clan, and if there were no suitable children for adoption within the clan, then Manchu children from within the company or the banner should be adopted (Elliott 2001).

genealogy; signed agreements of adoption from the child's adoptive mother and biological mother, the head of the descent group, and relatives from the same descent group; and a report from the Captain's Office that clearly stated the adoptive child's banner affiliation at his place of origin.<sup>14</sup> The government would first review the genealogy to verify that the adoptive son was from the appropriate generation and a close patrilineal relative, and then verify the authenticity of the adoptive son's banner affiliation in his place of origin. Any flaw in these documents would result in the return of the case by the government.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, all the adoption documents – the report and testimonies – had to follow a rigorous bilingual format with Manchu and Chinese texts juxtaposed together. Separate documentation was not allowed, and in 1880 the government even returned a case of adoption reported by the Plain Red banner because the Manchu and Chinese texts of each report and agreement were written as separate documents.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the rigorous review procedure, the local government also respected customary practices, giving equal weight to government records and to the written verification of adoption by the adoptive parents when judging the authenticity of adoption. When a record of adoption could not be found in official registers, the government did not simply reject its authenticity. Instead, officials would look for such evidence as the verification of adoption and the depositions of neighbors. Only when none of the evidence indicated

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<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that mothers' opinions were highly respected, if not indispensable, in the official adoption procedures in the banner society. In 1879, the government refused an adoption reported by the Bordered Red banner because the genealogy did not list either the adoptive mother or the biological mother. Moreover, the biological mother's testimony was not among the paperwork. Therefore the government ordered the Captain's Office to redo the paperwork according to the official format. (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 837, pp. 62-65)

<sup>15</sup> In 1879, the government returned a case of adoption because the genealogy of the adoptive parents did not include the name and status of the adoptive mother, and because the adoptive mother's statement of willingness to adopt was missing from the file. (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 837, pp. 62-65)

<sup>16</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol.846, pp. 256-260.

the occurrence of adoption did the government deny its authenticity.<sup>17</sup> For example, in 1879, the government ruled against a floating bannerman named Chenghe, who claimed to have been adopted by his father's cousin, the late Jichengbu. To investigate the authenticity of this adoption, the clerks first checked the government population registers and found no record of an adoption by Jichengbu's household. The clerks proceeded to investigate eleven of Jichengbu's fellow villagers. All these witnesses testified that they had only learned the news orally from Chenghe himself, and had not seen the written verification of adoption from Jichengbu. Ultimately, the local government judged that Chenghe's claim of adoption by Jichengbu was a fraud.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, as the following case shows, the government only recorded as legitimate an adoption that had completed the customary procedures. In 1882 the local banner government received a lawsuit from Dong Fujū, a floating bannerman from the fifth village of the first *Jiala* of the Bordered White banner, accusing *née* Wu, the widow of his late cousin Geji, of breaching the adoption agreement between Fujū's son and Geji. Fujū sued because, rather than recognizing Fujū's son as Geji's heir, *née* Wu had adopted another cousin's son.<sup>19</sup> (See figure 7.2 for illustration.) Fujū claimed that when Geji was ill, he had agreed to adopt Fujū's son as heir. However, the two neither wrote a verification of adoption (*guo dan*) nor reported the adoption to the government to record it. After Geji died, *née* Wu adopted Shengzi, the son of Dong Hai, another cousin of Geji. *Née* Wu made the adoption of Shengzi an elaborate event; she wrote a verification of adoption right after the agreement was made and invited her husband, relatives, and village head, as well

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<sup>17</sup> In the judgment of cases regarding adoption, the government usually listed two reasons for the denial of an adoption: the lack of government records and the lack of verification of adoption from the adoptive parents (202-839-2).

<sup>18</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp. 100-108.

<sup>19</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 873, pp. 9-18.

as the 28 households residing in the same village, as witnesses. Before the government recorded the adoption of Shengzi, Fujū informed née Wu of the adoption agreement between Geji and himself. Née Wu denied the agreement and went ahead to request that the government record the adoption of Shengzi. Disappointed by née Wu's decision, Fujū filed the lawsuit.

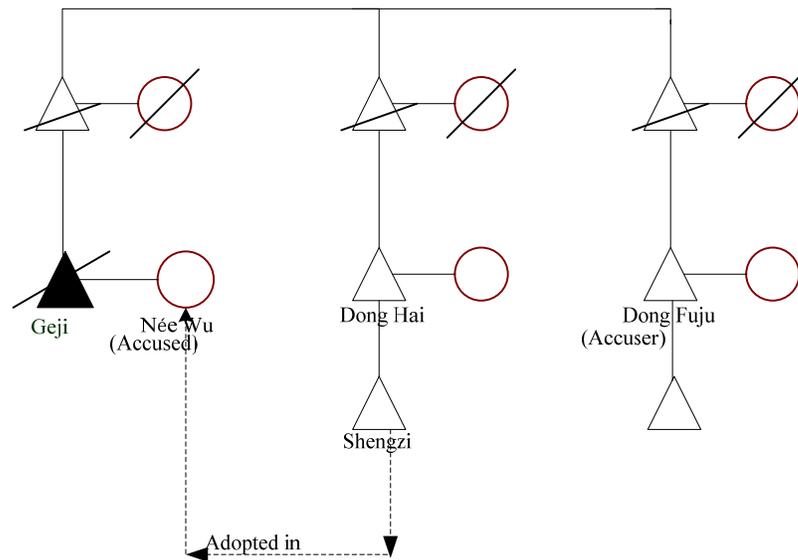


Figure 7. 2 Lawsuit between Dong Fujū and née Wu.  
Source: SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 873, pp. 9-18.

After considering both sides of the dispute, the government gave full credit to customary practices and ruled that the oral adoption agreement between Dong Fujū and Geji was unreliable.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, Dong Fujū received a punishment of 40 lashes for his attempt to take née Wu's property with a fraudulent claim of adoption. It is obvious that, in this case, the government fully respected the custom of witness by relatives and fellow villagers and the legitimacy of the written verification of adoption. Although the

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

government did not have a record of the adoption of Shengzi, the signed verification strongly backed née Wu's case. However, on Dong Fujū's side, the oral adoption agreement was considered null because none of the customary practices had been followed.

The above rules and practices indicate the importance of kin and neighbors in the formation of fictive kinship. Although the government review process decided whether an adoption could be recorded, this procedure usually hung not on the selection of an heir but merely on the completeness of paperwork. Therefore, as long as families followed the general principles, they enjoyed great flexibility in selecting heirs. More challenges, however, might come from within the kinship network. As the case of Dong Fujū and née Wu indicates, kinship members motivated by the prospect of property inheritance competed with each other for the designation of heir. Achieving the support of relatives and neighbors was therefore crucial for the formation of fictive kinship. This complex process, although often remaining hidden from historians due to the scarcity of records, was rife with competition and *realpolitik* among kin.

### **Distant-kin and non-kin inheritance**

In the absence of male heirs, all households fall extinct. Under this circumstance, governments can step in to transfer the property to other households. The tradition of government disposition of property from extinct households has a long history in China. In Shuangcheng, when a household head died with no heirs, the government reallocated the land, together with the position of principal adult male, either to distant kin or to a neighbor. From 1866 to 1912, about 10 percent of metropolitan and rural banner households fell

extinct.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, distant-kin and non-kin inheritance provided important opportunities for bannermen to acquire landed property.

In Shuangcheng, the government applied different policies to metropolitan and rural bannermen regarding their inheritance of land from extinct households, creating two distinct fields of power dynamics between the local government, village communities, and kinship networks. Compared to rural bannermen, metropolitan bannermen had smaller households and more fragmented kinship structures. At the same time, as the elite population in the state farm, the distant kin of metropolitan bannermen enjoyed greater rights in inheriting property when households held by their family members went extinct. Rural bannermen, with larger households and stronger kinship structures, had to compete from time to time with fellow villagers to secure the inheritance of property from extinct branches of their families.

### Metropolitan bannermen

The reallocation of plots from extinct metropolitan banner households began in 1869. Previously, the state had simply retained this land, but, in 1869, the local government began to reallocate the plots, either to distant relatives of the extinct household (*enque*) or to other metropolitan banner households (*gongque*) with adult males eligible to become household heads.<sup>22</sup> By that year, 225 of the 698 metropolitan households had fallen extinct, and the local government was in possession of 225 plots of land. Moreover, the government had also noticed a shortage of land among the remaining metropolitan

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<sup>21</sup> This percentage is calculated from the linked population database created from banner population registers.

<sup>22</sup> See the government recount of the history of the allocation of distinct household land (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp.70-85).

bannermen, resulting from population growth. In his memorial, Fumin'a, the general of Jilin, summarized that, of the 473 remaining metropolitan banner households, 158 were quite large.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, "90 households indeed had no support (*yangshan*), and 62 households had barely sufficient support." Thus, Fumin'a proposed to allocate the 225 *jichan* plots left behind by the extinct households to large metropolitan households that did not have enough land to support themselves.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of *enque*, inheritance rights belonged to existing relatives of the extinct household; the closeness of blood and birth order decided the precedence. Following this guideline, the Captain's Office and the village head took full responsibility in handling the inheritance of *enque*, while the assistant commandant and area commander-in-chief usually stayed away from these cases.<sup>25</sup> In practice, the Captain's Office usually followed the decisions of the kin group. Therefore, in the inheritance of *enque*, kinship groups wielded great power and authority in deciding the heir.

Although in theory the closest relative had the strongest claim to the property, the local banner government reserved the right to adjudicate disputes between relatives when they arose. An 1880 case involving a dispute between two brothers over a plot of land released by an extinct household exemplifies the state adjudication process.<sup>26</sup> Qishisi, a metropolitan bannerman, struggled with his late younger brother's wife, née Lü, over a plot of *jichan* land left by Woxi, their deceased uncle (figure 7.3). Each household wanted one

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> In her unpublished master's thesis about the Shuangchengpu relocation, Ding Yizhuang cited the same document to illustrate the poverty of the metropolitan bannermen. However, my interpretation of this document is different. I consider it an illustration of the shortage of land among metropolitan bannermen. The key divergence between the two interpretations lies in the understanding of "support (*yangshan*)."  
Although a common interpretation of support would be general material supplies for living, in the present context, I think "support" refers to the *jichan* land.

<sup>25</sup> See SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 834-1, pp. 85-98.

<sup>26</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 852, pp. 199-211; reel 204, vol. 845, p. 187.

of its sons to inherit the plot. According to customary practices, Qishisi's son had priority since Qishisi was the elder brother. However, confusion arose when née Lü claimed that her late husband had been adopted by Woxi's wife, the late née Guan, and her household was thus the *de facto* manager of Woxi's land and housing. Without such reliable documentation as the verification of adoption, which née Lü claimed to have lost, the Bordered Yellow Captain's Office found it difficult to make a judgment and reported this case, together with the records of the two households, to the area commander-in-chief.

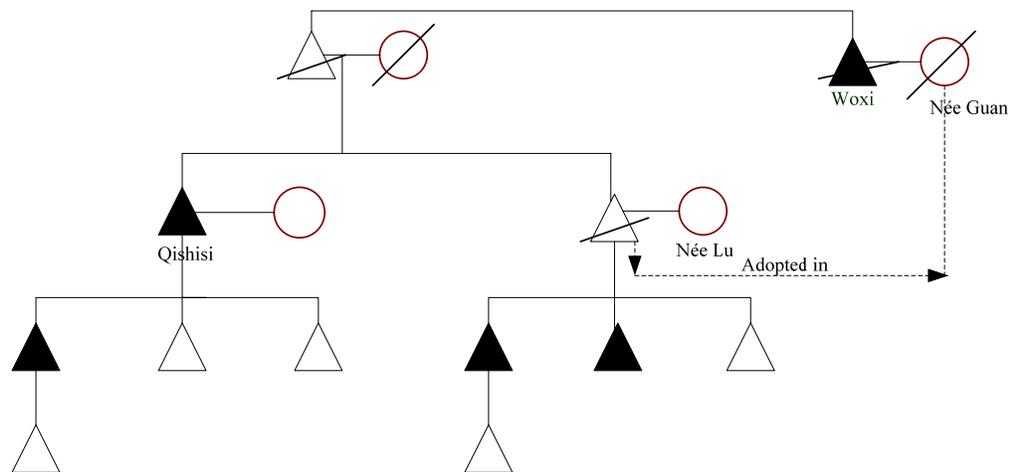


Figure 7. 3 Land disputes between Qishisi and née Lü.  
Sources: SCPZGYMDA, reel 205, vol. 852, pp. 199-211; reel 204, vol. 845, pp. 187.

Interestingly, the final decision of the local banner government was determined not just by degree of kinship but also by state preferences for equitable land distribution. The court awarded the plot to née Lü's son for two reasons: first, the claimed adoption of née Lü's late husband sounded reasonable. Since née Lü's late husband was the younger brother in the household, if there had been an adoption between the families of née Guan and Qishisi, it was née Lü's late husband who would have been adopted. Moreover, given that née Lü's household was the *de facto* manager of Woxi's property, the adoption was

probably real. Equally important, however, this decision better served the principle of equitable distribution of land. In the adjudication, the area commander-in-chief compared the demographic and property composition of the two households as follows:

“It is verified that Qishisi has three sons and one grandson under his name. His household now has two plots of *jichan* land. [Moreover,] he also has one plot of *ziken* land<sup>27</sup>, the amount of which is forty *shang*. These three generations indeed have three plots of landed property. [In addition,] their family is fairly affluent and has no difficulty in [living]. It is verified that although Qingfu died, his wife is still alive, and also has three sons and one grandson. Their household right now only has two plots of *jichan* land. Other than [these two plots of land], they do not have subsistence. Moreover, their family is pretty poor. If they inherit this plot, they will end up having three plots of land as well, which is equally comparable to the property of the elder brother Qishisi’s household.”<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, in this adjudication, the principle of equitable land distribution directed the local government’s attitudes. Although the authenticity of née Lü’s late husband’s adoption was questioned due to the lack of supporting documentation, the local government chose to legitimize the adoption because its existence facilitated the equitable distribution of land.

The principle of equitable land distribution was even more prominent in the inheritance of *gongque*; all of these plots were distributed according to the demographic and wealth composition of eligible metropolitan banner households. In the 1870 reallocation of the 225 public plots, the local government laid out the rule as follows:

“(We should) differentiate those who had support from those who had not. For those households who had no support, every four people, men or women, could receive a plot. For those who had more or less support with a large household, every six or seven people, men or women, could receive one plot.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ziken* land is a type of *nazu* land.

<sup>28</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 845, p. 187

<sup>29</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp.70-85.

Consequently, *gongque* plots were usually transferred to assistant adult males of large households with relatively less land support. From 1870 on, each time a *gongque* plot appeared, the Captain's Office would list four or five households from which the heir would be selected. In addition to a complete record of household members, the Captain's Office would also note the economic situation of each household, using such terms as "poor (*pin*)," "extremely poor (*ji pin*)," and "having more or less support (*shao you yang shan*)." The local government would then review these reports and select the heir according to the demographic and economic conditions of the candidates' households.

### Rural bannermen

In contrast, the rules of land inheritance from extinct rural banner households favored residence over blood. The local government established this principle in adjudicating a land dispute in 1878. In that year, Qingxi, a retired soldier in the Bordered Red banner, sued Zhao Shiyu, a village head of the Plain White banner, for illicitly taking a plot of extinct household land (figure 7.4).<sup>30</sup> This plot originally belonged to Qingxi's father's cousin Jichengbu. According to Qingxi, the late Jichengbu had adopted Chenghe, Qingxi's cousin, as heir. After Jichengbu's death in 1874, Chenghe rented the land to Zhao Shiyu, the head of the village where Jichengbu resided. However, Chenghe later discovered that, in 1877, Zhao Shiyu had reported this plot as extinct-household land and had it officially assigned to his brother Changlin. After checking the registers and interrogating villagers, the Captain's Office of the Plain White banner found that Chenghe was an unregistered floating bannerman, and determined that his adoption by Jichengbu was not authentic. Therefore, Chenghe's inheritance of the plot was not legitimate.

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<sup>30</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 829, pp. 69-74.

Having failed in securing the land for his cousin Chenghe, Qingxi went on to request this plot for his own brothers, who were rural bannerman and, in Qingxi's understanding, eligible to inherit the land. Nevertheless, the local government refused Qingxi's request and stated the rules for reallocating land among rural bannermen as follows:

“All the land assigned to rural bannermen in the state farm belongs to state land. It is quite different from private property. Each time someone dies without heir or is unable to farm the land, he is allowed to return it to the government. The Captain's Office will inspect and select an assistant adult male from the adult males in the four households who share one draft animal in the same village to inherit the plot. ...If there is no capable assistant adult male in the (four households) who share one draft animal, (the Captain's office) is allowed to select (heirs) from (those) in the same village. However there is no such regulation as inspecting kinship members of the deceased or retired.”<sup>31</sup>

According to this policy, the inheritance of land from extinct households by distant kin was not guaranteed to rural bannermen.

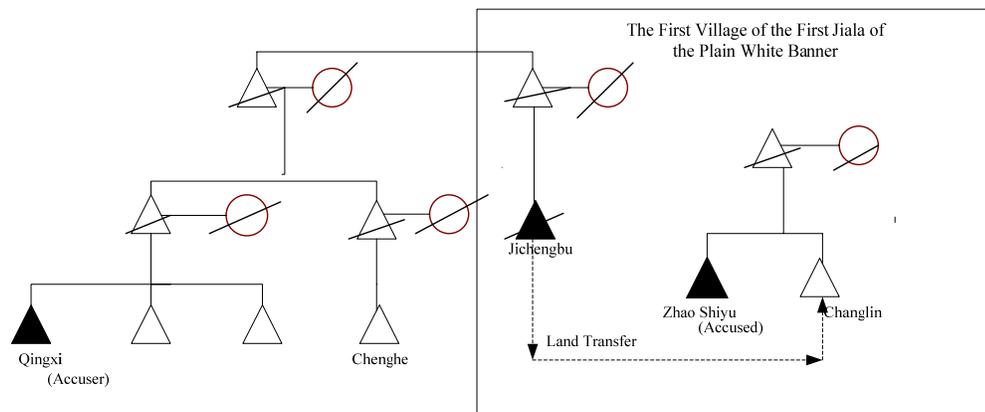


Figure 7. 4 Lawsuit between Qingxi and Zhao Shiyu.  
Source: SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 829, pp. 69-74.

For rural bannermen the village community emerged as the rival of distant kin in acquiring land from extinct households. This practice has its precedence in Chinese history. In rural China, the village community was always an important element of social

<sup>31</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol.835, pp.100-108.

life. As early as the tenth century, rules had defined the order of precedence in the land market: kin in the same descent group, neighbors, and, only if all kin and neighbors declined the land, someone outside of the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup> In Shuangcheng, village organization played an important role in managing the population and land. The village head routinely reported births, deaths, marriages, and land transfers occurring among villagers to the Captain's Office, where the official records were updated. Village heads who failed to update these events would incur punishment.<sup>33</sup> In theory, the village head could manipulate village politics to secure his interests, especially when a household fell extinct and had no kin in the same village. In the case of Qingxi, Zhao Shiyu's advantageous position as village head might have helped secure his brother's possession of the plot.

In practice, however, the local government still gave full consideration to the rights of kin. Whenever an extinct rural banner household had kin in the same village, kin precedence was honored. Table 7.3 summarizes the cases concerning inheritance of extinct-household land among rural bannermen I have collected so far. In four of the five cases, the plots were first offered to kin. Only when the kin denied their rights of inheritance with a clear statement of their inability to farm the land and their willingness for public reallocation, did the government reallocate the land to non-kin. In two cases, non-kin inherited the extinct household land through the above process.<sup>34</sup> In only one case – the lawsuit Qingxi filed against Zhao Shiyu – did the government reallocate the extinct household land to non-kin without first considering the opinion of the kinship

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<sup>32</sup> SHYJG 139 ce. p.5448b.

<sup>33</sup> In a case of illegal registration in 1866, the village head was punished for not reporting to the Captain's Office the death of a bannerman's son (SCPZGYMDA, reel 164, vol. 658, pp.18-26).

<sup>34</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel. 205, vol. 851, pp. 24-27; reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 65-69.

members. In all of these cases, the kin who were first considered as the heir resided in the same village as the extinct household. Thus, although the official regulation emphasized geographic proximity in the selection of heirs, local kinship members were still privileged over unrelated neighbors.

Table 7. 3 Cases concerning the reallocation of extinct-household land among rural banner farmers.

Case No.	Year	Month	Consider kin first	Kin in the same village	Character of the newly replaced farmer	
					In the same village	Kinship member
1	1879	5	No	No	Yes	No
2	1879	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	1880	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
4	1881	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
5	1881	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Sources: SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 829, pp.69-74; reel 201, vol. 835, pp.100-108; reel 202, vol. 839, pp. 411-418; reel. 205, vol. 851, pp. 24-27; reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 65-69; reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 65-69; and reel 208, vol. 865, pp. 91-103.

### Local practices and partible inheritance

Despite the primogeniture rules of land inheritance, partible inheritance persisted as a customary practice in Shuangcheng. The voluminous disputes over land indicated that some families did divide properties equally among all sons, and that the local government permitted this practice. Moreover, the practices of primogeniture inheritance and partible inheritance not only coexisted but also interacted with each other to provide spaces for both individual bannermen and local officials to exercise greater agency.

In 1879 a petition from a rural bannerman exposed the practice of partible inheritance in the state farm. Tongxi, a rural bannerman in the fifth village in the second *Jiala* of the Plain Red banner, filed a petition after fourteen years of household division in his family to request permission to register the *nazu* land in his household under the name of the *de-facto*

owner.<sup>35</sup> This petition therefore requested a reform of the current registration system, which registered all land under the principal adult male's name. According to Tongxi, his father and uncle had each received one plot of *jichan* land upon their arrival in Shuangcheng. In the following years, Tongxi's father and uncle had gradually cleared more land, which each registered as *nazu* land under his own name. By 1864, when Tongxi's father and uncle had both died, the family divided their property. By then, Tongxi had three brothers and one cousin, the uncle's son. The family divided Tongxi's father's *jichan* land and a small plot of *nazu* land equally among the four brothers in Tongxi's household, and divided the other property among the five men – Tongxi, his three brothers, and his cousin. Because partible inheritance was not permitted by official rules, they did not report this division to the government and the land records were not updated. Consequently, Tongxi, as the principal adult male in his household, was still responsible for the rent on all land registered under his name. He therefore filed the petition with the hope of delegating some of this responsibility to his brothers and cousin.

The Captain's Office receiving this petition supported Tongxi's request. Interestingly, the reason cited by the Captain's Office for supporting this proposal was the peacefulness of this property division: "Although the brothers are common farmers, they are aware of the affection between brothers. It seems good that (they) divided (the property) in this way, and there was no dispute at all."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, in its report, the Captain's Office recommended that Tongxi's proposal to update the land registration be approved.

This case reveals the pragmatic nature of the local government's authority, but the

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<sup>35</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel. 202, vol. 839, pp.71-78.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

local government was also a representative of state interests. As such, the local banner government followed state regulations regarding land inheritance and maintained the land records. The local government therefore upheld the principle of equitable land distribution when policing land inheritance and adjudicating disputes. At the same time, however, the local government supported such practices as partible inheritance and relied heavily on such basic social organizations as the family and kin group to maintain local order. As the Captain's Office's comments on Tongxi's case indicate, the peaceful settlement of local affairs was the local government's major interest. In practice, therefore, the local government balanced its administration between state regulations and local practices to maintain social order; the customary practice of partible inheritance was supported when it served the interests of the local government.

Several other lawsuits regarding property division affirm that partible inheritance was not a rare practice in Shuangcheng. A case filed by Wang Desheng, a rural bannerman in the first village of the fourth *Jiala* of the Bordered White banner, recounts his family's story of household division.<sup>37</sup> Desheng's father was the third brother in his family. In the late 1810s, Desheng's father and his two elder brothers moved to Shuangcheng under the government order. At first, only the second brother, Anping, was allocated a plot of *jichan* land. In 1828 the three brothers equally divided the family property, including this plot of land, but only Anping set up a separate household, while Desheng's father continued to live with the eldest brother, Anquan. In 1830, Anquan's son Zengxi received a principal adult male position and a plot of *jichan* land by replacing an extinct household. In 1842 Desheng's father and Anquan divided the land under Zengxi's name among themselves, excluding Anping from this second household division.

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<sup>37</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 860, pp. 45-53.

The above cases reveal that families in Shuangcheng strategically used both primogeniture and partible inheritance as methods of property accumulation and transmission. As Desheng's case indicates, the primogeniture rule was mainly used when land was transferred between households. Therefore, families used primogeniture as a strategy to acquire land from outside sources. After the acquisition of land, families took full control over the division of their property, with some following partible inheritance rules to distribute land among family members. Moreover, in Shuangcheng, families repeated these activities over the course of the family life cycle to accumulate and distribute property.

In fact, the co-existence of primogeniture and partible inheritance reflects the dual nature of family in Shuangcheng: each family was both an administrative unit and a social organization. In areas where private land ownership is recognized, families are mainly social organizations responsible for their own consumption and production. Thus, a family takes full responsibility for organizing wealth transmission. However, in Shuangcheng, the state control of land made its transfer a government job; from the state perspective, families and village communities were primarily units of land allocation and management. At the same time, the local government still left space for and relied on families' social functions. This flexibility allowed families to tactically employ official rules to acquire land on the one hand and then reallocate property among their members on the other.

This combination of official primogeniture and local partible practice, however, brought up questions about defining family members' property rights. In China, partible inheritance could take place in several steps, and family property could be divided several

times. In theory all property of the family, including land, housing, leasehold, household items, and debt, were divisible.<sup>38</sup> After the initial household division, once a son established a separate household, he enjoyed exclusive rights over the property of the new household, including both the property he had inherited and any property he acquired afterwards on his own. In future divisions of the original household, he retained only his equal share of the property in the original household, but his own property was not up for division among non-coresident brothers. In Shuangcheng, however, since the official registers did not record the results of partible inheritance, the registration of land ownership could not protect the property rights of those who acquired property through household division. Therefore, in reality, customary laws were important in maintaining family member's property rights.

As we see in the cases of both Tongxi and Wang Desheng, in practice, families in Shuangcheng exclusively followed customary notions in defining their members' property rights. In the official records of Tongxi's family the four brothers and their cousin appeared as two respective households, one under Tongxi's name and the other under his cousin Dexi's name.<sup>39</sup> However, in the actual process of property division, the brothers and their cousin combined the property of the two households (figure 7.5). First, Tongxi and his three brothers equally divided the plot of *jichan* land assigned to their father, along with an adjacent plot of *nazu* land, leaving Tongxi and his fourth younger brother with 26 *shang* each. Then, the 58.4 *shang* of *nazu* land registered under Dexi's name were divided, with Tongxi's second and third younger brothers each receiving 29.2 *shang*.

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<sup>38</sup> In the household division agreements our research group collected in villages in Liaoning Province, the lists of family property were so specific that they included such small items as a pot and a broken jar. (Liaoning document 159)

<sup>39</sup> See the 1878 and 1880 household registers of the Plain Red banner (sorted 1878 pp.249-254 and 1880 pp.262-268).

Dexi was left with only a plot of *jichan* land and an adjacent plot of *nazu* land, totaling 25.63 *shang*. Besides the landed property, each of the brothers – but not Dexi – was responsible for debts worth more than 1,200 strings of coins. Finally, Tongxi and each of his brothers controlled between 33 and 36.4 *shang* of land and a debt of 1,200 strings of coins, while their cousin held 25.63 *shang* of land. Although a total of 84.03 *shang* of land was registered under Dexi’s name, it was in fact considered the common property of the larger family. After the property division, despite the fact that Tongxi and his cousin were the only owners listed in the official registers, in reality all the brothers had property rights on the shares they received. Similarly, in Wang Desheng’s case, the plot Zengxi acquired was considered the common property only of the co-residing brothers, so the brother with his own household was excluded from its division.

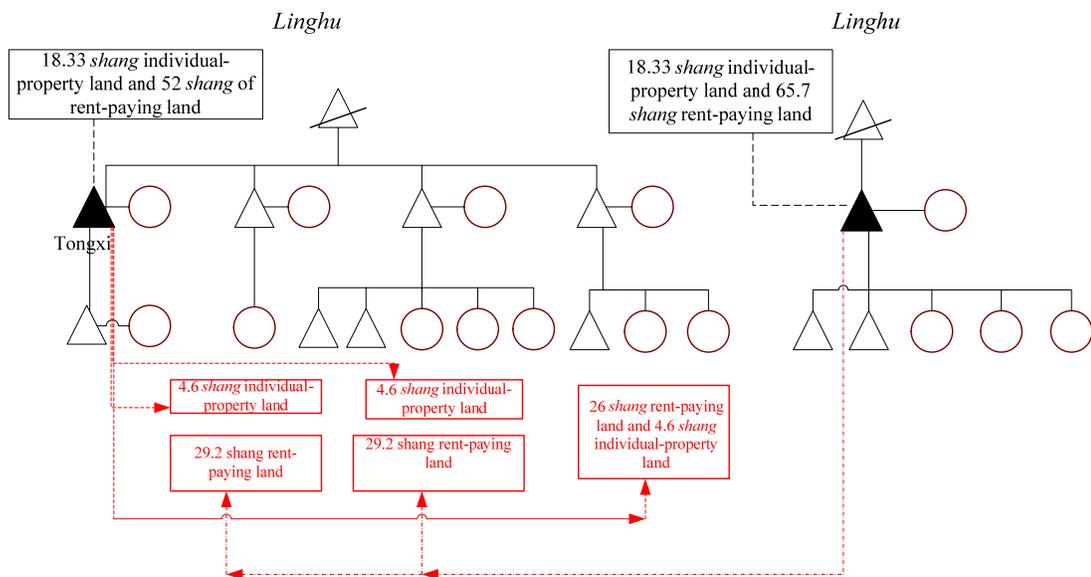


Figure 7. 5 Household division in Tongxi’s family.

Sources: SCPZGYMDA, reel. 202, vol. 839, pp.71-78 and the 1878 and 1880 household registers of the Plain Red banner (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834700, vol. 355, pp 249-254 and reel 1834701, vol. 357, pp 262-268).

Above all, the persistence of partible inheritance highlighted the competition between

customary laws and the official rules of primogeniture inheritance. Since the state rules of land inheritance served as the official code of behavior, Shuangcheng residents only reported the results of primogeniture inheritance. For example, in Tongxi's case, they chose not to report the household division because it deviated from the state regulation on inheritance. At the same time, rules of partible inheritance existed outside the official records as important guidelines for practice. In applying this practice, villagers maintained their flexibility in managing their family property on the one hand and satisfying the official rules on the other. Ironically, local officials also played by both sets of rules. On the one hand, by maintaining a clean population and land record, the local government satisfied the provincial and central governments' interests of governance. On the other, local officials recognized customary practices in order to facilitate the management of civil affairs among the villagers.

### **Local governance**

The coexistence of the official law of primogeniture inheritance and the customary practice of partible inheritance provided both the local government and villagers with a full range of competitive and flexible rules they could use to secure land use rights. In practice, both local officials and villagers tactically chose either rule to defend their interests depending on the context. The most intriguing part of local governance surrounding inheritance in Shuangcheng is not the rules themselves, but the ability of different actors to exercise their agency in the spaces between these flexible and contradictory rules.

The following lawsuit illustrates villagers' strategies in using government records to secure their rights. In 1879 Changshun, a rural bannerman from the third village of the

second *Jiala* of the Plain White banner, filed a lawsuit against his cousin Mingyue for usurping twenty *shang* of *nazu* land that belonged to Changshun.<sup>40</sup> Changshun had two older uncles who had lived with Changshun's father in the same household in early years. While the eldest uncle had no son, Changshun's second uncle and father each had one son, Mingyue and Changshun. Their household had two plots of *jichan* land – one registered to Changshun's eldest uncle and one to Changshun's father. In 1843, this household equally divided the two plots of *jichan* land into four shares of eight *shang*. Each of the three brothers and Changshun's grandfather took one share. After the property division, only Changshun's father set up a separate household, while Changshun's two older uncles still lived together. After the establishment of his own household, Changshun's father opened 40 *shang* of land and registered them under his name as *nazu* land. However, in 1861 Changshun's father died, leaving his widow and the fourteen-year-old Changshun behind. Without an adult male to serve as household head, Changshun and his mother went back to his older uncles' household and lived with them again. During this period, Mingyue, Changshun's cousin, managed all family properties, including the land registered under Changshun's name. In 1875, Mingyue divided this family's household property again, but this time this division incurred a dispute.

From Changshun's perspective, in the second household division, the way Mingyue divided their family property deviated from the notion of family property rights backed by customs. By the time of the second household division, only Mingyue and Changshun and their wives and children survived. Mingyue included the 40 *shang* of land opened by Changshun's father after the first division as part of the family's common property. He

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<sup>40</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 202, vol. 839, pp.91-96. and The 1870 population registers of Plain White banner. SCPGBTDHKDM reel 1834668, vol. 86, pp.179-180.

equally divided all this property into three shares, according to the number of descent groups from their father's generation, and gave Changshun one share. Mingyue then assigned the third share to his own son by claiming that his deceased elder uncle had adopted his son as heir. From Changshun's point of view, the 40 *shang* of land had been acquired by his father after the first household division and thus should not have been included in the family's common property for the second household division. Moreover, the adoption of Mingyue's son had neither been agreed upon by the two brothers nor witnessed by kin and neighbors.

Interestingly, when making his case in court, Changshun did not cite the customary notion of family property rights but instead used government land records to defend his rights. In the household registers, the forty *shang* of land was registered under Changshun's name. Changshun's reliance on the official records to protect his rights to the land indicates the authority of official records in securing land ownership. Although Changshun could have found support in either the official records or the customary notions, he obviously considered the official records to be hard evidence. Therefore, whenever official records were available, villagers still tended to rely on them.

The Captain's Office, when adjudicating this case, used the government records to form its opinion. The government had recorded none of the changes in residential and property arrangements that had occurred in Changshun's family. In the household register, Changshun and Mingyue always appeared in two separate households with Changshun as the head of one, and Mingyue living with their late eldest uncle in the other.<sup>41</sup> The Captain's Office reported to the local banner government that the land was

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<sup>41</sup> This is the observation according to the banner household registers preserved in the Liaoning Provincial Archives.

registered under Changshun's name, and, moreover, there was no record of the adoption of Mingyue's son in the household register. Therefore, the Captain's Office drew the conclusion that it was Mingyue who had fraudulently manipulated the property division.

In other cases, however, villagers tried to use government records to seize property while the local government relied on customary laws to adjudicate the cases. The lawsuit Wang Desheng filed against his cousin Dequan illustrates a failed example of villagers trying to take advantage of the official register to seize property.<sup>42</sup> After the second household division described above, Desheng's father Antai started to accrue property for himself. Antai first managed to clear 30 *shang* of waterlogged land that had originally been assigned to Anping, and then farmed 10 *shang* of waterlogged land that had originally been registered under Zengxi's name.<sup>43</sup> In 1852, Antai registered these two plots as *nazu* land. However, since Antai himself was not a principal adult male and was thus not qualified to hold any landed property, he had to register the two plots of land respectively under Anping's and Zengxi's names. In 1881, when the government allowed the *de facto* owners of *nazu* land to register it under their own names and acquire certificates, the discrepancy between registered owner and *de facto* owner sharpened. Dequan, Anping's son and Desheng's cousin, went to the Captain's Office to apply, on behalf of his brother, for the certificate for the 30 *shang* of land that Desheng had registered under his name, without notifying Desheng. As Desheng was still the *de facto* owner, Desheng accused Dequan of secretly drawing from the government the certificate of 30 *shang* of *nazu* land that ultimately belonged to Desheng. Obviously, in this case, Dequan was trying to use the fact that he was the registered owner to seize this property for his own family.

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<sup>42</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 860, pp. 45-53.

<sup>43</sup> These were the original *jichan* plots assigned to Anping and Zengxi, but once the government discovered that these plots were waterlogged, Anping and Zengxi were assigned *jichan* land elsewhere.

Interestingly, when judging this case, the government did not follow the official records but gave full consideration to customary practices. The local officials recognized that, in registering this plot of land under Dequan's name, Desheng had only been "borrowing the name to register (land) to facilitate the rent collection (*jie ming bao guan, yi bei shu zu*)." Therefore the government explicitly recognized Desheng's ownership of the thirty *shang* of land and denounced Dequan for plotting to seize Desheng's land. Finally, Dequan returned the land certificate and received his punishment.<sup>44</sup>

The meaning of this case is two-fold. On one hand, it reveals the pragmatic stance taken by the local government in solving disputes. The local officials were well aware of the various customary practices. Moreover, in practice, by allowing Desheng to "borrow the name to register (land) to facilitate the rent collection," the local officials manipulated the land registration system to accommodate the customary practice of partible inheritance. Thus, in the judgment of the above case, the government did not follow the official record but used the customary law as the standard of justice. On the other hand, it also reveals that individual villagers used official records as a strategy to gain property. Although this case illustrates a failed attempt, it still indicates the possibility of exploiting discrepancies between official rules and customary practices to seize property from other family members.

Finally, this interaction between primogeniture inheritance rules and partible inheritance practices led to the modification of the government land registration system. After Tongxi's petition in 1879, the government started to register *nazu* land under the *de facto* owner's name. Although I did not find any official announcement of this policy change in the archives, in the years between 1880 and 1881 the increase in the number of

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<sup>44</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 860, pp. 45-53.

disputes over property divisions and land certificate applications for the *de facto* owners points to its occurrence. In these cases, the villagers mentioned the important policy change that had occurred: “now (the government) followed the order to ask (people) to apply for their (land) certificate, allowing those who divided their property receive a separate certificate.”<sup>45</sup> While this change in land registration pertained to *nazu* land, the registration of households and of *jichan* land remained unchanged. This indicates that the government made this policy change to facilitate rent collection; since no rent was collected from the *jichan* land, its registration still followed the rules of primogeniture.

Moreover, the results of descriptive statistics on *nazu* land records reveal that the relaxation of land registration in fact started even earlier than the official change. I list in table 7.4 the change in the number of registered owners of *nazu* land by household from 1870 to 1889. In 1870, the state rules of primogeniture registration were more or less maintained; more than 93 percent of the households only had one registered owner of *nazu* land. The maximum number of registered owners in a single household was three. Between 1876 and 1878, however, the percentage of single-land-owner households was reduced to 89.7. As for multiple land-owner households, not only did their percentage in the land registers increase, but the number of registered owners in a single household greatly increased as well. A little more than 10 percent of the households had two or more registered owners. In one extreme case, a household even had twenty-one registered owners. The increase in multiple land-owner households continued in the period 1887-1889. In 1887-1889, 88.1 percent of households had only one registered landowner, while 11.9 percent had two or more registered owners. These figures indicate an interesting relationship between policy and practice in local society; practices preceded

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<sup>45</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 860, pp. 45-53.

policy change. Policies usually reflected a post-facto recognition of existing reality. It was the existence of contradiction and variation that changed the rules in Shuangcheng, as the constant interaction between contradictory rules and behaviors constituted a slow but strong force for change.

Table 7. 4 Number of registered owners of *nazu* land by household, 1870-1889.

	1870		1876-1878		1887-1889	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
1	1,031	93.1	1,135	89.7	2,009	88.1
2	69	6.2	95	7.5	219	9.6
3	8	0.7	12	1.0	39	1.7
4	0	0.0	5	0.4	7	0.3
5	0	0.0	5	0.4	3	0.1
6	0	0.0	3	0.2	1	0.0
7	0	0.0	1	0.1	2	0.1
8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
9	0	0.0	2	0.2	0	0.0
10	0	0.0	3	0.2	0	0.0
11	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0
13	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0
16	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0
21	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,108</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>1,265</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>2,281</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Sources: The linked population and land database.

### **Conclusion: inheritance practices and their consequences**

Inheritance practices in Shuangcheng illustrate the state's flexibility in local governance. Despite the government's policies regarding state land ownership, it considered land inheritance largely a family procedure and allowed family members considerable autonomy to determine their own method of wealth transmission. Therefore, although the state stipulated primogeniture inheritance as the standard practice, partible inheritance persisted among metropolitan and rural bannermen.

The coexistence of primogeniture and partible inheritance in Shuangcheng offers an alternative model to the traditional view of the relationship between state regulation and local practice. Traditional scholarship often applies a binary model of public and private to analyze the relationship between state regulation and local practice in China, with state regulation representing the public and local practice representing the private. Moreover, when looking at wealth distribution, these studies always associate public with equal and private with unequal. For example, scholars have agreed that the major cause of land concentration in Chinese history was private land accumulation by powerful landlords, which often opposed the state's interest.<sup>46</sup> Although this view is held true regarding land transactions, in Shuangcheng, both the state regulation of primogeniture inheritance and private partible inheritance pursued the ideal of equality.

The two types of inheritance practices in Shuangcheng, however, pursued equality at different levels; primogeniture inheritance emphasized equality across households in the metropolitan and rural banner populations, while partible inheritance emphasized equality among individual heirs within a household. The persistence of these two types of inheritance, in the long term, would lead to different outcomes in wealth stratification at the household level, with primogeniture promoting equality and partibility leading to growing inequality. In their empirical study on partible inheritance in North China, William Lavelly and R. Bin Wong have demonstrated that, since partible inheritance split a family's land holding equally among heirs, over the long term, familial wealth is closely associated with reproductive behavior; large households with more heirs experienced greater downward mobility in their wealth status (1992). Therefore, in the long term, partible inheritance led to growing stratification among metropolitan and rural banner

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<sup>46</sup> For the elaboration of this argument, see chapter eight.

families.

In contrast to partible inheritance, the state stipulated primogeniture inheritance as the standard practice in order to concentrate household wealth and maintain within-category equality at the household level. Although the state only registered land in Shuangcheng under the household head's name, it also granted other household members the ability to share the land. In China, both state and society consider property to be held in common within households (Zelin 2004). Thus, by registering all members under the same household, the state defined their entitlement to household property. Furthermore, by concentrating its members' common property in the household, the state maintained equality among the metropolitan banner households and among the rural banner households. Therefore, although the state began to allow the separate registration of *nazu* land by bannermen who practiced partible inheritance, it still maintained the registration of *jichan* land in the primogeniture form.

Yet, regardless of variations in practice, in Shuangcheng, both primogeniture inheritance and local partible inheritance prevented land concentration. On the one hand, the state regulation prevented a household from possessing two plots of *jichan* land; on the other, partible inheritance, if practiced, broke up large land holdings. Therefore, although flexibility in inheritance practices in Shuangcheng would probably have led to growing stratification among metropolitan and rural bannermen, inheritance practices *per se* would not have led to land concentration. This proposition can be tested: having looked at the various local practices of land acquisition, transaction, and inheritance in chapters six and seven, in chapter eight, I explore land distribution as an outcome of the interaction between state policies and these local practices.

## **Part Four Wealth Stratification and Social Formation**

### **Chapter VIII Wealth Stratification: State Categories and Individual Agency**

In agrarian societies, the distribution of landed wealth has been considered the major indicator of the level of social stratification. Land not only provided farm families the wherewithal to live but also defined their social standing. In China, even in 1995, that is seventeen years after the beginning of economic reform, land still accounted for 46.8 percent of per-capita net wealth and explained 40.4 percent of total inequality in rural China (Li and Zhao 2007). These proportions were likely to be far greater in historical China, especially in regions that were less urbanized and less commercialized.

The level of land concentration is also important in China because it is an indicator of state power. In historical China, the transition from relatively egalitarian land distribution to highly concentrated land ownership has been a central component of the canonical 'dynastic cycle' (He 1956, 1958). In early Chinese dynasties, because of the state ownership of land, the state did not levy tax on land but instead allocated land to people and levied poll tax and service from them. The functioning of the state largely relied on its control of population. Since peasants only paid poll tax and provided service when they owned a parcel of land, an equal land distribution ensured the state's control of

population.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of almost every Chinese dynasty, the new state redistributed the concentrated land of the previous dynasty to create a relatively equal land distribution among the populations who provided the state with labor and service. Private land transactions and acquisitions, however, eventually led to the reconcentration of wealth, growing inequality, social and political unrest, and declining control of manpower. The rise of large landowners always marked the decline of state power.

Therefore, the Chinese state always sought to maintain equality by manipulating the distribution of land. In historical dynasties, the state struggled with large landlords over the control of small peasants. The Communist revolution and the subsequent Land Reform also prioritized elimination of the landlord class. In post-revolutionary China, the state maintained an egalitarian distribution of land by enforcing a public land system and forbidding private land transactions. Even in the recent economic reform period during which the state reintroduced the market economy, under the household responsibility system in rural China land was still equally allocated on a per-capita basis. The state policy maintained a relatively equal distribution of land in late twentieth century rural China (Brenner 2001).<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, I analyze longitudinal household level data on landholding from 1870 to 1906 to examine the land distribution in Shuangcheng half a century after the initial settlement. In so doing, I assess how well the institution of population categories was maintained in Shuangcheng. As I documented in previous chapters, state policy created population categories and prioritized banner land ownership and equal land distribution

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<sup>1</sup> As I discussed in chapter one, only beginning in the late eighth century, when the state started to tax land, did the importance of service tax decline. However, this transformation from poll tax and service to land tax took a long time. It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that this transformation was completed.

<sup>2</sup> According to Brenner's analysis of land distribution data in China from two waves of survey in 1988 and 1995, the Gini coefficient of the distribution of land value was 0.323 in 1988 and 0.393 in 1995 (2001).

within metropolitan and rural bannermen. At the same time, this state policy also constantly interacted with local practices of land acquisition, which were characterized by stratification based on the ability of individual households. Moreover, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the worsening fiscal crisis pushed the state to adjust its land management policy. The opening of *nazu* land in the 1840s and the expedient allocation of *jichan* plots in 1878 both created possibilities for greater stratification in land distribution. Therefore, changes in the level of equality in land distribution in the latter half of the nineteenth century reveal how successful the state was at maintaining the categorical equality and inequality in the face of social and economic changes.

To assess the durability of state population categories, I look not only at the overall level of equality in land distribution, but also examine the persistence and mobility of individual households within and across strata of landholding in Shuangcheng. The period for which the household-level land holding data is available, 1870 to 1906, was full of changes, including the immigration of civilian commoners, the establishment of a civilian government in this area, and elevated tension regarding land ownership. Therefore, the persistence of households in the upper and lower strata of land distribution indicated how these societal changes altered social fluidity.

In the next part of this chapter, I present an overview of previous findings on categorical inequality and within category equality in land distribution in Shuangcheng. In the third part, I examine the distribution of landed wealth among the entire metropolitan and rural banner population to observe the functioning of population categories in wealth distribution and the mobility generated by local practices of land acquisition. In the fourth part, I examine persistence and mobility in land stratification. Based on descriptive

statistics, I also present three case studies of wealth accumulation by specific families to illuminate the strategies and processes of land stratification in Shuangcheng. Finally, by comparing the histories of families that were successful or unsuccessful at wealth accumulation, I demonstrate how upward and downward mobility occurred and how the agency of successful families was constructed.

### **State categories and land distribution**

Throughout the history of the state farm, the metropolitan and rural bannermen owned the majority of landed wealth. As figure 8.1 shows, the metropolitan and rural bannermen owned 72 percent of Shuangcheng's registered farm land in 1876, including both *jichan* and *nazu* land.<sup>3</sup> A group classified as "banner tenants," bannermen who were not registered under the metropolitan or rural bannermen categories, owned 9 percent of the registered farmland. Therefore, in Shuangcheng bannermen owned 83 percent of the registered farmland, and civilian commoners only owned 16 percent. Because of the state regulations that prevented land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners, the shares of registered ownership between the two remained unchanged until the early twentieth century.

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<sup>3</sup> Although the land registers did not refer to their population category, these banner tenants probably consisted of bannermen from such adjacent areas as Lalin and some floating bannermen, who were either registered on the population registers or not. Floating bannermen as a category was not officially allowed to own land in Shuangcheng, but some individuals still managed to register *nazu* land.

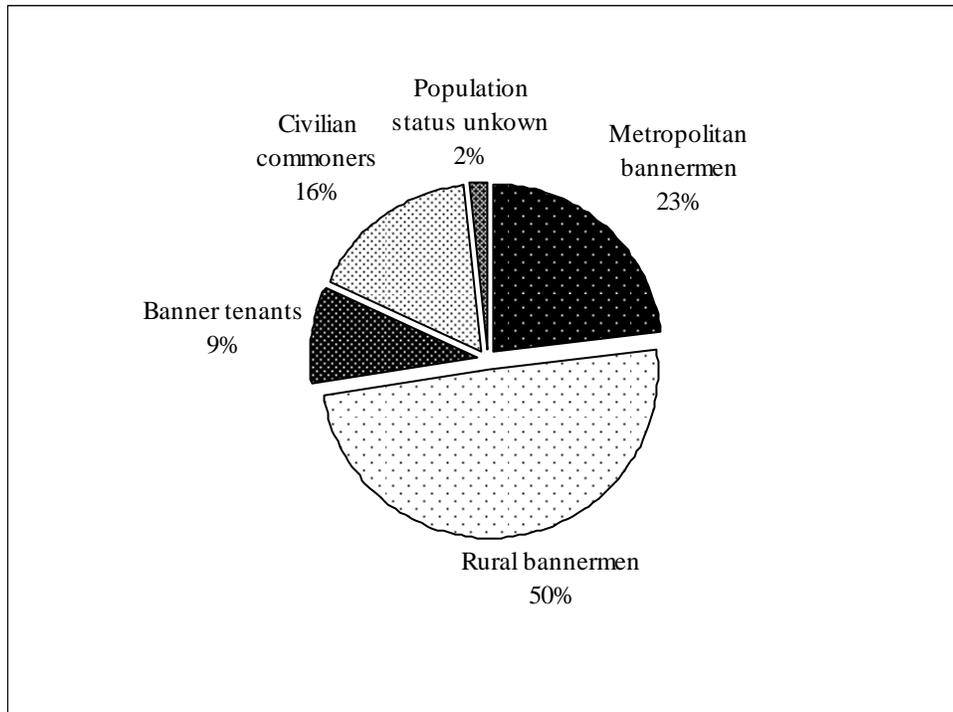


Figure 8. 1 The distribution of all land among different population categories, 1876.\*

Sources: The 1876 land registers of banner and civilian divisions. SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834696, vol. 285; reel 1834731, vol. 658, vol. 659. SCPZGYMDA, reel 160, vol. 635, pp.147-295.

\* The total amount of land used for the generation of this figure includes the amount of *sanwanshang* land, the land located between Shuangcheng and Lalin. In the Shuangcheng banner government only controlled this land category for a short period of time. In a strict sense, this land category was not a regular property of Shuangcheng. The owners of *sangwanshang* land consist of both bannermen from Lalin (banner tenants in land registers) and civilian commoners. Therefore, if the category *sangwanshang* land is excluded from the total amount of land, the share of land for metropolitan and rural bannermen is even larger.

Within the haves, under the egalitarian principle, the state managed to maintain a relatively equal distribution of land between the metropolitan and the rural bannermen. This equality was especially evident in the distribution of the *jichan* land (Chen, Lee, and Campbell 2008). In 1876, among the metropolitan bannermen, 72 percent of households had one plot; 17 percent of households had no *jichan* land; and only about 11 percent of the households had more than one plot. Most of the households that had no *jichan* land had no adult males. Similarly, among the rural bannermen, 64 percent of households had one plot; 13 percent of households had no *jichan* land, and 23 percent of households, mostly

very large ones, had more than one plot. This pattern of equality continued into the early twentieth century (Chen, Lee, and Campbell 2008).

At the same time, however, local practices in Shuangcheng created dynamics in land management and accumulation. First, the existence of land rental and conditional sale ensured that the have-nots had land use rights.<sup>4</sup> The have-nots, floating bannermen and the civilian commoners, therefore, made their living as hired laborers or tenants or through customary institutions of conditional sale. As table 6.5 showed, the disproportionate labor-land ratio of some of the metropolitan and rural banner households created demand for hired labor. Renting land out was another easy solution for families without sufficient family labor to farm and/or manage their property. With the development of land rental, conditional sale as a means to maintain stable land use rights took root in the state farm villages. While the state prevented the have-nots from officially owning state land, they tolerated the existence of conditional sales under customary law. Through such conditional sales, some have-nots were even able to accumulate ‘rights’ to large parcels of land.

Second, the bannermen’s cultivation of *nazu* land also affected the land distribution. The concentrated distribution of *nazu* land increased the level of inequality by adding more land to the metropolitan and rural households who owned it. The distributions of *nazu* land were extremely unequal within both the metropolitan and rural bannermen; in 1876, 70 percent of the metropolitan and 60 percent of the rural banner households had no *nazu* land (Chen, Lee, and Campbell 2008). When *nazu* land is also considered, the land controlled by the top 10 percent of metropolitan households rose from 28 percent to 40 percent, and the share controlled by the top 10 percent of rural households rose from 28

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<sup>4</sup> See chapter six.

percent to 32 percent (Chen, Lee, and Campbell 2008).<sup>5</sup>

Whereas in previous chapters, I focused on inequality between categories and equality within categories, in the rest of this chapter, I break down the boundary between categories and examine the land distribution in the entire metropolitan and rural banner population. In so doing, I identify that to what extent state categories contributed to overall inequality in land distribution. To do so, I divide the metropolitan and rural households into three strata—the haves, have-nots, and the have-a-lots—and focus on the have-nots and have-a-lots.<sup>6</sup> By have-nots, I refer to households who were landless or nearlylandless. By have-a-lots, I refer to households in the top decile in the distribution of households by landholding.

### Measuring inequality

When measuring inequality in the distributions of wealth and income, social scientists commonly use the Gini coefficient to measure the level of inequality. As a single measurement, the Gini coefficient provides a convenient index and facilitates comparison across societies. At the same time, however, measures like the Gini coefficient have drawbacks. First, as a singular measurement, the Gini coefficient only measures the overall level of inequality in the society as a whole and by itself does not distinguish

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<sup>5</sup> Previous study shows that although the acquisition of *nazu* land increased the level of inequality, it also balanced the hidden inequality at the household per-capita level, a product of the state's land allocation policy, which only emphasized equal distribution of land at the household level (Chen, Lee, and Campbell 2008). Since the state allocated land not to individuals but to households, variations in household size created greater variations between households in their amount of land per member. The seemingly equal land distribution at the household level, therefore, became less equal at the household per-capita level. Thus, *nazu* land satisfied some large households who were disadvantaged in per-capita *jichan* land distribution.

<sup>6</sup> Although land distribution at the per-capita level is an important indicator of stratification, in Shuangcheng, since land ownership mainly marked social and political status, being a member of a household with substantial amount of land itself is meaningful. Thus, in this chapter, I focus my analysis on the stratification of landed wealth at the household level.

between-category inequalities. Second, the Gini coefficient only reflect the level of inequality at a very aggregated level but does not directly reflect the level of poverty or wealth concentration (Blackwood and Lynch 1994). Therefore, its analytical power is constrained in measuring inequality in land distribution, especially when the focus is the differences between the have-nots, or landless, and the have-a-lots, those who have especially large landholdings.

In an agrarian society where land provides the basic means of livelihood, the major source of inequality is not in the slight differences within the middle strata of land distribution, but at the two extremes, between the landless and the large landowners. During a short-term economic crisis, the landless, or the have-nots, are the most vulnerable group. For example, in nineteenth-century Sweden, the landless suffered significantly because of their low wages; when the real wage declined by 10 percent, the adult mortality of the landless increased by 13 percent. The landed, however, were not affected by reductions in real wages, which suggests that in the short term, they could meet the consumption needs of their families by drawing on savings or taking other measures (Bengtsson 2004). By the same token, the have-a-lots were the most powerful. Wealth constitutes an important resource for people to exercise power, “the ability to produce intended effects” (Russell 1938). In Chinese history, whenever land was highly concentrated, major landowners who controlled the majority of land were powerful enough to compete with the Emperor and the central government (He 1956, 1958).

In Shuangcheng, given the relatively equal land distribution in the metropolitan and rural bannermen, the tails of the distribution, that is the have-nots and have-a-lots, are of special interest. As figure 8.2 shows, the overall distribution of *jichan* and *nazu* land in

the entire metropolitan and rural banner households exhibit a pattern of stratification without concentration. What stratification there was existed in the top and bottom deciles, who owned 30.9 percent and one percent of landed wealth, respectively. This level of stratification is similar to wealth stratification in present-day rural China. In 2002, the top decile of the population in rural China accounted for 30.5 percent of wealth, and the bottom decile possessed 2 percent (Li and Zhao 2007).<sup>7</sup>

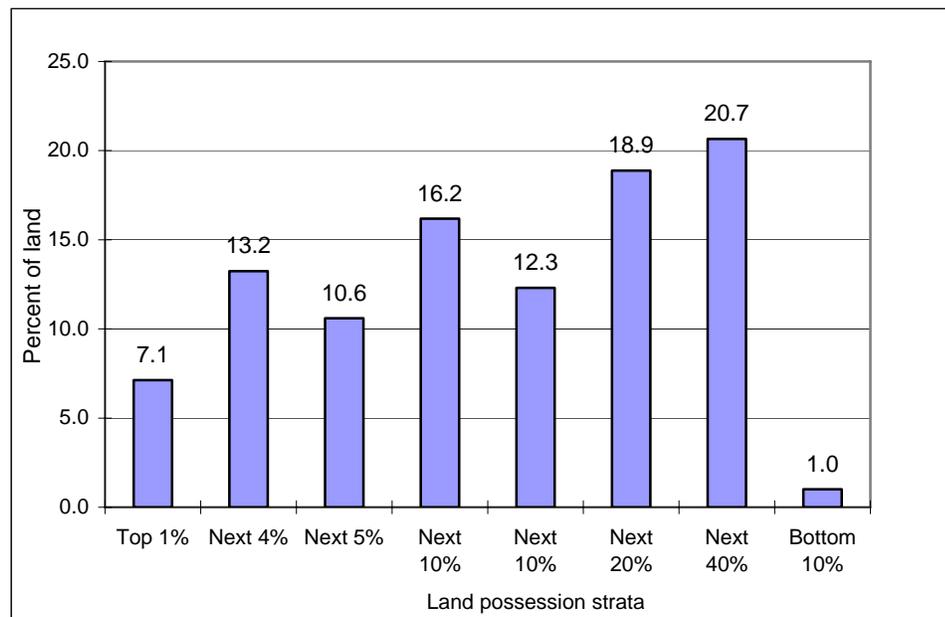


Figure 8. 2 Distribution of *jichan* and *nazu* land among the metropolitan and rural banner households, 1876.

Sources: the 1876 land registers of metropolitan and rural bannermen and the linked population and land database. In 1876, there were land records for 2,748 households, 648 from metropolitan banner and 2,100 from rural banner.

However, if we compare the level of stratification in Shuangcheng to other locations, it is still moderate. For example, in the United States in 1774, the top decile of individuals accounted for 59 percent of total wealth. In 1860, the same proportion of individuals occupied 71 percent of total wealth (Schneider 2004). Compared to several other

<sup>7</sup> Compared to that in 1995 China, the stratification in 2002 has increased; in 1995, the top decile of population shared 26.2 percent of wealth, and the bottom decile shared 3.1 percent.

European and Asian communities for which data are available, Shuangcheng is the location with the least land concentration. Among the communities for which we have been able to locate relevant estimates, we have only found one, in Japan, that is comparable to Shuangcheng (Bengtsson, Campbell, and Lee 2004).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the landless and those with substantial landholdings were indeed distinguished from this population.

In light of the state's egalitarian principle in land allocation, the have-nots and have-a-lots in the metropolitan and rural bannermen tell stories of failure and success that transcend state policy. As members of the category of haves, every metropolitan and rural household in principle was eligible for one plot of *jichan* land, and thus, should have been landed. The existence of landless among this elite group therefore reveals the failures of some of the privileged. At the same time, despite the strong presence of the state, some households were still able to accumulate substantive amounts of land and thereby became have-a-lots. As figure 8.2 shows, the bottom 70 percent of households had less than their fair share of land, while the top 30 percent of households had far more than their fair share of land. The top decile of the households was the have-a-lots with almost one third of all land. The top one percent of households had 7.3 percent of land, 7.3 times their share of the banner households. The next four percent of households had 13.2 percent of land, which was 3.3 times their share. The next five percent of households accounted for 10.6 percent of land, twice their proportional share. The rise and fall of the families, therefore, reflected the interaction between state policy and local practice.

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<sup>8</sup> In Casalguidi, the top 10 percent households had 35 percent of wealth, and in Scania, the top 10 percent households had 40 percent of wealth.

### Between-category inequality and mobility

Although the overall distribution of land was egalitarian, this relatively equal distribution at the aggregate level concealed between-category inequality that left the majority of the rural bannermen at the lower strata of land holding. As figure 8.3 shows, the metropolitan and rural banner households in Shuangcheng were clearly divided into two layers. 57.8 percent of the rural households were in the bottom half of the distribution, while 86.5 percent metropolitan households were in the top half. This clear division between the metropolitan and rural bannermen in wealth revealed the effectiveness of the state land allocation policy in maintaining the between-category inequality.

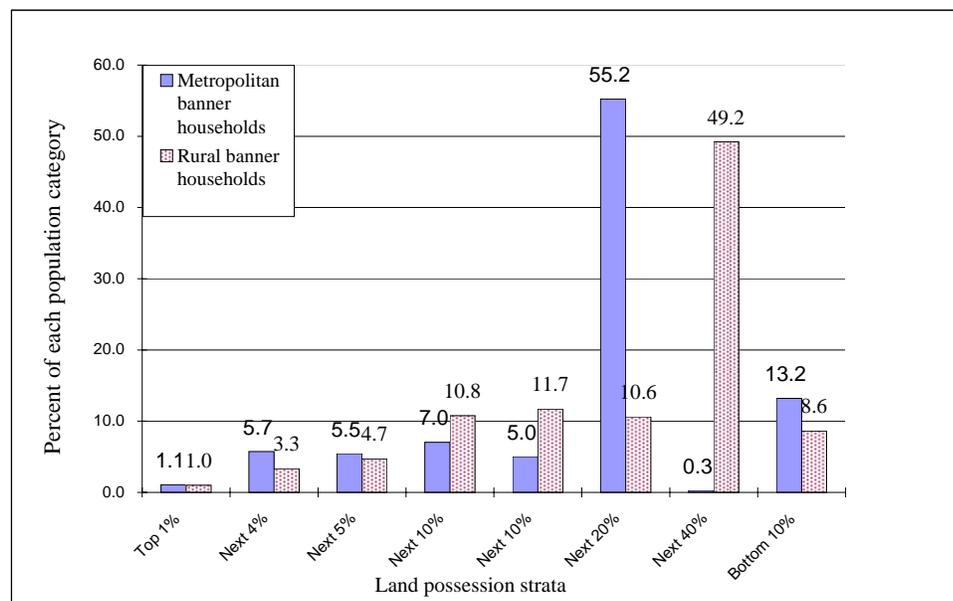


Figure 8. 3 Proportional distribution of metropolitan and rural banner households at different strata of land holding, 1876.

Sources: The linked population and land database.

At the same time, however, in the have-nots and have-a-lots, there is no prominent between-category inequality. Among both the have-nots and have-a-lots, the two state categories had considerable shares; 13.6 percent of the metropolitan banner households were have-nots, and 31.5 percent of the rural households were among the top 30 percent of

households. Therefore, the state policy that enforced between-category inequality was only effectively maintained for the middle strata, whereas the land distributions among the have-nots and have-a-lots were mainly consequence of individual ability.

### **The have-nots**

The proportion of landless households in Shuangcheng was very low; as figure 8.2 shows, only about 10 percent of the households had no land. The low percentage of landless households distinguished Shuangcheng's unique position among the agrarian communities for which historical land distribution data was available. For example, in Casalguidi, Italy, about 30 percent of households had no land; in Ou, Japan, about 20 percent of households had no land; and in Scania, Southern Sweden, about 50 percent of households had no land (Bengtsson, Campbell, and Lee 2004). Only in the banner communities serving the imperial lineages in Liaoning, another Northeast province of China, does the percentage of landless households resemble that of Shuangcheng. The low percentage of landless in Shuangcheng therefore contributed to the overall low levels of land concentration.

The majority of the have-nots, moreover, had no land because of a demographic disadvantage: they did not have enough adult males between 20 and 50 *sui*.<sup>9</sup> This is especially evident for the metropolitan bannermen. As table 8.1 shows, 51 of the 79 have-not metropolitan households, 64.6 percent, had no adult males. Another 30.4 percent of these metropolitan households only had one adult male. Although the demographic composition of the rural banner have-nots exhibits was more diverse, the

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<sup>9</sup> According to the official regulation, at least for rural bannermen, an adult male (*chengding*) should be aged between 20 and 50 *sui*. A male above age 50 *sui* would be considered exceeded the age (*yusui*), and a male below 20 *sui* would be considered young male (*youding*).

rural have-not households were still demographically more disadvantaged than their counterparts who had land. As table 8.2 shows, only 28 of the 138 have-not households, 20.3 percent, had no adult male. 36.2 percent of the have-not households had one adult male. Thus, 56.5 percent of the rural banner have-nots had no or only one adult male. In comparison, the mean number of adult males in the rural have-not households was 1.8, while that of the rural haves was 2.4. Above all, although demography is not the only explanation for the existence of have-nots, it is an important contributing factor.

Table 8. 1 Number of adult males in the landless households, 1876.

N. of adult male	Metropolitan		Rural	
	N.	Percentage	N.	Percentage
0	51	64.6	28	20.3
1	24	30.4	50	36.2
2	3	3.8	27	19.6
3	1	1.3	14	10.1
4	0	0.0	8	5.8
5	0	0.0	5	3.6
6	0	0.0	3	2.2
7	0	0.0	3	2.2
Total	79	100.0	138	100.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

### The have-a-lots

Whereas the low percentage of landless households indicates the effectiveness of state land allocation policy, the composition of the have-a-lots in terms of population category reveals mobility beyond the state designation. A considerable proportion of the top decile of households was rural banner households. As figure 8.3 shows, one percent of the rural households were in the top one percent of households in land possession, which indicate that although the rural bannermen as a population category were underprivileged by state

policy, some rural banner households was not disadvantaged at all. Moreover, 3.3 percent and 4.7 percent of the rural banner households were respectively distributed in the next four and next five percent strata. Thereby, a total of 9 percent of rural banner households were among the top decile of households, a proportion only slightly less than their equal share of the population.

The above stratification of landed wealth beyond the state-defined category was mainly due to concentration in the distribution of *nazu* land. As figure 8.4 shows, in 1870, about 60 percent of households had no *nazu* land. At the same time, the top decile had 67.9 percent of the *nazu* land. The share of land for the top one percent of households was 22.1 percent; the next four percent of households shared 27.5 percent, and the next five percent of households had 18.3 percent. Although the distribution of *nazu* land was ostensibly equalized in the 1876 and 1889, it remained concentrated. In 1889, the share of land owned by the top one percent of households declined substantially, to 17.1 percent. At the same time, the shares of land accounted for by the next four percent and the next five percent of households increased slightly to 28.6 and 19.2 percent. Therefore, the share of land for the top decile in 1889 was 64.9 percent, only a three percentage-point reduction from 1870.

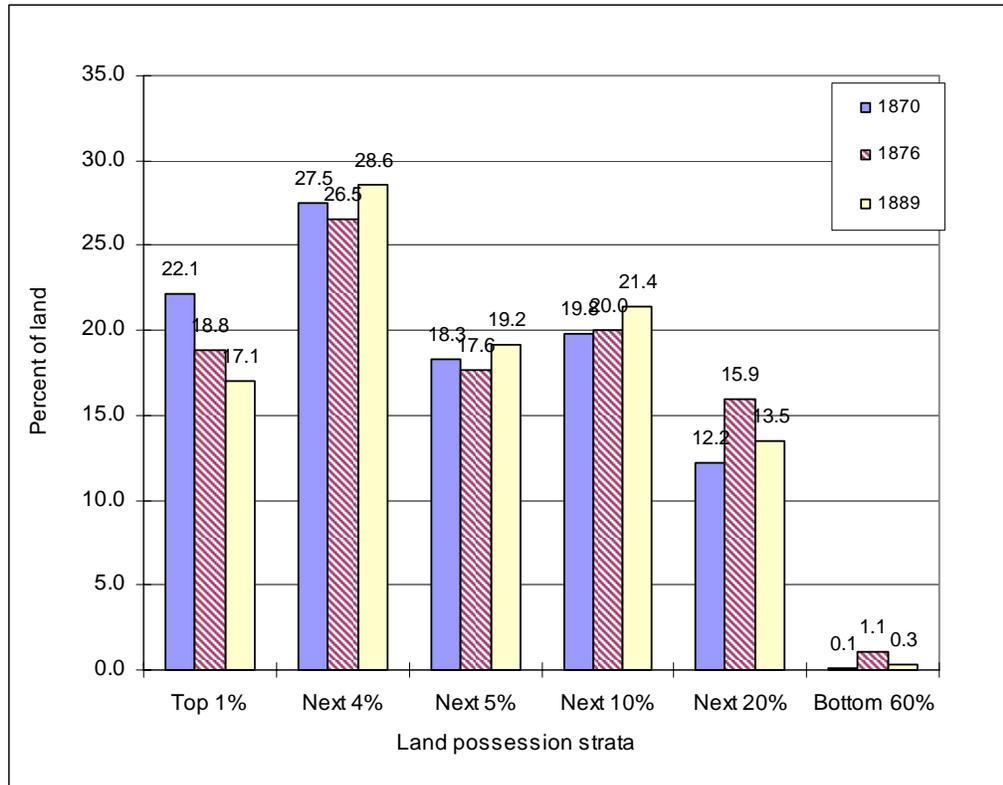


Figure 8. 4 Distribution of *nazu* land among metropolitan and rural banner households, 1870-1889.

Sources: The linked population and land database.

This unequal distribution of *nazu* land not only enabled some metropolitan bannermen to become rich, but also provided the rural bannermen opportunities to overcome their initially disadvantaged status and become have-a-lots. Although the rural bannermen were disadvantaged in the allocation of *jichan* land, they were not disadvantaged at all in the possession of *nazu* land. As table 6.2 shows, in 1870, the rural bannermen had a total of 314,858.6 *shang* of *nazu* land, which is 4.7 times the amount owned by the metropolitan bannermen, 66,493 *shang*. In 1889, the *nazu* land owned by the rural bannermen was 7.2 times the amount owned by the metropolitan bannermen. In addition, analysis of the land-type composition for the top decile households reveals that 68 percent of the rural households and 55 percent of the metropolitan households had more *nazu* land than *jichan*

land. Therefore, the majority of top households became wealthy because of their possession of *nazu* land, and, moreover, the rural bannermen benefited more from this game.

Between 1870 and 1889, moreover, the rural banner households exhibited great upward mobility in the possession of *nazu* land. As figure 8.5 reveals, in 1889 the proportion of rural bannermen in the top decile households was much higher than it was in the 1870s. This increase is most prominent in the top one percent of households. In 1870, the rural banner households accounted for 76.9 percent of the top one percent of households in *nazu* land possession; although the share of the rural bannermen in the top one percent of households experienced a slight drop in 1876, in 1889, it increased to 83.3. In both the next four percent and the next five percent of households, the rural bannermen accounted for a larger proportion in 1889 than in 1870; in the next four percent, the percentage of rural bannermen increased from 88.3 to 90.4, and in the next five percent, it increased from 84.3 to 88. At the same time, the proportion of rural bannermen in the bottom 60 percent of households in *nazu* land possession, the landless and nearly landless, dropped by 10 percentage points, from 77.9 percent to 67.4 percent. The results above reveal that during the twenty years between 1870 and 1889, the rural bannermen, as a whole, moved from lower to higher strata. This upward mobility of the rural bannermen coincided with the downward mobility of the metropolitan bannermen as a whole.

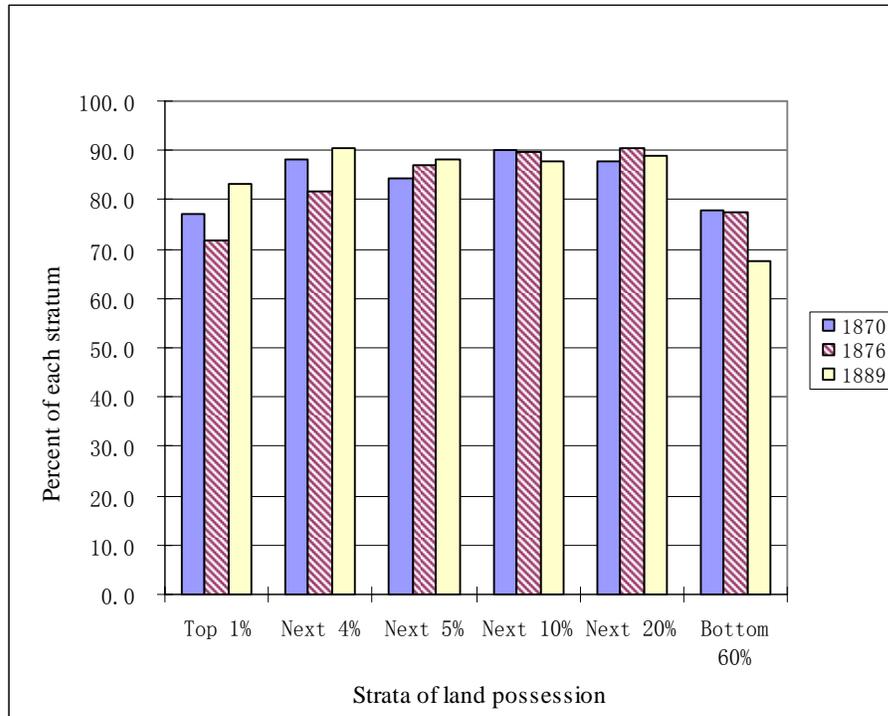


Figure 8. 5 The proportions of rural banner households in each land possession stratum, 1870-1889.

Sources: The linked population and land database.

### Persistence and mobility

The land distribution in Shuangcheng, therefore, tells a story enriched by both persistence of wealth status and mobility among the strata of land possession. In this section, I examine the level of persistence and mobility of the have-nots and have-a-lots. I thereby assess the degree of fluidity in Shuangcheng society for the metropolitan and rural bannermen, as reflected in wealth accumulation. Since only the data on *nazu* landholdings are longitudinal and available for the entire metropolitan and rural population, I restrict my analyses of persistence and mobility to household possession of *nazu* land. Besides the data availability issue, analyzing the mobility of *nazu* landholding fits with our interests in wealth stratification for two other reasons: first, compared to *jichan* land, *nazu*

land as self-cultivated land was subject to less state control. Therefore the acquisition of *nazu* land allowed for greater individual agency. Second, *nazu* land was also the major land type that drove wealth stratification and created the have-a-lots. In the analyses of have-a-lots, I focus on the extremes, which are the top 5 percent and especially the top 1 percent of households. In the analysis of have-nots, I focus on the bottom 60 percent of households who were landless or nearly landless between 1870 and 1889.

Among the bottom 60 percent of households in terms of *nazu* land possession, the rate of persistence between 1870 and 1889 was high. Table 8.2 presents the 1889 wealth status of the bottom 60 percent of households in *nazu* land possession. As table 8.2 shows, 69.2 percent of the bottom 60 percent of households in 1870 remained in the same stratum in 1889. This rate of persistence is the same for both metropolitan and rural bannermen; 69.7 percent of the landless rural households remained landless.

Table 8. 2 The 1889 *nazu* land holding status of the households who had been among the bottom 60 percent in *nazu* land ownership in 1870.

	Metropolitan		Rural		Total	
	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.
Top 1	2	0.4	4	0.2	6	0.3
2-5	6	1.2	34	1.9	40	1.7
6-10	12	2.4	56	3.1	68	3.0
11-20	18	3.6	92	5.1	110	4.8
21-40	29	5.7	245	13.7	274	11.9
Bottom 60	351	69.2	1,246	69.7	1,597	69.6
Disappeared	89	17.6	111	6.2	200	8.7
Total	507	100.0	1,788	100.0	2,295	100.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Despite the fact that the persistence rate for the have-a-lots was not as high as that of the have-nots, there were still considerable cases of persisting households. As table 8.3

shows, 76 of the 193, or 39.4 percent, of the top 5 percent of households in *nazu* land possession remained the same in 1889. Compared to the metropolitan bannermen, the rural bannermen had a higher rate of persistence. 40.4 percent of the rural households in the top 5 percent stratum in 1870 remained in the same stratum in 1889, while only 33.3 percent of the metropolitan households originally in the top 5 percent remained there in 1889. At the same time, there was also significant downward mobility; 21.2 percent of these households joined the landless bottom 60 percent in 1889. The metropolitan banner households experienced especially dramatic downward mobility; 29.6 percent of the metropolitan households became landless in 1889, which was about 10 percentage points more than in the rural banner households.

Table 8. 3 The 1889 landholding status of the households who had been among the top 5 percent in *nazu* land ownership in 1870.

Percent	Jingqi		Tunding		Total	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
Top 5	9	33.3	67	40.4	76	39.4
6-10	3	11.1	24	14.5	27	14.0
11-20	3	11.1	27	16.3	30	15.5
21-40	3	11.1	5	3.0	8	4.1
Bottom 60	8	29.6	33	19.9	41	21.2
Disappeared	1	3.7	10	6.0	11	5.7
<u>Total</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Sources: The linked population and land database.

However, if we look only at the top 1 percent of households in 1870, the metropolitan and rural bannermen exhibited a pattern of persistence opposite that of the top 5 percent of households. Of the top 1 percent of households in *nazu* possession in 1870, 35.9 percent remained in the top 1 percent in 1889. This overall percentage was reflected a mixture of a higher rate of persistence in the metropolitan bannermen with a lower rate in the rural

bannermen; 5 of the 9, or 55.6 percent of, metropolitan households in the top 1 percent in 1870 remained in the same stratum in 1889, whereas only 9 of 30, rural households, 30 percent, remained in the top one percent in 1889. The metropolitan bannermen's high persistence rate for the top one percent of households and relatively low persistence rate for the top five percent (which included the top 1 percent) households suggests that the majority of the metropolitan have-a-lots who sustained their wealth status were the ones who were among the top one percent. Although the rest of the top five percent of the metropolitan households enjoyed high wealth status in the early years, they experienced substantial downward mobility between 1870 and 1889.

Although the persistence rate of the top one percent of households is slightly lower than that of the top five percent, the majority of these households still remained in a high stratum. As table 8.4 shows, although only 30 percent of the top one percent of rural banner households in 1870 remained in the same stratum in 1889, another 36.7 percent were located nearby, in the top 2 to 5 percent. Therefore, 66.7 percent of the top one percent of rural households in 1870 remained in the top five percent in 1889. Similarly, including those who remained in the top one percent, 66.7 percent of the top one percent of metropolitan households in 1870 was located in the top five percent in 1889. This percentage reveals that, in fact, the persistence rate of the top one percent of households in 1870 was high.

Table 8. 4 The 1889 landholding status of the households who had been among the top 1 percent in *nazu* land ownership in 1870.

Percent	Jingqi		Tunding		Total	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
Top 1	5	55.6	9	30.0	14	35.9
2-5	1	11.1	11	36.7	12	30.8
6-10	0	0.0	2	6.7	2	5.1
11-20	1	11.1	2	6.7	3	7.7
21-40	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
bottom 60	2	22.2	5	16.7	7	17.9
Disappeared	0	0.0	1	3.3	1	2.6
Total	9	100.0	30	100.0	39	100.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

In the above results, we also see considerable downward mobility among the have-a-lots. As table 8.3 shows, 14 percent of the top 5 percent of households in 1870 fell to the sixth to tenth percentile, 15.5 percent fell to the top second decile, 4.1 percent fell to the third to fourth decile, and 26.9 percent became have-nots or disappeared. Interestingly, in Shuangcheng, movement from one end of the distribution to the other, from have-a-lots to have-nots, accounted for the majority of the downward mobility. This is especially true for the metropolitan bannermen. Moreover, in the downward mobility of the top 1 percent of households in 1870, 20.5 percent became have-nots or disappeared (table 8.4), which is the second largest group. Moving down from the top 1 percent to the second to fifth percentile, of course, can be considered as persistence.

Moreover, the upward mobility in land possession in Shuangcheng represented another type of persistence of previous wealth status; among the landed households, only those who had already achieved a high wealth status in 1870 were able to rise to the top stratum in 1889. This was apparent in an examination of the origins of the top 5 percent of households in *nazu* land possession in 1889. As table 8.5 shows, as we decompose the

1870 wealth status of these households and proceed down the ladder of *nazu* land possession, the proportion of households from each stratum declines; while 14 percent of these households were from the top six to ten percent, only 10.1 percent were from the second decile, and 9.2 percent from the third and fourth decile. This pattern is especially prominent for the metropolitan bannermen; no households were from the third to fourth decile. This phenomenon is, in fact, an extension of the high persistence of wealth status in Shuangcheng; those who had achieved a relatively higher wealth status were more likely to sustain and expand their landed wealth.

Table 8. 5 The 1870 landholding status of the households who were among the top 5 percent in *nazu* land ownership in 1889.

	Jingqi		Tunding		Total		
	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	
Top 5		9	31.0	73	36.7	82	36.0
6-10		3	10.3	29	14.6	32	14.0
11-20		2	6.9	21	10.6	23	10.1
21-40		0	0.0	21	10.6	21	9.2
bottom 60		9	31.0	39	19.6	48	21.1
New		6	20.7	16	8.0	22	9.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: The linked population and land database.

On the other hand, the upward mobility also meant dramatic change in wealth status for some have-nots; the landless and newly established households accounted for more of the have-a-lots than those who had been landed but in a lower wealth stratum. As table 8.5 shows, 48 of the 228 households, or 21.1 percent, were from the previous bottom 60 percent, that is the landless. With the exception of the persisting households, this percentage is higher than those from the other land possession strata. Moreover, 22 of the 228 top 5 percent households were established after 1870, which accounted for 9.6 percent.

These new households were established by inheriting the land from extinct households. Therefore, through inheritance and land accumulation afterwards, these new households rose from nowhere to the stratum of top 5 percent. This pattern is especially prominent for the metropolitan bannermen. 9 of the 29 metropolitan households in the top 5 percent in 1889 were from the previous bottom 60 percent group, and 6 were from households established after 1870. These households therefore accounted for 51.7 percent of the metropolitan top 5 percent of households. In addition, landless and newly established households accounted for the only upward mobility in the metropolitan households in the top 1 percent group in 1889. As table 8.6 shows, of the 10 metropolitan households in the top 1 percent stratum, 3 were from the previous bottom 60 percent, and 2 were from households established after 1870, which accounted for 50 percent of the metropolitan top 1 percent of households.

Table 8. 6 The 1870 landholding status of the households who had been among the top 1 percent in *nazu* land ownership in 1889.

Percent	Jingqi		Tunding		Total	
	N.	Percent	N.	Percent	N.	Percent
Top 1	5	50.0	9	23.7	14	29.2
2-5	0	0.0	8	21.1	8	16.7
6-10	0	0.0	2	5.3	2	4.2
11-20	0	0.0	7	18.4	7	14.6
21-40	0	0.0	4	10.5	4	8.3
Bottom 60	3	30.0	4	10.5	7	14.6
New	2	20.0	4	10.5	6	12.5
Total	10	100.0	38	100.0	48	100.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Above all, the stratification in landed wealth in Shuangcheng exhibits a high degree of persistence and, at the same time, dramatic downward and upward mobility in *nazu* land

possession. Persistence among the have-nots was especially high; about 80 percent of the have-nots in 1870 remained have-nots in 1889 or became extinct. Compared to that of the have-nots, the persistence rate for the have-a-lots was much lower, creating opportunities for upward mobility. Yet, the majority of the very rich (top 1 percent of households) were able to maintain a high wealth status, remaining close to the top of the distribution though not necessarily in the top 1 percent. At the same time, some households also experienced dramatic downward or upward mobility, moving from the have-a-lots to the have-nots or vice versa in twenty years, or about one generation. Although we are familiar with anecdotes about individuals becoming rich or poor overnight, it is still quite striking that mobility took such a dramatic form in this frontier society. Exploring the histories of those who maintained their status, experienced dramatic downward mobility from have-a-lots to have-nots, or experienced upward mobility from have-nots to have-a-lots illuminates processes of stratification in Shuangcheng. Therefore, in the following sections I investigate several cases of stratification of landed wealth to explore the mechanisms of wealth stratification in Shuangcheng.

### **Stories of land accumulation**

#### **Land accumulation and Wenbo's household**

The story of land accumulation by Wenbo and Wenkai's family, two metropolitan households who remained among the top households in the *nazu* land possession from 1870 to 1889, exemplifies how political achievement and family size contributed to the stratification of landed wealth. Wenbo's family originally belonged to the Manchu Plain Red banner in Beijing. In 1825, Wenbo's grandfather, a cavalryman named Deminan,

moved to Shuangcheng.<sup>10</sup> Wenkai's father, a *yangyubing* from the same descent group named Anping, also relocated to Shuangcheng together with Deminan.<sup>11</sup> At the time of relocation, Deminan only had two other family members, and Anping only had one. They settled in the third village of the Bordered Blue banner in the central *tun* as two households, and each received one plot of *jichan* land. By 1866, the household sizes and political statuses of the two had significantly increased. Deminan's households, then headed by Wenbo's father Mingtong, had grown to a family of 23 members; Mingtong had five present sons, three present daughters, four grandsons, and four granddaughters.<sup>12</sup> At the time, Mingtong held the post of Conditional assistant commandant (*wei xieling*), a position equivalent to assistant magistrate, and Wenbo himself also worked as a clerk (*bitieshi*) in the banner government. Anping, who then held the official title of conditional tax preceptor (*lingcui*), also expanded his household size to eight, with two present sons and three present daughters. Wenbo and Wenkai's descent group was therefore one of the local families that was especially successful at producing high officials.

Together with demographic and political prosperity, Wenbo's households enjoyed economic success. In 1867, after his father's death in 1866, Wenbo succeeded his father as household head. In 1869, when the government decided to reallocate 225 plots of *jichan* land from extinct households among the metropolitan bannermen, three of Wenbo's four brothers received one plot each and established new households. Upon receiving their allocations, these three brothers moved to the village where the plots were located.

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<sup>10</sup> See the name list of the metropolitan bannermen who volunteered to move to Shuangcheng in 1825 (NGTFDTYMDA, 1824. Reel 52, p559.)

<sup>11</sup> Deminan and Anping were not the first ones in their descent group to move to Shuangcheng. In 1824, a cavalry Deqing'an, together with three family members, moved to Shuangcheng with the first group of metropolitan bannermen. Therefore, Deqing'an was the pioneer of their descent group to settle in Shuangcheng. According to the population registers, Deqing'an's descendants settled in the first village of the Bordered Blue banner in the central *tun*, 5 *li* away from Deminan and Anping's village.

<sup>12</sup> By 1866, Deminan had died.

Wenbo's household size was then reduced to ten, now consisting of three sons, two daughters, the youngest brother who died in that year, and three younger sisters. In 1870, Wenbo acquired the title of commandant of cavalry (*qiduwei*), a hereditary rank of the seventh grade, and owned one plot of *jichan* land and 103.4 *shang* (190.3 hectares) *nazu* land. The size of *nazu* land made Wenbo's household the 48th largest landholder among all metropolitan and rural banner households, a location close to the top one percent stratum in land possession.

Despite frequent changes in the headship of Wenbo's family, its political and economic status continued. In 1873, Wenbo died, and his eldest son, Xingquan, inherited his title of commandant of cavalry and succeeded to the household headship at the age of 23. In 1878, when the government allowed the metropolitan bannermen to acquire the 302 plots of not-yet-allocated *jichan* land by making a monetary contribution, Xingquan's family was able to get three plots; whereby Xingquan's two younger brothers, aged 19 and 18, and his son, aged eight, were registered as separate households. Given that Xingquan's two younger brothers were still single and his son was so young, it is very possible that these family members still lived and managed their property together. Therefore, by 1879 Wenbo's sons who remained in the village had accumulated four plots, 140 *shang* (257.6 hectares) of *jichan* land. In addition, in 1876, Xingquan also had 138.4 *shang* (254.7 hectares) registered *nazu* land.

The other household in Wenbo's descent group, Wenkai's household, also achieved great economic prosperity. In 1870, Wenkai had one plot of *jichan* land and 289.3 *shang* (532.3 hectares) of *nazu* land, which put his household in the top one percent in *nazu* land possession. Together with increases in landed wealth, the family also managed to raise

their social and political status. In 1876, Wenkai acquired the title of *shengyuan*, and the registered *nazu* land under his name also increased to 374.3 *shang* (668.7 hectares). The 409.3 *shang* (753.1 hectares) of land of Anping's descendants' placed them within the top 3 households in *jichan* and *nazu* land possession. In contrast with Wenbo's household, who managed to expand their landed wealth through the acquisition of *jichan* land as well as *nazu* land, Anping and his descendants mainly achieved their status through the acquisition of *nazu* land. Due to their shortage of males, Anping's family only had one plot of *jichan* land; Anping had two sons and three daughters, of which the second son died in 1872, and Anping's surviving son Wenkai had no son but only one daughter. This demographic composition circumscribed their chances of acquiring *jichan* land, which required the owner of a plot to be a male. Anping's descendants enjoyed the landed wealth until 1880.

When Wenkai died in 1880, the two families used adoption to sustain his line and property status. Wenkai died at the age of 35, leaving behind his wife, daughter, and three younger sisters. Wenkai's household therefore faced the threat of extinction. In 1885, Wenkai's wife adopted Xingren, Wenbo's second son,<sup>13</sup> to facilitate the inheritance of Wenkai's property. This adoption benefited both families. Because Xingren originally owned a plot of *jichan* land in 1878, he had to transfer his original plot to his nephew, Xingquan's second son, to inherit Wenkai's plot. Xingquan's household thereby inherited one more plot of *jichan* land, and his second son was registered as a separate household at the age of seven. Despite the death of the male head, Wenkai's family managed to sustain their property through adoption. Xingren inherited not only Wenkai's

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<sup>13</sup> In the population registers, in 1883, the name of Wenbo's second son was changed from Xingyin to Xingren.

*jichan* plot but also all his *nazu* land.

The two households succeeded in maintaining and expanding their landed property into the early twentieth century. In 1889, Xingquan's household, in which only himself, his wife, his third son and two daughters were formally registered as members, had one plot of *jichan* land and 103.4 *shang* (190.3 hectares) of *nazu* land. At the same time, Xingquan's other two sons had already acquired their own *jichan* plots. In 1904, the amount of registered land under Xingquan's name remained the same. After his succession of Wenkai's headship, Xingren was even able to expand the household's landed property. In 1889, not only did Xingren maintain the allocated *jichan* plot, but also the *nazu* land registered under his name increased to 419.7 *shang* (772.2 hectares). In 1904, Xingquan's registered *nazu* land further increased to 500.9 *shang* (921.7 hectares).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, during the entire period of 1870-1904 for which we have land records, Wenbo and Wenkai's households were two of the wealthiest among the metropolitan and rural bannermen.

### **Declining wealth and Jiertukan's family**

The following story about two metropolitan households, Jiertukan's and Mingshan's families, illustrates how political achievement and land transaction could result in dramatic downward and upward mobility in landed wealth. One of these households, Jiertukan's, fell from the have-a-lots, the top one percent in *nazu* land possession in 1870, to a have-not household in *nazu* land in 1889. The other household, Mingshan's, rose from a newly established household, who previously had no right to officially register land, to one of the

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<sup>14</sup> See the 1904 land register of the Plain Yellow banner (SCPGTBDHKDM vol. 326).

top 1 percent of households in *nazu* land possession.

Jiertukan's family originally belonged to the Manchu Bordered Yellow banner in Beijing. In 1826, Jiertukan's father, a *xiansan* named Hualiantai, moved to Shuangcheng with five other family members. Hualiantai settled in the fifth village of the Plain White banner in the central *tun* and received one plot of *jichan* land. Hualiantai's family remained as one household until 1869, which by then was headed by Hualiantai's eldest son, a retired tax preceptor named Jiertahun. The household then had sixteen members, including the three sons of Hualiantai and their families, of which Jiertukan was the third son.

From 1869 to 1878, Jiertukan and his extended families took advantage of opportunities to expand their landed wealth through the acquisition of *jichan* and *nazu* land. In 1869, when the government reallocated 225 plots of *jichan* land from extinct metropolitan households, Jiertukan acquired one of these plots and established his own independent household. At the same time, his second brother's family also managed to obtain another plot. In 1870, in addition to the one plot of *jichan* land, Jiertukan also had 107.7 *shang* (198.2 hectares) of registered *nazu* land, which put him and his household in the top one percent of households in *nazu* land possession.<sup>15</sup> Still not satisfied with their land possession, both Jiertukan and his eldest brother's households further expanded their possession of *jichan* land in 1878 by contributing money to the government. Jiertukan's two sons, who were 29 and 18 *sui*, each received one plot of land and registered independent households. This frequent expansion of *jichan* land and subsequent household division significantly reduced Jiertukan's household size to only two –he and

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<sup>15</sup> The other new household, headed by the son of his second brother, also had 92.2 *shang* (169.7 hectares) registered *nazu* land.

his wife –by 1879. At the same time, in the newly established households, the household of his eldest living son, Kuijun, only had three members: Kuijun, his wife, and their daughter. His youngest son, Kuixiang, lived alone in a singleton household.

However, when Jiertukan's acquisition of *jichan* land reached its peak, his possession of *nazu* land declined. In 1876, his registered *nazu* land had been reduced to 66.8 *shang* (122.9 hectares), a reduction of 40.9 *shang* (75.3 hectares) from his 1870 possession. Moreover, even the ownership of the 66.8 *shang* of remaining land was in question; under Jiertukan's name, two new names, Mingshan and Changling, appeared, indicating these two people had shares of these plots. In 1879, an official document regarding the transfer of two of Jiertukan's plots to Changling was issued. According to this document, Jiertukan went to the Captain's Office, stating that he no longer had the ability to manage two plots, one 20.6 *shang* and the other 14.1 *shang* in size, due to their geographic distance and wanted to return these two plots to the government to be reassigned to someone capable of farming them. The Captain's Office therefore selected Changling, who resided in the third village, 10 *li* from Jiertukan's village. The two households then completed the paperwork and formally transferred ownership. In that year, the *nazu* land registered under Jiertukan's name was further reduced to 32.1 *shang*.

The period when Jiertukan gradually lost his *nazu* land is also the period when his family faced a demographic downturn. In 1876, Jiertukan was already 51 years old. Kuijun, who was 25 of age, only had one daughter, and his third son, aged 18, was single. In 1879, when the two sons had established their separate households, Jiertukan also became reached an age which no longer allow him to manage his land. At the same time, his two sons were not fortunate enough to have large households. Although Kuijun

managed to have two more daughters and one son from 1881 to 1891, the son died at seven *sui*, leaving Kuijun only daughters. The other son Kuixiang remained single throughout his whole life.<sup>16</sup> The decline of Jiertukan's family also coincided with the downturn of its wealth status. By 1887, Jiertukan and his son's names had disappeared from the *nazu* land registers. Jiertukan died in 1896 at the age of 71. Therefore, in 1906, only his two sons owned two plots of *jichan* land. At the same time, two new names, Mingshan and Changling, gradually became prominent among the land owners.

### **The ascent of Mingshan**

Mingshan's land accumulation tells the prosperous side of the above story. Although Mingshan did not reside in Jiertukan's village, in 1887 he and his son Changling owned a total of 148.2 *shang* (272.7 hectares) of *nazu* land, of which a considerable amount was from Jiertukan's family.<sup>17</sup> Mingshan was the second son of a high official family. His father Fuqing'e, a metropolitan bannerman who originally belonged to the Manchu Plain Red banner in Beijing, settled in the second village of the Plain Red banner in the central *tun* (the later second village of the second Jiala of the Plain Yellow banner) and became a banner captain who supervised 20 villages.<sup>18</sup> After Fuqing'e's death, Mingshan's eldest brother Ming'an succeeded to the household headship. In 1866, Mingshan's household had five registered members: two young couples—Ming'an's and Mingshan's—and their sister.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Mingshan himself started his official career. He started out as

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<sup>16</sup> Kuixiang died in 1904 at age 40 (the 1904 population register of the Bordered Yellow banner).

<sup>17</sup> In 1887, Mingshan had 103 *shang* and Changling had 45.2 *shang* registered *nazu* land in the village Jiertukan resided.

<sup>18</sup> See the 1903 Three Generation Book of the Bordered Yellow banner (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834666, vol. 74.) The exact year when Fuqing'e moved to Shuangcheng, however, was unclear.

<sup>19</sup> See the 1866 population register of the Plain Yellow banner.

a conditional clerk and then became a clerk in the banner government. As a clerk, Mingshan was responsible to process such paperwork as salary books of the officials and soldiers.<sup>20</sup> In 1869, Mingshan acquired one of the 225 reallocated *jichan* plots from the extinct metropolitan households and established his household in the third village of the second Jiala of the Bordered Yellow banner, a village outside of his previous banner administration.<sup>21</sup>

After Mingshan established his own household, he successfully accumulated a large amount of *nazu* land. In 1870, Mingshan already had 114.2 *shang* (210.1 hectares) of registered *nazu* land in his previous residential village.<sup>22</sup> In 1876, his registered *nazu* land under his previous residential village increased to 139.4 *shang*. Moreover, Mingshan also accumulated more land in his new residential village; in 1876, Mingshan already owned 71.6 *shang* of *nazu* land registered under Jiertukan's village. At this time, Mingshan was working as a clerk in charge of the public granary (*cangwu bitieshi*). His position as a granary clerk probably served as a special resource that facilitated his land acquisition outside of his residential village.

From 1878 on, Mingshan's official position provided him great opportunity to expand his family wealth and social status. In that year, Mingshan was the principal clerk who took charge of the allocation of the 302 *jichan* plots for bannermen's monetary contribution.<sup>23</sup> In this reallocation, he not only acquired a plot of *jichan* land for his son

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<sup>20</sup> The local archives shows Mingshan was responsible to check and finalize the salary book of government personnel. See the salary book of 1874.7, (SCPZGYMDA, reel 184, vol. 759, p. 9) and 1879.7.10 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 201, vol. 837-1, p.65).

<sup>21</sup> See the 1870 population register of the Bordered Yellow banner (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834663, vol. 26). Although Mingshan established his own household under the Bordered Yellow banner, his and his families' records were still kept in his previous residential village under the Plain Yellow banner. Under the Plain Yellow banner, Mingshan was registered under his nephew Lianzhu's household.

<sup>22</sup> See the 1870 land register of the Plain Yellow banner (SCPGTBDHKDM, reel 1834731, vol. 653).

<sup>23</sup> See Mingshan's court demonstration for the land dispute between his brother and cousin's households

Changling, who was aged only two *sui* and had just recently appeared in the population register, but also reserved one plot for his cousin's son.<sup>24</sup> In 1879, Mingshan was promoted to the post of granary official (*cangguan*),<sup>25</sup> and his family's land acquisition continued. In 1887, although Mingshan lost some registered *nazu* land under his previous village administration, he still kept 88.3 *shang* (162.5 hectares).<sup>26</sup> His son Changling, who was then only 11 *sui* old, also owned 8.1 *shang* (14.9 hectares) of land in the same village. At the same time, in their current residential banner administration, Mingshan owned another 186.2 *shang* (342.6 hectares) and Changling owned another 45.2 *shang* (83.2 hectares) of *nazu* land. Therefore, altogether, in 1887 Mingshan and his son owned two plots of *jichan* land and 327.8 *shang* (603.2 hectares) of *nazu* land, a total of 397.8 *shang* (732 hectares).

As was typical in Chinese stories of upward mobility, political achievement, wealth, and social status grew hand in hand to signal this family's prosperity. Although Mingshan did not develop a big household,<sup>27</sup> he was fortunate to have two sons. In 1895, Mingshan also acquired one *jichan* plot from an extinct household for his second son, who was only

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(1880.10.10, SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 845, p.96.).

<sup>24</sup> In 1878, Mingshan managed to acquire one plot of *jichan* land for Liuzhu, Mingshan's cousin Minglu's second son, who was probably just born and had not yet been registered. In this process, Mingshan handled all the work and even paid the monetary contribution for Minglu. Minglu's family however failed to secure this plot due to Liuzhu's immediate death even before the completion of paperwork. In response to Liuzhu's death, Minglu first tried to negotiate with Ming'an, Mingshan's elder brother, to use Ming'an's second son Zhanzhu's name to secure this plot for his household. Since Zhanzhu was also young and had not appeared on the population register, Ming'an at first agreed Minglu's proposal. One year after, however, Minglu changed his mind and filed a lawsuit to get this plot for his own household. After Mingshan's mitigation, the two families reached a settlement: Minglu returned the plot he got by using Zhanzhu's name to Mingshan's family, which was still registered under Zhanzhu's name. To compensate Minglu's loss, Mingshan gave one plot of his *nazu* land, 20.2 *shang* (37.2 hectares) in size, to Minglu's family. See the case summary of Ming'an's case (1880.10.10, SCPZGYMDA, reel 204, vol. 845, p.96.).

<sup>25</sup> See Mingshan's resume for the promotion to Granary Official on 1879.11.6 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 841, pp.232-235).

<sup>26</sup> See the 1887 land registers of the Plain Yellow banner. In fact, Mingshan and his son had more land in the 1882 land register; in that year, Mingshan had 147.5 *shang* and Changling had 28.7 *shang* of registered *nazu* land under the Plain Yellow banner. (See the 1882 land register of the Plain Yellow banner.)

<sup>27</sup> For his entire life, Mingshan had two sons and four daughters.

nine *sui*. At least until the last year of the extant land registers, they sustained their landed wealth.<sup>28</sup> Wealth also brought Mingshan's family social status; in 1896, Mingshan's eldest son earned the title of *shengyuan* through monetary donation.

### **Paths of wealth accumulation**

The above stories reveal that both land inheritance and land transfer/transaction were important pathways for Shuangcheng residents' wealth accumulation. While land transaction was important for wealth accumulation, the most dramatic change was explained by inheritance and land transfers that granted the new household all the landed property held by the previous owner.

At the same time, family demographic characteristics, including family size and gender composition, and political achievement were also two major determinants of a family's fortune in wealth accumulation in Shuangcheng. Of these two determinants, family size and gender composition are the products of biology, while political achievement reflects more individual aspiration and ability. In spite of the availability of adoption and other options for securing the descent line, family size is much harder to control than political achievement and resulted in dramatic downward mobility.

### **Family size and gender composition**

In Shuangcheng, family size and gender composition influenced households' landed

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<sup>28</sup> The last available land register for Mingshan's previous residential village was in 1904 and for his current residential village was in 1889. In 1889, Mingshan and Changling owned a total of 317.4 *nazu* land (Under the Plain Yellow banner, Mingshan owned 89.1 *shang* and Changling owned 7.3 *shang*. Under the Bordered Yellow banner, Mingshan owned 175.8 *shang* and Changling owned 45.2 *shang*). In 1904, the extant land register of the Plain Yellow banner reveals that in their previous residential village Mingshan and Changling even expanded their *nazu* land possession; While Mingshan owned 89.7 *shang*, Changling who was then owned 75.7 *shang*, which was a 68.4 *shang* increase of his 1889 possession.

wealth both in terms of the number of family laborers and qualification for official land ownership. In agrarian societies, family size is an important indicator of a family's consumption and production abilities. While consumption explains a family's demands for land, production determines a family's ability to farm or manage their landed wealth. Therefore, in both the metropolitan and rural bannermen, the mean household size is positively associated with wealth status; the higher the wealth status, the larger the household. As table 8.7 shows, the have-nots had the smallest family size, which was 2.6 for metropolitan bannermen and 6.5 for rural bannermen. Among the metropolitan bannermen, the top two deciles had a mean household size above 5, and the other landed households had a mean size of between 3.8 and 4.3. The association between household size and wealth status is especially strong among the rural bannermen. The top 1 percent of households had a mean size of 18.8, which was 5.3 more than those in the second to fifth percentiles. For the landed rural banner households in the second to fifth percentiles and lower, the mean household size started from 13.5 and respectively declined to 11.2, 9.8, 9.2, and 8.3. These results underline how demographic success and economic prosperity in Shuangcheng typically went hand in hand.

Table 8. 7 Mean household size and number of adult males by *jichan* and *nazu* land ownership, 1876.

	Metropolitan		Rural	
	Household size	Adult Male	Household size	Adult Male
Top 1%	5.4	1.3	18.8	4.3
Next 4%	5.2	1.1	13.5	3.0
Next 5%	5.2	1.1	11.2	2.7
Next 10%	5.3	1.2	10.8	2.6
Next 10%	4.3	0.6	9.8	2.5
Next 20%	3.8	0.9	9.2	2.3
Next 40%	4.0	0.5	8.3	2.2
Bottom 10%	2.6	0.5	6.5	1.9

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Households' age-sex composition also influenced their wealth status; the majority of wealthy households had capable adult males. In the three stories on wealth accumulation, the heads of successful households were always young or at their middle age. For example, at the time they inherited household headship, both Wenbo, aged 38 *sui*, and Wenkai, aged 25 *sui*, were in the prime of life and physically strong. Although Wenbo and Wenkai ultimately died early, the two families were able to secure suitable heirs to sustain their wealth. Similarly, when Mingshan established his household in 1870, he was only 30 *sui*. This prime age enabled him to accumulate and sustain his wealth despite his sons' young ages. Jiertukan's story best illustrated the wax and wane of wealth along with a household's demographic cycle. When Jiertukan first established his household in 1869, he was already 45 *sui* old. Yet this age still fell in the range that the government defined as adult male (*ding*), and Jiertukan's family still enjoyed several years' prosperity. In 1876, when Jiertukan reached 51 *sui*, his family's wealth status began to decline.

Although less prominent, the number of adult males in a household is also positively associated its wealth status. As table 8.7 shows, for rural bannermen, the mean of adult

males for the top 1 percent of household was 4.3, which is the highest among all strata. In the subsequent wealth strata, the mean number of adult males gradually declined from 3 to 1.9. For metropolitan bannermen, the top two deciles of households on average had more than 1 adult male, while the bottom half of households only had a mean of 0.5. This overview indicated that although metropolitan and rural banner households did not necessarily rely on family labor, having members of working age was still important, since they still need capable personnel to manage their land.

In addition to the way family size influenced landed wealth, in Shuangcheng, the presence of male members also determined whether a household could officially own land. The state stipulated that only the principal adult males (*zhengding*) could register *jichan* land and be considered as a household. In theory, a principal adult male in Shuangcheng was defined to be between 20 and 50 *sui*. In practice, the state allowed household heads to be older or younger as long as there were males in the family. This situation was especially true for the metropolitan bannermen, who in the state land allocation in 1878 established 88 households with household heads who were children, that is under 10 *sui*. Even under the loosened state policy, a male heir was a requirement for a household to continue. A household would become extinct if the family failed to secure a male heir before the death of the head's widow. Once the widow died and there was no heir, the household would lose all their property, including *jichan* and *nazu* land.

Family size in Shuangcheng, therefore, not only contributed to a household's upward mobility in wealth accumulation, but also accounted for most of the dramatic downward mobility. While the causal relationship between family size and wealth could run in either direction, the decline of family wealth usually started with the aging of the household head,

the disability of male members, or, most crucially, the absence of a surviving heir. For example, as discussed in chapter six, the major reasons that Shuangcheng households gave up land were aging and disability. Since families could not completely control their demographic outcome, even the wealthiest families could not escape the fate of decline. In our stories, Wenkai's and Jiertukan's families both lacked a surviving heir. Although they managed to become the wealthiest families in Shuangcheng, they eventually faced extinction because they had either only daughters, or the only grandson died. While Wenkai's family successfully solved this crisis through adopting Wenkai's cousin's son, Jiertukan's household gradually gave up their landownership and became extinct in 1896.

### **Political achievement**

If demographic outcomes reflect the unpredictable nature of life, political achievement signals individual merit and agency. In China, political power is highly associated with wealth. The autocratic nature of the Chinese political system legitimated the intervention by political power into economic rights. This tradition not only enabled the state to constantly redistribute wealth, but also endowed political elites with privileges that allowed them to use power to accumulate landed wealth. Chinese historians have agreed that, in historical China, official's land acquisition through political power was a major cause of land concentration (Han 1984; He 1956; Yang 1990). Therefore, land distribution in China was the outcome of the interaction between two forms of political power: the state power and individual power derived from a connection to the state.

At the same time, the major path to achieve political power is to become an official through a merit-based examination system. As the Song dynasty emperor Zhenzong

(997-1022) wrote:

“To be wealthy you need not purchase fertile fields,  
thousands of tons of corn are to be found in the books.  
To build a house you need not set up high beams,  
golden mansions are to be found in the books.  
To find a wife you need not worry about not having good matchmakers,  
maidens as beautiful as jade are to be found in the books.  
To travel you need not worry about not having servants and attendants,  
large entourages of horses and carriages are to be found in the books.  
When a man wishes to fulfill the ambition of his life,  
he only needs to diligently study the six classics by the window.”

(Miyazaki 1976)

The above poem suggests that an average man could achieve wealth and social status through an official career earned by the civil service exam. The examination was highly competitive; in Qing China, only about 0.1 percent of literate adult males, or 0.01 percent of all adult males at a given time could achieve the title of *jinshi* that would make them eligible for appointment to official posts.<sup>29</sup> Achieving an official career, therefore, required tremendous aspiration and talent.

Although the banner system provided bannermen greater opportunity for political achievement than the civil service examination system did for civilians, it still required individual ability and talent. Not only did bannermen enjoy special quotas in the standard civil service exam, but they could also become officials through the special translation examination or even bypass the exam system through the banner hierarchy (Elliott 2001). Any of the above paths, however, required successful performance as an indicator of the

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<sup>29</sup> In the Qing, there were three levels of exams: the district and prefectural exam, by passing which the candidates earned the title of *Shengyuan*; the triennial provincial exam, by passing which *Shengyuan* earned the title of *juren*; the triennial metropolitan exam, by passing which *juren* earned the title of *jinshi*. While in the beginning, the *Shengyuan* title holders were able to get some low-rank official positions, due to the increase in the number of candidates by mid-Qing only *jinshi* degree holders were eligible to official posts. At any given time in the Qing, there were about 500,000 *Shengyuan*, 40,000 *juren*, and 2,000 *jinshi* degree holders. If we project the adult male population in 1750 to be 50 millions, then, the percentage of *Shengyuan* was 1; that of the *juren* was 0.1 percent; and that of the *jinshi* was 0.01 (Ho 1964; Lee and Wang 1999).

candidate's talent.<sup>30</sup> In Shuangcheng, for example, a bannerman could start his career in government either by holding a *shengyuan* title or as a soldier (*pijia*).<sup>31</sup> Both paths could lead to the same career. Usually, a *shengyuan* title holder would start as a clerk, and then be promoted to tax preceptor and such higher level officials as banner captain, assistant commandant, and area commander-in-chief. A soldier could also be promoted to a clerk position if he was capable of handling paperwork or be promoted to tax preceptor, lieutenant, banner captain, and so on. When assigning official positions, the local government had to send the candidate's resume to the provincial government for review. Previous experience and performance were the major criteria for obtaining a position.

While all the three families/descent groups in our stories of land accumulation had members with official or soldier titles, Mingshan's case most clearly demonstrates the role of political power and individual ability in wealth accumulation. Mingshan was the most successful individual in his family to establish an official career. As the second son in the family, he was able to overcome the disadvantage of birth order and acquire occupational mobility outside of his family. In order to become a clerk, Mingshan's reading and writing skills were probably better than others including his elder brother. The job provided him two resources: a stable salary and power. Mingshan earned an annual salary of 24 taels of silver as a clerk and 36 taels of silver when he later became a granary official. This stable income served as indispensable financial support for his land acquisition. Moreover, although Mingshan's clerk position did not make him a high official, he directly controlled access to land endowments because of the nature of his work. This position

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<sup>30</sup> The *yin* privilege also existed within the banner system. *Yin* privilege benefited the candidate by giving him an easy start of official career. Yet the official positions acquired through *yin* privilege were usually some low rank position or honorific title without specific duties. The candidate's future career still depended on his ability and performance. For example, in Shuangcheng, sons of bannermen who died in battles would be given a title of *yunqiwei*.

<sup>31</sup> Sometimes, a bannerman can be both *shengyuan* and soldier.

provided him not only a stable income but also an advantage in land accumulation. In this process, Mingshan acquired land for both his and his brother's family. Although Mingshan's elder brother did not have extravagant *nazu* land, the brother's eldest son was able to acquire a *jichan* plot in 1869 at the age of 6 *sui*. In 1878, when Mingshan was in charge of the allocation of 302 *jichan* plots, he managed to reserve one plot for his brother's second son, who was so young that he had not yet been registered.

The larger picture in Shuangcheng also reveals that political achievement commonly facilitated the attainment of higher wealth status by bannermen. Throughout the entire period under analysis, official families were concentrated at the top strata of *nazu* land possession. The proportion of official families in the top 1 percent of households was especially high. As table 8.8 shows, in 1870, of the top 1 percent of households, 25.6 percent were official families, which is 5 times the proportion of official families (4.8 percent) in the entire population in the same year. Moreover, this concentration of official families in the top 1 percent of households was prominent in both the metropolitan and rural bannermen; 22.2 percent of the metropolitan and 26.7 percent of the rural households were official families. In 1889, the concentration of official families in the top 1 percent of households remained at the same level; 35.7 percent of these households were official families, which was 4 times the proportion of official families (8.3 percent) in the entire population. At the same time, households in the higher strata universally had a higher proportion of official families.

Table 8. 8 Percentages of households with officials in each strata of *nazu* land ownership, 1870-1889.

Percent	1870			1889		
	Jingqi	Tunding	Total	Jingqi	Tunding	Total
Top 1	22.2	26.7	25.6	28.6	37.1	35.7
Next 4	11.1	8.8	9.1	12.5	19.2	18.6
Next 5	16.7	7.5	8.9	16.0	14.2	14.4
Next 10	5.3	5.2	5.2	11.8	11.2	11.3
Next 20	4.3	3.7	3.8	5.4	9.3	8.8
Bottom 60	3.8	4.1	4.1	6.2	5.9	6.0

Sources: The linked population and land database.

If we consider the households who successfully sustained their top position in the land holding strata, the concentration of official families is much greater. In both the metropolitan and rural bannermen, 75 percent of the households (3 of the 4 metropolitan households, and 7 of the 9 rural households) who sustained their position at the top 1 percent in *nazu* land possession were related to official families. Of the three metropolitan banner households, two had members serving as tax preceptor and clerk and one's household head was an assistant *zong tunda*. Of the seven rural banner households, three had official titles of platoon commander (*fangyu*), vanguard, and tax preceptor; two had members working as clerks; and two had members serving as soldiers.

At the same time, although the use of political achievement to accumulate wealth was a common practice, not all families with power were able to translate it into material gain. Despite the opportunity provided by political achievement in land accumulation, there was still tremendous stratification in landed wealth among official families. As table 8.8 reveals, some official families were still located at a lower stratum in *nazu* land possession. In 1870, official families accounted for 4.1 percent of the bottom 60 percent of households, and in 1889, the percentage of official families in the bottom 60 percent was 6. In addition, in 1870, 3.8 percent and, in 1889, 8.8 percent of the households in the third to fourth deciles

were official families. This phenomenon indicates that some official families either were not interested in accumulating land or else were not very good at it. Moreover, there was no positive association between official ranks and their wealth status. For example, the majority of the households who sustained their top 1 percent status in *nazu* possession were not high-ranking official families but rather middle and lower level official and soldier families. Mingshan's case also reveals that despite his low rank as a clerk, his duty regard to land allocation rendered greater power in wealth accumulation. Therefore, in private land accumulation, what mattered was not official rank *per se*, but whether the individual in the household was associated with political power and wanted to use that power for material gain.

### **Conclusion: state power and individual agency**

The overall picture of land distribution in late nineteenth-century Shuangcheng reveals both continuity and change: the state policy succeeded in maintaining between-category inequality and within-category equality among the majority of the banner population, while continuous land accumulation by bannermen also created an upper class and a have-not population that transcended state-designed population categories. More than fifty years after the establishment of the state farm, metropolitan and rural bannermen still possessed the majority of registered farmland. Every household had a share of land, and eventually, land was equally distributed among metropolitan and rural bannermen respectively. The landless proportion of the metropolitan and rural banner population was still small, and can be accounted for by disability and the absence of capable laborers. The inequality between metropolitan and rural bannermen continued in the majority of the population; in the distribution of landed wealth, rural bannermen,

overall, occupied a lower stratum than did metropolitan bannermen.

At the same time, however, the rise of an upper class in land ownership illuminates individual agency. In the 1870s, an upper class did exist in Shuangcheng; the top decile of households occupied 30.9 percent of the farmland registered by metropolitan and rural bannermen (figure 8.2). Most members of the upper class sustained their wealth status for two or more generations. This upper class is mainly a product of the constant interaction between individual behaviors of land acquisition and state policy. Beginning in the 1840s, official permission to open *nazu* land allowed a rapid growth of this upper class. In particular, highly capable rural bannermen benefited from owning *nazu* land and were able to rise to the top stratum in land possession.

The development of the upper class also transcended state-designed categorical inequality. While the state had attempted to establish metropolitan bannermen as the upper class, by the 1870s, the state land grant was only able to situate them at the middle strata in land distribution; 55.2 percent of metropolitan households with only one plot of *jichan* land were located in the fourth to fifth deciles. While the state had designed the rural bannermen as the disadvantaged segment of the banner population, 9 percent of rural households were able to rise to the top decile and thus enter the upper class. Therefore, despite state policy that effectively determined the economic status of the majority, some exceptional families were able to transcend their assigned role through the cultivation of *nazu* land and land acquisition by various other means.

Moreover, capable rural banner households were increasingly able to bridge official between-category inequality through the acquisition of *nazu* land in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The data reveal that the proportion of rural banner households in

the top decile of households in *nazu* land ownership increased from 1870 to 1889 (figure 8.5), demonstrating that more rural banner households surpassed metropolitan banner households and moved into the upper class in the later period. In this process, political achievement especially facilitated upward mobility in wealth status for rural bannermen, demonstrated by the finding that the proportion of official rural banner families in the top decile of households in *nazu* land ownership in 1889 was significantly higher than that in 1870 (table 8.8).

Yet, despite the existence of individual mobility beyond state control, the capacity for individual agency was still largely derived from state power. Political achievement in the form of official and soldier titles, as well as family size, constituted important capitals for families' land accumulation. Official families accounted for a considerable proportion of the upper class and were able to sustain their wealth status. Political achievement served as a capital not only in the form of official salaries, which provided families stable income and greater purchase power, but also in the form that families used their political power to acquire land. This finding is in accordance with the observation that, in China, political power constitutes a major source of inequality.

While the land distribution reveals the overall success of state policy, in the following chapter, I reveal that the existence of the different social strata and the concomitant labor relations between the four population categories –metropolitan, rural, floating bannermen, and civilian commoners—quickly assumed social meanings. The land allocation assigned different social meanings to these population categories. Through the one-hundred-year history of Shuangcheng state farm, the tension between these social groups had been entangling with local politics and transcended individual and even polities.

## Chapter IX Social Formation and Conflict

In December 1912, one year after the fall of the Qing, a rent resistance movement swept the 120 Shuangcheng villages, dividing the villagers into two groups: rural bannermen in the 80 villages of the right and left *tun*, and metropolitan and rural bannermen in the 40 villages of the central *tun*. Rural bannermen in the right and left *tun*, who farmed part of the land allocated to the bannermen in the central *tun*, refused to pay rent for these plots. Having failed to collect rents, the central-*tun* residents struggled with the residents of the right and left *tun*, both at the level of the local village and at the provincial government level. In the villages, the central-*tun* residents rode their wagons to the right and left *tun*, one after another, and pressed their tenants for rent; when refused, they sometimes initiated fights. Simultaneously, at the seat of the provincial government, the representatives of the central-*tun* residents sued the representatives of the right and left *tun* for organizing this collective action.

To fight against the charges by the central-*tun* residents, the bannermen of the right and left *tun* filed a lawsuit of their own, suing the central-*tun* residents for bringing a false charge against them. In their petition, these rural bannermen targeted the metropolitan bannermen and expressed their chronic grievances:

“The residents in the new *tun* [the right and left *tun*] were restricted by the residents of the old *tun* [the central *tun*] for no reason. Metropolitan bannermen enjoyed the profits of the *sula* [refers to rural bannermen in the context of Shuangcheng]. We were not willing to have this special suffering. Yet in the Qing [the state] gave special treatment to metropolitan bannermen.

Although we *sula* in the new *tun* suffered from [this inequality] like ulcers deeply rooted in our bones, nobody had sympathy for us. We thus had to let them manipulate us.”<sup>1</sup>

“[In the Qing,] not only was the Shuangcheng government the government for metropolitan bannermen, but everything under heaven (*tianxia*) was also for metropolitan bannermen. How can [we] little people fight against the powerful? We were overshadowed by the power of the metropolitan bannermen, controlled and rode roughshod over by them like masters and servants. We had hidden our grievances for more than ninety years.”<sup>2</sup>

This conflict revealed two pairs of competitive social groups: metropolitan bannermen versus rural bannermen, and bannermen residing in the central *tun* versus those residing in the right and left *tun*. Both pairs were products of the Qing land allocation policy. The state intentionally created the first pair, whereas the subordination of bannermen in the right and left *tun* to the central-*tun* bannermen was not a deliberate consequence of state policy, but rather a consequence of the spatial patterns of settlement and land allocation. The residents in the right and left *tun* became tenant farmers for those in the central *tun* because part of the land the state allocated to the residents of the central *tun* was located in the right and left *tun* and was originally cleared by their residents. This arrangement therefore resulted in a hierarchical landlord-tenant relationship between the residents of the central and those of the right and left *tun*. Moreover, the coincidental fact that all metropolitan bannermen had settled in the central *tun* blurred the distinction between the metropolitan-rural rivalry and the rivalry between central-*tun* residents and right- and left-*tun* residents. After the collapse of the Qing, the authority that had maintained the land allocation policy and produced the social distinctions in question, previously-suppressed tensions between these groups found vehement expression in the

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<sup>1</sup> See the report of the representative of the right and left *tun* to the county government on 1912.12.29. (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270).

<sup>2</sup> See the petition to the Shuangcheng county government by the representatives of the right and left *tun* on 1913.3.9. (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270).

rent resistance movement.

In this chapter, I revisit the state allocation of *jichan* land in the 1820s to examine the social meanings of land distribution. I especially focus on how tensions formed within the landlord-tenant relationship between metropolitan and rural bannermen, and between residents of the central *tun* and those of the right and left *tun*. In the first part of this chapter, I analyze the basic unequal relationships among the four population categories created by the initial allocation of land in the early 1820s. In the second part, I explore the 1829 adjustment of the land allocation policy that created an unequal landlord-tenant relationship between residents of the central and those of the right and left *tun*. The unequal relationships formed in the early period of land allocation persisted throughout the entire history of the Shuangcheng state farm and even influenced local politics. Moreover, by analyzing the discrepancies between bannermen's land holding status and their income, I demonstrate that, in Shuangcheng, it was not income but land ownership that defined social groups. Therefore, the cold numbers in the official land registers were in fact closely tied both to local politics and to the happiness and sorrow of Shuangcheng residents.

### **Categorical inequality and tension**

In Shuangcheng, the categorical inequalities enforced by state land allocation policy constituted the basic tensions between residents. The most prominent inequality in Shuangcheng was that between the haves—metropolitan and rural bannermen—and the have-nots—floating bannermen and civilian commoners. Floating bannermen and civilian commoners had no access to *jichan* land until 1906, when the state officially allowed it to

be freely transacted. In addition to controlling *jichan* land, metropolitan and rural bannermen also occupied the majority of *nazu* land. Nonetheless, the have themselves were riven by tension and inequality, as metropolitan bannermen had more land than did rural bannermen.

However, the same state institution that produced unequal population categories also successfully maintained the local social order, precluding the eruption of the above tensions. By creating population categories, the state clearly differentiated the rights and obligations of Shuangcheng residents and thus circumscribed their expectations of entitlement. Resistance to the inequalities created by state categories was thus considered a violation of state regulation. Knowing their limits, members of different population categories usually chose to remain within the boundaries of these categories.

Therefore, in Shuangcheng, the most visible conflicts originated not from the most prominent inequalities but from the places where the boundaries were most porous. For example, although the inequality between bannermen and civilian commoners was prominent, civilian commoners seldom confronted metropolitan and rural bannermen as a group. Conflict between civilian commoners and bannermen was averted mainly because state policies totally excluded civilian commoners from stipends and land grants. In contrast, conflicts between the various banner categories were more evident, as all belonged to the national elite and boundaries between these categories were more fluid. Thus, in this part, I mainly analyze the tensions emerging from the unequal landlord-tenant relationship between different categories of bannermen.

### **Floating bannermen versus metropolitan and rural bannermen**

In Shuangcheng, because floating bannermen occupied an awkward status as both national elite and local non-elite, the conflict between the haves and have-nots mainly occurred between metropolitan and rural bannermen on one side and floating bannermen on the other. On the one hand, floating bannermen were excluded from the allocation of state land and could farm only as the tenants of metropolitan and rural bannermen. The wealth status of floating bannermen was even lower than that of the civilian commoners, as they were not even allowed to officially register *nazu* land. On the other hand, the state still considered floating bannermen members of the banner population. As I document in chapter five, the state not only paid attention to their registration, but also tried to explore employment opportunities for them, granting them local government posts and government student titles and directing them to newly-developed settlements. Banner membership therefore offered floating bannermen opportunities to improve their underprivileged wealth status and compete with metropolitan and rural bannermen.

The porous boundary between floating bannermen and rural bannermen provided floating bannermen a chance to change their status. Since many floating bannermen were from the same descent group as rural bannermen, they could officially become rural bannermen through adoption. For example, the case of Née Wu's adoption of her husband's nephew, Dong Hai, in 1882, which I document in chapter seven, illustrates how the wife of a deceased rural bannerman adopted a relative, himself a floating bannerman, to avoid the extinction of her household. By joining Née Wu's family, Dong Hai successfully changed his category from floating bannerman to rural bannerman. These opportunities not only allowed floating bannermen some chance of upward mobility but also motivated them to strive for it.

In the process of acquiring landed property, the interests of floating bannermen inevitably conflicted with those of metropolitan and rural bannermen. Metropolitan and rural bannermen often used the official regulation prohibiting floating bannermen from registering land (*fuding buzhun lingdi*) to defend their privileges. For example, in the dispute between Qingxi and Zhao Shiyu over the land left by the deceased Jing'ebu, which I document in chapter seven, Zhao Shiyu, as the village head (*tunda*), used this regulation to prevent Qingxi's cousin, the floating bannerman Chenghe, from inheriting his uncle's land, even though Chenghe had been managing the land.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, as more and more land disputes erupted between floating bannermen and metropolitan and rural bannermen, it was not the government but the metropolitan and rural bannermen who most frequently cited the official regulation to prevent floating bannermen from owning land.

The case of Wulintai in 1879 illustrates an official conflict between metropolitan and rural bannermen as haves and floating bannermen as have-nots.<sup>4</sup> In that year, Wulintai, whose family had already achieved a decent occupational status in the banner government, petitioned for state permission to open and register two unused plots located outside the banner villages and to pay rent for them. Although Wulintai only requested *nazu* land, his action marked the historical momentum of efforts by floating bannermen to officially obtain land in the state farm. When handling this case, the banner government did not simply reject Wulintai's request by pointing out that, as a floating bannerman, he could not own land. Instead, the state sent personnel to investigate the two plots on-site, checking to determine whether they were indeed arable and unclaimed. For a time, Wulintai seemed to have a good chance of promoting both his own wealth status and that of floating

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<sup>3</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 200, vol. 829, pp. 69-74.

<sup>4</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 203, vol. 841, p. 294; reel 204, vol. 846, pp. 246-254.

bannermen in general.

However, both metropolitan and rural bannermen opposed Wulintai's request. After the on-site investigation, the banner officials found that both plots had been used by metropolitan and rural bannermen in adjacent villages as public land. While one plot, more than 50 *shang* (92 hectares) in size, was located in the north border of the central *tun*, the other plot, 120 *shang* (220.8 hectares) in size, was located in the east border of the left *tun*. Bannermen in adjacent villages had used both plots as grazing land and burying grounds. Therefore, Wulintai's request for these plots conflicted with the interests of the haves. The metropolitan and rural bannermen of the three villages closest to these two plots, one in the central *tun* and two in the left *tun*, thus filed a joint petition to defend their public land, stating that opening the two plots would interfere with their livelihoods. After reviewing all the reports, the government finally denied Wulintai's request.

### **Metropolitan bannermen versus rural bannermen**

Among the haves, tensions existed between metropolitan and rural bannermen. Although both population categories enjoyed more privileges than did either floating bannermen or civilian commoners, tremendous inequality existed between the two. As early as the settlement stage, the state intended that the rural bannermen would serve the metropolitan bannermen as laborers. In this section, I analyze the distribution of *jichan* land among metropolitan and rural bannermen to illustrate the unequal relationship between the two population categories. Due to the lack of land data in the early years, I use the land data from 1876. By looking only at the distribution of *jichan* land, I reveal the great disparity in wealth status between metropolitan and rural bannermen. As I will

show, in 1876, a half century after the establishment of the state farm, even though some rural bannermen managed to accumulate more land, they were still significantly disadvantaged in *jichan* land holding. Therefore, disparities in status persisted between metropolitan and rural bannermen in the state farm.

The government's land allocation policies created inequality between metropolitan and rural bannermen in the forms of both material wealth and social status. In terms of material wealth, the metropolitan households held twice the land of their rural counterparts. As table 9.1 shows, in 1876, 56 years after the initial land allocation, 63.5 percent of the 2,100 rural households (from 80 villages) whose registers were preserved still held 18.33 *shang* (33.7 hectares) of *jichan* land, the standard size of plots allocated to the rural bannermen.<sup>5</sup> Of the 697 metropolitan banner households living in the forty villages of the central *tun*, 68.7 percent still held 35 *shang* (64.4 hectares) of land, the standard size of *jichan* plots allocated to metropolitan bannermen. These numbers show that the government's land allocation process generated a fundamental and persistent distinction between metropolitan and rural households in terms of landed wealth. Even after a half century of land accumulation by some rural bannermen, only the top 25 percent of rural banner households had as much *jichan* land as an average landed metropolitan household. This distinction in *jichan* land holding determined the categorical inequality between the majority of the metropolitan and rural banner populations.

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<sup>5</sup> In 1829, the government increased the size of the *jichan* plots allocated to banner immigrants, granting 18.33 *shang* to rural banner households and 35 *shang* to metropolitan banner households.

Table 9. 1 Distribution of *jichan* land among metropolitan and rural banner households, 1876.

Land size		Rural banner households			Metropolitan banner households		
In <i>shang</i>	In hectares	N.	Percent	Mean size	N.	Percent	Mean size
0	0	256	12.2	7	144	20.7	3
18.33	33.7	1333	63.5	9	0	0.0	
35	64.4	0	0.0		479	68.7	4
36.66	67.5	332	15.8	10	0	0.0	
55-90	93.8-165.6	160	7.6	11	47	6.7	5
90.1-120	165.7-220.9	14	0.7	9	23	3.3	5
120.1-185	221-340	5	0.2	14	4	0.6	6
Total		2100	100.0		697	100.0	

Sources: the linked population and land database.

Taking household size into consideration, the inequality in per capita land holding between metropolitan and rural banner households was even greater. As table 9.2 shows, although an average landed rural household had only half the land of an average metropolitan household, it had twice as many members. A comparison of per capita land holding between the two population categories further reveals this unequal land distribution. In 1876, the minimum amount of land held by a landed rural bannerman was 0.3 *shang* (0.55 hectares), while the minimum held by a landed metropolitan bannerman was 2.3 *shang* (4.23 hectares), seven times the minimum among rural bannermen. Table 9.2 demonstrates that the median per capita land holding among rural bannermen fell between one and two *shang*, which was less than the minimum holding among landed metropolitan bannermen. Furthermore, while the median per capita holding among metropolitan bannermen fell between 5.1 and 8 *shang*, only 9.67 percent of rural bannermen held that much land or more. In other words, only the top 10 percent of rural bannermen had as much land as an average metropolitan bannerman.

Table 9. 2 Household *per capita jichan* land holdings of metropolitan and rural bannermen, 1876.

Size in hectare	Size in <i>shang</i>	Rural bannermen		Metropolitan bannermen	
		N. of persons	Percent	N. of persons	Percent
0.2-1.8	0.1-1	3,073	17.99	0	0.00
1.9-3.7	1.1-2	5,625	32.93	0	0.00
3.8-5.5	2.1-3	3,304	19.34	79	3.44
5.6-7.4	3.1-4	2,002	11.72	136	5.92
7.5-9.2	4.1-5	1,234	7.22	393	17.10
9.3-13.2	5.1-8	1,150	6.73	656	28.55
13.3-18.4	8.1-10	305	1.79	332	14.45
18.5-27.6	10.1-15	227	1.33	310	13.49
27.7-36.8	15.1-20	128	0.75	213	9.27
36.9-55.2	20.1-30	16	0.09	83	3.61
55.3-92.0	30.1-50	13	0.08	86	3.74
92.0+	50.1+	4	0.02	10	0.44
Total		17,081	100.00	2,298	100.00

Sources: the linked population and land database.

The land allocated to metropolitan bannermen allowed them living standards far superior to those experienced by rural bannermen. Although the land allocated to rural bannermen yielded enough produce to feed their families in the 1820s, metropolitan households could enjoy a greater surplus with more land. According to the official reports, in the 1820s, the grain yield of one *shang* of land was 8 to 9 market *shi* (2,566 to 2,887 kilograms) in good years, 6 market *shi* (1,925 kilograms) in middle years, and 4 to 5 market *shi* (1,283 to 1,604 kilograms) in bad years.<sup>6</sup> In average years, a rural household with 10 *shang* of cultivated land would therefore produce 60 market *shi* (19,250 kilograms) of grain, equal to 150 imperial *shi*. With 150 imperial *shi* of grain, a rural bannerman could

<sup>6</sup> See HCZDLZ, book 3, p.14b, the report of Wang Lütai to the assistant commandant of Shuangcheng on 1821.8.4 (SCPTTJL, p.165), and the memorial of Jing'ebu on 1844.5.7 (HCDXTGZY, *juan.* 31, book 14, 6b). All these reports on the yields of land agreed with each other. Here the yield of one *shang* of land referred to grains with husk on.

still enjoy a large surplus after feeding his family. Since rural households in the 1820s had an average of six members, including adults and children,<sup>7</sup> an average rural household could live well with the output from this ten-*shang jichan* plot. Metropolitan bannermen, with twice as much land and half the number of dependents, could thus have lived much better.

This unbalanced land-labor ratio between metropolitan and rural bannermen gave rise to labor-hiring and sharecropping among banner immigrants. Some members of the rural banner population worked not only as hired laborers but also as sharecroppers. As soon as metropolitan bannermen arrived in Shuangcheng, the government urged them to use their travel stipends to hire rural bannermen as laborers. Many metropolitan bannermen also personally rented their land to rural bannermen, depending on that rent for their livelihoods. This land rental benefitted both metropolitan and rural bannermen; not only did metropolitan bannermen acquire a stable rent income, but rural bannermen with large families also found ways to generate income and thus to prosper. According to Jing'ebu, in the early years, rural bannermen would pay 0.5 *shi* (160.4 kilograms) of grain in rent for each *shang* of land.<sup>8</sup> Metropolitan bannermen who rented out their full twenty *shang* of *jichan* land could thus collect 10 market *shi* (3,208 kilograms) of grain. This stable rent income ensured a decent living for metropolitan bannermen inexperienced in farming; as Jing'ebu pointed out, in the 1840s, metropolitan bannermen who rented all their land out lived better lives than those who did not. At the same time, the rural tenants enjoyed a

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<sup>7</sup> Because the lack of population data in the 1820s, I have to use data from the 1870s to project household size back to the 1820s. From the information provided in table 5.2, the mean rural banner household size in 1876 was nine. In the 42 years from 1870 to 1912, the rural banner population increased 62.7 percent. If the rural population experienced a constant growth rate from the 1820s on, given the fact that the number of households did not change throughout the history of the state farm, then the average rural banner household size was approximately six, including adults and children.

<sup>8</sup> See Jing'ebu's memorial on 1844.5.7 HCDXTGZY, *juan.* 31, book 14, 6b.

decent gain from the produce of the land they rented. In an average year, if the yield of one *shang* of land reached 6 *shi* (1,925 kilograms) of grain, a rural tenant could keep 5.5 *shi* (1,764 kilograms). Even after taking into consideration of the cost of farming, this income was high.

However, although some rural bannermen enjoyed economic gains by farming as tenants, the landlord-tenant relationship between metropolitan and rural banner households reinforced the inequality of the two population categories. Being landlords gave metropolitan bannermen both symbolic and real power over their rural tenants. As Jing'ebu described in 1844,

“Some metropolitan bannermen treated their tenants like slaves, commanding them and shouting loudly to them. Moreover these metropolitan bannermen also asked for loans from their tenants. Having been refused, they would then deprive their tenants of land and look for somebody else to rent the land.”<sup>9</sup>

The above quotation reveals that, even though some rural bannermen were economically more prosperous than their metropolitan landlords, metropolitan bannermen held the superior position in the social hierarchy, having acquired greater power through the state allocation of *jichan* land and the institution of population categories.

Metropolitan bannermen were also privileged in their exemption from service to the government. Although the state did not levy regular labor service from metropolitan and rural bannermen, when labor was needed for construction, the government turned to Shuangcheng bannermen. In 1866, the government extracted money and labor from residents to rebuild the city wall at the Shuangcheng seat. While the government targeted all of Shuangcheng for money, it ordered only rural bannermen and civilian commoners in

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 7a.

Shuangcheng to work as laborers.<sup>10</sup> Rural banner adult males building the city wall not only had to work as laborers but also had to prepare their own food and tools. Households without adult males had to hire laborers to provide their service. In return, the government gave these laborers limited stipends. As the government annually found parts of the city wall damaged, it extracted labor from rural banner households on a regular basis. This labor service lasted for several years, but metropolitan bannermen were spared.

This special government treatment generated discontent among rural bannermen, especially those who lived alongside metropolitan bannermen in the villages of the central *tun*. In 1871, Guan Shengde, head of one of these 40 villages, filed a petition to the general of Jilin, asking for exemption from labor service on the city wall.<sup>11</sup> In this petition, Guan had allied himself with several other rural bannermen to collectively represent all rural bannermen in the 120 villages. They expressed grievance for having suffered this labor service and for the differentiated treatment:

“While [we] had already finished building the city wall, it was not expected that [parts of the city wall] collapse every year and have to be repaired annually. Except the adult males in the Plain Yellow and the Bordered Yellow banners [refer to metropolitan bannermen] who had never been asked for service, we, the adult males in the other six banners [refer to rural bannermen], had to repair the city wall at our own costs. [Moreover], it was set up as the rule forever.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, the state’s unequal treatment of metropolitan and rural bannermen penetrated every aspect of state farm life, constantly reminding members of the two categories of their distinctive social status. Through these everyday interactions, social boundaries gradually formed between these state-created categories.

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<sup>10</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 184, vol. 759, pp. 235-242.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Spatial inequality**

In 1829, the state reduced the quota of designated metropolitan banner households from 3,000 to 1,000 and allocated the *jichan* land prepared for the additional 2,000 metropolitan households to the existing metropolitan and rural bannermen in Shuangcheng, adding 15 *shang* (27.6 hectares) to each metropolitan household and 8.33 *shang* (15.33 hectares) to each rural households.<sup>13</sup> While the first phase of land allocation created inequality between the two state-defined categories of metropolitan and rural bannermen, the policy adjustment in 1829 resulted in the differentiation of these two populations by residential space: the residents of the central *tun* versus those of the right and left *tun*. Although the state did not design this spatial inequality, it was nonetheless produced by the government's land allocation policy. Reinforced by the existing inequality between metropolitan and rural bannermen, the categorical spatial inequality generated a major conflict among state farm residents. This conflict intensified over the ninety years following the policy adjustment, exploding in the 1912 rent resistance movement and subsequent political struggles.

### **Policy adjustment in 1829**

In 1829, when allocating the additional land to metropolitan and rural bannermen of the central *tun*, the officials soon confronted a spatial constraint. In the original land allocation, the government had planned that each of the three *tun* would have an equal amount of *jichan* land: 30,000 *shang* (55,200 hectares)—to accommodate 1,000 rural households and 1,000 metropolitan households. Since the government finally decided to

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<sup>13</sup> For details of this policy adjustment, see chapter four.

settle all metropolitan bannermen in the central *tun*, the adjustment of the relocation quota would result in only 1,000 rural banner households in each of the right and left *tun*, with 1,000 rural banner households and 1,000 metropolitan banner households in the central *tun*. This plan, however, left no extra *jichan* land in the central *tun* for the additional allocation to its residents. In contrast, the right and left *tun* would each have 11,670 *shang* (21,472.8 hectares) of extra land.

To solve this spatial constraint, the government allocated the extra land farmed by rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* to the residents of the central *tun*. The government decreed that each household in the right and left *tun* could take 18.33 *shang* of the 30-*shang* plot it farmed as its own property. It would then have to give the remaining 11.67 *shang* (21.5 hectares) to one metropolitan and one rural household in the central *tun*, 7.5 *shang* (13.8 hectares) to the metropolitan household and 4.17 *shang* (7.7 hectares) to the rural household. In this way, the 11.67 *shang* of land relinquished by two households in the right and left *tun* comprised the additional *jichan* land allocated to one metropolitan (15 *shang*) and one rural household (8.33 *shang*) in the central *tun*.<sup>14</sup> The 1876 land register of the Bordered White banner, which administered twenty villages in the left *tun*, illustrated the composition of the *jichan* land farmed by bannermen of the right and left *tun*. As table 9.3 illustrates, in 1876, rural bannermen of twenty of the forty villages of the left *tun* farmed 499 plots of land, of which 228 were partially taken by residents of the central *tun* and 271 were not yet allocated to central-*tun* residents. The 30 *shang* of each of the 228 divided plots of land were split into three parts: 18.33 *shang* belonged to the rural banner farmers themselves, 7.5 *shang* belonged to metropolitan bannermen, and 4.17

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<sup>14</sup> See the investigation and report of the Shuangcheng government in 1912. The report recounted the history of the adjustment of the land allocation policy (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270).

*shang* belonged to rural bannermen of the Plain White banner, which administered twenty villages of the central *tun*. The 30 *shang* of each of the 271 not-yet divided plots were split into two parts: an 18.33 *shang* plot as the rural banner farmer's individual property and a 11.67 *shang* plot that rural banner farmers rented from the state, waiting for its future allocation to central-*tun* residents.

Table 9. 3 Composition of *jichan* land farmed by rural bannermen under the Bordered White banner (20 villages in the left *tun*), 1876.

Types	N. of plot	Size of <i>jichan</i> ( <i>shang</i> )	Amount not owned as <i>jichan</i>			Plot size
			Owned by metropolitan bannermen	Owned by rural bannermen in the Plain White Banner	Paying rent to state	
Plots partially taken by the central- <i>tun</i> residents	228	18.33	7.5	4.17	--	30
Plots not yet taken	271	18.33	--	--	11.67	30
Total	499					30

Source: the 1876 land register of the Bordered White banner, SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834731, vol. 659.

This policy adjustment turned rural bannermen of the right and the left *tun* into the sharecroppers of central-*tun* metropolitan and rural bannermen. The distance between the central *tun* and the right and left *tun* made it impossible for the residents of the central *tun* to manage their “enclaves.” The state therefore stipulated that the original farmers of these plots should continue to farm the land and pay rent in kind to the central-*tun* residents. The rent was originally set to 0.5 *shi* (160.4 kilograms) of a mix of millet, sorghum, and beans for each *shang*. In 1853, when the residents of the central *tun* complained that the income from the allocated land was not sufficient to support their families, the government

increased the rent to 0.8 *shi* (256.6 kilograms) of grain for each *shang*. In addition, the residents of the right and left *tun* were also responsible for transporting the rent to their landlords' homes in the central *tun*. If they chose not to transport the rent themselves, they would pay an additional 0.2 *shi* of grain for each *shang* to subsidize the cost of transportation.<sup>15</sup> The rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* were therefore institutionally subordinate to the metropolitan and rural bannermen of the central *tun*.

Despite the unequal landlord-tenant relationship between the residents of the central *tun* and those of the right and left *tun*, by farming part of the land allocated to the residents of the central *tun*, or even by renting this land out, rural bannermen in the right and the left *tun* in fact could have earned more income than their landlords. In 1912, when investigating the rent resistance movement, the local officials estimated the income of these bannermen according to the informants' reports. If a rural bannerman of the right or left *tun* rented the full 11.67 *shang* of land allocated to central-*tun* residents out to private tenants, he could collect a rent of 2.2 or 2.3 *shi* (705.7 or 737.8 kilograms) of grain for each *shang*.<sup>16</sup> He would then only need to hand 0.8 *shi* of grain for each *shang* of land to his landlords in the central *tun*, and could keep 64 percent of the rent income for himself. As table 9.4 illustrates, in this scenario, a metropolitan household would control 20 *shang* of *jichan* land in the central *tun* plus 12 *shi* (3,849 kilograms) of grain collected as rent on its 15 *shang* of "enclave" in the right or left *tun*. The income of rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* could even compete with that of the metropolitan bannermen; each household in the right and left *tun* not only controlled 18.33 *shang* of *jichan* land, but also had a potential rent income of 16.34 *shi* (5,241.1 kilograms) of grain. The rural bannermen of

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<sup>15</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 870, pp.289-298; reel 209, vol. 873, pp. 113-121.

<sup>16</sup> MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270.

the central *tun*, however, were the most disadvantaged; their households controlled only 10 *shang* of *jichan* land plus 6.66 *shi* (2,136.2 kilograms) of grain collected from their 8.33-*shang* “enclaves.”

Table 9. 4 Comparison of household landed property and estimated incomes from *jichan* land after the policy adjustment.

Residence location and population category	Central- <i>tun</i> residents		Right and left- <i>tun</i> residents
	Metropolitan bannermen	Rural bannermen	Rural bannermen
Size of <i>jichan</i> land under control ( <i>shang</i> )	20	10	18.33
Size ( <i>shang</i> )	15	8.33	11.67
Sharecropped <i>jichan</i> land			
Rent per <i>shang</i> ( <i>shi</i> /kilogram)	0.8 (256.6)	0.8 (256.6)	1.4 (449.1)
Total rent income ( <i>shi</i> /kilogram)	12 (3,849.6)	6.66 (2,136.5)	16.34 (5,241.9)

Sources: MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270.

### Tensions between the central *tun* and the right and left *tun*

The tradeoff between social status and material wealth created chronic tensions between residents of the central *tun* and those of the right and left *tun*. As the Shuangcheng population grew, the control of these “enclaves” became the site of power struggles between the two groups. On the one hand, residents of the central *tun* were always trying to control their land for more material wealth. In 1853, the central-*tun* residents petitioned the government to withdraw their “enclaves” from the right- and

left-*tun* residents and allow central-*tun* residents to manage these plots themselves, so as to accommodate their increasing population.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* were also disaffected by the central-*tun* residents' exploitation of their labor. As the rural bannermen in the right and left *tun* expressed in their 1912 accusation:

“If the land in the new *tun* [the right and left *tun*] was indeed opened by metropolitan bannermen, we could still negotiate [the ownership transfer]. Yet [the land] was exclusively opened by [the residents of] the new *tun*. [We] worked painstakingly with our labor, but they just seized our product without any effort and took it for years.”<sup>18</sup>

These rural bannermen, who had originally cleared and farmed these plots, felt exploited by having to pay rent to the residents of the central *tun*. Sharing this mentality, the rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* often used rent resistance to fight against the central-*tun* residents and exhibit their power. In 1881, the residents of the central *tun* reported that the residents of the “new *tun* (the right and left *tun*)” refused to transport the rent to the central *tun*. Moreover, even when the central-*tun* residents went to collect their rent, the right and left *tun* residents gave them only chaff and blighted grain.<sup>19</sup>

While conflicts between individual landlords and sharecroppers arose from time to time,<sup>20</sup> these conflicts became more and more organized beginning in the late nineteenth century. In 1881 the residents of the central *tun* and those of the right and left *tun* confronted each other as distinct groups. In that year, Zhao Fuxing, a rural bannerman in the Plain White banner (which administered twenty village of the central *tun*), filed a lawsuit at the local banner government, suing the rural bannermen of the right and left *tun*

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<sup>17</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 207, vol. 864, pp. 95-99.

<sup>18</sup> MGSCXGSDA, item no. 270

<sup>19</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol.870, pp.209-215.

<sup>20</sup> In the local government archives, some legal cases concerning rent disputes represent this type of conflict. For example, the rent dispute between the metropolitan bannerman Shouchang and the rural bannerman Han Zhaoqing in 1882 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol.873, pp.113-121.)

for not paying sufficient rent to their landlords.<sup>21</sup> Zhao intended to withdraw his land from the residents of the “new” *tun* and manage it himself. The local banner government investigated the chief village heads (*zong tunda*) from the 80 villages of the right and the left *tun*. These chief village heads defended their villagers’ interests and denied Zhao’s charge. They also pointed out that since only Zhao alone requested to withdraw land, they would not give up their plots. The government therefore denied Zhao’s request.

Dissatisfied with the adjudication of the local government, Zhao submitted his petition to the provincial government in 1882. This time Zhao clearly stated that he was representing all metropolitan and rural bannermen of the central *tun*. In addition to himself, Zhao had also found five co-signers – three metropolitan bannermen and two rural bannermen – from the forty villages of the central *tun*. The right- and left- *tun* representatives consisted of four chief village heads. All these representatives attended the hearing at the provincial government.

The banner government, however, preferred to maintain the status quo. In 1853, when the residents of the central *tun* first requested to withdraw their land, the government mitigated the conflict by increasing the rent by 60 percent from 0.5 *shi* to 0.8 *shi*.

Although the solution of the 1882 case is not preserved in the archives, the continuous development of this spatial tension shows that the state did not change its policy; the central-*tun* residents remained landlords, and the right- and left- *tun* residents remained sharecroppers. When rent disputes arose between the two parties, the government always tried to treat them as individual cases. The government’s mentality can be illustrated by the adjudication of a 1902 lawsuit, in which a group of rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* tried to have the government deny the central-*tun* residents’ ownership of their

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<sup>21</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 209, vol. 870, pp. 209-215 and pp.289-298.

enclaves. The government refused this petition, stating, “(you) are the extreme examples of those who were not benevolent and righteous. Those who pay rent are tenants, and those who live on rent are landlords.”<sup>22</sup>

While the central-*tun* residents struggled to control their allocated plots, the right- and left-*tun* residents tried to abolish the central-*tun* residents’ power over these plots. At the turn of the twentieth century, the right- and left-*tun* residents seized on an opportunity to overturn their landlords. In 1902, in order to increase revenue, the state decided to collect rent on all banner land in Northeast China, including the allocated *jichan* land.<sup>23</sup> In order to collect this rent, the state first issued a deed to every land owner, noting the size of the plot and its boundaries. The rural bannermen of the new *tun* therefore petitioned at the provincial government to eliminate their rent to the central-*tun* residents and have the deeds to those plots issued to the actual rural banner farmers of the right and left *tun*. Moreover, in 1909, Guangzhi,<sup>24</sup> a clerk (*bitieshi*) who resided in the Bordered Blue banner, (which administered twenty villages of the right *tun*), even offered 200,000 strings of copper coins in donation if the state agreed to this request.<sup>25</sup>

Having been refused by the provincial government, Zhao Rongchun,<sup>26</sup> a banner

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<sup>22</sup> See the accusation of the central-*tun* representatives (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207).

<sup>23</sup> SCPZGYMDA, reel 268, vol. 1195, pp.1-18.

<sup>24</sup> About Guangzhi’s background information, see the accusation of the central-*tun* residents in 1912 and the population registers (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207). In their accusation, the residents said in 1909 that Guangzhi was a candidate for the post of Assistant Secretary (*fujingli*). While there were four people named Guangzhi in the population registers, only one had banner post. The population register indicates that Guangzhi was a student of the government school and later worked as a clerk in the banner government.

<sup>25</sup> See MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207. In recounting the case of Guangzhi, the document did not explain the source of the 200,000 strings of copper coins. Yet another account of this case said that Guangzhi offered to contribute all the rent belonging to the central-*tun* residents to the government. Therefore, the 200,000 strings of copper coins are probably the monetary form of the rent the right- and the left-*tun* residents owed to the central-*tun* residents.

<sup>26</sup> The population register indicates that Zhao Rongchun was a local person of the Bordered White banner. He was registered under the fourth village of the second *jiala* and was a nephew of the household head. He also held a government student title.

lieutenant of the Bordered White banner (which administered twenty villages of the left *tun*), colluded with the officials in the other three banners in the new *tun* to not record in the land registers the boundaries of the “enclaves” of the central-*tun* residents. As a local of the Bordered White banner, Zhao used his political power to defend the economic interests of his own social group. This resistance significantly hindered the issuing of land deeds to the central-*tun* residents; by 1912, the central-*tun* residents still had not received the deeds to their plots in the right and left *tun*.<sup>27</sup>

### **The culmination of conflicts**

In 1911, the political transition after the fall of the Qing provided an opportunity for the right- and left-*tun* residents to alter the unequal relationship between themselves and the central-*tun* residents. As the Qing dynasty fell under a series of rebellions and revolutions, a republican government was established. On the one hand, the republican government preserved the local order under the Qing; the banner government, with the new title Office of Banner Affairs (*qiwu chengban chu*), continued to administer the banner villages. On the other hand, the new government also pushed through political reforms initiated at the end of Qing, encouraging local self-governance and establishing local councils. This change provided bannermen with not only an alternative power structure but also new concepts of citizenship and equal rights.

In 1912, catalyzed by these political changes, the repressed grievances of the two groups finally led to the collective rent resistance movement described at the beginning of this chapter. The local elites of the right and left *tun* soon rose to organize rural

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<sup>27</sup> See the accusation of the central-*tun* representatives (MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207).

bannermen to request ownership of the land they farmed. In the autumn, as the time for rent collection approached, Zhao Rongchun and Wu Chengzhu, a tax preceptor (*lingcui*) of the Bordered White banner, circulated a leaflet door to door among the residents of the eighty villages of the right and left *tun*, asking them not to pay rent to the central-*tun* residents. Zhao Rongchun assured these bannermen that he would serve as their representative to the provincial government and successfully negotiate their land ownership. These organizers not only staffed the banner government, but were also active in the local self-governance movement under the new republican regime. For example, in 1912, Wu Chengzhu was also in charge of the Office of Election Affairs of Dong'an, the seat of the left *tun*,<sup>28</sup> and had been elected a member of the council in Dong'an Township. This background assured the rural bannermen from the right and left *tun* of the organizers' ability to negotiate, and convinced the right- and left-*tun* residents to refuse rent to the bannermen from the central *tun*.

This event soon resulted in a factional struggle in the banner government between officials from the central *tun* and those from the right and left *tun*. The central-*tun* faction accused Zhao Rongchun and Wu Chengzhu of cheating the rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* in order to pursue their own personal material and political interests.<sup>29</sup> Through this struggle, the central-*tun* faction succeeded in expelling all personnel from the right and left *tun* from the banner government. The banner government not only removed all active officials who originated in the right or left *tun* from their posts, but also permanently denied their right to serve the banner government. At the same time, at the

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<sup>28</sup> See MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207.

<sup>29</sup> According to the charges of the central-*tun* faction, Zhao and Wu asked for monetary donations from the rural bannermen of the right and the left *tun* for representing them to negotiate the land ownership (See MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207).

provincial government level, eleven central-*tun* representatives accused the right- and left-*tun* residents of rent resistance.

Having failed in the banner government, the right- and left-*tun* representatives tried to find a way to succeed under the republican government. Four rural bannermen represented the right and left *tun* residents to defend their rent resistance action. These representatives submitted a solution to the provincial council, stating that they were willing to buy the plots in question from the central-*tun* residents at the price of 135 strings of copper coins for each *shang* of land. They embraced the new language of “citizen,” “the people,” and “equality” to justify their ownership of the plots:

“Since now [the polity] has changed to the republic, [all people], regardless Manchu and Han, are citizens. Thus we should have equal rights.”

“Now it is the republican era, and we all are common bannermen of the same kind. If we still maintain the old social order to give special treatment to metropolitan bannermen, having the *sula* in the new *tun* pay rent [to them], isn’t it a departure from the agreement of equality among the people? Has not our polity changed to republic government? Yet why they [the central-*tun* residents] still used the old system to defend their benefits, emphasizing their status as metropolitan bannermen?”<sup>30</sup>

By using the new concepts and language, the representatives of the right and left *tun* referred to the new political system to justify their quest for equality.

Moreover, in their petitions, instead of targeting all residents of the central *tun*, the rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* attacked only the metropolitan bannermen. The spatial division that had classified the bannermen of the right and left *tun* as tenants to landowners in the central *tun* was both structured and reinforced by the categorical inequality between rural and metropolitan bannermen, as all metropolitan bannermen resided in the central *tun*. For these representatives, therefore, the categorical inequality between metropolitan and rural bannermen was the fundamental inequality created by the

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<sup>30</sup> See MGSCXGSDA, item no. 207.

old system. The rural bannermen in the right and the left *tun* tactically highlighted this categorical inequality, which was incongruous with the ideals of the new republican government, to protest their disadvantaged status and bolster their request for equality.

Despite the new institutional support, the republican government still failed to find a quick solution to this chronic conflict. At first, in March 1913, the provincial council had voted in favor of the proposal of the right- and the left-*tun* residents, making it mandatory that all residents in the central *tun* surrender their plots in the right and the left *tun* for the price of 135 strings of copper coins per *shang*.<sup>31</sup> This decision, however, received vehement opposition from the central-*tun* residents, whose representatives protested at the provincial government. Since neither of the two representative groups – thirteen central-*tun* residents and eleven right- and left-*tun* residents – were willing to give up their interests, the provincial governor pressed the council to develop a better solution and ordered an on-site investigation of the case. By November 1913, as the time of rent collection approached, the conflict remained unsolved. The provincial government thus decided to maintain the status quo, stipulating that, for the year of 1913, the right- and left-*tun* residents should still send rent to the central-*tun* residents.<sup>32</sup> Only in February 1914 did the provincial government order the central-*tun* residents to sell their plots to the right- and the left-*tun* residents at half of the value of the land.<sup>33</sup>

However, even after the republican government ordered the central-*tun* residents to sell their “enclaves” to residents of the right and left *tun*, the landlord-tenant relationship between the two parties persisted. In 1938, the local government under the Manchukuo regime issued another order, stating that, upon the agreement between the two parties, the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

landlords in the central *tun* should sell their rights of rent collection to their tenants in the right and left *tun*.<sup>34</sup> This later edict indicates that the settlement in 1914 by the republican government in fact was not effective, and suggests that the residents of the right and left *tun* probably continued to pay rent to their landlords in the central *tun*.

### **Conclusion: land ownership and its social meaning**

While the results of land distribution described in chapter eight reveal the state's success in maintaining categorical equality and inequality, the stories in this chapter demonstrate the state's success in using these categorical distinctions to create social groups. The state was successful not only in that differential entitlements to *jichan* land directed conflicts in the state farm, but also because the state thus successfully confined the scale and patterns of conflict; no matter how fierce the struggles or how complicated the population groupings, the conflicts never went beyond the frame defined by land allocation. The system of differentiated entitlement first defined the hierarchy among the four population categories, dividing them into two large groups: floating bannermen and civilian commoners, as the have-nots, were marginalized in struggles over land; metropolitan and rural bannermen, as the haves, were empowered and were the major actors in struggles over land. This division meant that metropolitan and rural bannermen allied to defend their elite status against floating bannermen's quest for land, but it also precipitated struggles between metropolitan and rural bannermen, which comprised a major issue in local political and social life. Therefore, the Shuangcheng society was deeply embedded in the state institution of population categories.

In the process of social formation in Shuangcheng, land ownership *per se* outweighed

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<sup>34</sup> See SCXZ (1990) p.145.

the income from land in determining social status. All the conflicts I document in this chapter are about the ownership of *jichan* land, which was independent of income and usufruct. As I illustrate in table 9.4, by farming the land for the central-*tun* residents, rural bannermen of the right and left *tun* in fact earned more income than their counterparts in the central *tun*, enjoying a standard of living on par with metropolitan bannermen. Similarly, rural bannermen who worked as tenants for metropolitan bannermen also had a decent income from the land. Despite this economic picture, unequal entitlement to land still created chronic tensions between these population categories and finally turned them into distinct social groups.

This separation of ownership from income illustrates the dual functions of land in Chinese history: land as wealth and land as a source of income. The two functions were interrelated but at the same time independent; while the ownership of landed wealth marked social status, the rent and produce from the land provided income. This dual function was prominent in many areas in China Proper in the late imperial period and was especially well documented in the Jiangnan area. In Jiangnan, the development of a land market in the sixteenth century generated a two-tiered form of landownership that has persisted ever since (Huang 1990; Pomeranz 2008). Land was considered to consist of both topsoil and subsoil. Topsoil rights referred to usufruct, and its ownership was relatively stable. After being separated from topsoil rights, the subsoil rights became an artifact of family wealth status and, by the twentieth century, could be traded like stocks and bonds (Huang 1990). The land market in Shuangcheng also separated ownership from usufruct. Land rentals and conditional sales that secured tenants' usufruct persisted. This land market played an important role in providing a decent living for bannermen with

large households but less land and for floating bannermen and civilian commoners who had no entitlement to *jichan* land. The local government allowed this market to develop in order to balance the labor-land ratio among Shuangcheng families.

However, as recent studies of wealth distribution in developed countries reveal, wealth is more important than income in determining social inequality (Keister 2000; Schneider 2004). As recent studies on wealth distribution in western countries reveal, a substantial portion of concentrated wealth is acquired through inheritance, not through income (Schneider 2004). In 2004, while the top two deciles of households controlled 84.6 percent of total net wealth, the top two deciles of income earners controlled only 58.7 percent of total income. Moreover, income and wealth are not necessarily strongly correlated. For example, in the United States, even after including asset income in total income, the correlation between wealth and total income in 1983 was only 0.49 (Keister 2000), suggesting that wealth status could vary greatly within income categories. Inequality in wealth distribution was therefore much greater than inequality in income.

Compared to that in the above mentioned societies, the registered landed wealth in Shuangcheng could be even more important in determining social status. While in every society, wealth rendered power, under the institution of population categories in Shuangcheng, wealth status was even more strongly associated with power, since the entitlement to landed wealth was defined by the state. In contrast to areas where free land transactions were allowed and people could convert their income into wealth by purchasing assets, in Shuangcheng, state-defined entitlements confined opportunities to increase wealth. Inequalities in power therefore directed the formation of social groups and their collective conflicts over land.

The banner immigrants' demographic behaviors also demonstrate that in Shuangcheng population categories and levels of land ownership associated with them indicated immigrants' social status rather than their living standards. Previous analysis of the mortality of metropolitan bannermen from twenty villages of the central *tun* and rural bannermen from twenty villages of the right *tun* revealed that metropolitan bannermen suffered greater mortality risks than did rural bannermen, despite higher levels of entitlement to state land (Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2006). The mortality disadvantage experienced by metropolitan bannermen persisted from 1870 to 1890 in all age groups except the elderly. Moreover, even after decades of adaptation, in the period 1891-1912, metropolitan banner children and youth still had higher risks of dying than did their rural counterparts. Since mortality is mainly a function of living standards and lifestyle, the comparison of mortality rates for metropolitan and rural bannermen indicates that rural bannermen's reduced entitlement to state land did not result in a living standard poor enough to affect their mortality. Instead, it was the metropolitan bannermen's adherence to an urban life style that led to their mortality disadvantages.

At the same time, the immigrants' marriage behavior was consistent with the hierarchy of population categories (Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2008). In Shuangcheng, daughters of rural bannermen married earlier than did those of metropolitan bannermen. Moreover, whereas nearly all women in the rural banner population married, three to five percent of the women in the metropolitan banner population appear to have remained unmarried into late middle age. As for males, the metropolitan bannermen had better chances to marry than did their rural counterparts; whereas 94 percent of metropolitan males were married by age 35, only 88 percent of rural males were married by the same age.

The male and female marriage patterns in Shuangcheng were consistent with traditional marriage practices in China, where higher social status tended to delay marriage for females and improve the chances of marriage for males.<sup>35</sup> The fact that population categories predict differential marriage patterns in Shuangcheng indicates their correlation with social status.

Above all, state land allocation in Shuangcheng created durable inequalities that persisted for more than a century and even transcended polities. Although landed wealth inherently marks the owners' social status, in Shuangcheng, the state control of these resources enlarged this aspect of landed wealth and presented it in an extreme form. While landownership in general was associated with both state policy and the market economy, the ownership of *jichan* land was independent of market forces; the Shuangcheng immigrants acquired *jichan* land exclusively through the political processes of population categorization and land allocation. On these politically differentiated entitlements, immigrants formed into groups to expand and defend their rights. Once they came into being, these social groups and the subsequent power struggles between them persisted across dynastic transitions and changes of political institution. The landlord/tenant relationship between the central-*tun* and the right- and left-*tun* residents

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<sup>35</sup> In China, females have always married universally and early, while males have married later or not at all. According to previous studies of Chinese marriage, in the nineteenth century most Chinese females were already married by age 20-24. By age 30-34, virtually no Chinese females remained single. Contrary to the early and universal marriage of women, the scarcity of females and the cost of marrying had prevented many men from ever marrying. Previous studies show that in nineteenth-century China, more than twenty percent of males still remained single by age 30. Even by age 40-45, some 15 percent of males were still bachelors (Lee and Wang 1999). This contrast between male and female marriage patterns is a consequence of the scarcity of females in the marriage market caused by sex-selective infanticide and restrictions on female remarriage. It is also related to the traditional practices of bride price and dowry. Bride price was pivotal in securing the marriage, whereas dowry was not necessary and was usually only provided by rich families. Therefore, hypergamy is a typical pattern for female marriage; lower status women married early because the marriage brought their family bride price, whereas higher status women married late because their families had to pay dowry and, at the same time, the pool of prospective grooms was circumscribed by the women's high social status (Lee and Wang 1999).

was sustained through the different regimes, from Qing to republic and then to Manchukuo. Although the republican government tried to solve this chronic tension, its social roots were just too strong to shake. Even in the Manchukuo period, despite the appearance of another government order on the settlement of this conflict, whether it was effectively carried out remained unclear. The Qing state policy in land allocation therefore generated far-reaching consequences in local society.

## **Chapter X Epilogue: Wealth, Power, and Category**

Throughout the world, the distribution of wealth is highly unequal. In 2000, 85.1 percent of the global wealth was concentrated in the hands of 10 percent of the world's households, and about 60 percent of households had nearly nothing (Davies et al. 2006). Even in the most egalitarian Western nations, the top 10 percent of households possess more than half of total national wealth. In the United States in 2001, for example, the top 10 percent of households accounted for 69.8 percent of total wealth, while the top 10 percent of households in the United Kingdom in 2000 and in Sweden in 2002 accounted for 56 and 58.6 percent of all wealth respectively. In contrast, the share of households with zero wealth was 40 percent in the United States and the United Kingdom and 60 percent in Sweden (Davies et al. 2006).

In many Western countries in the past, the distribution of wealth, especially landed wealth, was even more skewed. For example, in England and Wales in the late eighteenth century, the top 1 percent of households possessed 43.6 percent of marketable net worth, and the top 5 percent of individuals possessed 84.6 percent (Schneider 2004). As late as the 1920s, the top 10 percent households in Sweden possessed 91 percent of total wealth. Inequality, in other words, is present almost everywhere, is persistent across time, and at the individual level is largely inherited (Schneider 2004).

The relatively equal wealth distribution found in China today and in Shuangcheng historically is therefore a major exception to global trends. In present day rural China, the

top 10 percent of individuals possessed 26.2 percent of total wealth in 1995 and 30.5 percent in 2002 while the proportions of have-not individuals accounted for less than 10 percent of total population (Li and Zhao 2007). Similarly in 1876 Shuangcheng, the top 10 percent of metropolitan and rural banner households occupied 30.9 percent of the banner land, and only 9.7 percent of households had no land. Land distribution was still relatively egalitarian, even when we take into consideration floating bannermen and civilian commoners who were systematically discriminated against.

Shuangcheng, as I documented in Chapters 1 and 2, was typical of many communities in late imperial Chinese history or for that matter imperial and even pre-imperial Chinese history as a whole. It is typical because the use of population categories to maintain between-category inequality and within-category equality was a characteristic practice of the Chinese state. And it is typical because the distribution of wealth within categories was consistently egalitarian. Thus, the Chinese state has a long tradition of intervening in the livelihoods of its subject population through the allocation of resources. Although the state's ability to control resources waxed and waned along with its power, whenever and wherever the state was powerful enough, an equal distribution of wealth was the norm. Therefore, Shuangcheng exemplifies the tradition of Chinese state seeking to maintain an egalitarian distribution of wealth.

The relatively equal distribution of land in Shuangcheng illustrates the state's success at allocating wealth and power equitably through a command economy. Under this command economy, the state was the only source of power. Through land allocation, the state empowered the haves and, at the same time, prevented the concentration of wealth and power. State land allocation divided the Shuangcheng populations into two different

levels according to their power; the rural and especially the metropolitan bannermen were at the top; the floating bannermen and civilian commoners only had very limited rights to land and thereby were at the bottom. At the same time, by enforcing the equal distribution of land within each population category, the state prevented the concentration of wealth and thus power. Indeed, by ignoring most previous lineage and kinship organizations in recruiting emigrants from Beijing, Liaoning, and Jilin, the state prevented the formation of any possible competing power structures in Shuangcheng immigrant society. This unique institutional arrangement in Shuangcheng guaranteed the state remained the only source of organizational authority and political legitimacy.

At the same time, the rise of the have-a-lots and have-nots in the metropolitan and rural bannermen marked the interplay of state power and individual agency. Although the state farm system represented an extreme example of command economy, like elsewhere in China proper, the state institutions still left space for local practices. In Shuangcheng, ironically, the absence of strong local social organizations (e.g. lineage) left individual households greater space to practice their agency. In this context, despite the state prohibition of land transaction, the land market still played a partial role in wealth stratification. On one hand, some capable or lucky households that were large or had an affiliation with the government managed to empower themselves by land accumulation. Through individual behaviors of land acquisition and transaction, metropolitan and, from the mid-nineteenth century on, rural bannermen were able to overcome the power structure established by the state policy and became have-a-lots. On the other hand, some incapable or unlucky households became have-nots either because demographic adversity led to the extinction of their household, or they were unable to manage land. This

interaction between state power and individual agency therefore constituted the major force in a stratified but not concentrated pattern of land distribution.

Moreover, even when the drastic political changes in the early twentieth century eliminated the institutional constraints of banner system, many key characteristics of late imperial economic stratification continued. In 1905, in order to cope with the fiscal crisis incurred by the indemnity for the Boxer Rebellion, the Qing started to collect rent on *jichan* land in Shuangcheng.<sup>1</sup> To facilitate the rent collection, the state acknowledged the prior private transactions both within the bannermen and between the bannermen and civilian commoners, issuing ownership certificates to the *de facto* landowners.<sup>2</sup> In 1906, the state finally allowed unrestricted land transactions between bannermen and civilian commoners.<sup>3</sup> This move marked the eventual transformation of landownership from the

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<sup>1</sup> The state made the decision in 1902 to open all land in Shuangcheng to private owners. See the twenty-eight rules made by the General Bureau of Tax Counting and Land Opening (*qingfu fanghuang zongju*) on 1902.7.15 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 268, vol. 1195, pp. 1-18). To do so the state not only encouraged the claim of unopened land but also started to collect rent on the allocated banner land. After three year's preparation and transition, the government finally collected rent on *jichan* land in 1905. See SCPZGYMDA, reel 275, vol. 1237, pp.35-39.

<sup>2</sup> See the twenty-eight rules made by the General Bureau of Tax Counting and Land Opening on 1902.7.15 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 268, vol. 1195, pp. 1-18). "This time, all banner land is subject to rent collection. Thus, all the land which has been sold to civilian commoners should be identified and granted a certificate."(12). In this movement, the state worked hard to decide the *de facto* land owner. The government not only issued certificates to those whose land transaction was complete, but also tried to identify the owners of conditional sale. The government finally decided that once a conditional sale had been established for thirty years and the sale price had been paid off, a conditional sale should be considered as a sale.

<sup>3</sup> In 1906, the provincial government issued an order, stipulating that from then on all individuals who transacted land, regardless of bannermen and civilian commoners, could obtain a land certificate. See the order from the Jilin Provincial Government on 1906.3.27 (SCPZGYMDA, reel 276, vol. 1238, pp. 225-226). The contents of this order had three points: first, from then on, the land under each banner administration was fixed in size and location. The administering banner had the right and obligations to collect rent according to the size of land. Second, all individuals, bannermen or civilian commoners, were able to trade land. Third, to document the land transaction and manage land, the government only need change the individual owner's information and issue certificate. There was no need to move the plot from the previous owner's banner administration, if it was the case, to the new owner's. This policy change intended to reform the previous way of banner land allocation and management, whereby land plots were associated with banner households; a Captain's Office can only collect rent from households under its administration. Therefore, once land transaction occurred across banner administrations, the traded plot was moved not only from the previous owner's name to the new owner's but also from the banner administration of the previous owner's to that of the new owner's. This reform, by allowing the rights of

state to private owners; after the elimination of restrictions on transactions, the different levels of entitlement to land that were previously attached to state categories eventually disappeared. Five years later, the Qing dynasty fell and a republican government replaced the Qing government as the authority. In 1932, after the Japanese invasion of Northeast China, a puppet government of Manchukuo was established in northeast China. In 1945, after the defeat of Japanese invasion, the communist party established a local government in Shuangcheng.

Inequality did increase. By 1906, when the state first permitted unrestricted land transactions, the proportion of landless households among the metropolitan bannermen had already increased compared to that in 1876. As figure 10.1 shows, in the metropolitan banner households in 25 villages, the proportion of households without *jichan* land increased from 16 percent in 1876 to 25 percent in 1906. The demographic composition of these landless households, moreover, also suggests that a larger proportion of the 1906 landless households lost their land due to reasons other than family size. As table 10.1 shows, in 1876, 57 percent of the landless households had no adult male, while in 1906 only 31 percent households had no adult male. This 9 percent-point increase in landless households suggests that since 1876 on, even before its official permission, land transactions probably had led to increased inequality in land distribution.

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land to both bannermen and civilian commoners, cleared the boundaries of state population categories and facilitated land transaction.

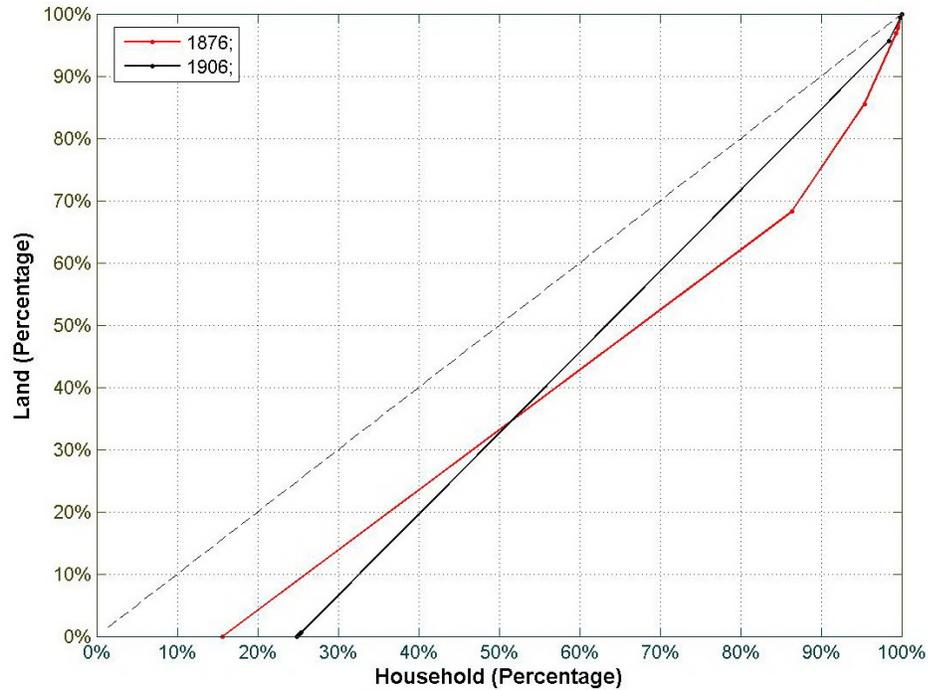


Figure 10. 1 Distribution of *jichan* land in the metropolitan banner households, 1876 and 1906.

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Table 10. 1 Number of adult males in metropolitan banner households without *jichan* land, 1876 and 1906.

N. of adult male	1876		1906	
	N. of household	Percent	N. of household	Percent
0	39	57.35	48	30.97
1	23	33.82	82	52.9
2	4	5.88	21	13.55
3	2	2.94	3	1.94
4			1	0.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: The linked population and land database.

Inequality continued to increase until the eve of the land reform in 1947. In that year, the top 10 percent of Shuangcheng households occupied 56 percent of the total registered farmland, and the top 1 percent households (the large landlords) occupied 18.7 percent of

land.<sup>4</sup> The proportion of land occupied by the top 1 percent of households increased by 1.6 times than that in 1876, and that occupied by the top 10 percent of households increased by 81 percent. At the same time more than 65 percent of the households were landless and could only work as hired labor.<sup>5</sup>

Equality and banner land ownership in general however also persisted. As figure 10.1 shows, in 1906, 75 percent of metropolitan banner households still retained *jichan* plots. The distribution of *jichan* land within these metropolitan bannermen also became even more equal. In 1926, 20 years after the transformation of land ownership, bannermen still occupied most of the registered farmland. Of the 467,882 *shang* of registered land of the county, 389,181.57 *shang* belonged to the bannermen, which accounted for 83 percent of the total registered farm land.<sup>6</sup> The civilian commoners only had 66,788.42 *shang*, which accounted for 14 percent of the total land. Compared to 1876, the percentages of land owned by the bannermen and civilian commoners remained almost the same. Moreover, in 1947, while the proportion of hired laborers county-wide was as large as 65 percent, it remained small in previous banner villages. Based on the land reform records for six banner villages, the proportion of hired labor ranged between 5 percent and 51 percent, and the average proportion of hired laborers for these villages was only 19.7 percent.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the majority of the landless households in 1947 were relatively recent arrivals, not the descendants of the migrants who came in the first half of

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<sup>4</sup> See SCXZ (1990), p.155.

<sup>5</sup> See SCXZ (1990), p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> See SCXZ (1990), p.147.

<sup>7</sup> See the registration book of land acreage and population classification of Shuangcheng (*tudi mianji renkou dengji dengji bu*) compiled in 1947. This registration book was compiled for the purpose of recording the results of land reallocation in the land reform. The registration book is organized by village. It registered for each household the name of household head, the class of the household-landlord, rich peasant, middle peasant, poor peasant, and hired labor-the household size, and the grade and acreage of land allocated. In my trip to Shuangcheng in 2007, I collected the records of six previous banner villages.

the nineteenth century.

The persistence of the historical pattern in the land distribution in Shuangcheng demonstrates the salient legacy of the command economy even after the development of market. The Shuangcheng example, therefore, is an extreme example of a worldwide phenomenon; for most of human history, a command economy coexisted with the market and played an important role in economic life (Polanyi 1957b; Dalton 1961). As Karl Polanyi pointed out, the market economy, in which a self-regulating market system was the controlling force, did not exist before the nineteenth century (1957b, 43). In all pre-industrial countries, a command system, organized either on the principles of “reciprocity or redistribution or an integration of the two,” took precedence (Polanyi 1957b, 1957a). It was not until the nineteenth century that the wide spread of factory industrialism and market organizations in England changed economic relationships between people and eventually lead to the rise of a self-regulating market. Moreover, even after the "great transformation" from command to market economy, the tension between the growing self-regulated market and the efforts to regulate it persisted. This tension eventually impaired this self-regulating market system and lead to its collapse in the 1910s. Starting in the 1920s, many states reasserted a role in the market and began to intervene once more.

The long history of the command economy suggests that in the past, political power was the crucial pre-condition for the accumulation of wealth. This is true both in China and in the rest of the world. In China, although the land market emerged as early as the fifth century B.C., the state continued to intervene in land distribution through either direct redistribution or imposition of heavier taxes on large landholders. Moreover, in most

cases in Chinese history, it was not transactions in the market but political privileges that led to land concentration. Eventually, the large landlords were people with political power and special privileges. For example, in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the land grant from the emperors to the imperial lineage and officials with close ties to the emperors constituted a major source of land concentration.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, in Western Europe, the application of political power by kings and feudal lords resulted in a much higher level of wealth concentration than present day. For example, in the mid-seventeenth-century Scania, Southern Sweden, land was so concentrated at the hands of the privileged that 92 percent of the population were tenants on crown and noble land (Olsson 2006). Moreover, the nobilities preserved their privileges in land ownership over the course of the transition from feudal to peasant economy. Because of the stratification generated by political privileges, wealth distributions were more concentrated in the past than the present. In Sweden in 1920, the top 10 percent of households owned 91 percent of the total wealth, while in 1975, the percentage of the total wealth owned by the top 10 percent of households was only 54 percent (Schneider 2004). In Great Britain, the percentage of the total wealth owned by the top 10 percent of households was 89.1 in 1923 and 71.7 in 1972 (Schneider 2004, 23).

The historical pattern of wealth distribution in Shuangcheng also persisted because the social structure formed under the Qing was preserved by the Republican and Manchukuo regimes. After the fall of the Qing, the Republican regime preserved the banner administration in Shuangcheng. Under the Republican government, the Office of Banner

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<sup>8</sup> In the Ming dynasty, the imperial lineage occupied a large amount of land. In 1514, in the Beijing area alone, the farm belonged to the imperial lineage summed up to 37,595.46 hectares. In the latter half of the Ming dynasty, the expansion of the imperial lineage farms constituted a major form of land concentration. In 1393, the Ming state had 8,507,623 hectares of registered taxable farmland. In 1502, the amount of registered taxable farmland reduced to 4,228, 518 hectares. The 4,279,105 hectares of missing land were occupied by imperial lineage members and powerful officials (Lai 1957).

Affairs (*qiwu bangongshi*) was established specifically to administer the banner population. Previous land owners in Shuangcheng continued to own their land. This stable social structure enabled smooth intergenerational wealth transmission. The landed class formed under the Qing therefore enjoyed a stable political environment to pass down their wealth.

In addition, the banner ownership in Shuangcheng endured the influx of free immigrants because the relatively equal land distribution under the Qing created class stability. Since the late nineteenth century, Shuangcheng witnessed a constant immigration of Han-Chinese to the Northeast China. The volume of immigration significantly increased in the early twentieth century and changed the ethnic and social compositions of the population. In many regions of China proper, this social change led to bannermen's loss of landownership.<sup>9</sup> The bannermen in Shuangcheng, however, resisted this competitive social force brought by the new immigrants because of their large population size. In the first 90 years in Shuangcheng history, the state power successfully maintained a relatively equal distribution of land. This relatively equal land ownership in turn created a large size of landed class and stabilized them as a group. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the landed bannermen accounted for about 60 percent of the Shuangcheng population. The substantive size of the landed class therefore constituted a social force that was strong enough to resist social change.

Therefore, as the Shuangcheng story illustrated, state categories interacted with wealth and power to form the social structure. In this process, wealth acted as an

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<sup>9</sup> The bannermen's loss of banner land to civilian commoners has been a chronic problem ever since the eighteenth century. Even the Qing officials had surmised that prior to the state's acceptance of free land transaction, the civilian commoners had occupied substantive banner land in Northeast China (SCPZGYMDA, reel 268, vol. 1195, pp. 1-18).

especially important channel for the transmission of power and thereby explained the durable inequality between the have and have-not categories. The fact that many state-created population categories disappeared when the political regimes they depended on fell demonstrates that political power alone can not maintain durable inequality. By contrast, inequality supported by unequal distribution of wealth is more durable. The historical pattern of wealth distribution persisted in Shuangcheng because the metropolitan and rural bannermen, by transforming their privileges under the Qing into landed wealth, achieved a durable power. Through intergenerational transmission of wealth, the power relationship formed under the Qing persisted. This durable power of the haves withstood the republican revolution and the enormous society change incurred by migration into Northeast China. Only until the 1947 Land Reform, when the communist state initiated a truly social revolution and used coercion to equally redistribute wealth, did the privileges and power preserved by the bannermen eventually disappear.

**Appendix 1**  
**Registered Farm Land in Shuangcheng during the Qing**

Time of first reclamation	Type	Amount in <i>Shang</i>	Amount in hectare
1815	Jichan	90,000.0	165,600.0
1820	Hengchan	6,220.3	11,445.4
1820	Suique	6,500.0	11,960.0
1822	Gongzu	5,729.0	10,541.4
1845	Baqianshang	8,753.1	16,105.7
1853	Ziken	42,502.3	78,204.3
1856	Maohuang	7,817.9	14,384.9
1862	Sanwanshang	24,766.0	45,569.4
1862	Hengchan jiajie	8,394.5	15,445.9
1867	Hengchan fuduo	2,255.8	4,150.7
1871	Hengchan fuduo	610.8	1,123.9
1880	fuduo	899.2	1,654.6
1881	Fuduo di	19,528.8	35,933.0
1883	Fuduo di	1,495.2	2,751.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>225,473.0</b>	<b>414,870.2</b>

Sources: The 1876 land registers of banner and civilian divisions. SCPGBTDHKDM, reel 1834696, vol. 285; reel 1834731, vol. 658, vol. 659. SCPZGYMDA, reel 160, vol. 635, pp.147-295.

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