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Remaking Chineseness: The Transition Of Inner Asian Groups In The Central Plain During The Sixteen Kingdoms Period And Northern Dynasties

Abstract

This dissertation aims to examine the institutional transitions of the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties. Starting with an examination on the origin and development of Sinicization theory in the West and China, the first major chapter of this dissertation argues the Sinicization theory evolves in the intellectual history of modern times. This chapter, in one hand, offers a different explanation on the origin of the Sinicization theory in both China and the West, and their relationships. In the other hand, it incorporates Sinicization theory into the construction of the historical narrative of Chinese Nationality, and argues the theorization of Sinicization attempted by several scholars in the second half of 20th Century. The second and third major chapters build two case studies regarding the transition of the central and local institutions of the Inner Asian polities in the Central Plain, which are the succession system and the local administrative system. In the first case study, through applying the crown prince system, the Inner Asian rulers reached the centralization of authority, which was different from and even more centralized than the Han tradition. In the second case study, the polities of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties largely followed the Inner Asian political tradition and the Inner Asian groups also remained as units inside the polities. The two case studies show the transition of the institutions of the Inner Asian polity in the Central Plain. The transition is neither a one-way change from Inner Asian institutions to Han and Jin institutions nor a simple hybridity. For different institutions, here the succession system in the central government and the administrative system in the local level, the dynamics for the transition are also not the same. This dissertation approaches the Chinese history with articulating not only what these Inner Asian groups took from the Chinese tradition, but also what they contributed to the institutional changes in Chinese history, which reshapes our understanding of what we call "Chinese" institutions, in other words, Chineseness.

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REMAKING CHINESENESS: THE TRANSITION OF INNER
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SIXTEEN KINGDOMS PERIOD AND NORTHERN
DYNASTIES

Fangyi Cheng

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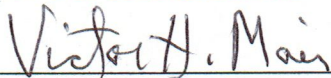
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PLAIN DURING THE SIXTEEN KINGDOMS PERIOD AND NORTHERN DYNASTIES

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For my *taidia* and my wife's *popo*, may they rest in peace!

ABSTRACT

REMAKING CHINESENESS: THE TRANSITION OF INNER ASIAN GROUPS IN THE CENTRAL PLAIN DURING THE SIXTEEN KINGDOMS PERIOD AND NORTHERN DYNASTIES

Fangyi Cheng

Victor H. Mair

This dissertation aims to examine the institutional transitions of the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties. Starting with an examination on the origin and development of Sinicization theory in the West and China, the first major chapter of this dissertation argues the Sinicization theory evolves in the intellectual history of modern times. This chapter, in one hand, offers a different explanation on the origin of the Sinicization theory in both China and the West, and their relationships. In the other hand, it incorporates Sinicization theory into the construction of the historical narrative of Chinese Nationality, and argues the theorization of Sinicization attempted by several scholars in the second half of 20th Century. The second and third major chapters build two case studies regarding the transition of the central and local institutions of the Inner Asian polities in the Central Plain, which are the succession system and the local administrative system. In the first case study, through applying the crown prince system, the Inner Asian rulers reached the centralization of authority, which was different from and even more centralized than the Han tradition. In the second case study, the polities of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties largely followed the Inner Asian political tradition and the Inner Asian groups

also remained as units inside the polities. The two case studies show the transition of the institutions of the Inner Asian polity in the Central Plain. The transition is neither a one-way change from Inner Asian institutions to Han and Jin institutions nor a simple hybridity. For different institutions, here the succession system in the central government and the administrative system in the local level, the dynamics for the transition are also not the same. This dissertation approaches the Chinese history with articulating not only what these Inner Asian groups took from the Chinese tradition, but also what they contributed to the institutional changes in Chinese history, which reshapes our understanding of what we call “Chinese” institutions, in other words, Chineseness.

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

The Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties are known for the invasions of Northern China by Inner Asian peoples, mainly from the Northern steppe zone, usually described in Chinese historical records as *wuhu luanhua* (五胡亂華, five *hu* disordering China), *siyi luanhua* (四夷亂華, four *yi* disordering China), or *yidi luanhua* (夷狄亂華, *yi* and *di* disordering China).¹ The Sixteen Kingdoms period began with Liu Yuan's (劉淵) proclamation of the Han (漢) state in the year 304 CE, and ended with the unification of northern China by the Northern Wei in 439.² This marked the beginning of the Northern Dynasties period (439 – 589), which lasted until the replacement of the Northern Zhou by the Sui, who later unified China. Nearly all the ruling groups of Northern China between 304 and 589 were Inner Asian, and non-Han peoples comprised more than half of the population of Northern China during the Sixteen Kingdoms period.³ As a period of division and fragmentation, the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties have been the object of less scholarly attention, particularly in the Western academic world, than major dynasties like the Han and Tang, despite the pertinence of at least two significant aspects of the period to topics that have enjoyed broad interest in the field of Chinese studies. The first of these is the notion of Sinicization, relevant because of the general view that the Inner Asian ruling groups of this period, especially the

¹ *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), vol.56, 1529-1534.

² Because of the complex implications of the word “China”, here “China” is mainly used as a geographic term to roughly refer to the territory of today's People's Republic of China.

³ Wang Xiaowei, “Shiliuguo shiqi Zhongyuan Yi-Han renkou bili” 十六國時期中原夷漢人口比例, in *Lishi jiaoxue* 歷史教學, 1995, no.7, 15-18.

Xianbei, merged into the Chinese population.⁴ The second aspect, not unrelated, pertains to the "eventual" unification under the Sui that followed this period. Why was China unified after this period of division? Was it inevitable? What dynamic lay behind the integration? One of the answers for these questions is also related to the theory of Sinicization.

Although the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern dynasties are often treated as evidence for the validity of Sinicization theory, the notion of Sinicization has been challenged and hotly disputed in the Western academic world. The corresponding Chinese word for Sinicization is usually *hanhua* 漢化, but this translation is not optimal due to the mismatch between the “Han” of the Chinese word, which can refer also to Han Chinese or the Han ethnicity, and the “sino-/sini-” of “Sinicization,” which refers more broadly to China. The alternative *huahua* 華化, which matches the English word more closely, is preferred by such scholars as Ping-ti Ho and Chen Yuan, the latter of whom uses *huahua* in the title of his book discussing the Sinicization of foreigners from the Western Regions (*Xiyu* 西域) during the Yuan Dynasty.⁵ Although the character “hua 化” inside the two terms had the meaning of civilizing non-Sinitic people since very early in Chinese context, neither term, however, carries the meaning of Sinicization before the beginning of the Republic of China in 1912.

⁴ Sinicization theory is very common in numerous works of Chinese and Japanese scholarship, such as Lü Simian, *Liangjin Nanbeichao shi* 兩晉南北朝史 (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chubanshe, 2009), 623-627; Kawamoto Yoshiaki 川本芳昭, “Kozoku no kokka” 胡族の国家, in *Gi-Shin Nanbokuchō Zui-Tō jidai shi no kihon mondai* 魏晉南北朝隋唐時代史の基本問題 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), 98-106.

⁵ Ping-ti Ho, In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski’s “Reenvisioning the Qing”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.57, no.1 (Feb., 1998), p.152; Chen Yuan, *Yuan Xiyuren huahua kao* 元西域人華化考, Shanghai guji press, 2000.

Since the 1940s, however, many Western scholars have questioned or outright rejected the Sinicization theory as a “Han nationalist interpretation of China's past.”⁶ New approaches to Inner Asian rulers in China, such as "conquest dynasties" and "New Qing history," have been brought up in the Western academic world.⁷ Yet these approaches deal primarily with later dynasties, such as the Liao, Jin, Mongol, and Qing, and Qing history remains the chief battleground of the academic debate about Sinicization and other theories. In Mainland China and Taiwan, on the other hand, the theory of Sinicization is still embraced by a large number of scholars today,⁸ and the debate about the "New Qing History" has recently expanded into severe political attacks by mainland Chinese commentators condemning it as a “New Imperialist” approach to history.⁹ Though the flames of war have yet to reach the study of the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties, questions concerning the theory of Sinicization will ultimately still have to be answered for this period as well. Can the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties period yet serve as an example of Sinicization? If not, how can the transition of the Inner Asian ruling groups be described? A few scholars have already attempted

⁶ Evelyn S. Rawski, “Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.55, no.4 (Nov., 1996), 842.

⁷ Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Sheng, *History of Chinese Society. Liao (907-1125)*, Philadelphia 1949; Jennifer Holmgren, “Northern Wei as a Conquest Dynasty: Current Perceptions, Past Scholarship”, *Papers on Far Eastern History* 40 (1989), 1-50; Albert Dien, “A New Look at the Xianbei and their Impact on Chinese Culture”, in George Kuwayama (ed.), *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), 40-59.

⁸ E.g. Ping-ti Ho and Chen Yuan, mentioned earlier; see also Jing-Shen Tao, *The Jurchen in Twelfth-century China: A Study of Sinicization*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967; Ch’i-Ch’ing Hsiao, *Lun Yuandai Mengguren zhi hanhua 論元代蒙古人之漢化, Mengyuanshi xinyan 蒙元史新研*, Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1994, p.221.

⁹ Li Zhiting, “‘New Qing History’: An Example of ‘New Imperialist’ History”, *Contemporary Chinese Thought*, 47:1 (2016), 5-12.

answers.¹⁰ More fundamental questions regarding the notion of Sinicization, meanwhile, go unasked and unanswered on both sides of the broader debate: when was Sinicization first conceived in the West and China? Do scholars who use the theory do so with the same understanding and definition? Is *hanhua* 漢化 or *huahua* 華化 in the Chinese context the same as Sinicization in the Western context? More importantly, do mainland Chinese and Taiwanese scholars embrace the theory solely out of nationalism? If not, should Western academia reexamine the Sinicization theory accordingly? My dissertation will consider these questions.

Another key factor in discussing this period, which I will also deal with in my dissertation, is the tradition of “grand unification (*dayitong* 大一統)” in Chinese history. The Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties period was the first time in Chinese history that the Central Plain (*Zhongyuan* 中原) was conquered by Inner Asian peoples who ruled over both Han Chinese and Inner Asian subjects. China was fragmented during this period, but was subsequently unified by a northern regime in which the descendants of those Inner Asian rulers remained. In many interpretations, the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties are treated as a “detour” in Chinese history, with China ultimately returning to its “normal route of development” after the Northern Dynasties. The “detour” is seen as corresponding to the process of the Sinicization of Inner Asian groups, which in this interpretation yielded a solid social and intellectual foundation for

¹⁰ Chin-Yin Tseng, for instance, has drawn inspiration from the “New Qing History” in interpreting the material culture of the Tuoba Xianbei during the Northern Wei Pingcheng period (398-494 CE) by using the notion of “dual presence.” Tseng argues that the people and the agency of material forms in the Tuoba Northern Wei have two different identities for the Chinese people and Eurasian steppe people, suggesting a new angle from which to read material culture during the Northern dynasties. Chin-Yin Tseng, *The Making of the Tuoba Northern Wei: Constructing material cultural expressions in Northern Wei Pingcheng Period (398-494 CE)*, BAR International Series 2567, 2013, 12-15.

the later unification of China. Another representative interpretation is the “Southernization theory” first advanced by Tang Zhangru, who argues that the whole empire was southernized from the mid-Tang onwards.¹¹ In other words, although the Tang directly inherited the legacy of the Northern dynasties, this was gradually replaced by the influence of the Southern dynasties. Both interpretations emphasize the assimilation of Inner Asian ruling groups via the absorption of “Chineseness” during the period of division. In light of the increasing questioning and rejection of the theory of Sinicization theory mentioned earlier, however, these interpretations must also be reevaluated. Did people during this time foresee the re-unification of China? Was the unification inevitable, or could disunity have become the new “natural state” of China had things gone differently? What was the dynamic behind the integration? These questions require a rethinking of the tradition of “grand unification” in Chinese history.

To address the questions from the two aspects mentioned above, my dissertation builds two case studies to reveal different strata in the transition of Inner Asian peoples. I examine the responses of Inner Asian rulers and community members during the transition, and consider how their responses may have varied according to their differing identities. Confronted with different options from the sedentary civilization, did they accept willingly and unquestioningly? Did they hesitate between different options, or just take one option unconsciously? What factors might have motivated their final decision?

Besides the introductory chapter, this dissertation comprises four other chapters. The second chapter, “The Evolution of Sinicization,” traces the history and usage of the

¹¹ See Tang Zhangru, *Weijin Nanbeichao Suitangshi sanlun* 魏晉南北朝史隋唐史三論 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue press, 1992), 486; Mou Fasong, “Luelun Tangdai de Nanchaohua qingxiang” 略論唐代的南朝化傾向, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究, 1996, no.2, 51-64.

theory of Sinicization in Eastern and Western scholarship, and will discuss the intellectual trends underlying the different ways in which the theory has been applied. As mentioned above, the earliest use of Sinicization seems to have been in the West, with such foundational sinologists as Paul Pelliot and Édouard Chavannes playing major roles, and with early reports about the assimilation of Kaifeng Jews in China lending apparent support to the idea.¹² With the expanding influence of western Sinology in China, and the contemporary rise of nationalism, the theory of Sinicization was quickly picked up by early 20th century Chinese scholars such as Chen Yuan. Nationalism alone, however, cannot explain the popularity of the theory in the Chinese academic world: Chinese traditional concepts, such as the *yi* 夷/*xia* 夏 dichotomy and the concept of *tianxia* (天下, All-under-Heaven) in Confucianism also played an important role, as did the Marxian and other views of social evolution, all of which were taken as evidence for the proposition that "barbarians" naturally would become – and would want to become – “Sinicized.” I follow this by discussing criticisms of Sinicization since the 1950s. I conclude by discussing to what extent the theory of Sinicization remains valid in the field of Chinese studies, and how it might best be applied or avoided in future research.

In each of the following three chapters, I build two case studies to examine the transition of Inner Asian groups in different layers. In the third chapter, also I discuss how Inner Asian rulers in Northern China adopted a vertical crown prince succession system after their migration into Northern China. I begin by examining the institution of crown princes as recorded in Chinese canonical texts in order to discuss the motivations

¹² Donald Daniel Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972, 103-108.

underlying the institution and the usual roles of crown princes in this context. A discussion of the succession system in the Inner Asian tradition follows: although the institution of the crown prince was to some extent new to Tuoba Xianbei rulers, it was the Tuoba Xianbei who officially adopted this system for themselves. Key questions to be discussed in this section include: Why did the Tuoba rulers accept and try to apply this new succession system? What advantages did the new system present to them? How did they come gradually to use this institution differently from the typical Chinese way? What influence did this new institution exert upon nomadic rulers and later dynasties?

The fourth chapter deals with the transition of the community structures of Inner Asian people. Nomadic groups were usually reorganized after migration to sedentary areas, either by the government or by themselves. In this chapter, I first examine the concepts of “tribes (*bu* 部)” and “clan (*zu* 族)” in the nomadic tradition during the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties, based on materials from both received historical records and anthropological field work. Next, I discuss the concepts of “household (*hu* 户)”, “village (*cun* 村)” and “county (*li* 里)” in the Chinese tradition, and the strategy of the government to reorganize the nomadic people in Chinese territory. Of particular interest will be the question of how the nomadic groups were reorganized after entering the Central Plain, and whether this reorganization was entirely along Han Chinese lines or retained features of pastoral tradition. The relationship between *hu* and Han in local society is discussed and fleshed out using excavated inscriptions from Buddhist steles and epitaphs from the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern dynasties.

In final chapter, which is the concluding chapter, I consider the findings drawn from the case studies presented in the preceding chapters and discuss the ways in which these conclusions may be brought to bear in reconsidering the theory of Sinicization and the tradition of "Grand Unification." It is my hope that the discussion will shed new light on the content and role of nationalism in the construction of Chinese history and even the ethnic conditions in today's China.

CHAPTER 2 The Evolution of “Sinicization”

Sinicization (alternatively known as Sinicisation, Sinofication, or Sinification) is usually interpreted as the process by which all non-Han or non-Sinitic people who entered the Chinese realm, no matter whether as conquerors or conquered, eventually were inevitably assimilated as Chinese.¹³ As an important concept used in the study of Chinese history, Sinicization theory is discussed not only in almost all topics related to the non-Sinitic groups in Chinese territory, but also is in the core of some debates, such as the those about the New Qing History and “Conquest Dynasties.” In these debates, Sinicization theory always is questioned, or even radically rejected, by many Western scholars and is treated as a “Han nationalist interpretation of China's past.”¹⁴ To the contrary, the Sinicization theory is embraced by a large number of scholars from Mainland China and Taiwan, and the debate even leads to severe political criticism of the New Qing history by attacking it as the “New Imperialist” history.¹⁵ Behind these arguments and debates, perhaps because of its seemingly “obvious” character, scholars usually do not give a clear or consistent definition for Sinicization.

Many questions about Sinicization still remain unasked. Among these questions are some that are basic and significant for the debate. When was Sinicization theory first

¹³ Here the definition of Sinicization is paraphrased from Evelyn Rawski's article. In her article, she says “Sinicization—the thesis that all of the non-Han peoples who have entered the Chinese realm have eventually been assimilated into Chinese culture.” Evelyn S. Rawski, “Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no.4 (Nov. 1996), 842.

¹⁴ Evelyn S. Rawski, 1996, 842.

¹⁵ Li Zhiting (2016) “New Qing History: An Example of 'New Imperialist' History,” *Contemporary Chinese Thought*, 47:1, 5–12.

mentioned in the West and in China? Do all scholars use this theory with the same understanding and definition? Is Hanhua 汉化 or Huahua 华化 in the Chinese context the same as Sinicization in Western context? More importantly, is nationalism the only reason for scholars from Mainland China and Taiwan to embrace the Sinicization theory? In other words, why is there emphasis on the significance of Sinicization in Chinese history? Have Western scholars offered a better interpretation than Sinicization? All these questions will be discussed in this chapter.

We begin with a chronological analysis of the application of Sinicization theory from the end of 19th century until the early 21st century. The analysis includes the contexts, definitions and contents of Sinicization theory. Next will be an examination of the variety of conceptualization behind the usages of the Sinicization theory. Following will be a discussion of ethnicity in early Medieval Chinese history.

2.1 Early use of Sinicization in the Western Context

As a frequently used concept, the morphology of the word “Sinicization” is quite simple; the word is comprised of the root “Sinicize” and suffix “-ization.” The root “Sinicize” means somebody or something modified under Chinese influence; the suffix “-ization” denotes the process, act or result of something, in this case Sinicizing. Words with a similar combination are abundant in English, such as Romanization and Westernization. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, both Sinicize and

Sinicization first appeared in *The Athenaeum*, a British literary magazine at the end of 19th century, and they often are used to describe the Chinese influence on Japanese language and religion.¹⁶

In the early 20th century, “Sinicization” first was used in academic articles to describe the Chinese impact on the languages and customs of cultures surrounding China.¹⁷ When W. Perceval Yetts discussed the communication between China and the West in 1926, he even used “Sinicization” to describe the intellectual history of Europe in the 17th and 18th century, writing: “Indiscriminate admiration for Chinese notions and things, or those supposedly Chinese, became the vogue. This Sinicization of intellectual Europe reached its acme during the eighteenth century, and it has influenced our arts to an extent hard to estimate.”¹⁸ Therefore, it is almost certain that in the beginning, the words “Sinicization” or “Sinicize” served as descriptive terms for Chinese influence, including Chinese notions, language, and material culture, on cultures outside of China. An example of this influence would be the language and religion in Japan, and art in Europe. In other words, when first used, Sinicization had no direct connection with ethnic identity, nor did it carry the connotations of universality (“all”) and meritability (“must”).

¹⁶ In *OED*, 2nd edition (1989) *OED* Online version March 2016. Examples such as “1889 *Athenæum* 28 Sept. 414/2, While the civilization of Japan becomes every year more and more Westernized, her language becomes more and more Sinicized.” “1898 *Athenæum* 26 Nov. 747/3, Shinto might have become a religious and ethical system, but its development was arrested by Sinicization and Buddhism.”

¹⁷ William Elliot Griffis, Don C. Seitz and Homer Lea, "Japan and the United States," *The North American Review*, vol. 197, no. 691 (Jun. 1913), p. 729.

¹⁸ W. Perceval Yetts, "Contact between China and the West," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, vol. 48, no. 276 (Mar, 1926), p. 122. The term “Chinoiserie” was also probably first used in the 16th and 17th Century.

As an alternative form of Sinicization, Sinification did not bear the same meaning. According to the *OED*, the word “Sinification” first appeared in 1900 with the same definition as Sinicization. In actuality, it had been in use already in 1899 with the meaning of “managed/administered by the Chinese instead of foreigners.” This was in reference to the process of the Chinese government and people gradually taking over the control of foreign settlements, railways and other organizations inside China.¹⁹ Further, when Noël Williamson talked about the gradual control of Tibet by the Chinese, he said “Events have been taking place of late which are likely to increase interest in this section of the Lohit valley. I refer to the Sinification of Tibet, and if reports in the public press be true, it is only a matter of months, not years, before the Rong, instead of forming a part of Tibet, will become a Chinese province.”²⁰ From these early usages of Sinification, it is clear that Sinification referred to the political control or governance by the Chinese government or people.

Although Sinicization did not obtain the meaning of “becoming a Chinese by assimilation or acculturation,” work by a prominent Sinologist of the mid-19th century, Sir Henry Yule, already reflected a similar assumption, albeit without using the word “Sinicization.” In the end of his “Dedication and Preface” in *Cathay and the way thither: Being a collection of medieval notice of China*, published in 1866, Yule said:

¹⁹ See “The Proposed Sinification of the Settlements,” *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870–1941)* [Shanghai] 20 Mar 1899:474; Gilbert McIntosh, “The Christian Literature Society Moves Forward,” *The Chinese Recorder (1912–1938)* [Shanghai] 01 Dec 1923: 746.

²⁰ Noël Williamson, “The Lohit-Brahmaputra between Assam and South-Eastern Tibet, November, 1907, to January, 1908,” *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 34, no. 4 (Oct. 1909), p. 383. The Rong here could refer to the Rong-chu Valley.

The empire (referring to China) which has a history coeval with the oldest of Chaldaea (10–6 century BC) seems to be breaking up. It has often broken up before and been reconsolidated; it has often been conquered, and has either thrown off the yoke or absorbed its conquerors. But they derived what civilization they possessed from land which they invaded. The internal combustions that are now heaving the soil come in contact with new and alien elements of Western origin. Who can guess what shall come of that chemistry?²¹

While talking about China's fate after its contact with Western civilization, Yule looked back at Chinese history, and emphasized that the empire of China either had "thrown off the yoke or absorbed its conquerors" while being conquered. According to Yule, how did China absorb its conquerors? In the preliminary essays of the same book, he gave an example about the Khitan:

The Khitan empire subsisted for two centuries, in Northern China and the adjoining regions of Tartary. The same curious process then took place which seems always to have followed the intrusion of Tartar conquerors into China, and singularly analogous to that which followed the establishment of the Roman emperors in Byzantium. The intruders themselves adopted Chinese manners, ceremonies, literature, and civilization, and gradually lost their energy and warlike character. It must have been during this period, ending with overthrow of the dynasty in 1123, and whilst this northern monarchy was the face which the Celestial Empire turned into Inner Asia, that the name of Khitan, Khitat, or Khitai, became indissolubly associated with China.²²

Here, Yule interpreted the intruders as being "absorbed" and adopting "Chinese manners, ceremonies, literature and civilization" and eventually losing "their energy and warlike character." Later Yule also expressed a similar idea about the Jurchen in the Jin

²¹ *Cathay and the way thither: Being a collection of medieval notice of China*, translated and edited by Colonel Henry Yule, C.B., vol. I, "Dedication and Preface" vii–viii, London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, M.DCC.LXVI. 1866.

²² *Ibid.* pp. vii, xi, 147–148.

dynasty.²³ How was “their energy and warlike character” related to the Khitan or Jurchen identity? Does losing them mean the Khitan and Jurchen were absorbed? Does this absorption equal assimilation by the Chinese and the loss of their original ethnicity? Henry Yule did not provide answers to these questions. Instead of constructing a sophisticated social theory, his “absorption theory” was closer to a description based on his impression from reading Chinese history than a serious consideration of ethnicity.²⁴

This way of describing Chinese history was used in the works of the small community of early European Sinologists, such as Édouard Chavannes and Paul Pelliot.²⁵ In *Haute Asie*, when Pelliot mentioned the change of the Khitan people after they conquered China, he said

Mais il en advent des Khitan comme de tous les nomads qui se fixaient en vainqueurs sur le sol de la Chine et que, par un choc en retour, la civilisation chinoise conquérait bientôt. Au bout de quelques generations, les Khitan s'étaient policés, chinoisés.²⁶

The last sentence is translated as “After a number of generations the Khitan were civilized, Sinicized” by Witfogel and Feng.

Here, Pelliot calls the acceptance of Chinese culture as “civilized and Sinicized,” which implies that he considered Inner Asian peoples like the Khitan and Jurchen to have

²³ Ibid. p. 148.

²⁴ The general statement of “absorption theory” was in accordance with the Confucian idea that the superiority of “Chinese” culture and the foreigners/Barbarians can be and should be civilized. Meanwhile, it is also about the civil and military (*wenzhi* 文质) theory.

²⁵ Later in 1915, the book *Cathay and the way thither* was reprinted with editing and annotating by another French sinologist Henri Cordier. In the end of his preface for the second edition, he expressed his gratitude to those friends who helped him, including Sir Aurel Stein, Ed. Chavannes and Paul Pelliot. In *Cathay and the way thither: Being a collection of medieval notices of China*, dedication and preface xiii, vol. 1, 1915.

²⁶ Paul Pelliot, *Haute Asie*, Paris 1931, 21–22.

been “uncivilized” before “la civilization chinoise conquérirait bientôt.” After that, they became Chinese since they were absorbed into Chinese civilization. Compared to Henry Yule, this further statement gives a more explicit interpretation of the “absorption theory,” which served as the major target that Karl Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Sheng argued against in their monumental 1949 work about the Liao Dynasty.²⁷ From Yule’s description to Pelliot’s statement, absorption theory served as a depiction of Chinese history without further regard for the social history or ethnicity of those Inner Asian intruders inside China; in Pelliot’s writing, however, this “absorption” gradually became similar to “assimilation”. One reason for this should be that in the early stages of Sinology, anthropological and sociological theories had not been adopted to any significant degree. For a long time, philology remained the main method for approaching this issue, especially among European Sinologists such as Pelliot and Chavannes.

It is necessary to mention, however, that already in the early 20th century, anthropology had a role in China studies; this was led by Berthold Laufer, an anthropologist, who was educated in Germany and migrated to the U.S. in 1898. During 1901–1904, he led the Jacob H. Schiff expedition to China and acquired a comprehensive ethnographic collection for the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).²⁸ In a letter to his mentor Franz Boas at AMNH written in 1903 during the expedition, Laufer says, "I shall conquer China. . . [for] the anthropologist. China, no longer the exclusive

²⁷ Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Sheng, *History of Chinese Society. Liao (907–1125)*, Philadelphia 1949, p. 4.

²⁸ Wang Jiqing 王冀清, “Berthold Laufer,” in *Zhongwai Dunhuang xuejia pingzhuan* 中外敦煌学家评传, edited by Lu Qingfu 陆庆夫 and Wang Jiqing 王冀青, Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003, pp. 368–387.

domain of travelers and sinologues, both narrow-minded and one-sided in their standpoints and researches, China to all who have anthropological interests."²⁹

Among the large number of publications by Laufer, one article published in 1917 mentions the Lolo people of southwestern China who did not have family names before contact with the Chinese. He calls a group of Lolo “Sinicized Lolo” because they adopted Chinese surnames.³⁰ This is one of the earliest examples in which “Sinicize” is used directly to describe the ethnic groups living inside Chinese territory. By adopting Chinese surnames, the group of Lolo had been acculturated into Chinese. Laufer describes them as “Sinicized Lolo.” As an anthropologist, Laufer’s use of “Sinicized” starts to connect to the concept of ethnicity in anthropology and ethnology, and it clearly diverts the use of “Sinicize” and “Sinicization” into another context and field. Both orientations, i.e., Sinicization in Sinology and anthropology, have been projected in the contemporary Chinese intellectual world.

2.2 Early use of Sinicization in China in the early 20th century

The Chinese word for Sinicization is usually the above-mentioned Hanhua 汉化. This translation is not optimal due to the confusion between the Han of the Chinese word, which can refer also to Han Chinese or the Han ethnicity, and the “sino-/sini-” of “Sinicization,” which refers more broadly to China. The alternative *huahua* 华化, which

²⁹ American Museum of Natural History: Laufer to Boas, 12 August, 1903.

³⁰ Berthold Laufer, "Totemic Traces among the Indo-Chinese," *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 30, no. 118 (Oct.–Dec. 1917), p. 417.

matches the English word more closely, is preferred by such scholars as Ping-ti Ho and Chen Yuan, the latter of whom uses *huahua* in the title of his book discussing the Sinicization of foreigners from the Western Regions (Xiyu 西域) during the Yuan Dynasty.³¹ Although the character “*hua* 化” in the two terms has had the meaning of “civilizing non-Sinitic people” since very early in a Chinese context, neither term carried the meaning of Sinicization before the beginning of the Republic of China in 1912.

Possibly the earliest use of Hanhua and Huahua in a Chinese text occurred in 1923; the two words, however, appeared in very different contexts. Huahua was related to the European Sinology mentioned earlier, and Hanhua was influenced directly by Western explorers’ fieldwork in China.

2.2.1 Huahua in early Chinese Context

As mentioned above, Huahua was used by Chen Yuan in his famous 1923 book, *Yuan Xiyuren Huahua kao* (元西域人华化考 *Research on the Sinicization of the People from Western Regions of Yuan Dynasty*),³² and it was also possibly the first appearance of Huahua. Before delving into the meaning of Huahua, it is important to point out that Hua 华 and Yi 夷 constitute the Chinese-barbarian dichotomy.³³ In his book, Chen Yuan does

³¹ Ping-ti Ho, "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.57, no.1 (Feb. 1998), p. 152; Chen Yuan, *Yuan Xiyuren Huahua kao* 元西域人华化考, Shanghai guji Press, 2000.

³² Chen Yuan, 2000, p. 3.

³³ Wang Ke 王珂, *Zhongguo, Cong tianxia dao minzu guojia* (中国, 从天下到民族国家, *China, From All under Heaven to Nation State*), Taipei: Zhengda chubanshe, 2014, pp. 27–52. Although “Yi 夷” was often recongnized as foreigners or aliens instead of barbarians, the term “Yi” did bear the implication that the Yi people was less civilized comparing to the Hua people according to Wang’s analysis.

not give a clear definition of Huahua but only states that “as for the meaning of Huahua, its acquisition is judged by whether it may eventually be acquired, and if only Chinese have it. (至于华化之意义，则以后天所获，华人所独为断)”³⁴ Here, Chen discusses the content of Huahua; in other words, what people should learn from Chinese to be able to be considered as being Sinicized (Huahua). For Chen Yuan, the answer was Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, Chinese literature, art, rituals, customs, and female education.³⁵ Then, what was the ultimate goal of Huahua? Chen did not present a clear answer, but he revealed some ideas about it in his writing. In his discussion about why he chose to study the people of the Western Regions instead of the Khitan, Jurchen or others, he says,

Since the issue discussed in this volume is limited to the Western Region of the Yuan dynasty, therefore, Mongolians, Khitans and Jurchens are not included here. It is also because the Mongolians and so on were culturally naïve, and therefore their assimilation by Chinese was by no means surprising. As for countries like Japan, Korea, the Ryukyus, and Annam, they long ago adopted Sinitic written language and institutions, and therefore, their “Huahua” was also not surprising at all.

本編所论，既限于元西域，故蒙古、契丹、女直诸族不与，亦以蒙古等文化幼稚，其同化华族不奇，若日本、高丽、琉球、安南诸邦，则又袭用华人文字制度已久，其华化亦不奇。³⁶

Based on this statement, it is clear that Chen’s “Huahua” means “assimilated by Chinese (tonghua Huazu 同化华族).” In other words, by learning any one or any

³⁴ Chen Yuan, 2000, p. 3.

³⁵ Besides the practical knowledge, here the female’s education also includes the wifely submissions and virtues.

³⁶ Chen Yuan, 2000, p. 2.

combination of those unique Chinese cultural practices listed above, any people can be, and will be, “assimilated” by Chinese. In another place in Chen’s book, he also tries to differentiate “Huahua” from “*guihua* (归化, submission)” and “*Huaxue* (华学, learning from Chinese).” He says,

And there are peoples in the Western Regions who have long been living in the Han habitations and submitted to China, yet from the aspect of Chinese culture nothing special about them could be commemorated. For example, in the geography section of *The Book of Han*, there is a prefecture named Qiuci State. Yan Shigu 颜师古 commented, “because people from the Qiuci State who submitted to China dwelled here, so the place was named after it.”……Similar cases are numerous; from these we understand that the submissions of people from the Western Regions to China have been common ever since ancient times. Because they made no contributions to Chinese culture, nothing much about them was worth recording. And there are those who excel at Chinese language and have learned widely about Chinese classics, such as the Western Region monks in *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, who translated sutras; and Jesuit priests during the end of Ming and early Qing. Instead of “assimilating to Chinese” (Huahua 华化), we should call them “learning from Chinese” (*Huaxue* 华学).

又有西域人久居汉地，归化中国，然不能于汉族文化中有特别可纪，如《汉书·地理志》上郡有龟兹国。师古曰：“龟兹国人来降附者，处之于此，故以名云。”……凡此种种，可见西域人归化中国之事，古所恒有，特其人不能于中国文化有所表见，亦无足述。又有娴习华言，博综汉典，如《高僧传》中之西域翻经沙门，及明末清初之耶稣会士，可以谓之华学矣，然不得谓之华化。³⁷

According to Chen Yuan, Hanhua was not equal to *guihua* because those people who submitted to Chinese rule had not necessarily learned Chinese cultural practices, nor did they make any contribution to Chinese culture. As for those Buddhist monks from the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

Western Regions and Jesuit missionaries in China, although they had learned the Chinese language and classics, they were not Sinicized (Huahua), because they still insisted on their own religion and did not practice those learned from China.

In his first chapters, Chen Yuan also supplies three examples from pre-Yuan to show the implication of Huahua. One of the three people, Pu Shoucheng 蒲寿晟, was a Song official with a great reputation, recorded in a gazetteer. Chen emphasizes, however, that being an important Song official did not mean that Pu was assimilated (Hanhua), and Pu was included in the book only because he was a very good Chinese poet.

As for the reason why Huahua was true for the people from the Western Regions, Chen Yuan states,

The peoples of the Western Regions were, on the one hand, extensively influenced by Indian, Jewish, Greek and Arabic civilizations; on the other hand, they watched one slice of Chinese civilization (this refers to the Qara Khitan/Western Liao), no wonder they strongly desired to be personally on the scene. The Yuan army first unified the Western Regions, then conquered the Central Plain. Among the people of the Western Region, soldiers, captured personnel, and traders all flooded into the Central Plain. The constitution and civilization that they always wished to experience suddenly were unfolded before their eyes. Besides, in the Yuan dynasty, the Semu people were allowed to live freely among other people. Therefore, the constitution and civilization were spread through generations. As a result, many of the people from the Western Regions liked and believed ancient Chinese classics, *the Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites* and *the Book of Music*. The purpose of this volume is precisely to commemorate such a flourishing golden age.

西域人既杂受印度、犹太、波斯、希腊、亚刺伯诸国之文明，复曾睹中国文明之一线（此处此黑石契丹/西辽），其渴望身亲见之情可想也。元军先定西域，后下中原，西域人之从军者、被虏

者、贸易者，接踵而至，平昔所想望之声明文物，尽触于目前，元制色目人又自由杂居，故一传再传，遂多敦诗书而说礼乐。兹编之作，正所以著其盛也。³⁸

According to Chen, the Western Regions people came to China, learned Chinese culture and participated in Chinese cultural performances mainly because they admired Chinese civilization, and the Mongol conquest created the possibility of travel for them.

Meanwhile, as mentioned above, when Chen discussed the reason he chose not to study the Mongols, Khitan and Jurchen, saying that their assimilation (Huahua) by the Chinese was because their civilizations were primitive (*youzhi* 幼稚), which is different from why Western Region people were assimilated. Both reasons, however, imply the sophistication of “Hua” culture.

Therefore, the definition of Huahua in the context of Chen Yuan’s book was that people who admired Chinese culture had been assimilated by coming to China, learning the language, performing some type of Chinese cultural practices, and even making some contributions to Chinese culture. They then can be considered as “Hua (华 Chinese).”

Because of these circumstances, most of the people discussed in Chen’s book were Yuan officials and well educated. After excluding the six females in the book who could not be officials in the Yuan government, of the other 127 people described by Chen Yuan,³⁹ 78

³⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

³⁹ There are 168 cases discussed in *Yuan Xiyuren Huahua kao* under 6 different topics. 30 in the Confucianism chapter, 8 in the Buddhism and Daoism chapter, 51 in literature chapter, 32 in art chapter, 41 in ritual and custom chapter, and 6 in female education chapter. After taking away the people discussed in other chapter, there are 138 people in total. There are 5 people included by mistake, so Chen Yuan actually has discussed 133 people in his book. In the conclusion, Chen Yuan has given the numbers, but there is a minor mistake. See Chen Yuan, 2000, p. 132. About the 5 people mistakenly included, see Hsiao Ch’i-Ch’ing, *Nei beiguo er wai Zhongguo* 内北国而外中国, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007, p. 579.

(61.4%) were Yuan officials, and 55 (43.3%) belonged to families having held high official positions for generations. In other words, the lofty requirement of Chen's Huahua set limitations on the people who could be considered as being assimilated (Huahua) by the Chinese. The limitations not only were on the number of people but also on their social status and family background.

In his famous rebuttal to Evelyn Rawski's address, Ping-ti Ho implied a possible connection between the "Sinicization" or "Absorption" theory in French Sinology and the early usage of "Huahua 华化" by Chen Yuan. Ho said that he suspected that "it was under Pelliot's inspiration that Ch'en Yüan, president of the leading Catholic Fujen Univeristy, who was in close touch with French sinology with the help of research assistants, published his famous study of the Sinicization of Western and Central Asians during Mongol times in 1935."⁴⁰ Considering the influence and popularity of French Sinology during the early Republican era in China, Chen Yuan's interest in Central Asian people during Mongol times might have been from following the research of European Sinology, especially French Sinology.

The strong influence of French Sinology during that time also can be found in other records. For example, Fu Sinian 傅斯年 claimed that the center of Sinology during that period was in Paris, and he wanted to bring the center back to China by building the Institute of History and Philology at the Academia Sinica. Chen Yuan also mentioned this concept. Another famous scholar, Chen Yinke, also emphasized the influence of Paul

⁴⁰ Ping-ti Ho, 1998, p. 150.

Pelliot on his own research.⁴¹ Ideas on Chen Yuan's definition of Huahua, however, cannot be found in contemporary French Sinology, especially Paul Pelliot's work. So Chen Yuan's concept of "Huahua 华化" in his academic writing appears to have arisen from his own thinking based on textual sources and social background, which will be discussed below.

2.2.2 Hanhua in Early Chinese Context

As for Hanhua, possibly the earliest two cases were related directly to the Western explorers' fieldwork in Southwest China. Before coming to the context of its usage, it is necessary to point out that although the term Han refers to the largest nationality known as Han Chinese in modern China, Han had different implications in diverse periods in Chinese history. For example, in the Jin Dynasty, the Jurchen rulers called the former Liao people who were under their rule as Hanren 汉人 or Yanren 燕人 (People of the Yan [region]), but called the former Northern Song people inside Jin territory as Nanren 南人.⁴² Therefore caution should be used when applying the term Hanhua in different dynasties.

⁴¹ Sang Bing, "Boxihe yu Zhongguo jindai xueshu jie 伯希和与中国近代学术界," *Lishi yanjiu* (1997), 5, pp. 115–135. Jiang Tianshu, *Chen Yinke xiansheng biannian shiji* 陈寅恪先生编年事辑, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997, p. 50.

⁴² Shao-yun Yang, "Fan and Han: The Origins and Uses of a Conceptual Dichotomy in Mid-Imperial China, ca. 500–1200," in *Political Strategies of Identity Building in Non-Han Empires in China*, ed. by Francesca Fiaschetti and Julia Schneider, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2014, pp. 9–36; Mark Elliot, "Hushuo: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese," in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. by Thomas S. Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros and Eric Vanden Bussche, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, pp. 173–190.

The earliest possible instances of using Hanhua appear in *Shun Pao* 申報, an influential newspaper founded in 1872. The term was used to describe the Western explorers' fieldwork in southwest China. In an article titled "Hanzu yu feihanzu (汉族与非汉族, Han Ethnic group and Non-Han Ethnic groups)" published in 1923, it reads,

Westerners who traveled to the borderland of Dian (Yunnan) and Shu (Sichuan) returned and wrote books. In their books, they talked about the diversity of the ethnicity of these areas. While most ethnic groups were assimilated by Chinese, Tibetans were the hardest to assimilate. Not only were they exceptional in not changing with Han influence, but moreover, Chinese who entered Tibet had to follow their customs; only then could they remain peacefully. On one hand, it is because Tibetans have a tough personality; on the other hand, it is because of the power of religion. Because Tibetans commonly believed in Buddhism, it was easier for them to be Sinicized than for them to be Europeanized. If the Republic of China could finally be revitalized, there was no reason to worry about them turning to "others."

西人游滇蜀邊地者，歸而著書，言其地人種紛歧，而皆受漢族之同化力，其最難同化者，則為藏人，不特不從漢人之化，且漢人入藏地者必從其地之俗，乃可相安。此雖由吐蕃之族較強悍而亦由宗教之力，但西藏同為佛教，使之漢化尚易，而使之歐化則更難，民國果能振作，亦不患其他向也。⁴³

Both "Hanhua" and "tonghua" (assimilation) appear in this article, and it is clear that Hanhua here meant assimilation by the Han people through following Han customs. The author also stated that these points about Hanhua came from "Xiren" (西人), or Westerners).

⁴³ Laopu 老圃, "Hanzu yu feihanzu (part third)," in *Shun Pao*, March 27th, 1923, no.17988, p. 20.

In addition, there are other cases with similar contexts. One is from the contemporary United States ambassador's speech after he travelled in southwestern China.⁴⁴ The similarity between these cases is that they are about the relationship between Han and other ethnic groups in Southwestern China, namely the Chinese borderland, and the customs are considered as the most important ethnic characteristic. Here, the customs included the clothes, diet, housing and family structure in the case of the Miao ethnic group.⁴⁵ This context of Hanhua was close to Berthold Laufer's usage of "Sinicized" in his article about the Lolo people, also in southwestern China.⁴⁶ Based on the connection with the Western explorers in the earliest cases, one may conclude that the concept of Hanhua in its early context was borrowed directly from the West; particularly from the Western anthropologists who did fieldwork in southwest China, such as Laufer. As mentioned above, Laufer's use of "Sinicized" started to connect to the concept of ethnicity in anthropology and ethnology, and this might have been projected into the intellectual world of the Republic of China.

2.3 Huahua and Hanhua in Constructing a National History of the Chinese Nationality (Zhonghua minzu 中华民族)

⁴⁴ "Mei gongshi youli xinan zhi ganxiang 美公使游历西南之感想," in *Shun Pao*, Jan. 21st, 1924, no.18286, p. 7; Liu Xiang 刘骧, *Miaozu zhuangkuang de gailue 苗族状况的概略*, in *Jingbao fukan 京报副刊*, 1924, no.17, pp. 3-4; Cheng Zhi 成志, *Minsu 民俗*, no.67, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Liu Xiang, 1924, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁶ Berthold Laufer, 1917, p. 417.

With the weakening of the Qing regime in its late period, there were two different ideas about how to rebuild the Chinese state. One of them was espoused by the revolutionaries, such as Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, Zou Rong 邹容 and Liu Shiwei 刘师培. They wanted to construct Han nationalism in China. These revolutionaries considered the Manchu rulers to be barbaric invaders riding roughshod over the Han Chinese, so their regime needed to be overthrown.⁴⁷ They still believed, however, that the Manchu had already been assimilated already by the Chinese. For instance, Zhang Taiyan said:

Some may say if so then the Manchus are also minorities, and have already been slightly assimilated to us; why cannot they be considered the same as the Chinese. I answer: the reason that the assimilation of different nations is acceptable is because sovereignty is on our side and enables us to absorb them. The assimilation of the Manchu is not achieved by our pacifying and ruling, but because of their humiliating and overthrowing us. These two ways cannot be compared. It is like the example of marriage and plunder. If a woman is sent to us through marriage, then she will be assimilated by us; if they occupy our palace and beds through plundering, they also could be assimilated by us. It is absolutely clear, however, who is the enemy and who is a relative. I used to say the reason that we should drive the Manchus out is also because they overthrew our country and took away our sovereignty. If we defeated the enemy, and the Manchu Khan left Wanping and went to Huanglong Prefecture, then we can accept their submission and assimilation, and consider them the same as the Japanese and Thai people. Before our sovereignty was recovered, however, it could not be used as an example.

或曰若如是則滿洲人亦居少數，而已稍稍同化於我矣，奚不可與同中國，爲荅曰，所以容異族之同化者，以其主權在我，而足以翕受彼也，滿洲之同化，非以受我撫治而得之，乃以陵轢顛覆我而得之，二者之不可相比。猶婚媾與寇之例，以婚媾之道而歸女於吾族，彼女則固與吾族同化矣，以寇之道而據我寢宮入我牀

⁴⁷ Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Hewei Zhongguo: jiangyu minzu wenhua yu lishi* 何为中国: 疆域民族文化与历史, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 78–79.

第，亦未嘗不可與我同化，然其爲怨爲親，斷可識也，吾向者固云所爲排滿洲者，亦曰覆我國家，攘我主權之故，若其克敵致果，而滿洲之汗大去宛平以適黃龍之府，則固當與日本暹羅同視種人順化歸斯受之而已矣，然主權未復即不得舉是爲例。⁴⁸

What Zhang emphasized was that the initiative of assimilation was more important than cultural assimilation itself. The sovereignty of the Han nation should have the power to control the process of assimilation. Even if the Manchu people had been assimilated culturally by the Chinese, they still should not have been treated as Chinese (Zhongguo 中国). Therefore, the Han Chinese could not accept them as rulers. This point of view was against the culturalism in classic Chinese thought. Joseph R. Levenson pointed out that “the civilization, not the nation, has a moral claim on man’s allegiance” in classic Chinese doctrine.⁴⁹ In other words, as Hao Jing 郝经 (1223–1275) from the Yuan Dynasty had said, “Those who can carry out the *dao* of China (Zhongguo 中国), are the rulers of China.” (能行中国之道，则中国主也)⁵⁰ From the revolutionaries’ perspective, however, this was even worse that those “barbaric” rulers who carried out the Chinese way, as Liu Shupeì said,

Alas, when barbarians entered our China, they occupied our earth, mountains and rivers, stole our young men, women and property. They borrowed for a long time and never returned, without realizing that these were not their belongings. How pathetic. The most pathetic of all

⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, *Taiyanwenji* 太炎文錄, vol. 1, in *bielu* section, Minguo Zhangshi congshu edition 民國章氏叢書本.

⁴⁹ Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965, p. 102.

⁵⁰ Hao Jing 郝经, “Yu Songguo chengxiang lun benchao bingluan shu 与宋国丞相论本朝兵乱书,” in *Lingchuan wenji* 陵川文集, vol. 38, pp. 6 (upper section) -11(lower section), (Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan edition 北京图书馆古籍珍本丛刊).

was that they stole the wisest doctrine of our deceased emperors. Alas, the ethics and rites of barbarians were different from that of the central mainland. Their construction of ritual codes and production of music were, in fact the source of their weakness. Their abandonment of the barbarian customs and adherence to Chinese culture did not prove that they truly respected the doctrine of the sages. It was only a way of using Chinese law to deal with the Chinese land. They did this under the name of defending the doctrine (*dao*) ---- who on earth were they deceiving?

嗟乎，夷狄之入我中國也，據其土地山河，竊其子女玉帛，久假不歸，烏知非有，已可悲矣，其尤甚者，至並竊先王之至道。嗚呼，夷裔禮教與中土殊，制禮作樂實為衰弱之源，其舍夷從夏者，豈真知聖道之尊哉，不過以漢土之法還治漢土耳。於此而託名衛道則吾誰欺。⁵¹

Because those foreign rulers really did not understand the Chinese way, they just used Chinese methods to manipulate the Han Chinese people.

Toward the end of the Qing dynasty, the more urgent task became how to reunite all the people who formerly had been under the rule of the Qing government. Besides the political thought of the Chinese republic of five races (*wuzu gonghe* 五族共和, the five races include Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan), historical research also reflects this political necessity.⁵² In 1910, Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) published an article “Zhongguoshi xulun (中国史叙论 [Discussion of Chinese History])” about how researchers should deal with Chinese history. In the fifth section, on “race”

⁵¹ Liu Shupe, “Yudao pian 鬻道篇,” in *Rangshu* 攘書 (Minguo Liushenchu xiansheng yishu edition 民國《劉申叔先生遺書》本).

⁵² Ge Zhaoguang, 2014, p. 78; Wang Ke, 2014, pp. 215–222.

(renzhong 人种),⁵³ he states that there are more than ten races in Chinese history. Six races are the most obvious and relevant ones; the Miao 苗, Han 汉, Tibetan 图伯特, Mongolian 蒙古, Xiongnu 匈奴 and Tungus 通古斯 peoples.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Liang emphasizes that even though he has listed six races, it still was very hard to distinguish one from the other. He says,

Different races and nations, however, were generated separately. Their population was amazingly great. Moreover, their mixed inhabitation has a long history. They intermarried with each other. Their ancestry also mingled together. Nowadays, if we intend to divide the boundary between some races or nations, it is not easy. Not to mention, the nomadic people who constantly migrated followed no customary pattern. If we, as people who live thousands of years after, try to identify the nomadic nations recorded in history with today's nations one by one, it is either a silly deed or an absurd fallacy. Therefore, nowadays people use six nations to describe all the peoples who appeared in Chinese history, which cannot avoid the criticism for being arbitrary and carelessly omissive.

然則各種各族, 各自發生, 其數之多, 殆不可思議。且也錯居既久, 婚姻互通, 血統相雜。今欲確指某族某種之分界線, 其事蓋不易易。況遊牧民族, 遷徙無常, 立於數千年之後, 而指前者發現於歷史上之民族, 一一求今之民族以實之, 非愚則誣。故今日以六種族包括中國史內之人民, 誠不免武斷掛漏之譏。⁵⁵

From this point, if the bloodlines of all these different races already had been mixed during the long history of China, the so-called Han race should not be accentuated

⁵³ Here, based on the context, renzhong 人种 should be translated as to race. In the beginning of the renzhong section, Liang Qichao says that Western scholars divided the world population into five, three or seven kinds, which is not the ethnicity but race. Liang Qichao 梁启超, "Zhongguoshi xulun 中国史叙论," in *Yinbingshi heji* 饮冰室合集, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988, vol.6, pp. 5-7.

⁵⁴ Liang Qichao 梁启超, 1988, pp. 5-7.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

since “even our Han race, was actually from the same ancestor? Or just arose separately? This is also an undecidable question. (即吾漢族, 果同出於一祖乎, 抑各自發生乎, 亦一未能斷定之問題也).”⁵⁶ Therefore, all these different peoples that Liang listed should be treated within Chinese history, as their own history was also a part of Chinese history. For this purpose, since the late 1920s, Huahua and Hanhua were adopted widely in the field of Chinese history but with a different context from the earliest ones discussed above.

After the early appearance of Huahua and Hanhua, other scholars repeatedly used both terms. Huahua still was employed mainly for research on the people from the Western Regions in different dynasties. Such publications included: *Tangdai Huahua Fanhu kao* 唐代华化蕃胡考 by Feng Chengjun 冯承钧 first published in 1929; *Tangdai Chang'an yu Xiyu wenming* 唐代长安与西域文明 by Xiang Da 向达 first published in 1933; and *Suitang Xiyuren Huahua kao* 隋唐西域人华化考 edited by He Jianmin 何健民 and including Kuwabara Jitsuzou's 桑原隲藏 and Feng Chengjun's articles published in 1936.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Hanhua mainly was used for the Inner Asian groups who built regimes in Northern China, such as those described in *Nüzhen Hanhua kaolue* 女真汉化考略 by Song Wenbing 宋文炳 first published in 1934 and *Liaoren Hanhua kao* 辽人汉

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Feng Chengjun 冯承钧, “Tangdai Huahua Fanhu kao 唐代华化蕃胡考,” in *Suitang shidai Xiyuren Huahua kao* 隋唐时代西域人华化考, edited by He Jianmin 何健民, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1939, pp. 127–171; Xiang Da 向达, *Tangdai Chang'an yu Xiyu wenming* 唐代长安与西域文明, Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001; *Suitang shidai Xiyuren Huahua kao* 隋唐时代西域人华化考, edited by He Jianmin 何健民, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1939.

化考 by Mao Wen 毛汶 in 1935.⁵⁸ It is also necessary to point out that in these works, both Hanhua and Huahua were used frequently and were interchangeable.⁵⁹

In Feng Chengjun's article, he begins his argument by stating that all the nationalities with a long history are “*zazhong* 杂种 (mixed/hybrid nation)” and so were the “*Hanzhong* 汉种.”⁶⁰ Apparently his point followed Liang Qichao's idea about the “*Hanzhong* 汉种.”⁶¹ Then, Feng gave his description and definition of Huahua. Unlike Chen Yuan, he did not emphasize the superiority of the unique Chinese culture, but the “Han nation (*Hanzhong* 汉种),” stating that:

Xianbei, which was discussed below [in this article], had already been Sinicized in the Tang dynasty. Except for a small number of people with the surnames from the north of Daizhou (代州), Xianbei people were in fact no different from other Tang people. From this aspect, the extent to which Yuan Zhen 元稹 was a Chinese was no less than today's so-called Han (汉) people. On the other hand, the differentiation between today's so called Manchu people and Han people could in fact be ignored. The Han ethnic group is like a vast ocean, while Xianbei, Turks, Khitan, Jurchen, Mongol, and Manchu are like streams. Since all these rivers run into the sea, how can we distinguish between river water and sea water?

[本文]此后所述之鲜卑，在唐时已早华化，除其少数代北姓氏之外，实与唐人无殊。就此点言，元稹之汉人程度，不能少于今日所谓汉人，而今日所谓满人与汉人，相差之程度，亦无几矣。汉

⁵⁸ Song Wenbing 宋文炳, “Nüzhen Hanhua kaolue 女真汉化考略,” in *Suitang shidai Xiyuren Huahua kao* 隋唐时代西域人华化考, edited by He Jianmin 何健民, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1939, pp. 172–194; Mao Wen 毛汶, “Liaoren Hanhua kao 辽人汉化考,” in *Guoxue lunheng* 国学论衡, 1935, vol.6, pp. 23–43.

⁵⁹ The term Hanhua also has been used a few times in Chen Yuan's book.

⁶⁰ Here, although Feng uses the “*zhong* 种” similar to Liang Qichao's “*renzhong* 人种,” in Feng's context, the “*zhong*” is closer to nation or ethnicity; the people who share the same “*zhong*” also share history and culture in Feng's writing. So I use “nation” to translate Feng's *zhong*.

⁶¹ Feng Chengjun, 1939, p. 134.

种犹之大海，鲜卑、突厥、契丹、女真、蒙古、满洲皆如川流，诸川入海，尚有何川水海水之可辨耶。⁶²

Feng's description of "Huahua" here accentuated the superiority of the "Han nation," which absorbed all the other small ethnic groups as an ocean absorbs all the small rivers and makes them indistinguishable inside the ocean. It is more or less like the "absorption theory" in French Sinology mentioned above, and this type of description appeared in later Chinese historical writing again and again. As for Feng's definition of Huahua, he also talked about the cultural practice as Chen Yuan had done, but he did not establish such high requirements as Chen. He said, "when the ancient people in our country judged if a person was Hua or Yi, it was decided based on whether this person practiced rituals and possessed moral codes."⁶³ And for the Tang Dynasty, he stated, "as for the characteristics of Han people in the Tang Dynasty, it is not about the blood relationship, but ethnic characteristics. People who share ethnic characteristics are Han even though they are of different races. People who don't share ethnic characteristics are considered as Yi and Di even if they are Han."⁶⁴ Here the common ethnic characteristics (zhongxing 种性), means "commonality of thoughts, emotions and interests," and the chief ethnic characteristics of Han Chinese are "loyalty and filial piety,"⁶⁵ which, according to Feng, were considered to be the foundation of Chinese society. Therefore, for Feng, the requirement of Hanhua was not as high as Chen, but they still shared part of

⁶² Ibid., p.132.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 135. The Chinese is "吾国古人视人之是否华夷，即以其人有无礼仪科条为断。"

⁶⁴ Ibid. The Chinese is "唐代汉人之特征，不在血统，而在种性。同种性者，虽异种亦为汉人，不同种性者，虽汉人亦视同夷狄。"

⁶⁵ Ibid. The Chinese is "思想感情利害相同诸点也" and "汉种之种性，可以忠孝二字概之。"

the definition. Feng emphasized the “code of ritual and ethics (礼仪科条),” but for Chen Yuan, the code of ethics was not unique to Chinese people; so he stressed the significance of those special cultural practices by Chinese people including ritual, Chinese literature, art, religion and so forth.

While Feng focused on the “Hanhua” of the commoners of the non-Sinitic groups in Chinese history, similar arguments have been made for the ruling classes during the Khitan Liao and Jurchen Jin Dynasties. In Song Wenbing’s article dealing with the “Hanhua” of the Jurchens, he first stated the reason for Hanhua,

From ancient times to the present, there has been a natural law for two or more than two nations to assimilate each other. The minority were assimilated by the majority. The ones with relatively low culture were assimilated by the ones with relatively high culture. Such has become the general rule of social evolution. The population of Jurchen was much less than that of the Song people, and they were more uncivilized than the Song people. Therefore, the former was assimilated by the latter with a higher culture. Such has become a convention in social evolution and seldom are there exceptions.

自来两民族或两民族以上诸民族，於互相同化之进程中均有自然之规律，少数民族被化於多数，较低文化见化於较高者，已为社会演进之公例。女真人口，远逊於宋，而野蛮之程度则反较宋为优；故其见化於较高者，已为社会演进中之一剧，自难例外。⁶⁶

According to Song, it was natural law in the social evolution/development that a minority will be assimilated by a majority, and people with low culture will be assimilated by those with high culture. Therefore, it was unavoidable that the Jurchen were assimilated

⁶⁶ Song Wenbing, 1939, p. 173.

by the people of Song. The Hanhua discussed by Song Wenbing includes the institutions, customs, literature and other aspects of civilization.

By directly adopting the term Hanhua into the argument about the Jurchen, however, this term cannot fit fully in the context of the Jin Dynasty. First, the Jurchen in the Jin Dynasty were the ruling class; even though they were a minority, their social rank should have had an impact on the Hanhua. In Song Wenbing's argument, he even compares the population of the Jurchen to the Song, and it is unclear if the Song refers to the Southern Song population or original Northern Song population. Certainly, different populations in two different states did not mean necessarily that the one with the larger population would assimilate the other since these were two separate states with different regimes.

Meanwhile, as mentioned above, the term "Han" had different meanings during different periods. When Song Wenbing used "Hanhua," the "Han" he was referring to would have been the concept of the Han nation in the Republic era. It is anachronistic, however, to use "Hanhua" for the Jurchen of the Jin Dynasty. These problems also can be found in other researchers' discussions of the Hanhua of other dynasties, such as the Liao Dynasty.

The content of Hanhua in Mao Wen's article about the Hanhua of the Khitan people in the Liao Dynasty is similar to Song Wenbing's. He argues this topic from four aspects—the Hanhua of the emperors, imperial concubines, other Khitan clans and the Liao institutions. So in his argument, Hanhua included respecting Confucianism,

appointing Han officials/literati, studying Confucian classics, learning and speaking Chinese, creating language, building cities, marrying Han people, using the Han political system, wearing Han style clothes, applying Han law, and so forth. By stating these facts, he concluded that “in the Liao Dynasty, emperors, empresses and imperial concubines, officials and commoners, decrees, regulations and institutions, all of them had attained Hanhua.”⁶⁷ In the discussion at the end of his article, Mao said,

The Chinese nation is, in fact, a flexible colossus. After the Han people and Liao people came into contact with each other, the Liao people were assimilated by the Han like iron being melted by a furnace. This is for certain, but the fact that the fire in the furnace also has changed constantly should be remembered. Moreover, the Liao people rose from the North, and the nations in the northwest and northeast all were dominated by them. Their Hanhua also made Chinese civilization spread to the nations in the northwest and northeast.

中华民族实一具有弹性之庞大物也。汉辽接触而后，辽化於汉，如铁入炉。斯固然已，特炉中之焰，亦复时生变化为可念耳。⁶⁸矧辽人起自朔方，东北西北诸国族，彼实尽之。彼其汉化，亦所以传播华夏文明於东北西北诸民族也。⁶⁹

Mao's metaphor compared the Han to a furnace. To some extent, this is similar to Feng Chengjun's comparison of the Han nation to an ocean and other ethnic groups to the rivers. The concept of Chinese Nationality (Zhonghua minzu 中华民族) in this quotation, however, makes Mao's argument slightly different from Feng Chengjun's. The Han nation in Feng's context kept absorbing other ethnic groups without changing itself. In

⁶⁷ Mao Wen, 1935, pp. 23–43. The Chinese is “有辽一代，帝王后妃，臣工黎庶，典章制度，无不汉化。”

⁶⁸ Fire in the furnace refers to Han civilization, and here Mao gives an example that Buddhism was introduced to the Liao from Han territory, which is a kind of transformed “fire.”

⁶⁹ Mao Wen, 1935, pp. 23–43.

Mao's context, however, during the course of Chinese history, the so-called "Chinese Nationality" had absorbed all the other ethnic groups around China by melting them into China. This made them indistinguishable so they became part of the Chinese Nationality; and unlike the Han, the "Chinese Nationality" itself also had changed from time to time. Mao also made a further statement that "Chinese civilization (Huaxia wenming 华夏文明)" had been transmitted to the ethnic groups in northwest and northeast China through the Hanhua of the Khitan people.

2.4 Nationalism behind the Huahua and Hanhua Theory

One important reason that Evelyn S. Rawski rejected the Sinicization theory was that she considered it a "Han nationalist interpretation of China's past."⁷⁰ This point can be justified to some degree since some hint of nationalist influence can be found in the early usages of Hanhua and Huahua.

As discussed above, famous Chinese historians, such as Chen Yuan and Fu Sinian, felt a sense of competition with the European Sinologists and tried to bring the "center of Sinology" back to China. Moreover, when Chen Yuan wrote his book about the Huahua of the people from Western Regions during the Yuan Dynasty, he also emphasized the superiority of Chinese culture by admiring which Chinese cultural practices those people chose to learn. Chen also stated that "this book was written during the time when the

⁷⁰ Evelyn S. Rawski, "Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no. 4 (Nov. 1996), 842.

Chinese were despised the most, and when people advocated complete westernization, I, therefore wrote a book like this.”⁷¹ So by arguing for the assimilation of the people from the west by the superior and admirable Chinese culture, Chen tried to make the readers proud of being Chinese and of their own culture. This is precisely the reason he used Huahua instead of Hanhua in his book and chose people from the Western Regions instead of Northern zone for his subject matter.

As for the early cases of using Hanhua, anxieties over losing the borderlands of the Republic of China can be found in many places. In one of the earliest examples, the Hanhua of Tibet are discussed because the author worried that Tibet might be Europeanized (Ouhua 欧化) and seek support from Europe. So the author wanted the Republic of China to become more powerful and have more influence on Tibet by way of Hanhua.⁷² This idea was the same as Sun Yat-sen’s interpretation of nationalism in the Three People’s Principles (sanmin zhuyi 三民主义) in early 1920s.⁷³ Meanwhile, in a 1935 article, Mao Wen argued that the Khitan people had become an indistinguishable part of “Chinese Nationality.” He emphasized that Chinese civilization had been transmitted to northwest and northeast China by the Khitan people. Therefore, in the end of the article, he claimed,

Who says that the Northeastern people would finally end up as barbarians? Among the descendants of Jishou,⁷⁴ there were those who

⁷¹ Chen Yuan, 2000, p. 5. The Chinese is “此书著于中国被人最看不起之时，又值有人主张全盘西化之日，故其言如此。”

⁷² Laopu, 1923, p. 20.

⁷³ Wang Ke, 2014, p. 226.

⁷⁴ Jishou is ancestor of the Khitan people according to *Liaoshi. Liaoshi*, juan 32, 378.

revitalized in different eras. We need only to rub our eyes and wait for them.

谁谓东北民族，其终沦於夷狄乎。奇首后裔，间有异代而兴者，谨拭目以待之可耳。⁷⁵

From this statement, it is clear that what really concerns Mao Wen is that northeastern China, which was occupied and controlled by the Japanese at that time, might be lost to the barbarians (Yidi 夷狄). By arguing that the ancestor of the Northeastern ethnic groups was the Khitan people who already had become part of the Chinese Nationality, their descendants along with their territory should also be part of China and no longer controlled by the Japanese.

With the gradually more severe threat of the Japanese against China in the 1930s, and in response to Japanese politicians and scholars theory of “preserving China” or “carving up China,”⁷⁶ the unity of “Chinese Nationality (Zhonghua minzu 中华民族)” was more and more accentuated. The construction of a history for Chinese Nationality became significant and urgent.⁷⁷

In 1931, after the Mukden Incident on September 18, the government of the Republic of China made a course in the General History of China mandatory for college

⁷⁵ Mao Wen, 1935, p. 43.

⁷⁶ The Japanese thinkers claim that as the leader of East Asia, they have the responsibility to protect East Asians from the Western states. Either “preserving China” or “carving up China” would need the help of the Japanese, which would involve military occupation and “supporting” the local ethnic groups to build “their own” nation-state, such as the Manchukuo state. Ge Zhaoguang, 2014, pp. 82–84.

⁷⁷ Before the Japanese threat becoming more serious, there were other ideas of dealing with the different ethnic groups inside China and in Chinese history. Ge Zhaoguang, 2014, pp. 91–97.

students.⁷⁸ With the beginning of the full-scale invasion of China by the Japanese was marked by the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July of 1937, Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚 published an article titled “The Chinese Nation is one (Zhonghua minzu shi yige 中华民族是一个),” which was supported by many Chinese scholars.⁷⁹ In this article, he began with the statement of “All the people of Chinese belong to the Chinese Nation --- within the Chinese Nation we should no longer differentiate any other nationalities --- from now on everybody should exercise caution on using these two characters: *minzu* (民族, nationality).”⁸⁰ Then he continued to argue that all the different cultures inside China were the culture of “Chinese Nationality,” and so were the people inside China.⁸¹ By means of this theory, Gu wished to unite all the people inside China to fight against the Japanese. During this time, several works regarding general Chinese history and ethnic history also were published; one of the most famous was the *Outline of National History* (Guoshi dagang, 国史大纲) finished in 1939 and published in 1940 by Qian Mu 钱穆.

Although Qian’s book was a general history about China, the Inner Asian peoples did not play an important role in his book. For example, he only spent one chapter on the Liao and Jin Dynasties, and their relationship with the Song, but three chapters on the

⁷⁸ Li Mumiao 李木妙, *Guoshi dashi Qian Mu jiaoshou zhuanlue* 国史大师钱穆教授传略, Yangzhi wenhua press, 1995, p. 77.

⁷⁹ Zhou Wenjiu 周文玖, “Cong yige dao duoyuan yiti: guanyu Zhongguo minzu lilun fazhan de shixueshi kaocha (从一个到多元一体: 关于中国民族理论发展的史学史考察),” in *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, 2007, vol. 44, no.4, pp. 102–110; Ge Zaoguang, 2014, pp. 104–109.

⁸⁰ Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚, “Zhonghua minzu shi yige 中华民族是一个,” in *Kunming: Shiyi bao* 世益报, Feb. 13, 1939. The Chinese is “凡是中国人都是中华民族——在中华民族之内我们绝不该再析出什么民族——从今以后大家应当留神使用这民族二字。”

⁸¹ Ibid.

Song Dynasty. For the Inner Asian peoples in the *Outline of National History*, for instance, when he discussed the Northern Dynasties, he said,

At the time, China invited the barbaric groups of five Hu people into the heartland. Since then, these barbarian groups have been influenced by Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, although these people seized the opportunity to revolt, they already had been sharing the same powerful current of culture with the Chinese. Such a powerful current of culture irrigated the vitality of their life, and thus permeated their life. The division, upsurge, alternation and revitalization of these barbarians were affairs that only equaled the fluctuation inside Chinese society itself.

当时五胡诸蛮族,中国延之入内地者,自始即与以中国传统文化之熏陶,故彼辈虽乘机骚动,而彼辈固已同饮此文化之洪流,以浇灌其生机,而浸润其生命。彼辈之分起迭兴,其事乃仅等于中国社会内部自身之一种波动。⁸²

So the argument is that those Inner Asian groups were “nurtured” by Chinese traditional culture and are included into the Chinese Nationality through the process of “Hanhua,” which Qian mentioned a number of times in his book. Without giving a clear definition, the Hanhua in Qian’s context is similar to Mao Wen and Song Wenbing’s mentioned earlier. According to Qian Mu, the transformations inside and brought about by the Inner Asian peoples are all just fluctuations inside Chinese society, which is similar to Gu Jiegang’s argument.

2.5 Besides Nationalism, What Else?

⁸² Qian Mu 钱穆, *Guoshi dagang* (国史大纲), Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1991, p. 19.

From the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republican Era, the theoretical structure of the history of Chinese Nationality gradually was built. Later on, a number of scholars made adjustments to the interpretation of Chinese Nationality, but the base of this theoretical framework continues even into the 21st Century.⁸³ For example, instead of emphasizing the Han people, some scholars paid more attention to the elements brought by other people inside Chinese civilization. When Chen Yinke 陈寅恪 argues about the success of the Tang empire, he states that “With the barbarian blood of valor and vigor was injected into the decadent body of Central Plains culture, moribund conventions were removed and a new vitality was reborn. By developing and carrying forward [the new vitality], then [the Tang] was able to distinctively create an unprecedented prosperity.”⁸⁴ In this statement, the “Barbarian blood of valor and vigor” refers to the nomadic people and culture during the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties. In his research on this period, besides Hanhua, he also uses another term “Huhua (胡化 barbarianization)” to describe how the Han people in Northern China were affected by nomadic culture. Young-tsu Wong also put the Huhua together with Hanhua and Yanghua (洋化 foreignization) in his article discussing the multi-ethnic China. Later in Mainland China, the main theory about the Chinese Nationality is the “Plurality and

⁸³ See Chen Yinke, “Li Tang shizu zhi tuice houji” 李唐氏族之推測後記, *Jinming guan conggao erbian* 金明館叢稿二編, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980, p. 303; Young-tsu Wong 汪榮祖, *Lun duominzu Zhongguo de wenhua jiaorong* 论多民族中国的文化交融, in *Huren Hanhua yu Hanren huhua* 胡人汉化与汉人胡化, edited by Young-tsu Wong and Lin Guanqun 林冠群, Yijia: Guoli Zhongzheng daxue Taiwan renwen yanjiu zhongxin, 2006, pp. 1–40; Fei Xiaotong 费孝通, “*Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese People*,” The Tanner lectures on human values, delivered at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Nov.15 and 17, 1988. Chinese version of this lecture is in *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (中华民族多元一体格局), edited by Fei Xiaotong, Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 3–39; Yao Congwu 姚从吾, “Guoshi kuoda yanmian de yige kanfa (国史扩大延绵的一个看法),” in *Dongbei shi luncong* 东北史论丛, vol.1, Taipei: Zhongzheng shuju, 1959, pp. 1–26.

⁸⁴ Chen Yinke, 1980, p.303.

Unity (*duoyuan yiti* 多元一体)” theory by Fei Xiaotong 费孝通, who argues that plural nationalities (*minzu* 民族) form the unity of Chinese Nationality both in historical and modern China. Yao Congwu 姚从吾 also discusses the Chinese Nationality in the context of Chinese history. In an article regarding the expansion and continuity of Chinese history published in 1957, he mainly emphasizes the significance of Confucianism.⁸⁵ Yao went to Taiwan in 1949 where he continued his teaching and research. One of his students is Jing-shen Tao 陶晋生, who has done the research on the Sinicization of the Jurchen people in Jin Dynasty. In all these and earlier researches, the stable base of this theoretical framework of the Chinese Nationality includes that all the peoples inside China belong to Chinese Nationality; the hybrid Chinese Nationality is also a changing historical entity defined by different peoples from different dynasties. So the category of “Chinese Nationality” can unite (or eliminate differences between) all the historical and present peoples inside the Republic of China and People’s Republic of China to form an egalitarian identity as a member of “Chinese Nationality.” The Hanhua theory, in Mao Wen's, Song Wenbing's and Qian Mu’s contexts discussed above, has played a significant role in the formation of Chinese Nationality during the historical development. Subsequently, later scholars both in Mainland China and Taiwan continuously adopted Hanhua, some scholars attempting to assign it a more accurate and new interpretation based on different social theories.

When Yao Congwu described the expansion and continuity of Chinese history, he interpreted it as a process of the peoples from the borderland accepting the Confucianism

⁸⁵ Yao Congwu 姚从吾, 1959, pp. 1–26.

of the Central Plain.⁸⁶ He also accentuated the Great Harmony (datong 大同) of Confucianism in Chinese history. So Young-tsu Wong summarized the Hanhua in Yao's context as specifically referring to Confucianization (Ruhua 儒化).⁸⁷ Based on Yao's discussion about the Hanhua of the Khitan, Jurchen and Mongols in the Liao, Jin and Yuan Dynasties, however, the meaning of Hanhua was more than just Confucianization.⁸⁸ Ping-ti Ho's interpretation of "Sinicization" also was considered as Confucianization by some scholars⁸⁹ because he argued that the essential dynamic of Sinicization ultimately was derived from the "man-centered Sinitic religion with ancestor worship as its core," which was fundamentally different from the Western religions.⁹⁰ Ho also emphasized "the open-mindedness and large-heartedness of Chinese" as another reason for the success of Sinicization in ancient China.⁹¹ These two characteristics, however, should not be considered merely as Confucian ideology, and Ho himself actually differentiated between Confucianization and Sinicization in his writing.⁹²

After 1949, scholars from Mainland China tried to put Hanhua in the context of Marxism. They interpreted Hanhua with the Marxist theory about the stages of history. Concerning about barbarian invasion and conquest in history, Frederick Engels stated that,

⁸⁶ Yao Congwu, 1959, pp. 6–7; Lu Hubin 卢胡彬, "Yao Congwu xiansheng dui Zhongguoshi shang Hanhua wenti de yanjiu 姚从吾先生对中国史上汉化问题的研究," in *Shiyun* 史耘, no.1, Sep. 1995, pp. 297–298.

⁸⁷ Young-tsu Wong, 2006, p. 30.

⁸⁸ Lu Hubin, 1995, pp. 245–313.

⁸⁹ Qi Meiqin 祁美琴, "Guanyu shinian lai Hanhua jiqi xiangguan wenti yanjiu de kaocha 关于十年来汉化及其相关问题研究的考察," in *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, 2006, no.2, p. 104.

⁹⁰ Ping-ti Ho, 1998, pp. 151–152.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ping-Ti Ho, "The Significance of the Ch'ing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (Feb. 1967), p. 193. In his article, he says "Despite its inevitable cost, the Manchu policy of systematic Sinicization and Confucianization served dynastic interests extremely well."

Every conquest by a more barbarian people disturbs of course the economic development and destroys numerous productive forces. But in the immense majority of cases where the conquest is permanent, the more barbarian conqueror has to adapt himself to the higher “economic situation” as it emerges from the conquest; he is assimilated by the vanquished, and, in most cases, he even has to adopt their language.⁹³

In standard Chinese Marxist historiography, China had entered into the stage of feudalism from the Western Zhou period (ca. 1046-771 BCE) and stayed in that stage until the First Opium War (1840).⁹⁴ The population of the Central Plain is usually in a “higher economic situation” than the people from the borderland, who usually are considered as fixed in the stage of slave society or even “primitive communism.” In this context, some scholars from Mainland China interpret Hanhua as “Feudalization” of the people from the borderland who either had gone to the Central Plain or interacted with people from the Central Plain.⁹⁵

There were also scholars trying to define Sinicization from the social scientific aspect, such as Jing-shen Tao, who, as mentioned above, was a student of Yao Congwu before he enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Indiana University. In his book *The Jurchen in Twelfth-century China: A Study of Sinicization*, he considered Sinicization equal to assimilation. About assimilation, he states,

⁹³ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, trans. by Emile Burns, New York: International Publishers, 1894, pp. 208–209

⁹⁴ There are different opinions on this topic. The point here is cited from *Zhongguo tongshi jianbian* 中国通史简编 by Fan Wenlan 范文澜, which is one of the representative works of Chinese Marxism historiography. See Fan Wenlan, *Zhongguo tongshi jianbian* (revised version), Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, vol.1, 1964, pp. 13–14.

⁹⁵ Tang Zhangru 唐长孺, “Tuobazu de Hanhua guocheng 拓跋族的汉化过程,” in *Lishi jiaoxue* 历史教学, 1956, no.1, pp. 21–29; Zhang Jingsong 张劲松, “Ping Wanyan Liang de Hanhua gaige 评完颜亮的汉化改革,” in *Neimenggu minzu shiyuan xuebao* 内蒙古民族师院学报, 1996, no.4, pp. 1–6.

The term assimilation is used in this study in the sense of F. C. Anthony Wallace's statement that 'in assimilation, the subordinate group attempts to abandon its existing inadequate culture by entering into the society of the dominant group and accepting its culture, almost *in toto* (retaining only token vestiges of their distinctive culture traits).' The term so defined includes both acculturation and integration. The concept of Sinicization is employed in this study in the same sense as assimilation.⁹⁶

According to Tao, Sinicization means assimilation, which implies that the dominant group in a society assimilates the subordinate group. Tao's use of Sinicization and assimilation is one reason that some scholars criticized his book, since in the Jin Dynasty, the Jurchen was the politically and militarily dominant group.⁹⁷ Later, in the Chinese edition of his book and in his response to a book review by John Dardess, Tao translated and interpreted the "dominant group" as the culturally dominant group,⁹⁸ which was not the same as in the original context of referring to Anthony Wallace. With this modification, his definition of Sinicization became similar to Song Wenbing's discussion of the Jurchen's Sinicization—people with "higher" culture will be assimilated by the people with "lower" culture.⁹⁹ Tao's definition also was adopted by Hsiao Ch'i-Ch'ing 萧启庆 in his discussion of the Sinicization of Yuan Mongols.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Jing-shen Tao, *The Jurchen in Twelfth-century China: A Study of Sinicization*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976) p. xiii.

⁹⁷ John Dardess, review of *The Jurchen in Twelfth-century China: A Study of Sinicization*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.37, no.2, Feb. 1978, pp. 329–330; also reviewed by Ruth Dunnell in *Sung Studies Newsletter*, no.13 (1977), pp. 77–81.

⁹⁸ Jing-Shen Tao, *Nüzhēn shilun* 女真史论, Taipei: Shihuo chubanshe, 1978, p. 4; Jing-shen Tao, "A Reply to Professor John Dardess," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.38, no.2, Feb. 1979, pp. 441–442.

⁹⁹ Song Wenbing, 1939, p. 173.

¹⁰⁰ Hsiao Ch'i-Ch'ing, "Lun Yuandai Mengguren de Hanhua 论元代蒙古人的汉化," in *Mengyuanshi xinyan* 蒙元史新研, Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1994, p. 221.

The three different types of interpretation of the Sinicization/Hanhua theory, however, were not successful. In their works, Yao Congwu and Ping-ti Ho interpret Sinicization/Hanhua as Confucianization, but Confucianization itself cannot cover the content of Sinicization/Hanhua in their writing, as discussed above. The interpretation of Feudalization also was questionable because the adoption of the stages of Chinese history in Marxism was problematic, especially the concept of Feudalism.¹⁰¹ Jing-shen Tao's interpretation of Sinicization, using theories from social science, also incurred much criticism in the Western academic world, especially in the United States.¹⁰²

The main reason for the unsuccessful interpretation of Hanhua/Sinicization with different theories, was that these scholars' understanding and use of Hanhua/Sinicization still fell in the basic framework of the history of Chinese Nationality, constructed since the end of the Qing Dynasty. Since the historical narrative of Chinese Nationality still was dominant in both places, this was common for scholars in Mainland China and Taiwan like Tang Zhangru and Yao Congwu. As for Jing-shen Tao and Ping-ti Ho, although they both had received their doctoral education in the United States, and Tao's book about the Jurchen's Sinicization and Ping-ti Ho's rebuttal first were written and published in English, their usage of Sinicization still should be understood as Hanhua in the context of the history of Chinese Nationalism. It is clear from this that Tao included political centralization, political institution, intermarriage and changing of surname, literature and art, and religion as the content of "Sinicization." This is similar to the writing of earlier scholars, such as Song Wenbing and Mao Wen. Even Tao occasionally

¹⁰¹ Feng Tianyu 冯天瑜, *Fengjian kaolun 封建考论*, Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2006.

¹⁰² See n. 91.

uses a phrase like “the fusion of Chinese and Jurchen cultures” and “Sino-Jurchen synthesis” without giving an explicit explanation; but actually he reinforces on the theoretical frame of Chinese Nationality.¹⁰³ That is also why Ho, in the beginning of his rebuttal to Rawski’s speech, stated:

To reduce the potential for misunderstanding, I should state explicitly that Chinese civilization certainly changes over time, in part because of internal developments and in part because contacts with the very peoples who become sinicized also expand the content of what it can mean to be Chinese. While there are certain elements of Chinese thinking and behavior that have an extremely long historical pedigree, Chinese culture takes on distinctive characteristics in different historical periods as the culture is itself transformed.¹⁰⁴

In Ho’s explanation, Chinese civilization and Chinese culture changed over time through internal development and contact with “Sinicized” people. Those people had expanded the content of being Chinese. It is clear that Ho’s argument was the same as the basic theoretical framework about Chinese Nationality. Therefore, in his argument, the Manchu identification should not have excluded other forms of identity and been included in the Chinese Nationality; in other words, one can be Manchu and Chinese at the same time.¹⁰⁵ Apparently, in Ho’s context, Chinese represented not only Han Chinese but the entirety of Chinese Nationality. Therefore, at the end of his rebuttal, he mentioned his preference for the word "Huahua" instead of "Hanhua."

¹⁰³ Jing-shen Tao, 1976, pp. xi, 78.

¹⁰⁴ Ping-Ti Ho, 1998, p. 125

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The attempts to theorize a definition for Hanhua/Sinicization were not successful. Hanhua/Sinicization should not be considered as “feudalization” or “assimilation,” and it is also more than “Confucianization.” How then should the Hanhua theory in the context of Chinese Nationality be understood and interpreted? At this point, we should return to the Hanhua theory itself to seek the answer.

2.6 Culturalism behind Hanhua Theory¹⁰⁶

Although the Hanhua theory seems to be applied differently by historians, who also have made distinct interpretations of Hanhua, there are still some common characteristics in their discussions of Hanhua. First of all, the content of Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality is always broad and vague. In the earliest case, Chen Yuan emphasized the significance of culture in the process of Huahua. Then when Mao Wen and Song Wenbing argued about the Hanhua of the Khitan and Jurchen, Hanhua included respecting Confucianism, hiring Han officials/literati, studying Confucian classics, learning and speaking Chinese, creating language, building cities, marrying Han people, using the Han political system, wearing Han-style clothes, applying Han law, practicing ritual according to the Classics, learning Chinese literature and art, and so forth. In Jing-shen Tao’s argument, he also included political centralization, political institutions,

¹⁰⁶ Both Ping-ti Ho’s and Jing-shen Tao’s arguments about Sinicization should be understood as the Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality. So I will use the term “Hanhua” referring to Hanhua and Sinicization both in the context of Chinese Nationality. Later some scholars from the United States understood and used the term “Sinicization” differently, such as John R. Shepherd. I will be specific about the term when discussing them. John R. Shepherd, “Rethinking Sinicization: Processes of Acculturation and Assimilation,” in *State, Market and Ethnic Groups Contextualized*, Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 2003, pp. 133–150, p. 133

intermarriage and changing of surname, literature and art, and religion as the substance of “Sinicization.” Many topics were included in the Hanhua theory, and the boundary of Hanhua’s content is unclear. All the different aspects of Hanhua, however, generally can be summarized as learning and adopting so-called “Chinese culture.” Here the concept of “Chinese culture” also was vague and had different characteristics depending on the period.¹⁰⁷

Why was Chinese culture, nevertheless, so significant in the process of Hanhua? It was because these scholars held the notion that culture as the main standard to differentiate Chinese from non-Chinese always existed in pre-modern China. For instance, in his 1939 article, Feng Chengjun states that “when the ancient people in our country judged if a person was Hua or Yi, it was decided basing on if this person practiced the ritual and moral code;”¹⁰⁸ in other words, anybody can become Chinese by learning and practicing the Chinese “ritual and ethical code.” In 1940, when Chen Yinke discussed the Barbarization and Sinicization (Hanhua) in the Northern Dynasties, he said,

In sum, in the history of Northern Dynasties questions between Hu and Han without exception are in fact questions between barbarization and Sinicization, rather than the division between races of Hu (胡) and Han (汉). In other words, it is more related to culture than to race. Such is what was called “provide education for all people without discrimination (*youjiao wulei* 有教无类).”

¹⁰⁷ The word “Chinese” in “Chinese culture” is vague. Such questions as when the word “Chinese” can be adopted into the culture in the Chinese territory, and what culture particularly can be considered as “Chinese” culture, all need to be discussed. Different scholars may give different answers for these questions. For instance, Qian Mu and Ge Zhaoguang give a different description of Chinese culture in both of their works. Qian Mu, *Zhongguo wenhua shi daolun* 中国文化史导论, Beijing: Commercial Press, 1994; Ge Zhaoguang, 2014, pp. 112–115.

¹⁰⁸ Feng Chengjun, 1939, p. 135.

總而言之，全部北朝史中凡關於胡漢之問題，實胡化漢化之問題，而非胡漢種問題。當時之所謂胡人漢人，大抵以胡化漢化，而不以胡種漢種為分別，即文化之關係較重，而種族之關係較輕，所謂有教無類者是也。¹⁰⁹

In this statement, Chen Yinke more specifically points out that in the Northern Dynasties, culture was more important than race, and the Hu-Han dichotomy was based on culture.

Qian Mu and other scholars applied this point to all the dynasties in pre-modern China,¹¹⁰ and Joseph R. Levenson¹¹¹ later called this way of interpreting Chineseness as culturalism. Therefore, through contact with and learning Chinese culture, which was the main subject matter of Hanhua, non-Chinese people could become Chinese.

The discussion about Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality also implies the cultural superiority of Han. In Song Wenbing's article about the Hanhua of the

¹⁰⁹ Chen Yinke, *Suitang zhidu yuanyuan lue lungao* 隋唐制度淵源略論稿, Taiwan: Commercial Press, 1966, pp. 16–20. This book was first published in 1940.

¹¹⁰ Qian Mu, 1994, pp. 41–42. This book, *Zhongguo wenhua shi daolun*, was first published in 1948. Ping-ti Ho also made similar a point in his rebuttal by stating, “This saying of Mencius (about Shun and King Wen of Zhou) suggests that long before the rise of Chou the fundamental criterion for defining membership in the Sinitic world was the awareness of a common cultural heritage rather than rigid racial or ethnic identity.” Ping-ti Ho, 1998, p. 129.

¹¹¹ Joseph R. Levenson, 1965, pp. 98–102. To the interpretation of culturalism, Hoyt Tillman and Ge Zhaoguang responded by tracing Chinese ethnic nationalism to the Song Dynasty, and Yuri Pines and Paul Goldin by pointing out the existence of Han discourse about the “un-civilizable” side of foreigners such as Xiongnu because of military conflicts. Shao-yun Yang, however, argues that the term culturalism should not be adopted to describe the “relativistic and moralistic discourse on Chineseness and barbarism,” which was a product of the Tang-Song transition instead of Eastern Zhou origin or earlier. Nevertheless, the truth or falsity and the origin of culturalism interpretation is not the concern of this dissertation, what is more important for the argument in this chapter is that this interpretation is hold by many researcher till today. See Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-century China? The Case of Ch'en Liang,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39.2 (1979), 403–428; Ge Zhaoguang, 2014, 126–133; Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans: Pre-imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy,” in Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran eds., *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 59–102; Paul R. Goldin, “Steppe Nomads as a Philosophical Problem in Classical China,” in Paula L.W. Sabloff, ed., *Mapping Mongolia: Situating Mongolia in the World from Geologic Time to the Present*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2011), 228–234; Shao-yun Yang, *Reinventing the Barbarian: Rhetorical and Philosophical Uses of the Yi-Di in Mid-Imperial China, 600–1300*, Ph.D. dissertation from University of California, Berkeley, Spring, 2014.

Jurchen people, he specifically pointed out that Han culture was relatively high culture, and the Jurchen culture was relatively low culture, which was the main reason that they were “Sinicized (Hanhua).”¹¹² There were also other metaphors mentioned above implying that Han cultural superiority; such as comparing Han culture to the ocean and a furnace; and likening other cultures, such as the Khitan, Xianbei and Jurchen, to small rivers merging into the ocean and iron melting in the furnace. So the non-Sinitic peoples were Sinicized because Chinese culture was better than their own. They inevitably were attracted to or involved in the process of Hanhua, even when the non-Sinitic peoples were the ruling class.

Han cultural superiority was also an important part of the cultural interpretation of Chineseness, such as the existence of “bestiality” in *Chunqiu* discourse argued by Yuri Pines.¹¹³ One more important aspect of Hanhua discourse is that in most cases, it was not important to the researchers if those “Sinicized” people considered themselves as “Chinese.” What was more important to them was that the people had contact with and learned Chinese culture, which already fulfilled the requirement of Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality. So Hanhua also can be considered as a Sino-centric interpretation of Chinese history.

As an historical interpretation by modern scholars, the Hanhua theory contains a cultural interpretation of Chinese history. As a significant part in the discourse on Chinese Nationality, Hanhua theory, on one the hand, provides a method to construct the

¹¹² Song Wenbing, 1939, p. 173.

¹¹³ Yuri Pines, 2004, 63–69.

“historical myth” of the continuity of Chinese history in terms of culture regardless of dynastic change. On the other hand, however, because of the role of Hanhua theory in constructing the history of the Chinese Nationality problem, it can be argued that China as the Chinese Nationality was not held together as a modern nation-state, but still mainly is bonded by cultural identity brought from the culturalism rooted in traditional China instead of racial or ethnical identity.

2.7 Discussion

The research on the different contexts and interpretations of Hanhua theory provides an opportunity to engage in some criticism of Hanhua in the Western academic world. As mentioned above, since the 1920s, Hanhua theory in the context of Chinese Nationality has flourished in China. Later it appeared in the West through the works of Jing-shen Tao and Ping-ti Ho. The basic conclusion of Hanhua theory, that the Chinese absorbed the non-Chinese regardless of their status as rulers or not, a belief that already was held by the early European Sinologists, received both acceptance and criticism in Western academic writing.¹¹⁴ The criticism about Hanhua or Sinicization usually targeted the Chinese scholars discussed above,¹¹⁵ so Hanhua instead of Sinicization would be

¹¹⁴ For reacceptance, such as Wolfram Eberhard states that “The Manchus . . . did not return to their old home country and did not try to reform unto a new unity under their own rulers. They simply became Chinese.” See Wolfram Eberhard, *China's Minorities: Yesterday and Today*. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1982), 34.

¹¹⁵ Evelyn Rawski targeted Ping-ti Ho in her speech (Evelyn S. Rawski, 1996). Pamela Crossley thought that the “Sinicizationists” in the West also got this idea from their previous “Chinese mentors (Pamela Crossley, “Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” in vol.11, no.1, June 1990, 4–5). Peter Bol's

employed in this discussion by me. Among these criticisms, however, scholars have different opinions, even understanding of the Hanhua theory.

In 1973, John W. Dardess wrote that Sinicization “involved not only the loss of national or linguistic identity but also a most un-Confucian denial of the facts of ancestry. In the Yuan period, it carried an additional burden of the loss of caste as well.” Therefore, he used “Confucianization” to replace “Sinicization,” and Confucianization only means “the adoption by outsiders, even Chinese outsiders, of a certain system of ethical and political behavior.”¹¹⁶

Later, Peter Bol noticed that the term Sinicization/Hanhua covered topics including the political process and ethnic transformation, and obscured the distinctions between them. So he tried to distinguish “the adoption of the institutions and value structures of imperial government” from “the social transformation of the Jurchens as an ethnic group originally distinct from the Hans.”¹¹⁷ Further, he restricted Sinicization to refer to the adoption of Han customs (Hanren fengsu 汉人风俗) by non-Han peoples.¹¹⁸ He used “civilization (*wen* 文, *shangwen* 尚文, *wenzhi* 文治)” to indicate the shift in cultural practices of the Jurchen people.¹¹⁹

understanding of Sinicization also came from scholars like Jing-shen Tao, Yao Congwu, Jin Yüfu and so forth (Peter Bol, "Seeking Common Ground—Han Literati Under Jurchen Rule," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol.47, no.2(Dec. 1987), p. 483, no.67). Mark Elliot’s so-called “Sinicization school” also mainly was comprised of Chinese scholars, such as Meng Sen 孟森 and Ping-ti Ho (Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 27).

¹¹⁶ John W. Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians: Aspects of Political Change in Late Yuan China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 3

¹¹⁷ Peter Bol, 1987, pp. 483–484.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1987, pp. 485–486.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Both Dardess and Bol noticed the broad and vague content covered by Hanhua, and therefore try to split it and give distinct terms for different parts of Hanhua's content.¹²⁰ As discussed above, Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality covers many topics, and thus it fails to distinguish between different aspects such as politics and customs within the transition of the non-Chinese people. Therefore, as Dardess and Bol suggest, Hanhua theory in the context of Chinese Nationality has problematic analytic value, and should be applied with caution and clear restriction to its content.

In Evelyn Rawski and Pamela Crossley's discussions of Hanhua, both define it as people being assimilated by Chinese culture. Mark Elliot, however, describes it as people being assimilated by the Chinese.¹²¹ Although "Chinese culture" is highlighted in both Rawski's and Crossley's definitions of Hanhua, their understanding of Hanhua is basically the same as Elliot's, and even as Dardess and Bol's. In Rawski's and Crossley's papers, they try to track the implications and assumptions behind Hanhua theory. Rawski considers Hanhua "a twentieth-century Han nationalist interpretation of China's past."¹²² Compared to Rawski, Crossley's analysis is more detailed and provocative. She states:

The barest implications of "sinicization" were that Chinese culture was somehow autochthonous, rigid and exclusive, and in contact with other worlds either obliterated or was obliterated. Secondarily, it was implied that through nothing much more subtle than the sheer charisma of

¹²⁰ There are other cases in which scholars also tried to apply Sinicization differently. For instance, based on his field work in Taiwan, John R. Shepherd stated "use Sinicization as a descriptive term to refer to the "process of acculturation in which a non-Chinese group adopts elements of the Chinese culture with which it is in contact." For him, ". . . why the group adopts Chinese cultural elements, which elements it adopts and which it rejects, and whether the adoption has any effect on ethnic identity and consciousness are topics best left to separate analyses." (John R. Shepherd, 2003, pp. 133–150, p. 133). Ruth Dunnell (1977) also made some suggestions on the usage of "Sinicization" in her book review for Jing-shen Tao.

¹²¹ Evelyn S. Rawski, 1996, p. 842; Pamela Crossley, 1990, p. 2; Mark C. Elliott, 2001, p. 27.

¹²² Evelyn S. Rawski, 1996, p. 842.

Chinese culture, peoples were attracted to China and its society from elsewhere and, no great obstacle withstanding, were consumed in the flames of Hanhua.¹²³

As discussed above, the Hanhua theory has been adopted in the construction of the history of Chinese Nationality since the early 20th century. Therefore, Rawski's comment is reasonable although Ping-ti Ho tried to argue that the Hanhua theory originated with the European Sinologists. Rawski's criticism would be more sensible if she had used "Chinese nationalist" instead of "Han nationalist." This is because Hanhua mainly is applied to construct the history of Chinese Nationality rather than Han ethnicity to unite all the peoples inside China. These "Chinese nationalist" scholars usually argue the hybridity of Han people, and even try to dispute the existence of Han ethnicity.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, as argued above, the implication of Hanhua theory is more than nationalism; in other words, nationalism alone will not be enough to interpret Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality. With more detailed analysis, Crossley's discussion of Hanhua, however, introduces more controversy. Although, according to Crossley, "the sheer charisma of Chinese culture" implied by Hanhua was more or less demonstrated by the Han cultural superiority argued earlier, the Hanhua theory itself still will not lead necessarily to an "autochthonous, rigid and exclusive" use of Chinese culture. On the contrary, as mentioned above, Hanhua in the context of Chinese Nationality tried to be inclusive and flexible, and to connect different peoples with different cultural backgrounds inside Chinese territory. As Ping-ti Ho suggests, culturalism behind Hanhua

¹²³ Pamela Crossley, 1990, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Such as Liang Qichao and Gu Jiegang's arguments mentioned earlier in this chapter. Liang Qichao, 1988, pp. 5-7; Gu Jiegang, 1939.

theory would not “obliterate” the other patterns of culture and forms of identity inside the Chinese Nationality.¹²⁵

Crossley also suggests that some Chinese scholars, who use the terms like *tonghua* 同化 (assimilation), *xianghua* 向化 (submission and civilization) and *ronghe* 融合 (fusion), should not be considered Sinicizationists since they give more definitive expression to cultural exchange in Chinese history.¹²⁶ Chen Yinke and Xiang Da are listed as the examples because of their discussion about “alien exploitation of Chinese political instruments and Central and Inner Asian impact upon the cultural traditions of the Northern Qi, Sui and Tang regimes.”¹²⁷ As a matter of fact, in many works about Chinese Nationality by Chinese scholars discussed above, terms like *tonghua* and *xianghua* are interchangeable with Hanhua; *ronghe*, however, is a different term to express the process of Hanhua.

Chen Yinke also used the term Hanhua in his works as mentioned above, and his Hanhua theory should likewise be understood in the context of Chinese Nationality. He paid special attention to the influence of “barbarian” culture in the Tang empire, especially inside the ruling group. For instance, he put forth the famous theory of “Guanlong group (Guanlong jituan 關隴集團)” and “Guanzhong-based policy (Guanzhong benwei zhengce 關中本位政策).” According to this theory, the Xianbei generals from the Six Frontier Towns of Northern Wei played the major role in the

¹²⁵ Ping-ti Ho, 1998, p. 125. Mark Elliot has noticed this point by Ping-ti Ho, and he stated that Ho’s point was consistent with his approach to ethnicity adopted in his book, but he missed the big picture behind Ho’s point. Mark Elliot, 2001, p. 387, n. 100.

¹²⁶ Pamela Crossley, 1990, pp. 4–5.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Western Wei, Northern Zhou, Sui, and Tang dynasties.¹²⁸ When Chen argued about the success of the Tang empire, he stated that “With the barbarian blood of valor and vigor injected into the decadent body of Central Plains' culture, moribund conventions were removed and a new vitality was reborn. By developing and carrying forward [the new vitality], then [the Tang] was able to distinctively create an unprecedented prosperity.”¹²⁹ In this statement, the “Barbarian blood of valor and vigor” refers to the Inner Asian peoples and cultures during the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties. In his research, besides the Hanhua, Chen also made another argument for “barbarization (Huhua 胡化),” describing how the Han people in Northern China were affected by nomadic culture.¹³⁰ Chen Yinke's argument about the Hanhua and Huhua, however, should be understood in the context of the history of Chinese Nationality. The culturalism brought up in Chen's argument is the key to understanding both Hanhua and Huhua.

Although Hanhua theory plays an important role in maintaining the concept of Chinese Nationality, it has limited and problematic analytic value. By applying the Sinicization or Hanhua theory to every dynasty, the historical interpretation becomes a deterministic narrative. As a reaction to the flourishing of Hanhua theory in China and its adoption by some Western scholars, with misinterpretations and criticism about Hanhua,

¹²⁸ Chen Yinke, *Tangdai zhengzhishi shulungao* 唐代政治史述論稿 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), 54.

¹²⁹ Chen Yinke, “Li Tang shizu zhi tuice houji” 李唐氏族之推測後記, *Jinming guan conggao erbian* 金明館叢稿二編, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980, p. 303.

¹³⁰ Influenced by Chen Yinke's research, later scholars started to pay attention to other nomadic aspects in the Northern Dynasties, such as the origin of the *fubing* 府兵 military system, which involved a network of militia who usually were given tracts of farmland. See Kawamoto Yoshiaki 川本芳昭, “Kozoku no kokka” 胡族の国家, in *Gi-Shin Nanbokuchō Zui-Tō jidai shi no kihon mondai* 魏晉南北朝隋唐時代史の基本問題 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), 107–114. Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi* 府兵制度考釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe), 1962.

the ethnicity of the non-Chinese peoples in Chinese history is emphasized more and more in the works of Western scholars as represented by the New Qing historians. This research, however, does not explain why and how the non-Chinese peoples adopted Chinese culture after entering the Central Plain.

Hanhua theory often makes scholars focus on the result of the transition of the non-Chinese people and neglect the process of the transition. Therefore, in the following chapters, I present two case studies to explore the process of the transition of non-Chinese people. I will offer answers to a series of questions: How should we interpret the transition of the Inner Asian peoples who entered the Central Plain—as the ruling group or as commoners? How and why did they choose to adopt or refuse some customs and institutions from Chinese tradition? What did they bring into the Chinese entity? These two cases are about the transition of the succession system and local organization of the non-Chinese peoples from the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties, which is a classic example for the Hanhua interpretation.

CHAPTER 3 Why a Crown Prince?

In the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties, for the first time in Chinese history since the Zhou Dynasty, the Central Plain was occupied and ruled by peoples from Inner Asia. Many scholars consider this period as a classic model for Hanhua theory. One main reason is that the rulers from Inner Asia all claimed they had succeeded legitimately from the Jin or Han Dynasty based on the Five Phases theory.¹³¹ This claim also was followed with other measures, such as adopting Chinese political institutions into their own polities, one of the main arguments in Hanhua theory, to support the statement of legitimacy. As a significant part of the political system, the institution for succession not only regulated the transition of supreme power, but also demonstrated the power distribution in the court. This succession system, more specifically, the crown prince system, in the central governments is discussed in this chapter.

In comparison to the succession system of the Inner Asian polities, the crown prince system was a distinctive type of succession, which commonly was applied during the Han and Jin Dynasties. Later, after the Inner Asian peoples had built regimes in northern China, the crown prince system also was adopted by them. In this chapter, the assessment of the two different succession traditions in Inner Asian and China raise several questions. A discussion of the adoption of the crown prince system in the Sixteen

¹³¹ Besides the Five Phases theory, the *chenwei* 讖纬, which are apocryphal texts of prophecy, also were used by the rulers to justify their rule. Chen Yong has listed some examples in his research. Some scholars argue that the appearance of the term “*wuhu* 五胡” during the Sixteen Kingdoms period is associated with *chenwei*. Luo Xin argues the widespread *chenwei* justification could happen only after the legitimacy problem had been solved by the Five Phases theory. This assumption, however, is not necessarily true since the *chenwei* justification can support itself, and sometimes it could be accepted more easily by commoners. See Luo Xin 罗新, “Shiliuguo beichao de wude liyun wenti 十六国北朝的五德历运问题,” *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中国史研究, 2004, no.3, 47–56; Chen Yong 陈勇, “Cong wuzhu dao wuhu: wuhu chengwei tanyuan 从五主到五胡: 五胡称谓探源,” *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究, 2014, no.4, 21–35.

Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties will help to answer these questions. The succession system of the nomadic groups in Western Eurasia also will be compared with adoption of crown prince system by the Inner Asian peoples in northern China.

3.1 Two Succession Traditions

Unlike the founder of a dynasty both in China and Inner Asia, who usually would have had charismatic qualifications for leadership, the descendants of the founders needed to have a different way to legitimize their own enthronement. A succession system is applied to serve this purpose. The succession traditions in the Inner Asian polities, such as the Xiongnu, and in the Central Plain, the Han Dynasties, will be described to show the differences between them. Then discussion will focus on the succession system during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties.

3.1.1 Succession Traditions in Inner Asia

In the Inner Asian tradition, the succession system functioned on two different social levels, the tribal level and supratribal level. Although the latter is the main subject of this chapter, the tribal policy can be considered as a microcosm of a supratribal polity; in addition to the succession system, its institutions, practices and even myth of origin and so forth are all integrated into the supratribal polity. In the tribal level, the chief usually is elected. Sometimes this happens peacefully. At other times, however, this is based on the principle of tanistry, which emphasizes murder and warfare during the

succession. This type of succession plays a significant role in Turkish, Mongolian, and Manchu politics.¹³² After a chief's death, the chieftaincy does not automatically pass down according to any principle of seniority, but rather through election to the most competent member from the chiefly house. This power transition can be either patrilineal or lateral. In patrilineal succession, the chieftaincy would go to the son from the father. In a lateral succession, on the other hand, the chieftaincy passes to the deceased chief's eldest brother, and eventually to the next generation after passing on to the youngest brother of the deceased. Therefore, these two contradictory ways of succession can justify any result from the election.¹³³

Although the electoral principles also applied to the supratribal level, the succession process of the supratribal polity is less straightforward than on the tribal level. First, there is a distinction between the founder and his descendants and their paths to power.¹³⁴ The founder convinces his competitors through mythical or real competition with them of his suitability. The mythical aspect usually is not part of the process of the power transition of his descendants. The successors also are elected,¹³⁵ sometimes peacefully and sometimes based on taniistic principles. In addition to the election, however, first all the candidates and other elite members consider whether the supratribal

¹³² Joseph F. Fletcher borrows this term taniistry from the history of Ireland, and was the first to use it in Inner Asian history. Joseph F. Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, Cambridge, MA, 1986, 19.

¹³³ Joseph Fletcher, 1986, 17.

¹³⁴ Denis Sinor, The Making of a Great Khan, *Altaica Berolinensia, The Concept of Sovereignty in the Altaic World*, Permanent International Altaistic Conference (34th Meeting), Berlin 21–26 July 1991, ed. B. Kellner Heinkel, Asiatische Forschungen 126. Wiesbaden, 1993, p.256.

¹³⁵ According to Denis Sinor's research, both the founder and their successors were "elected," and he even compares the election of khan to the election of the Holy Roman Emperor and the President of the United States, who were elected by the German Electors and the Electoral College. Denis Sinor, 1993, p.256.

political structure should be continued. So at the ruler's death, the supratribal polity might disintegrate, as occurred in the Southern and Northern Xiongnu, and Western and Eastern Türkic Empires. Then one of the candidates could increase his authority by reuniting the tribe with violence or whatever means necessary.¹³⁶ Between the death of the old ruler and enthronement of the new one, one or more regents usually are appointed to enforce the integration of the state, which is fragmented because of the succession struggle. In Mongol tradition, the regent could be the ruler's principal wife, the youngest son of the principal wife or senior male in the ruling lineage.¹³⁷

Similar to the tribal level, the supratribal succession can be either patrilineal or lateral but usually within the founder's lineage.¹³⁸ Taking the Xiongnu Empire as an example, in the early period, it was mainly patrilineal succession. The lateral system, however, played a major role later; in the second half of the Xiongnu Empire, there was a hybrid system of patrilineal and lateral.¹³⁹

During the process of succession, the position of leadership is contested, and usually the most competent candidate would be the winner of the contest, The winner

¹³⁶ Joseph Fletcher, 1986, 24.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Some scholars err in thinking that the Inner Asian succession institution implied lateral succession as contradictory with the primogeniture in the Han Dynasty, and even consider the records about the patrilineal succession in the Xiongnu Empire unreliable. See Chen Linguo 陈琳国, *Zhonggu beifang minzu shi tan* 中古北方民族史探, Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010, 6; Li Ping 李凭, *Beiwei Pingcheng shiqi* 北魏平城时期, Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000, 6.

¹³⁹ Joseph Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire," in *Eucharisterion: Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak* (Harvard Ukrainian Studies 3/4), ed. I. Ševčenko and F. E. Sysyn. Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute Harvard University, 1979–1980, 240; Wu Mu 武沐, Xiongnu chanyu jicheng zhidu tubian de tantao 匈奴单于继承制度突变的探讨, *Neimenggu daxue xuebao*, 2004, no.1, vol.36, 11–16; Li Mingren 李明仁, *Zhongguo gudai junzhu jichengzhi zhi yanjiu* 中国古代君主继承制之研究, Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 2013, 17–34.

would be recognized and supported in the meeting for the election. Meanwhile, besides the capability of the candidates, there are several elements that can impact on the result of the election; for instance, the endorsement or designation of the former ruler is important. The influence of the former ruler is not only from his own prestige, but also from political measures he may have applied to secure his preferred successor.

In the Xiongnu Empire, the eldest son of the Chanyu 单于 usually had 10,000 cavalymen and controlled the eastern part of the empire.¹⁴⁰ Then he usually became the successor of the Chanyu because of his significant role in the political structure. On occasion, however, the Chanyu himself could be threatened by his preferred and powerful candidate. In the early period of the Xiongnu Empire, the transition of the supreme power was comparatively peaceful by following the former Chanyu's choice. It is partly because the Xiongnu ruler "obtained his booty peacefully from the Chinese government" brought by the Heqin 和親 policy of the Han Dynasty, "so a peaceful system of succession served

¹⁴⁰ In the Biography of Xiongnu in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, the term "taizi 太子" appears several times. But it usually refers to the eldest son of the Chanyu, and is often associated with the diplomatic practice of sending Chanyu's eldest son as hostage to the neighboring states when Xiongnu was not powerful enough. One of the examples is Modu (冒頓). He was kept as a hostage by the Yuezhi (月氏) as Chanyu's eldest son (taizi). This identity, however, could not secure his role as a successor to the Chanyu, so he chose to kill his father so as to be able to replace him. Later, in a conversation between the Han envoy Yang Xin 楊信 and the Chanyu, Yang asked for Chanyu's "eldest son (taizi)" as hostage if the Xiongnu wanted to make peace with the Han by marriage. Chanyu disagree, and said "Now you want to go back to the ancient tradition to make my eldest son as hostage, it is not far away from failure. (今乃欲反古, 令吾太子為質, 無幾矣.)" It shows that sending the eldest son as hostage is the "ancient" diplomatic method of the Xiongnu. Through the diplomatic activity of the Xiongnu, the Xiongnu court might have gotten to know about the crown prince system among the Han. *Shiji* 史記, juan 110, 2913; *Hanshu* 漢書, juan 94, 3773; Tomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China 221 BC to AD 1757*, Cambridge, MA, Oxford, UK : Basil Blackwell, c1989.p.42.

the Xiongnu best.”¹⁴¹ It is also because the successor’s role as the Left Wise King increased his own prestige and secured an advantageous position in the contest.

The Inner Asian succession tradition usually requires an election to legitimize a new ruler. Therefore, an Inner Asian ruler’s leadership requires approval from a relatively small group of electors, and this usually is based on the electors’ own interest. It is reasonable to argue that the decisive factor during the power transition is consensus rather than violence. The installation of a great khan by military proclamation seldom occurred.¹⁴² In the peaceful or tanistic process of succession involving almost all members of ruling class,¹⁴³ the successor needed to prove himself the best- candidate. The qualifications of the candidate can be enhanced by the designation of the former ruler and also the designee’s prominence in the government.

3.1.2 Succession Traditions in Han Dynasty

In the Han Dynasty, one of the emperor’s sons traditionally ascend to the throne at the death of the emperor. During his lifetime, the emperor usually appointed one of them as the heir apparent, entitled “crown prince” (*Taizi* 太子 or *Huangtaizi* 皇太子). The crown prince often was the eldest son of the empress. There was a strict distinction between the emperor’s principal wife, who was his empress, and his other concubines.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Joseph Fletcher, 1979–1980, 240. The Heqin policy refers to the Han government marrying princesses to the Chanyu to build marriage alliance with the Xiongnu.

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ Joseph Fletcher pointed out that the succession struggle in nomadic politics tends to involve everybody, which can politicize the society and personalize the monarchy, and it “reinforced the continuance of ecologically unnecessary supratribal polities.” Joseph Fletcher, 1979–1980, 240; Joseph Fletcher, 1986, 24.

¹⁴⁴ T’ung-tsu Ch’ü, *Han Social Structure*, Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1972, 13.

This succession principle can be traced to the Zhou Dynasty¹⁴⁵ and was followed by later major dynasties. Among the twenty crown princes of the Han Dynasty, twelve of them were the eldest sons of empresses; although four were adopted by empresses as they had borne no sons.¹⁴⁶

When the empress had neither a son nor adopted son, the crown prince was chosen from the sons of the emperor's concubines. Five among the twenty crown princes were the sons of concubines in the Han Dynasty.¹⁴⁷ On that occasion, according to *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, “Sons of concubines are ranked by nobility and not seniority;” and “the son is noble because the mother is noble; the mother is noble because the son is noble.”¹⁴⁸ In practice, however, the crown prince could be the eldest one, such as Liu Rong 劉榮, the first crown prince of Emperor Jingdi 漢景帝. Meanwhile, “nobility” (*gui* 貴) was associated with the personal attachment of the emperor to his concubines and their sons; this was true of the first crown prince of Emperor Zhangdi 漢章帝, who was appointed because of his mother. If the emperor had no son, the heir apparent would be chosen from the imperial lineage.¹⁴⁹ Since the crown prince was appointed mostly by the

¹⁴⁵ For example, in *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, when talking about picking the heir apparent for the kings, it is said “while sons of the legal wife are ranked by seniority and not worthiness, sons of concubines are ranked by nobility and not seniority. (立嫡 (适適) 以长不以贤, 立子以贵不以长)” In the Zhou Dynasty, the eldest son of the king from the principal wife was called “*zongzi* 宗子.” The translation is from Harry Miller, *The Gongyang Commentary on The Spring and Autumn Annals: A full translation*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 8. For more detail of the succession system in the Zhou Dynasty, see T'ung-tsu Ch'ü 瞿同祖, *Zhongguo fengjian shehui* 中国封建社会, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005, 92.

¹⁴⁶ Su Xin 苏鑫, *Handai huangtaizi zhidu kaoshu* 汉代皇太子制度考述. Master's thesis, Jilin University, 2007, 6–11.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Harry Miller, 2015, 8.

¹⁴⁹ There were three crown princes who were not the sons of the former emperors, but other members of the imperial lineage. Su Xin, 2007, 6–11; T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, 2005, 98–99.

birthright, as soon as he was appointed, the position could not be changed even by the emperor. When Emperor Gaozu, Liu Bang 劉邦, and Emperor Yuandi both wanted to remove their crown prince and appoint a new one, the officials strongly objected, and eventually both emperors gave up the idea.¹⁵⁰

A crown prince in the Han Dynasty received special treatment in many ways. First of all, a ceremony was performed to demonstrate the new status of the heir apparent to the nobles, officials, commoners, and also his imperial ancestors. The proceedings accompanying the celebration included granting amnesty and bestowing wealth or rank on nobility.¹⁵¹ After the ceremony, the crown prince received all the trappings appropriate for the heir apparent—a palace, royal clothing, a special carriage, and the rituals he was allowed to conduct. Also changed was the now formal greeting offered to him by his brothers and other nobles.¹⁵² Besides participating in special rituals, the crown prince's main responsibility was to be educated and trained by the mentors (*fu* 傅) appointed by the emperor.¹⁵³ As Jia Yi 賈誼 from the Western Han argued,

The fate of all under heaven depends on the crown prince. The virtue of the crown prince lies in early education and picking the right attendants So I say picking the right attendants and early education are most urgent. If the education was applied and the attendants were righteous, the crown prince will be righteous. If the crown prince is righteous, all under heaven will be settled firmly.

¹⁵⁰ T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, 2005, 92.

¹⁵¹ Su Xin, 2007, 30–59.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ There was a Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) and Junior Mentor (*shaofu* 少傅) for the crown prince in the Han Dynasty. Su Xin, 2007, 30–59.

天下之命，懸於太子；太子之善，在於早諭教與選左右……臣故曰選左右早諭教最急。夫教得而左右正，則太子正矣，太子正而天下定矣。¹⁵⁴

According to Jia Yi, the purpose of education for the crown prince was moral cultivation. Through this education, the crown prince was expected to become a “virtuous (*shan* 善)” and “righteous (*zheng* 正)” person, which is significant for “all under heaven (*tianxia* 天下)”. For this purpose, he was schooled in the Confucian classics, such as *Shangshu* 尚書, *Chunqiu* 春秋, *Analects* and so forth.¹⁵⁵ The crown prince also received instruction in legal matters to make him aware the “method (*shu* 術)” of being an emperor besides being virtuous.¹⁵⁶

According to *Zuozhuan* 左傳, the crown prince had another responsibility of being the temporary “inspector of the state (*jianguo* 監國)” or “soother of the troops (*fujun* 撫軍) if the emperor went to war.¹⁵⁷ During the Han Dynasty, however, there was no case of the crown prince having to assume this role, as the Han emperors had little opportunity to personally go to war. The exception was the founder of the Western Han, Emperor Gaozu 漢高祖. There were only four crown princes in the Han Dynasty who were replaced as heir apparent by their brothers.

¹⁵⁴ *Hanshu*, juan 48, 2251.

¹⁵⁵ Su Xin, 2007, 30–59.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ In *Zuozhuan* 左傳, the second year of Mingong 閔公, it is recorded that “When the ruler goes for a war, he (crown prince) guards the state; and if another be appointed to guard it, he attends upon his father. When he attends upon him, he is called ‘Soothen of the troops;’ when he stays behind on guard, he is called ‘Inspector of the State’ (君行則守, 有守則從, 從曰撫軍, 守曰監國).” The translation is based on *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen* translated by James Legge, 1872, with my own revising.

The focus of the succession institution during the Han Dynasty was the crown prince, who was usually the eldest son of the empress and was appointed during the emperor's lifetime. The qualification of the crown prince as the legitimate successor was largely decided by his birth instead of his ability. The personal attachment of the emperor sometimes played an important role when he could select his successor from the concubines' sons. The crown prince system, however, largely restricted the emperor's power on choosing his successor. By following the system, the emperor's appointment actually was not decisive since the crown prince usually qualified by his birth. The major responsibility of being the crown prince during the Han Dynasty was being educated and trained to be a "virtuous" future emperor, although he had little chances to practice his skill of ruling and administrating by serving the government as "inspector of the state" or anything else. The restriction of the crown prince's role inside the government, which prevented the potential conflict between him and the emperor, and also obviated any mistakes made by the heir apparent, was actually a way of protection.

3.1.3 Questions Proposed

The above discussion shows the major differences, mainly in the qualification of the successor and his role in the government, between the Inner Asian and the Han Dynasty succession traditions. When the Inner Asian rulers built up their own states during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties, they also confronted these differences. It is important to understand how these two conflicting customs were integrated during the later periods.

3.2 Crown Princes during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period

The name of the Sixteen Kingdoms period derives from the book *Spring and Autumn Annals of the Sixteen Kingdoms* (*Shiliuguo Chunqiu* 十六國春秋) by Cui Hong 崔鴻 (478-525); the author included sixteen polities in his book, and its title was adopted as the name of this period. According to Cui Hong, after the collapse of the Western Jin, there was no ruler in the Central Plain (Zhongyuan 中原), i.e., the lower area of the Yellow River,¹⁵⁸ and a number of polities were formed during this time. The territory covered by the polities included in Cui Hong's book, however, was much larger than the so-called Central Plain. The territory included Gansu, Inner Mongolia and part of Sichuan area, such as Western Liang, Northern Liang, Southern Liang, Xia and Cheng Shu regimes. During this period, however, there were definitely more than the sixteen polities listed in Cui Hong's book. The main reason he selected these sixteen polities is, as he said,

Since the Yongning 永宁 Reign period of Jin, although wars were started everywhere, and many royalty were set up by themselves, but those who able to build states to become warring states, were only sixteen.

自晉永寧以後，雖所在稱兵，競自尊樹，而能建邦命氏成為戰國者，十有六家。¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典, vol. 1, p. 600.

¹⁵⁹ *Weishu* 魏書, *juan* 67, 1503. Here “*jianbang* 建邦” and “*mingshi* 命氏” share the same meaning.

Apparently, “building their own states” was the main rationale for including polities for his book.¹⁶⁰ In these “warring states” described by Cui Hong,¹⁶¹ building a new state includes activities such as using the title of “emperor (*huangdi* 皇帝),” starting a new reign title, reestablishing the calendar, and setting up a whole imperial family by bestowing new titles on family members—the emperor’s mother became dowager empress, his principal wife, the empress, all his sons and daughters, princes and princesses. Meanwhile, during this time, the heir apparent, who usually was the eldest son of the empress, was also appointed.

Seven polities of the Sixteen Kingdoms period located in the Central Plain—Former Zhao, Later Zhao, Ran Wei (冉魏), Former Yan, Former Qin, Later Yan and Later Qin—are analyzed below. In these Central Plain kingdoms during this period, there were 27 heirs apparent appointed.

Table 3.1 List of the 27 Heir Apparents in Seven Kingdoms during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period¹⁶²

Name of the Kingdo	Name of the Heirs	If the father was the	If the mother was the	Seniority among his
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¹⁶⁰ It has been pointed out, however, that “building their own states” was not the only or decisive standard. Another significant factor for Cui Hong to pick these polities is the historical records written mostly during the time these polities still existed, and Cui Hong finished the *Spring and Autumn of the Sixteen Kingdoms* by following those records to a large extent. Hu Hong 胡鸿, “Shiliuguo de Huaxiahua: shishi yu shixiang zhijian 十六国的华夏化: 史实与史相之间,” *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中国史研究, 2015, no.1, 135–162.

¹⁶¹ By calling these polities “warring states,” he compared them to the states during the Warring States period, and also considered his writing the history of the sixteen kingdoms for the Northern Wei is the same as Sima Tan 司马谈 and Sima Qian 司马迁 writing the Warring State Period history for Western Han court.

¹⁶² All the information in this table is from *Jinshu*, *Shiliuguo Chunqiu* and *Zizhi tongjian*.

ms	Apparent	emperor	empress	brothers
Former Zhao	Liu He 刘和	Yes, Liu Yuan 刘渊	Yes, Empress Huyan 呼延 ¹⁶³	Empress Huyan's eldest son.
	Liu Yi 刘义	No, Liu Yi's father was Liu Yuan, and he was appointed by Liu Cong 刘聪, fourth son of Liu Yuan.	No, Liu Yi's mother was Empress Dan 单 of Liu Yuan. She was Empress Dowager during Liu Cong's reign.	Eldest son of Empress Dowager Dan.
	Liu Can 刘粲	Yes, Liu Cong	Yes, but Liu Cong had four empresses. ¹⁶⁴	Uncertain, but not the eldest son of Liu Cong's empress(es).
	Liu Yuangong 刘元公	Yes, Liu Can.	Yes, Empress Jin 靳.	Uncertain, but probably not the eldest son of Empress Jin.
	Liu Xi 刘熙	Yes, Liu Yao 刘曜.	Yes, Empress Yang 羊.	Eldest son of Empress Yang.
Later Zhao	Shi Hong	Yes, Shi Le 石勒.	No, Shi Hong's mother	Second eldest son

¹⁶³ Empress Huyan probably passed away in the first year after Liu Yuan's enthronement. Later, Liu Yuan's empress was from the Dan 单 family.

¹⁶⁴ In a conversation between Liu Can and Guo Yi 郭猗, Guo Yi called Liu Can "Gaozu Emperor's shisun 世孙 (grandson of Gaozu Emperor by his son's empress), emperor's ditong 嫡统 (son of the emperor by his empress). (高祖之世孙, 主上之嫡统)" *Jinshu, juan* 102, 2669.

	石弘		is from Cheng 程 family.	of Shi Le. ¹⁶⁵
	Shi Sui 石邃	Yes, Shi Hu 石虎.	Yes, Empress Zheng Yingtao 郑樱桃.	Eldest son of Shi Hu and Zheng.
	Shi Xuan 石宣	Yes, Shi Hu.	Yes, Empress Du Zhu 杜 珠. ¹⁶⁶	Uncertain, son of Empress Du.
	Shi Shi 石世	Yes, Shi Hu.	Yes, Empress Liu 刘. ¹⁶⁷	Eldest son of Empress Liu.
	Shi Yan 石衍	No, Shi Yan's father was Shi Bin 石斌, brother of the emperor, Shi Zun 石遵.	No.	Nephew of the emperor.
Ran Wei 冉魏	Ran Zhi 冉智	Yes, Ran Min 冉闵. ¹⁶⁸	Uncertain. Ran Min's empress was from Dong 董 family.	Uncertain, son of Ran Min.
Former Yan	Murong Jun 慕容儁	Yes, Murong Huang 慕容 皝.	Uncertain, probably son of empress Duan 段.	Second son of Murong Huang.
	Murong Ye 慕容晔	Yes, Murong Jun.	Yes, son of Empress Kezuhun 可足 浑.	Eldest son of Empress Kezuhun.

¹⁶⁵ Shi Hong was appointed because the eldest son of Shi Le, Shi Xing 石兴 was dead. *Jinshu, juan 105, 2739.*

¹⁶⁶ Shi Hu changed his empress after the changing of crown prince.

¹⁶⁷ Empress Liu was the daughter of Liu Yao 刘曜. So one reason that Shi Shi was picked as heir apparent is the nobility of his mother. *Jinshu, juan 107, 2785.*

¹⁶⁸ Ran Min was the adopted grandson of Shi Hu, and was given the family name Shi 石. He changed back to his original name Ran after his enthronement. *Jinshu, juan 107, 2793.*

	Murong Wei 慕容暉	Yes, Murong Jun.	Yes, son of Empress Kezuhun.	Third son of Murong Jun.
Former Qin	Fu Chang 苻苌	Yes, Fu Jian 苻健.	Yes, son of Empress Qiang 強.	Possible eldest son of Empress Qiang.
	Fu Sheng 苻生	Yes, Fu Jian 苻健.	Yes, son of Empress Qiang. ¹⁶⁹	Third son of Fu Jian. ¹⁷⁰
	Fu Hong 苻宏	Yes, Fu Jian 苻堅.	Uncertain, possible son of Empress Gou 苟.	Possible eldest son of Empress Gou.
	Fu Ning 苻寧	Yes, Fu Pi 苻丕.	Uncertain, possible son of Empress Yang 楊.	Possible eldest son of Empress Yang.
	Fu Yi 苻懿	No, Fu Yi's father was Fu Pi, but he was appointed as crown younger brother by Fu Deng 苻登.	No.	Not son of Fu Deng, the emperor.
	Fu Chong 苻崇	Yes, Fu Deng. ¹⁷¹	Uncertain.	Uncertain.
	Fu Xuan	Yes, Fu Chong. ¹⁷²	Uncertain	Uncertain.

¹⁶⁹ Empress Qiang was respected as Dowager Empress Qiang after Fu Sheng's enthronement. *Jinshu*, *juan* 112, 2872.

¹⁷⁰ Fu Chang was killed during a battle with Huan Wen 桓溫, so Fu Sheng was appointed. *Jinshu*, *juan* 112, 2872.

¹⁷¹ Fu Yi passed away in 388 CE according to *Zizhi tongjian*. *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 107, 3384.

¹⁷² *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 108, 3418.

	苻宣			
Later Qin	Yao Xing 姚興	Yes, Yao Chang 姚萇.	No, Yao Xing's mother wasn't empress. ¹⁷³	Eldest son of Yao Chang.
	Yao Hong 姚泓	Yes, Yao Xing 姚兴.	Yes, son of Empress Qi 齐.	Eldest son of Yao Xing.
Later Yan	Murong Bao 慕容宝	Yes, Murong Chui 慕容垂.	Yes, son of the former Empress Duan (not the Later Empress Duan). ¹⁷⁴	Fourth son of Murong Chui.
	Murong Ce 慕容策	Yes, Murong Bao 慕容宝.	Yes, son of Empress Duan.	Eldest son of the empress.
	Murong Ding 慕容定	Yes, Murong Sheng 慕容盛.	Uncertain.	Probably the only son of Murong Sheng.
	Gao Pengcheng 高彭城 ¹⁷⁵	Yes, Gao Yun 高云 ¹⁷⁶	Uncertain.	Probably the only son of Gao Yuan.

¹⁷³ Yao Chang's Empress was from the She 蚩 family. *Jinshu*, *juan* 116, 2967.

¹⁷⁴ Murong Bao was the son of former Empress Duan, who used to be Murong Cui's principal wife, but she was killed before Murong Chui's enthronement. She was bestowed the title of Empress Chengzhao 成昭 after Murong Chui's enthronement, while the later Empress Duan was also appointed. *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 107, 3383.

¹⁷⁵ Gao Pengcheng was recorded in *Zizhi tongjian*, but it was recorded as Gao Peng in *Jinshu*. *Jinshu*, *juan* 124, 3108; *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 114, 3605.

¹⁷⁶ Gao Yuan was from Goguryeo, so Gao 高 was his original family name. He was bestowed with the family name Murong by Murong Bao. Gao Yuan was also the adopted son of Murong Bao. *Jinshu*, *juan* 124, 3108.

The appointment of crown princes during the Sixteen Kingdoms period followed the crown prince system of the Han tradition to a large extent. In the seven kingdoms, among the 27 heir apparents who were appointed during the emperors' lifetime, 24 were the sons of the emperors and appointed by their fathers. Some of them already were considered heirs apparent (世子, heir apparent) before their fathers' enthronement because their fathers were kings or dukes and had needed a legitimate successor, such as Shi Hong (son of Shi Le) and Murong Jun (son of Murong Huang). Of the three heirs apparent who were not the sons of the emperors, Liu Yi 刘义, son of Liu Yuan 刘渊, was the a younger brother (huangtaidi 皇太弟) chosen by Liu Cong 刘聪, brother of Liu Yi. Shi Yan 石衍, the son of Shi Bin 石斌, was appointed as crown prince by Shi Zun, brother of Shi Bing, Fu Yi 苻懿, the son of Fu Pi 苻丕, was appointed as crown younger brother by Fu Yi's brother Fu Deng 苻登.

All three cases, however, can be understood in terms of Han succession tradition. Liu Yi was appointed as the crown younger brother by Liu Cong mainly because Liu Yi was the eldest son of Liu Yuan's principal wife, Empress Dan, which made him the legitimate successor after Liu He.¹⁷⁷ Fu Yi was appointed as the crown younger brother

¹⁷⁷ In an article by Chen Yong 陈勇, he argues that the reason that Liu Yi was appointed as Liu Cong's successor is because Liu Cong tried to unite the Di 氐 people to gain their military support. This argument, however, is not well based for several reasons. First of all, Chen's argument heavily relies on his different reading of a historical record. In the biography of Liu Yuan at *Jinshu*, there is a record about "Di chief great Chanyu Zheng (Diqu da chanyu zheng 氏酋大单于徵)." Meanwhile, the same record appears in *Zizhi tongjian* as "Di chief Dan Zheng (Diqu dan zheng 氏酋单徵)," and Chen considers *Zizhi tongjian*'s record is the right one so the Di chief shared the same family name with Liu Yi's mother Empress Dan and may possibly be the father of Empress Dan, even though *Zizhi tongjian* was compiled much later than *Jinshu*. There was also no other example of Di people obtaining the family name of Dan 单. Second, there was no direct evidence showing the relationship between the Di and Qiang people and Liu Yi, and the 15,000 people killed during the cancellation of Liu Yi's identity as heir apparent could be Liu Yi's

by Fu Deng since Fu Yi was the oldest of the surviving sons of Fu Pi, the former emperor. Shi Zun 石遵 probably had no son, and that is why he promised Ran Min (冉闵/Shi Min 石闵) to be his heir apparent before his rebellion. Shi Zun, however, eventually appointed his nephew, Shi Yan 石衍, son of his brother Shi Bin 石斌, as the crown prince. This was probably because Ran Min (Shi Min) was the adopted grandson of Shi Hu, and Shi Zun wanted to keep the imperial power within his family lineage.

Of the 24 crown princes who were appointed by their fathers as emperors, 14 were evidently the sons of contemporary empresses. Six were eldest sons; and of the remaining eight, their birth position was uncertain due to lack of evidence. It is possible that four of them were sons of the contemporary empresses. Apparently, only 2 of the 24 were not the sons of contemporary empresses: Shi Hong, son of Shi Le, and Yao Xing, son of Yao Chang. They possibly were appointed because Empresses Liu and She 虵 had no son,¹⁷⁸ and both Shi Hong and Yao Xing were the eldest sons among the surviving sons of Shi Le and Yao Chang. It is also necessary to point out that there were 4 cases in which the heir apparent was changed under the same emperor. Murong Ye 慕容晔 and Fu Chang 苻苌 died from illness and wounds. Liu Yi, Liu Cong's younger brother, was replaced by Liu Cong's son Liu Can. Shi Hu changed his crown prince twice, as the first

guardians and troops, rather than the Di and Qiang people. In a conversation between Liu Yi and his officials, it was mentioned that he could easily receive the support of 20,000 soldiers. Finally, the rebellion of Di and Qiang people actually did not cause the collapse of the Former Zhao Kingdom. Later During Liu Yao's reign, he again conquered and united the Qiang people. Chen Yong, *Hanzhao shi lungao: Xiongnu Tuge jianguo de zhengzhizhi kaocha* 汉赵史论稿: 匈奴屠各建国的政治史考察, Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009, 163–188; *Jinshu, juan* 102, 2675.

¹⁷⁸ Empress Liu might have no more sons to be choose, since Shi Xing 石兴, the eldest son of Shi Le, could be her son, and was considered as the heir apparent by Shi Le. But Shi Xing passed away later, which made Shi Hong, the second eldest son of Shi Le, became the heir apparent.

two were sentenced to death by him. By appointing a new crown prince, Shi Hu appointed a new empress at the same time to follow the Han tradition.

In sum, almost all the rulers appointed their heir apparents, mostly known as crown prince, along with their enthronement or later. All the heirs apparent were chosen from the imperial family, and the eldest sons of the empresses usually were the primary choice. When the empress had no son, the heir apparent was picked among the sons of consorts. Here the sons of concubines were mainly ranked by seniority, such as Shi Hong and Yao Xing. When the emperor had no son, the heir apparent was picked from the imperial lineage, and nephews, adopted sons or grandsons were always excluded by the emperors, such as Liu Yao, Shi Hu and Shi Min/Ran Min. In addition, some emperors also appointed the mentors, guardians and preceptors to educate and assist their heirs apparent by following the Western Jin institution.¹⁷⁹ For instance, Liu Yi as the crown younger brother had his own Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅), the Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師) and Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保).¹⁸⁰ Shi Hu also appointed two officials as the Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) and Junior Mentor (*shaofu* 少傅) for Shi Shi, and specifically asked them to educate him and make him change.¹⁸¹ All this shows that in the seven kingdoms during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, the principles of the Han succession system were followed by the rulers to a large extent.

¹⁷⁹ As mentioned earlier, in the Han Dynasty, the educators for the crown prince were only the Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅) and Junior Mentor (*shaofu* 少傅), although in Jia Yi's article, there were three dukes (*sangong* 三公) and three junior counselors (*sanshao* 三少) of the heir apparent mentioned. Later in the Western Jin dynasty, other officials like the Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師), Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保), Junior Preceptor (*shaoshi* 少師) and Junior Guardian (*shaobao* 少保) were added for the heir apparent. *Jinshu*, *juan* 24, Book of Officials, 742.

¹⁸⁰ *Jinshu*, *juan* 102, 2665.

3.2.1 Heirs Apparent Who Did Not Succeed to the Throne

By following the Han tradition, the succession system in these seven kingdoms, however, did not work very well. For the eleven of the 27 heirs apparent who succeeded to the throne, four were soon deposed or killed by their competitors at the imperial courts, and one was soon killed by an enemy from another kingdom.¹⁸² Therefore, only six of the heirs apparent successfully succeeded to the throne and ruled for more than one year. Both Fu Sheng and Murong Bao were deposed almost two years after their enthronement by imperial family members, Fu Jian and Lan Han 蘭汗. A third heir, Yao Hong, surrendered to the Eastern Jin after a military defeat.¹⁸³ Among the 27 heirs apparent, however, the remaining sixteen were banished or died either before or shortly after enthronement. Of these, six were deposed or killed by their enemies from other kingdoms,¹⁸⁴ thirteen were deposed by competitors from the imperial court, and three died from disease or battle wounds from battle before their enthronement.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2785.

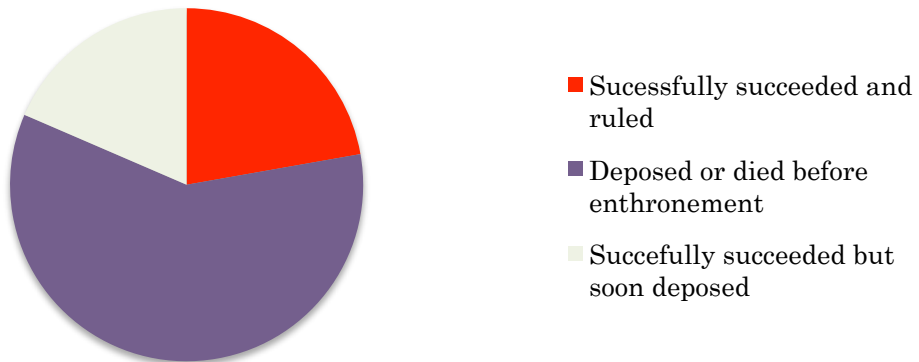
¹⁸² The four heir apparents were Liu He, Liu Can, Shi Hong and Shi Shi. They separately held the throne for less than three months, two months, less than one year and 33 days. Shi Hong was pushed to succeed to the throne by Shi Hu, and the imperial power actually was controlled by Shi Hu. Fu Chong was the one soon killed by Qifu Qiangui (乞伏乾归).

¹⁸³ The other three were Murong Jun, Murong Wei and Yao Xing.

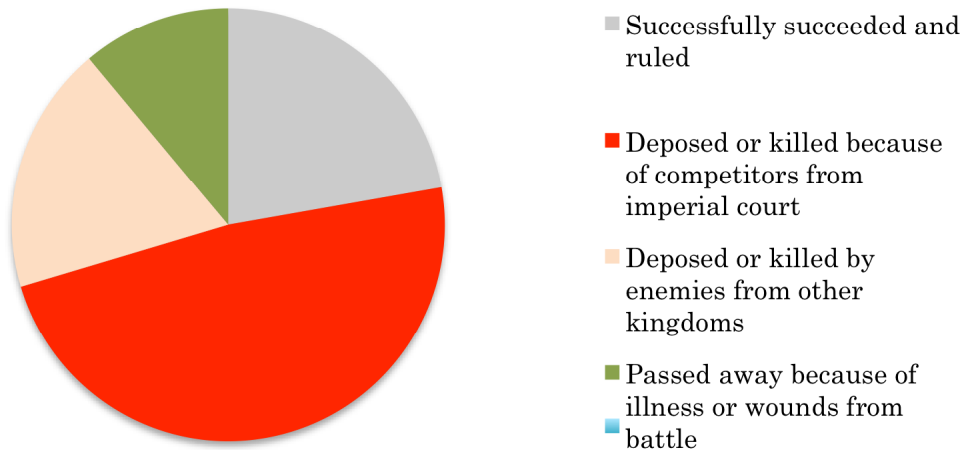
¹⁸⁴ The six were Liu Xi, Ran Zhi, Fu Hong, Fu Ning, Fu Chong and Fu Xuan.

¹⁸⁵ The three were Murong Ye, Fu Chang and Fu Yi.

Fate of Heirs Apparent



Fate of Heirs Apparent



Based on the numbers mentioned above, and compared to the 38 rulers who appeared in the seven kingdoms,¹⁸⁶ during Sixteen Kingdoms period, succession in these kingdoms was such that the majority of the heirs apparent were banished or passed away

¹⁸⁶ Here the rulers include the "legitimate" rulers for each kingdom and the usurpers, such as Lan Han, according to the historical records.

before their enthronement. Those who managed to ascend to the throne lost power soon afterwards.. Therefore, the succession system in these seven kingdoms did not successfully secure the transition of power. That there were various reasons for the failure of the heir apparent certainly was a major factor. The constant war between different kingdoms during this period created an insecure environment for the stable power transition. In these circumstances, the heir apparent, as well as the emperor, often were deposed or killed after the collapse of a kingdom. Liu Xi 刘熙, Ran Zhi 冉智, Fu Hong 苻宏, Fu Ning 苻宁, Fu Chong 苻崇, Fu Xuan 苻宣 and Yao Hong are examples. The challenges to the heirs apparent from inside the ruling class in these kingdoms, however, also had a negative effect on the heir apparent succession system.

3.2.2 Strong Competitors

Even though the Han succession system was applied by the seven kingdoms, the heirs apparent still faced challenges from other imperial clan male members who considered themselves legitimate or even more qualified successors. For instance, after Shi Hu assisted his uncle Shi Le to the throne by military means, he was disappointed that Shi Le bestowed the post of “Great Chanyu (大单于)” on his own son, crown prince Shi Hong.

During the Sixteen Kingdoms period, the “Great Chanyu” led all Yi 夷 peoples including the Xianbei 鮮卑, Di 氐 and Qiang 羌, and others.¹⁸⁷ The core of the military power, the five units of Xiongnu (Xiongnu wubu 匈奴五部) in the Former Zhao, and the Jiehu (Jiehu 羯胡) in the Later Zhao, were omitted as they were led directly by the emperors.¹⁸⁸ In the Former Zhao and Later Zhao, the position of Great Chanyu usually was taken by the crown prince, and Shi Hu 石虎’s disappointment actually implied his willingness to be the successor of Shi Le 石勒. He complained to his son, and said,

The one who accomplished the achievement of Great Zhao is I. People all actually expected me to be the Great Chanyu, but [Shi Le] granted to that maidservant’s kid. I couldn’t sleep or eat whenever I thought about this. After the emperor passing away, I will not leave any of his descendants.

成大趙之業者，我也。大單于之望實在於我，而授黃吻婢兒，每一憶此，令人不復能寢食。待主上晏駕之後，不足復留種也。¹⁸⁹

After Shi Hu successfully usurped the emperorship, he bestowed the post of Great Chanyu on his crown prince, Shi Xuan, just as Shi Le had done.¹⁹⁰ Ran Min is another example of usurpation. He was disappointed after Shi Zun appointed his nephew Shi Yan

¹⁸⁷ In *Jinshu*, *juan* 104, 2730, it says “with Great Chanyu suppressing and pacifying the hundred barbarians (yi Dachanyu zhenfu baiman 以大單于鎮撫百蠻).”

¹⁸⁸ Chen Yong, 2009, 130–145; 189–203.

¹⁸⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 106, 2762.

¹⁹⁰ *Jinshu*, *juan* 106, 2769.

as the heir apparent, even though Ran Min was the adopted son of Shi Hu, and he also considered himself as the better candidate for heir apparent.¹⁹¹

Considering themselves as legitimate successors, these imperial clan members were allowed to compete with the heir apparent appointed by the emperor because of their political and military power. In the polities like the Former and Later Han, the royal family members often were granted certain military authority, which served to decentralize the military. Some of the nobles were sent to local cities to serve as military governors.¹⁹² For example, after Liu Cong's enthronement, he placed each of his seventeen sons in command of a troop of 2000 soldiers.¹⁹³ Some of Shi Le's sons, such as Shi Hong 石宏 and Shi Kan 石堪, led armies in local cities.¹⁹⁴ With this distribution of military power, some imperial clan members showed their martial capability and accumulated their military experience. For example, Liu Cong 刘聪 and Liu Yao 刘曜 led an army of 50,000 troops to plunder Luoyang.¹⁹⁵ Shi Hu and Ran Min were also very experienced generals. With their military achievements, the emperor bestowed a high rank and official post on them,¹⁹⁶ thus giving them a marked advantage in competition with other possible heirs apparent.

¹⁹¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2790.

¹⁹² Michio Tanigawa 谷川道雄, *Suitang diguo xingcheng shilun* 隋唐帝国形成史论, translated by Li Jicang 李济沧, Shanghai: Shanghai guji press, 2004, 1-16. Michio Tanigawa focuses on the Northern Wei Dynasty, and Chen Yong extended this idea of decentralization of military power to the Former Han period. Chen Yong, 2009, 11-16.

¹⁹³ *Jinshu*, *juan* 102, 2665.

¹⁹⁴ Shi Le specifically pointed out those sons in the local cities who should play an important role during the period of imperial power transition if the heir apparent was in danger. *Jinshu*, *juan* 105 2751.

¹⁹⁵ *Jinshu*, *juan* 101, 2658-2659.

¹⁹⁶ Before Liu Yuan's death, Liu Cong held the posts of Great Sima (da Sima 大司马), Great Chanyu (da Chanyu 大单于), and controlling the Imperial Secretary (shangshu 尚書) affairs. Liu Yao, Shi Hu and Ran

3.2.3 Powerful Assistant Ministers

Some court officials warned the emperor about dangerous situations among the heirs apparent. For instance, Cheng Xia 程遐 and Xu Guang 徐光 advised Shi Le to remove Shi Hu from power, or even kill him, to secure Shi Hong's role as heir apparent. The emperor, Shi Le, answered that,

The *tianxia* has not yet been pacified, and the disasters of war were not over. Daya (Shi Hong's style name) is still young, and should have powerful assistants appointed [for him]. Zhongshan (Shi Hu, King of Zhongshan) is a meritorious general in founding the kingdom, and is as close to me as Lu to Wei.¹⁹⁷ So I assign him with the tasks of Yi Yin and Huo Guang. How can it become what you said? It must be because you are worried that in future days of assisting the young lord, you would not be able to monopolize the power of the emperor's maternal uncle. I will also appoint you as an assisting minister. Do not worry too much.

今天下未平，兵難未已，大雅冲幼，宜任強輔。中山佐命功臣，親同魯衛，方委以伊霍之任，何至如卿言也。卿當恐輔幼主之日，不得獨擅帝舅之權故耳。吾亦當參卿於顧命，勿為過懼也。
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Shi Le's words show that he, however, did not consider the powerful royal clan member Shi Hu as a danger to his chosen successor. He did, nonetheless, think that they would make powerful assistants (*qiangfu* 强辅) to support his successor in the future because of the ongoing warfare. The emperor compared Shi Hu to Yi Yin 伊尹 and Huo Guang 霍

Min also held high rank official posts to control civil and military affairs. *Jinshu*, *juan* 101, 2652; *juan* 102, 2658-2659; *juan* 106, 2762; *juan* 107, 2788-2789.

¹⁹⁷ Lu 鲁 was feudal state of Duke Zhou, and Wei 卫 is for Duke Zhou's younger brother Kang Shu 康叔.

¹⁹⁸ *Jinshu*, *juan* 105, 2752.

光, who were also assistant ministers during the Shang and Han adding Cheng Xia, as the crown prince's uncle (his mother's brother), to the group. Meanwhile, in his last decree, Shi Le reminded Shi Hu to “think over Duke Zhou and Huo Guang, and not become the subject of critics in the future.”¹⁹⁹

All three, Yi Yin, Due Zhou and Huo Guang, are famous for being faithful assistant ministers, but also became controversial because of some of their actions. Yi Yin and Huo Guang were known as bad examples for restricting or replacing the emperor.²⁰⁰ In the Shang Dynasty, while assisting Tai Jia 太甲, the Shang ruler, Yi Yin punished him because of mistakes he made during his rule and because he ignored Yi Yin's advice. After confining Tai Jia to the Tong 桐 Palace for three years to reflect on his mistakes, Yi Yin let Tai Jia rule again.²⁰¹ In the Western Zhou Dynasty, after King Wu of Zhou's death, Duke Zhou assisted King Wu's son, King Cheng of Zhou. Some materials show that Duke Zhou also made himself king while assisting King Cheng.²⁰² Huo Guang was from the Western Han Dynasty. When he was serving as the main assistant minister, he deposed Prince He 贺 as emperor, and exiled him from the capital. Afterwards, he installed Liu Bingyi 刘病已, who then was a commoner, as the new emperor, later Emperor Xuan 宣.²⁰³ When Shi Le brought up the three ministers, he tried to praise their faithfulness and loyalty to the imperial family in keeping the ruling house in power.

¹⁹⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 105, 2751.

²⁰⁰ *Jinshu*, *juan* 8, 36.

²⁰¹ *Shiji*, *juan* 3, 99.

²⁰² Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, *Zhougong zhizheng chengwang* 周公執政稱王, *Wenshi*, vol.23, 1984.

²⁰³ *Hanshu*, *juan* 68, 2937-2947.

Shi Le, however, also put his heir apparent, Shi Hong, in danger by claiming that Shi Hu's role was as significant as the three ministers. Although Shi Hu did not depose Shi Hong after the death of Shi Le, he took control of the court. Eventually he deposed and killed Shi Hong by claiming Hong was not competent enough to succeed to imperial power.²⁰⁴ When Liu Yuan and Shi Hu made similar arrangements for assistant ministers for their crown prince Liu He, so that he might also share this idea about powerful assistants with Shi Le, it did not work out as they had assumed.²⁰⁵

A rare example of a powerful assistant minister serving a young and inexperienced emperor is Murong Ke 慕容恪, who was the younger brother of Murong Jun. He supported Jun's young son, Murong Wei, until his death. It is said that Murong Ke "acted as Duke Zhou" (*xing Zhougong shi* 行周公事) in the *Jinshu*.²⁰⁶ Due to its rareness, a comparison was made to Duke Zhou and Yi Yin from the Confucian perspective by Murong Sheng. He argued that Murong Ke was better than they had been, because Duke Zhou and Yi Yin intervened too often in the emperor's affairs and influenced the emperor's own decision. By stating this point, Murong Sheng warned his own officials not to try to justify their deeds by using the example of Duke Zhou or Yi Yin.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ *Jinshu*, *juan* 105 2753-2756.

²⁰⁵ Liu Yuan's arrangement is mentioned earlier. About Shi Hu's case, refer to *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2786-2792.

²⁰⁶ *Jinshu*, *juan* 111, 2847.

²⁰⁷ *Jinshu*, *juan* 124, 3101.

3.2.4 Election Criteria

At the same time, the inexperienced young heir apparent was also not favored by the ruling group, whose opinions also played an important role during the succession process. The enthronement of Shi Zun 石遵 is a typical example.²⁰⁸ After Shi Hu's death, his crown prince, Shi Shi 石世, succeeded with the help of Empress Liu 刘 and Zhang Chai 张豺, who probably was the foster father of Empress Liu.²⁰⁹ Because Shi Shi was too young, Empress Liu and Zhang Chai seized imperial power, and Zhang Chai's role was like "Huo Guang assisting the Han."²¹⁰ Other members in the ruling group, however, were not pleased with the arrangement and refused to follow the orders of Liu and Zhang. Then the ruling elite, including Shi Hu's generals and sons, Yao Yizhong 姚弋仲, who was the father of Yao Chang 姚萇, later Emperor of Later Qin, Fu Hong 苻洪, Shi Min (Ran Min) 石闵, Liu Ning 刘宁, Shi Luan 石鸾, Shi Wu 石午, Shi Rong 石荣, Wang Tie 王铁, and Duan Qin 段勤, agreed to enthrone Shi Zun, Shi Hu's older son, probably through election. They persuaded Shi Zun by stating,

Your majesty is not just older but more virtuous. The former emperor also was well disposed to your majesty. But because his bewilderment and confusion in his last years, he was misled by Zhang Chai. Now the confrontation with Shangbai is lasting, and the capital's defense is weak. If we denounce the guilt of Zhang Chai, and beat the drums for a punitive expedition against him, who would not change sides, open the gate and welcome your majesty?

²⁰⁸ The other typical example was Murong Yun 慕容云 (Gao Yun 高云). He was elected by the generals to succeed Murong Xi 慕容熙. He, however, felt insecure and worried about his throne because he knew he did not control the major military power. So he kept many guards as subordinates to protect him, but eventually was killed by them. *Jinshu, juan* 124, 3112-3113.

²⁰⁹ Empress Liu was Liu Yao's 刘曜 daughter who was only 12 years old when she was captured by Zhang Chai. Zhang sent her to Shi Hu, who favored her and appointed her as Empress Liu. *Jinshu, juan* 107, 2758.

²¹⁰ *Jinshu, juan* 107, 2785, 2787.

殿下长而且贤，先帝亦有意于殿下矣。但以末年惛惑，为张豺所误。今上白相持未下，京师宿卫空虚，若声张豺之罪，鼓行而讨之，孰不倒戈开门而迎殿下者邪！²¹¹

After Shi Zun and his supporters gained control of the capital, in the name of Empress Liu, Shi Zun sent out the decree, in which he said,

The successor is very young, and he was appointed because of the personal grace from the former emperor. The imperial undertaking is the heaviest one, which cannot be taken upon (by the successor). Therefore, I will make Shi Zun the successor.

嗣子幼冲，先帝私恩所授，皇业至重，非所克堪。其以遵嗣位。²¹²

From the above two statements it is clear that age was a significant factor in deposing and enthroning rulers. Shi Zun was older and Shi Shi younger; their ages were an advantage and disadvantage during the competition. Before Shi Hu appointed Shi Shi as his crown prince, his official, Cao Mo 曹莫, already had told Shi Hu that “The undertaking of *tianxia* is too heavy, so it is improper to appoint the young one (as heir apparent).”²¹³ Similar points can be also found in other cases of imperial power transition. For instance, in Fu Deng’s 苻登 and Murong Xi 慕容熙’s enthronement, the young candidates also were excluded by the ruling group.

In the historical record, the preference for the older candidate sometimes was justified by a similar case from that in one of the Confucian classics, *Spring and*

²¹¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2788.

²¹² *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2788.

²¹³ The Chinese is “天下业重，不宜立少。” *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2785.

*Autumn.*²¹⁴ In the year 621 BCE after the death of Duke Xiang 襄公 of Jin 晉, his successor Duke Ling 灵公 was young, and the Jin, mainly the leading officials such as Zhao Dun 赵盾, wanted to select older ruler especially because of their constant war with the Qin 秦 and Di 狄.²¹⁵ Ironically, even though this case was used to justify the preference for older candidates during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, Duke Ling still succeeded on the insistence of his mother Mu Ying 穆嬴.²¹⁶ Although the older age was emphasized in these cases, the criteria in the decisions was actually not seniority but the competence and strength that came with seniority. Before Shi Zun was elected as the successor, he was one of the three major assistant ministers appointed by Shi Hu. Later he was excluded from imperial power by Zhang Chai and Empress Liu. Besides his high rank, he also had military experience. Eventually he was appointed as Great General (Dajiangjun 大将军) to defend the west of Later Zhao Kingdom.²¹⁷ The other successors, probably chosen also through elections, such as Liu Yao 刘曜, Fu Deng and Murong Xi, also held important posts and had military experiences.

Besides the age element emphasized above, these examples also illustrate the direct confrontation with the former emperor's will about the heir apparent. The former emperor, Shi Hu, was accused of being bewildered and confused in his last years, and he was misled by Zhang Chai. His appointment of Shi Shi as crown prince was criticized as

²¹⁴ *Jinshu*, *juan* 115, 2948.

²¹⁵ *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1990, 550-552.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ According to *Jinshu*, Shi Hu appointed Shi Zun as Great General, and appointed him to lead the garrison "guanyou (关右 right side of the pass)." Here the pass should refer to the Tongguan 潼关 pass. *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2786.

a “personal favor” (*si'en* 私恩). The personal favor suggests the appointment of an heir apparent by Shi Hu based on his personal relationship with Zhang Chai rather than for the good of the regime. This criticism implies the appointment of the heir apparent should not be made based on the personal preference of the emperor but should be based on the opinions of the whole ruling group. The ruling class not only included the emperor and other powerful male elites, but also female members, such as the empress and dowager empress were included.²¹⁸ Their opinion on the successor was sometimes revealed through election. This point can be used to object to any heir apparent appointed by the emperor if the majority of the ruling class disagreed.

3.2.5 Securing Heirs Apparent

Because of all these disadvantages, the heirs apparent appointed by the emperors often lost out to their competitors. The crown prince of Liu Yuan, Liu He, is a good example to demonstrate the disadvantages of the heir apparent during the competition. After his father Liu Yuan’s death and his enthronement, Liu He found himself in a dangerous situation. He felt threatened by his three brothers, who controlled almost all the troops of the kingdom, especially Liu Cong. He then tried to obtain military power by attacking his brothers, and killed two of them. Liu Cong, however, eventually defeated Liu He, and became the next emperor.²¹⁹ To secure the heir apparent’s position and

²¹⁸ In some cases, the empress’s and dowager empress’s opinions were decisive. For instance, against other people’s opinion, the dowager empress supported Murong Xi to replace the crown prince Murong Ding. *Jinshu*, *juan* 124, 3105.

²¹⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 101.

stabilize the transition after the emperor's death, some emperors applied certain measures to enhance the competitiveness of their heirs apparent.

3.2.5.1 Participating in the management of state affairs

Before being appointed as the crown prince, some candidates already had held other posts and titles. For instance, Liu He was the Commander-in-chief (Dasima 大司马) and King of Liang 梁.²²⁰ After being appointed as heir apparent, some special arrangements were made by some emperors. After Shi Le appointed the crown prince Shi Hong, his official Xu Guang 徐光 suggested to him that,

The crown prince is kindhearted, filial, gentle and respectful, and the King of Zhongshan (Shi Hu) is heroic, violent and deceitful. If your majesty passed away in one day, I am afraid that the state would be in danger. So it is necessary to gradually remove the authority and power of King Zhongshan, and let the crown prince participate in state affairs early.

皇太子仁孝溫恭，中山王雄暴多詐，陛下一旦不諱，臣恐社稷必危，宜漸奪中山威權，使太子早參朝政²²¹。

With this knowledge, Shi Le asked the crown prince Shi Hong to take care of certain state affairs by consulting with an official, Yan Zhen 严震. Only major military affairs and important sentences had to be reported to the emperor. This arrangement allowed Shi Hong to strip away Shi Hu's political power as the Director of the Department of State

²²⁰ The translations of official titles are all from Charles Hucker's work. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985.

²²¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 105, 2752.

Affairs (Shangshu ling 尚書令), and he became more powerful than the prime minister.²²²

Similar arrangements also can be found in other cases. After becoming crown prince, Liu Can 劉粲 was made prime minister and Great Chanyu, and managed state affairs.²²³ Shi Hu's crown princes, Shi Sui and Shi Xuan, Yao Xing's crown prince Yao Hong, and Murong Cui's heir apparent Murong Bao also played similar roles in the government.²²⁴ This position is similar to the "Inspector of the State (jianguo 監國)" that also appeared in the Northern Wei dynasty(see below). Similar to the Inspector of the State in the Han Dynasty, when the emperor left the kingdom for war or any other reason, the crown princes sometimes stayed in the capital to manage state affairs.²²⁵

Martial ability and military experience was a contrasty aspect in gaining an advantage as the heir apparent during the transition process. As argued earlier, in this period, the royal family members, including the heir apparent usually were granted certain military powers as a way to decentralize the military. Meanwhile, the heirs apparent were sometimes sent into battle to gain experience. In one case, when Yao Chang wanted to lead troops to attack Fu Jian's general Dou Chong 竇冲 by himself, his official Yi Wei 尹緯 said,

The crown prince's reputation for purity and honesty is famous near and far. But his resourcefulness and astuteness in leading the troops are not known by the people. So it is necessary to send the crown prince to

²²² *Jinshu*, juan 105, 2750.

²²³ *Jinshu*, juan 102, 2665-2666, 2675.

²²⁴ *Jinshu*, juan 106, 2762, 2771; juan 118, 2991; juan 123, 3087.

²²⁵ *Jinshu*, juan 116, 2971-2972, juan 118, 3003; juan 123, 3087.

lead by himself, which can gradually spread his power, and guard against covetousness of the crown.

太子纯厚之称，著于遐迩，将领英略，未为远近所知。宜遣太子亲行，可以渐广威武，防窥窬之原。²²⁶

Yao Chang followed Yin Wei's advice and sent Yao Xing into battle. Murong Cui sent his sons, including the crown prince Murong Bao, to go on an expedition against Northern Wei.²²⁷ Similar cases, however, did not often occur, since the heir apparent's safety also was significant for the regime. Fu Jian's 苻健 first crown prince Fu Chang 苻萇 died in battle; and his second option, Fu Sheng 苻生, was considered not as good as Fu Chang.²²⁸

3.2.6 Threats to the Emperor

When an heir apparent was weak, he needed the emperor's protection. The existence of the emperor as his father is justification for his position as the crown prince, and the arrangement made by the emperor could secure his enthronement to some extent. If he became powerful, such an heir apparent who manages state affairs, and has military experience, however, he could be beyond the emperor's control. He might seek to eliminate all the threats to his role as heir apparent by himself. For instance, when Yao Chang left the capital Chang'an for war against Fu Deng, his crown prince Yao Xing stayed behind to manage state affairs. When Yao Chang was seriously ill and asked Yao

²²⁶ *Jinshu*, *juan* 116, 2972.

²²⁷ *Jinshu*, *juan* 123, 3089.

²²⁸ *Jinshu*, *juan* 112, 2871-2872.

Xing to leave Chang'an to meet him, Yao Xing killed five powerful generals before he left because all these generals had their own troops and were a potential threat to Yao Xing's succession. The elimination of these important military figures might well have caused severe damage to the military strength of Later Qin and distrust among the ruling group. Yao Chang was furious about it but could do nothing.²²⁹

Sometimes a powerful crown prince could even become a serious threat to the emperor himself. Shi Hu's first crown prince, Shi Sui 石邃, is a good example. Shi Sui was authorized to manage state affairs, including choosing officials and performing rituals. As usual, only the major military affairs and important sentences were reported to the emperor.²³⁰ Two supreme leaders in one regime unavoidably caused conflict. In the beginning, Shi Sui reported everything to his father out of respect and fear. Shi Hu blamed him for presenting him with issues that were too minor. Then when Shi Sui omitted a report, Shi Hu was so furious at his crown prince he was punished physically. Soon Shi Sui hated the emperor. He tried to do what Modu (冒頓) of the Xiongnu Empire did to his father, for which see above.²³¹ Shi Hu eventually discovered Shi Sui's plan and sentenced him to death.

Because of the possibility of threats by a powerful heir apparent, the restriction of crown prince's power became another issue for the emperor. In the Han and Jin dynasties, the identity of a crown prince was shown in everything related to the heir apparent

²²⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 116, 2972.

²³⁰ *Jinshu*, *juan* 106, 2762. The Chinese here is “惟征伐刑斷乃親覽之。”

²³¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 106, 2766. According to *Jinshu*, Shi Sui often told his subordinates that “It is hard to satisfy the emperor. I want to do what Modu did. Do you want to follow me? (官家難稱，吾欲行冒頓之事，卿從我乎)”

including his palace, clothes, carriage, etc. .²³² When Murong Jun's 慕容俊 official Shen Yin 申胤 pointed out that the crown prince Murong Ye did not enjoy privileges over other officials and princes, especially in apparel and accessories, Murong Jun refused to accept Shen Yin's suggestion, claiming that such privileges would influence the authority of the emperor.²³³ To preserve and restrict the power of the crown prince at the same time, the usual method was to balance the power of the crown prince by raising up a competitor for him from the other princes.

After sentencing his first crown prince, Shi Sui, to death, Shi Hu realized the problem of the existence of a powerful heir apparent. The second crown prince was Shi Xuan 石宣, and he enjoyed the same powers over state affairs as Shi Sui once had. This time, however, Shi Xuan had to share the power with his brother Shi Tao 石韬. They dealt with state affairs by turns, and Shi Hu also made sure that Shi Tao received the same treatment as Shi Xuan.²³⁴

Maybe because of his own experience as an heir apparent, Yao Xing also made similar arrangements for his crown prince, Yao Hong 姚泓, by appointing another son, Yao Bi 姚弼, as the the Director of the Department of State Affairs. Thus, he set him up to compete with Yao Hong.²³⁵ Although in these cases the emperors intended to restrict and balance the power of the crown princes by making such arrangements, the fierce

²³² As for the privilege of the crown prince with regard to apparel and vehicle, refer to the Treatises of Vehicle and Apparel (Yufu zhi 輿服志) in *Later Hanshu* and *Jinshu*. *Later Hanshu*, juan 119, 3647; *Jinshu*, juan 25, 761, 765-767.

²³³ *Jinshu*, juan 110, 2835-2836.

²³⁴ *Jinshu*, juan 106, 2776; juan 107, 2782-2783.

²³⁵ *Jinshu*, juan 118, 2995.

competition that resulted between the rival princes might not have been expected by the emperor. Shi Tao was eventually killed by Shi Xuan, and Shi Xuan was sentenced to death by Shi Hu because of the murder.²³⁶ Yao Bi also made several attempts to kill the crown prince, and he was forced to commit suicide by Yao Xing before the emperor's death.²³⁷ This arrangement of promoting another son to compete with the crown prince could endanger the heir apparent. The emperor might be willing to take the risk since whatever the result of the competition, the winner was still one of his sons.

3.2.7 Conclusion and Discussion

During the Sixteen Kingdoms period, although the Han crown prince system was nominally applied by the rulers in the seven states located on the Central Plain, the Inner Asian ruler many times manipulated the system by choosing the heir apparent first, and then appointing his mother as empress to follow the crown prince system. In doing so, one of the functions of crown prince system, that is to restrict the emperor's power on choosing his successor, disappeared. To some extent, the emperor monopolized the power of choosing and appointing the crown prince.

The crown prince system, however, did not dominate the actual succession in this period. The decentralization of military power among the ruling elite brought potential powerful rivals to compete against the heir apparent. The emperor needed these rivals, some of whom were appointed as the assistant ministers, in wartime. This rival service

²³⁶ *Jinshu*, *juan* 107, 2784-2785.

²³⁷ *Jinshu*, *juan* 118, 3002-3003.

was a disadvantage for the heir apparent, especially when he was young and inexperienced. To deal with this situation, some emperors intentionally arranged for their heirs apparent to manage state affairs as a representative of the emperor, and of course they sent them to the front lines whenever possible. If the heir apparent was too powerful, however, he could present a severe threat to the emperor himself. In that case, some emperors promoted another son to share the power with and compete against the crown prince.

The Han crown prince system aimed to stabilize the transition of power. To achieve stability, an heir apparent was appointed before the death of the emperor based on the birthright of the eldest son of the empress. A consequence was the possible low quality of the heir apparent/crown prince, who might be not the best one, or even a suitable one.

Therefore, the Han system emphasized the education of the crown prince. Once the position of heir apparent was secured, even the emperor could not change it. The heir apparent usually did participate in the management of civil state affairs in order to avoid conflict with the emperor. In the seven kingdoms, discussed above, without changing the power structure inside the ruling class, bestowing the title of crown prince did not change the actual succession. Compared to the Han Dynasty, the emperor's role was more decisive in the choosing and appointing the heir apparent.

The Inner Asian tradition, however, still had great impact on the succession of these kingdoms. The idea of election tradition in the power transition is found in several

occasions; and the competence, experience and power of the candidate played a decisive role in the election.²³⁸ Some Inner Asian rulers adjusted this crown prince system by having their heir apparent in charge of state affairs, which can be considered a remnant of the Inner Asian tradition, such as the Xiongnu tradition of appointing the eldest son as the Left Wise King discussed earlier in this chapter.

3.3 Institution of the Crown Prince in the Northern Dynasties

Unlike the Former and Later Zhao, and Former and Later Qin, which were established inside the Central Plain, the Northern Wei started outside the Central Plain and gradually moved from north to south. According to the historical record, the institution of crown prince was new to the Tuoba Xianbei, and they adopted it at the suggestion of Cui Hao 崔浩. The Northern Zhou and Northern Qi Dynasties were built on the foundation of Northern Wei. Therefore, the Northern Wei will be examined first, followed by a discussion of the Northern Zhou and Northern Qi.

3.3.1 Early Succession Tradition

Before the establishment of Northern Wei and Tuoba Gui's 拓跋珪 enthronement at Pingcheng 平城 in 398 CE, the Tuoba Xianbei already had established their own polity,

²³⁸ Even though Shi Le made several arrangements, discussed above, for Shi Hong, Shi Hong still failed to succeed after Shi Le's death. It could be mainly because Shi Hong was not a martial figure and not capable of leading the kingdom's generals. According to his father, Shi Hong was not like a son from a martial family. *Jinshu*, *juan* 105, 2752.

which was initially interpreted as a tribal confederation and later became the Dai kingdom 代国. Throughout that period, the Inner Asian tradition dominated the succession: a certain form of election was used during the peaceful or tanistic process with the result of lateral or patrilineal succession. In the records of this period in *Weishu*, the term “*taizi* 太子,” however, appears several times; it refers to the eldest son of the ruler.²³⁹ In the first *juan* of the *Weishu*, it is recorded,

In the 42nd year, [Emperor Shenyuan 神元] sent his son Emperor Wen to Wei, also to learn natural conditions and social customs. It was the second year of Jingyuan Reign (261 CE) of Wei.

Emperor Wen's name was Shamohan. He stayed in Luoyang as the crown prince, and headed the list of all the Wei guests.

四十二年，遣子文帝如魏，且觀風土。魏景元二年也。

文皇帝諱沙漠汗，以國太子留洛陽，為魏賓之冠。²⁴⁰

In 261 CE, Liwei 力微 sent his son Shamohan (沙漠汗) to the Cao Wei (曹魏) as a hostage, and he stayed in Luoyang as the state crown prince (*guo taizi* 国太子). The reason that Shamohan was sent as a hostage was perhaps because he was the oldest son of Liwei. Thus he was recognized as the crown prince by the Wei court. He, however, did not have the title of crown prince given by the Xianbei ruler Liwei. It is also because the crown prince system did not yet exist among the Tuoba Xianbei people as yet. Later,

²³⁹ *Weishu*, *juan* 1, 4-5.

²⁴⁰ *Weishu*, *juan* 1, 3-4.

when Shamohan returned from the Wei capital, he was called “crown prince” by the chiefs (大人) but with the implication of eldest son (*zhangzi* 长子).²⁴¹ Shamohan apparently did not have privileges over his brothers, and was even disliked by the chiefs because he was influenced by the Han culture.²⁴²

The Tuoba Xianbei polity and the Cao Wei 曹魏 dynasty had already tried to make peace through marriage in 258 CE.²⁴³ In this case of Shamohan, the Cao Wei court required a “unilateral hostage”²⁴⁴ from the Tuoba Xianbei polity and initially might have asked for the crown prince as the hostage. The Xianbei could not meet this requirement as they had no system of a crown prince. Later, the Wei required the eldest son as someone who would be comparable to the crown prince in the Han system. As a hostage, Shamohan was treated as the crown prince by the Cao Wei government. This treatment created a negative impression about Shamohan among the Xianbei people once he was returned home. According to the historical record, the chiefs demanded that Shamohan be killed because they worried that Shamohan would exchange their customs for those of Han culture.²⁴⁵ But in fact, the chiefs worried that the support of the Jin court behind Shamohan might interfere with the Xianbei polity.²⁴⁶ The death of Shamohan shows that diplomatic communication through hostages giving did not successfully establish the

²⁴¹ Tian 田余庆, *Tuoba shitan* 拓跋史探, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2011, p.13. Taizi 太子 also has the meaning of the eldest son.

²⁴² *Weishu*, *juan* 1, 4-5.

²⁴³ *Weishu*, *juan* 1, 3-4.

²⁴⁴ Lien-sheng Yang, Hostages in Chinese History, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol.15, no.3/4 (Dec., 1952), pp.507–521.

²⁴⁵ *Weishu*, *juan* 1, 4-5.

²⁴⁶ While Shamohan staying in Luoyang, the dynasty in the Central Plain changed from the Cao Wei to the Western Jin, and he was still kept by the Jin court.

crown prince system in the Xianbei polity. On the contrary, the special treatment by the Wei might even have resulted in his death. Through this diplomatic relationship, the Tuoba Xianbei regime might have learned about the institution of crown prince but did not adopt it.²⁴⁷

3.3.2 Seeking Change

In 398 CE after formally founding the Northern Wei Dynasty and Tuoba Gui's 拓跋珪 enthronement at Pingcheng 平城, the succession of imperial power concerned Tuoba Gui, who wanted to change the succession tradition in his kingdom. Instead of creating a crown prince system based on the Han tradition, Tuoba Gui tried to kill his son's mother as a way of appointing him as successor. In *Weishu*, it is recorded that,

In the beginning, the emperor (Emperor Taizong, Tuoba Si 拓跋嗣)'s mother, Lady Liu was forced to commit suicide [by Emperor Taizu 太祖 (Tuoba Gui 拓跋珪)]. Emperor Taizu told the emperor (Tuoba Si) that, "Once, Emperor Wu of Han intended to appoint his son [as heir apparent] and [therefore] put his mother to death. He did not [wish to] allow his consorts subsequently to interfere with state affairs and [thereby] cause outside families [i.e., distaff families] to create troubles. You ought to succeed to the throne. That is why I have farsightedly emulated Emperor Wu of the Han, and carried out this long-term plan."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ The parallel case was the Modu 冒顿, as the eldest son, served as hostage in Yuezhi Kingdom, and he was also recorded as "taizi 太子" in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*. Refer to footnote 143 in this chapter.

²⁴⁸ The translation of Emperor Taizu's words is from Valentin C. Golovachev (2002), "Matricide among the Tuoba-Xianbei and its Transformation during the Northern Wei," *Early Medieval China*, 2002:1, 1–41.

初，帝母劉貴人賜死，太祖告帝曰：「昔漢武帝將立其子而殺其母，不令婦人後與國政，使外家為亂。汝當繼統，故吾遠同漢武，為長久之計。」²⁴⁹

This was Tuoba Gui's first attempt to appoint his eldest son Tuoba Si as his heir apparent by killing the successor's mother. Because of his mother's death, the young Tuoba Si, who was eighteen at that time,²⁵⁰ remained inconsolable, which irritated his father. In the end, Tuoba Si had to flee the capital and failed to become Tuoba Gui's heir apparent.²⁵¹ Then, Emperor Taizu made his second attempt to make Qinghe 清河 King, Tuoba Shao 拓跋紹 was his successor, so he also tried to kill Shao's 紹 mother, Lady He 賀. This time, Tuoba Gui was hesitant to kill Lady He,²⁵² maybe because of the earlier case. He also had to consider the family background of Lady He; she was the younger sister of his mother and from the powerful Helan 贺兰 unite (*bu* 部).²⁵³ Tuoba Gui's hesitancy eventually caused his own death. Lady He asked her son to rescue her, and Tuoba Shao led several attendants and eunuchs into the palace and killed Emperor Taizu.²⁵⁴

Even though the tradition of appointing the heir apparent and killing his mother caused Tuoba Gui's death, this tradition was kept and practiced throughout most of the Northern Wei dynasty. The origin of this practice still is controversial. Tuoba Gui himself

²⁴⁹ *Weishu*, *juan* 3, 49.

²⁵⁰ Golovachev, 2002, p.21.

²⁵¹ *Weishu*, *juan* 3, 49.

²⁵² *Weishu*, *juan* 16, 389-390.

²⁵³ Li Ping 李凭, *Beiwei Pingcheng shiqi* 北魏平城时期, Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000, pp.72-74.

²⁵⁴ *Weishu*, *juan* 16, 390.

claimed that he adopted this practice from Emperor Wu of the Han, but some scholars argue that this practice was Tuoba Gui's own invention or a relic of steppe culture.²⁵⁵ The origin of the practice may have been that maternal relatives in the early Tuoba history were powerful and often interfered in the Tuoba succession. Even Tuoba Gui himself came to power because of the support from his maternal relatives.²⁵⁶ To prevent the interference of maternal relatives, Tuoba Gui also forcibly dispersed the Helan 贺兰 and Dugu 独孤 lineages (tribes) to weaken them. In this way, Tuoba Gui tried to eliminate the threats to himself and his descendants. Although Emperor Taizu never used the crown prince as a means of hand over power, he already had set up a political environment for using the heir apparent system of Han tradition in the future.

After Tuoba Gui's death, the process of power transition shows the continuing dominance of Inner Asian tradition. The day after the death of Emperor Shizu, King Qinghe summoned all the officials (*bailiao* 百僚) to the palace, and asked whom they wanted to rule them. This meeting can be understood based on the "election" tradition of Inner Asian succession. Here is the record from *Weishu*,

The next day, the palace gate did not open till noon. [Tuoba] Shao announced the imperial edit, and summoned the officials facing the north in front of the Duan gate of the Western Palace. Shao talked to the officials between the door leaves, "I have a father, I also have an elder brother. Whom do you want to follow?" From the kings and dukes on, they were all surprised and frightened; nobody replied to him. After a while, Zhangsun Song as Duke Nanping said: "We wish to

²⁵⁵ Tian Yuqing, 2011, 1–49; Golovachev, 2002, 2–41.

²⁵⁶ Tian Yuqing, 2011, 1–49.

follow your majesty.” The officials only then knew the passing away of the emperor but were unaware how the emperor had died. Only Yuan Lie as Duke Yinping left crying. So both the court and country were agitated, and people were all disloyal [to Shao]. He Hu as Marquis Feiru (肥如) raised a beacon fire in the north of Anyang city, so the people of the Helan unite all went to join; the other old unites also led their juniors to assemble the clansmen, and often gathered together.

明日，宮門至日中不開，紹稱詔召百僚於西宮端門前北面而立，紹從門扇間謂群臣曰：「我有父，亦有兄，公卿欲從誰也？」王公已下皆驚愕失色，莫有對者。良久，南平公長孫嵩曰：「從王。」群臣乃知宮車晏駕，而不審登遐之狀，唯陰平公元烈哭泣而去。於是朝野兇兇，人懷異志。肥如侯賀護舉烽於安陽城北，故賀蘭部人皆往赴之，其餘舊部亦率子弟招集族人，往往相聚。²⁵⁷

At that time, King Qinghe already had the palace under his control. During the meeting, King Qinghe did not come out of the palace to meet them, and but only opened the gate slightly, and asked the officials “I have a father, I also have an elder brother. Whom do you want to follow?” The father was referring to Tuoba Gui (Tuoba Shao’s father), and the elder brother was Tuoba Si, the one who ran away from his father.²⁵⁸ At that time, the officials and nobles did not know the emperor already had been killed. They thought there might have been a coup inside the palace, which was led by Tuoba Shao’s elder brother. So Tuoba Shao asked them to pick sides between Tuoba Gui and him, as to who would be their ruler. Then the officials were ignorant of the actual

²⁵⁷ *Weishu*, juan 16, 390.

²⁵⁸ Scholars have different interpretations of this sentence. Li Ping argues that the “father” here should be “uncle (*shufu* 叔父)” based on the record in *Zizhi tongjian*. But in both *Weishu* and *Beishi* 北史, which were earlier than *Zizhi tongjian*, “father (*fu* 父) is recorded. By accepting the version in *Zizhi tongjian*, Li Ping further argues the uncle here refers to Tuoba Lie 拓跋烈. Since the earlier text in *Weishu* and *Beishi* can be well understood and explained, the interpretation relying on the later text with different record and hypothesis is less reliable. Li Ping, 2000, pp.98–108.

situation inside the palace, and which side should they pick. They were scared and remained silent. In the end, Zhangsun Song 长孙嵩, whose opinion was valued since he was one of the Xianbei high rank nobles, came up and gave the absolute right answer, “We wish to follow your majesty.” That is because Tuoba Shao was the one asking the question, for the officials and nobles, Tuoba Shao should have the palace under his control or at least he was the one in charge of their safety. Through the meeting, Qinghe King received support from the nobles and officials. It is reasonable to argue that Tuoba Shao tried to legitimize his succession through an election at the meeting.

Besides the support from the meeting, He Hu 贺护, who was from the Helan unit, summoned Helan people to gather in Anyang city. There were also other gatherings of the Helan people. They supposedly gathered to support King Qinghe, Tuoba Shao, because his mother was from the Helan tribe. King Qinghe, however, did not prepare for the guards inside the palace, who had followed Tuoba Gui for years, and eventually turned against him and seized him. Then, the nobles elected Tuoba Si as the next ruler.

The military played a role in the transition, but the election process was more significant. Tuoba Shao led several people to the palace. They killed the emperor. Tuoba Shao then attempted to make himself the lawful successor. Tuoba Shao asked the participants of the meeting to choose the new leader. He received the support of all the nobles participating in the meeting although some of them secretly were of another mind. Yuan Lie 元烈 (Tuoba Lie 拓跋烈), who had journeyed out of the capital and brought Emperor Taizong back to confront Yuan Shao. At that time, Emperor Taizong was not in

control of the major military power, and his success was brought about by the coup of some of his palace guards. Another consensus was reached right after that. The transition process is full of compromise, default and murder,²⁵⁹ and the decisive factor in the Inner Asian succession system was consensus rather than violence.²⁶⁰

3.3.3 First Crown Prince and Inspector of the State

Maybe because of his own experience, Tuoba Si, Emperor Taizong of Wei, did not follow his father's way of appointing the heir apparent by killing his mother.²⁶¹ While facing the problem of succession, he secretly turned to Cui Hao 崔浩, a Han literatus, for advice. In *Weishu*, it is recorded that,

Emperor Taizong constantly had indispositions, and unusual manifestations repeatedly appeared. So he secretly sent a eunuch to ask

²⁵⁹ This part is sometimes omitted by researchers. For instance, in Lin Hu 林鹤's article about the succession of Emperor Taizong of Liao, he considered the "election (*shixuan* 世选) tradition was a "democratic" electoral activity, so anything which violated the democratic principle should be considered as the election tradition. In the case of Emperor Taizong's succession, the dowager empress already showed her preference for Deguang on other occasions, and even executed some who supported Yelü Bei. When she called for all the chiefs (*qiuzhang* 酋长), she said she did not have a preference. This was similar to what Yuan Shao said ("I have a father, and I also have an elder brother, whom do you want to follow?"), but the chiefs all chose to compromise and consensus was reached soon because of the opinion of the regent (*Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 275, 8993). What Lin Hu does not take into consideration is that the Inner Asian election tradition is not only about the "democratic" electoral activity, but also includes compromise, default and even murder. Both the dowager empress/s opinion and the capacity of Yelü Deguang (later Emperor Taizong) were important for the chiefs to consider, and the dowager empress and Emperor Taizong also needed the affirmations from all the chiefs. Lin Hu, *Liao Taizong jiwei kao* 辽太宗继位考, *Beifang wenwu*, 2016, no.3, 94–99.

²⁶⁰ The participant was not punished because a consensus had been reached under the threat of King Qinghe. For instance, Zhangsun Song was not punished for his compromise by the next emperor Tuoba Si, but was even given a more important post after the emperor's enthronement as one of the "Eight Dukes (*bagong* 八公)." *Weishu*, *juan* 25, 643.

²⁶¹ Li Ping argues that Tuoba Tao's biological mother died because he was appointed as heir apparent. But there was no direct textual evidence about his speculation. Also Tuoba Tao's mother died in 420, and he was appointed in 422. In other words, Emperor Taizong did not decide if he should appoint Tuoba Tao as his successor in 420 when Tao's mother died. Li Ping, 2000, 160–161.

Cui Hao, and said, “ I have been ill for years, yet treatment has not reduce my illness. I am afraid that if I suddenly died, all my sons are young. What is to be done? Please make a posthumous plan for me.”

太宗恒有微疾，怪異屢見，乃使中貴人密問於浩曰：「，朕疾彌年，療治無損，恐一旦奄忽，諸子並少，將如之何？其為我設圖後之計。」²⁶²

Like his father and all the emperors mentioned in this chapter, Tuoba Si wanted one of his sons to succeed to his throne, but worried that it would not happen if he died suddenly. The reason given by Tuoba Si was that his sons were young. Apparently, Tuoba Si knew that the youthful and inexperienced candidate was not favored in the Inner Asian succession system, and other nobles in the Tuoba clan would covet the throne.

Therefore, he tried to confront the Inner Asian succession tradition by turning to a Han literatus for suggestions without informing other members of the ruling family of his intentions. Cui Hao first assured the emperor that his health would not be affected by strange astronomical phenomena and then gave his suggestion on the succession. Cui Hao understood Emperor Taizong’s conflict about the succession issue. He first pointed out that, since the beginning of the dynasty, there was no established tradition for appointing the heir apparent. This had placed the regime in danger since the beginning of the Yongxing 永興 reign (the first reign of Emperor Taizong, 409–413 CE). He suggested that the Emperor appoint an heir apparent, and appoint some trustworthy nobles and officials as his tutors, assistants, guests and friends. Cui Hao emphasized the

²⁶² Weishu, juan 35, 812.

benefit of the crown prince system for the emperor. The crown prince could deal with the civil and military issues, and control the supreme power for the emperor. The emperor could rebuild his health by rest and taking medicine. Anyone who coveted the throne after the emperor's death would desist because there was an already experienced lord as crown prince.²⁶³ After introducing the crown prince system, Cui Hao suggested how to choose the heir apparent, and who should be chosen, saying,

Now the eldest prince Tao (Tuoba Tao) is almost one year old. He is wise and gentle, and is cared for by everybody. If he became the heir apparent at that time, it will be the fortune of all under heaven. Appointing the eldest one as the crown prince is the great principle of the ritual. If (your majesty) waits until all the sons become grown-up and then picks from them, it would violate the heavenly ethic of (family relationship), which will lead to the disaster of stepping on the thin ice.

今長皇子燾，年漸一周，²⁶⁴明叡溫和，眾情所繫，時登儲副，則天下幸甚。立子以長，禮之大經。若須並待成人而擇，倒錯天倫，則生履霜堅冰之禍。²⁶⁵

Cui Hao suggested that Emperor Taizong appoints his eldest son, Tuoba Tao. A major characteristic of the Han crown prince institution was to appoint the crown prince

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ About “yizhou 一周” here, Li Ping argues it means twelve years old basing on the sentence “twelve years to form a circle (*shier sui er zhou* 十二岁而周)” in *Huainanzi*, *juan* 3, 37. The context of this sentence is about Jupiter orbiting the sun, and a circle is twelve years. So “zhou” here means a circle formed in twelve years by Jupiter, but there is another usage of “zhou 周,” which formed in 28 years by a different planet. So “zhou 周” implies different durations of time in *Huainanzi*. But both in *Jinshu* and *Weishu*, “yizhou 一周” also appears several times, and often means “one year.” For instance, in *Jinshu*, *juan* 95, Du Buqian 杜不愆 said someone needed one “zhou 周” to recovery from illness, and then that man was ill for one year. (*Jinshu*, *juan* 95, 2479). There are also other examples in *Jinshu*, *juan* 101, p.2644; *Weishu*, *juan* 11, 287. In all these examples, “yizhou 一周” means one year. Therefore, the parallel case in Cui Hao's statement should also mean one year. Li Ping, 2000, p.118.

²⁶⁵ 履霜堅冰 *lǚshuang jianbing*, from *Zhouyi*, Kun diagram. “*lǚshuang*” means stepping on the hoarfrost, *jianbing* means firm ice. It means from stepping on the hoarfrost foreseeing the forming of firm ice. In the context of Cui Hao's words, it means from violating the heavenly ethical family relationship foreseeing the future disaster.

at an early age because of his birthright. Cui Hao specifically pointed out that the emperor should not wait until all his sons were grown and then choose among them, which might violate the heavenly ethical family relationship and be disastrous. The principle of “appointing the eldest one as heir apparent” introduced by Cui Hao, however, differs from the usual Han principle of choosing the empress’ eldest son as heir apparent. He adjusted this principle because, according to the historical records, there was no empress in the inner court of Empress Taizong.

Tuoba Si, however, did not accept Cui Hao’s suggestion immediately, but adopted part of it with some adjustment. First of all, he waited until his eldest son Tuoba Tao was fifteen, an age one was considered to be a grown man in ancient China,²⁶⁶ to appoint him as heir apparent. The decision probably was made without consulting Cui Hao, but rather with Zhangsun Song, a high-ranking Xianbei noble. In the *Weishu*, it is recorded that when Emperor Taizong turned to Zhangsun Song for advice, he was seriously ill, different from the indisposition that Taizong had mentioned earlier. He did not ask about his heir apparent but about his successor. Zhangsun Song recommended Tuoba Tao as the successor because he was the oldest and was virtuous according to both Song and the emperor.²⁶⁷ Then Tuoba Tao was appointed both as the crown prince²⁶⁸ and inspector of the state.

²⁶⁶ Generally speaking, in ancient China, people who are older than fifteen years old can be considered as grown men, although there are various standards about the age of grown men. Hu Fagui 胡发贵, *Zhongguo gudai de chengren guannian 中国古代的成人观念*, *Wenshi zhishi 文史知识*, 1995, no.1, 24–28.

²⁶⁷ *Weishu*, *juan 25*, 644.

²⁶⁸ In the biography of Emperor Taizong and Emperor Shizu (Tuoba Tao), it did not clearly state that Tuoba Tao was appointed as the crown prince, but only as an inspector of the state. Li Ping had discussed this

The record in *Weishu* shows the heir apparent Tuoba Tao sat in the main hall dealing with state affairs with six assistant ministers. The emperor intentionally avoided the heir apparent in the court and was happy with Tuoba Tao's capability. He told his attendants that with the crown prince in the court they could travel around the state and launch expeditions against his enemies.²⁶⁹ When the officials sometimes sent him problems in the court, he even replied, "I don't know about it. It should be decided by the ruler of the state (*guozhu* 国主)."²⁷⁰ It seems that the emperor passed all the state affairs on to the crown prince. Emperor Taizong still controlled the martial affairs and dealt with some major civil issues,²⁷¹ and, apparently not affected by his health condition, he travelled around the states and even launched several expeditions against his enemies.²⁷² Later, after Tuoba Tao's enthronement, he also arranged that his crown prince Tuoba Huang 拓跋晃 play a similar role as inspector of the state for almost eight years.²⁷³

Cui Hao tried to use the Confucian classics to justify the crown prince's role, and he named it the "inspector of the state." It is clear that this "inspector of the state" was very different from the inspector of the state in Han tradition discussed earlier in this chapter. In the Han tradition, the crown prince only plays the temporary role of "inspector of the state (*jianguo* 監国)" during the absence of the emperor from the capital. While Tuoba Tao dealt with state affairs as the inspector of the state, however, Emperor

issue in his book, and argued Tuoba Tao was appointed as crown prince based on records in *Beishi* and *Zizhi tongjian*. Li Ping, 2000, 83–87.

²⁶⁹ *Weishu*, *juan* 35, 813.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ Yoshifumi Kubozoe 窪添慶文, *Weijin Nanbeichao guanliao zhi yanjiu* 魏晉南北朝官僚制研究, Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2015, 184–191.

²⁷² Li Ping, 2000, 90–92.

²⁷³ Yoshifumi Kubozoe, 2015, 184–191.

Taizong was often in the capital but intentionally avoided him. Through the role of “inspector of the state,” Emperor Taizong transferred, in advance, the supreme power to his crown prince while he maintained control of the military and some other key issues. In this sense, the inspector of the state in the Northern Wei dynasty essentially is similar to the role played by the crown princes, such as Shi Hong, Liu Can, Shi Sui and so forth. In the Sixteen Kingdoms period discussed above They all managed the state affairs for the emperors, and only the major military affairs and important sentences were decided by the emperors. Meanwhile, similar to the Sixteen Kingdoms period, a powerful crown prince could escape the emperor’s control and become a threat to the emperor. The inspector of the state, Tuoba Huang, crown prince of Emperor Shizu (Tuoba Tao), probably was sentenced to death by his father because of the conflicts between them.²⁷⁴ After Emperor Shizu, the crown prince in the Northern Wei did not ever play the role of “inspector of the state” again.²⁷⁵

3.3.4 The Distorted Crown Prince Institution

After the appointment of the first crown prince by Emperor Taizong in the Northern Wei dynasty, the next five emperors—Emperor Shizu Tuoba Tao, Emperor

²⁷⁴ Yoshiaki Kawamoto 川本芳昭, *Gi Shin Nanbokuchō jidai no minzoku mondai* 魏晉南北朝時代の民族問題, Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1998, 109–116.

²⁷⁵ Later, Emperor Xianzu Tuoba Hong 拓跋弘 abdicated and handed over his crown to his heir apparent. The power structure after the retirement of the emperor was actually similar to the “inspector of the state” in some way. There are different interpretations for the retirement of emperorship. Andrew Eisenberg argues it is to ensure “the smooth ascension to the throne of the future Xiaowendi.” Li Mingren points out that Emperor Xianzu wanted to hand over his crown to his brother in the beginning because he wanted to have a powerful emperor to confront the dowager empress. So his retirement was to avoid conflicting with the Dowager Empress Feng, but he was still killed by Feng after his retirement. Andrew Eisenberg, 2008, 53; Li Mingren, 2013, 113.

Gaozong Tuoba Jun 拓跋濬, Emperor Xianzu Tuoba Hong 拓跋弘, Emperor Gaozu Tuoba Hong 拓跋宏 (later Yuan Hong 元宏), Emperor Shizong Yuan Ke (元恪)— all appointed their own heirs apparent, six in total, and four of them successfully succeeded to the throne and became emperors. However, after the death of Emperor Suzong Yuan Xu 元颢, and especially after Erzhu Rong 尔朱荣 controlled Luoyang, the supreme power was no longer held by the Tuoba imperial family. During that time, the succession, or literally changing of the emperors, came to be manipulated by the warlords, such as the Erzhu, Yuwen 宇文 and Gao 高 families, so an heir apparent usually was not appointed. Before that, it seems the crown prince institution played an important and effective role during the imperial succession. Compared to the Han tradition, the crown prince in Northern Wei, however, was distorted from the beginning and caused some unexpected results.

The distortion was caused mainly by the tradition of appointing the crown prince and killing his mother at the same time created by Tuoba Tao. While Tuoba Gui created this tradition, his intention was to assure that supreme power was in the hands of his successors and to exclude the maternal relatives. In the Han tradition, the crown prince was the eldest son of the empress, and the heir apparent was interlocked with the empress both biologically and politically. So the emperor was not able to remove one of them without doing the same to the other.²⁷⁶ In other words, the Han crown prince system severely restricted the emperor's power in choosing and removing his successor. With the Northern Wei custom, the mothers of the heirs apparent usually were not empresses when

²⁷⁶ Andrew Eisenberg, 2008, 51.

they gave birth, and they also were killed soon after their son was selected as crown princes, usually the eldest son. In this circumstance, the role of crown prince was not interlocked with that of the empress; therefore he easily could be removed by a powerful emperor. Among the six crown princes, two, Tuoba Huang 拓跋晃 and Tuoba Xun 拓跋恂 (Yuan Xuan 元恂) were not able to succeed the throne, but rather were removed by their powerful fathers, Emperors Shizu and Gaozu.

After his mother's death, the crown prince was usually assigned to a wet nurse or stepmother, who usually came from regimes conquered by Northern Wei and had no political base in the court.²⁷⁷ The stepmother or wet nurse raised the crown prince and also provided protection for him.²⁷⁸ When the crown prince succeeded to the throne, she often was proclaimed as the dowager empress who took over the power of the inner court, such as Empress Dowager Chang 常. Later, however, the custom of killing the crown prince's mother was manipulated by the dominant female in the inner court, especially Dowager Empress Feng 冯. She insisted on applying this custom, so that she could then raise and control the heir apparent. Both Emperor Gaozu and Yuan Xun 元恂 were raised by her. The succession of Emperor Gaozu was also supported by her. While the emperor was young and under the protection of the dowager empress, the supreme power was not controlled by the emperor but by the dowager empress. Only when the emperor grew up and was powerful enough to confront the dowager empress, might he be able to take back

²⁷⁷ Jennifer Holmgren, "The Harem in Northern Wei Politics --- 398-498 AD," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, 1(1983): 71-95; Andrew Eisenberg, 2008, 50.

²⁷⁸ In the biography of Emperor Gaozong's wet nurse, Dowager Empress Chang 常 was praised for her toil and protection. *Weishu*, *juan* 13, 327.

his power, such as happened with Emperor Gaozu. In some occasions, the emperor was killed and replaced by the dowager empress with a younger one who could be easily manipulated, such as how Dowager Empress Feng 冯 enthroned Emperor Xianzu.²⁷⁹ Therefore, one may argue that the custom of killing the crown prince's mother actually assured the role of the crown prince and his succession.

Later during Emperor Shizong's reign, because of this custom, the imperial concubines did not want to give birth to boys. This may be why Shizong only had one son, Yuan Xu 元颢.²⁸⁰ Dowager Empress Hu was the biological mother of Yuan Xu; she was not killed perhaps because of Emperor Shizong's protection.²⁸¹ While Yuan Xu succeeded to the throne, he was too young, so Dowager Empress Hu dealt with the state affairs as the regent. Not having a son, the adult Yuan Xu eventually was killed by his mother because of the conflict between them while the warlord Erzhu Rong threatened the court.²⁸² The crown prince institution, therefore, was no longer applied in the Northern Wei.

Although the Northern Wei crown prince institution was differed from that of the Han tradition, the Northern Wei ruler still tried to immutate certain aspects of the Han tradition under the influence of the Han literati in the court, especially during Emperor Gaozu's reign. Confucian literatus Li Biao 李彪 suggested to Gaozu that the education of

²⁷⁹ Refer to footnote 139.

²⁸⁰ Besides Yuan Xu, Emperor Shizong had another elder son Yuan Chang, who, however, died at the age of three.

²⁸¹ Li Ping, 2000, 171–172; Tian Yuqing, 2011, 48.

²⁸² *Zhizhi tongjian*, juan 152, 4738-4739.

the crown prince should be taken seriously for the sake of the state.²⁸³ Gaozu valued his opinion and assigned tutors to Yuan Xun 元恂 to make him study during the day.²⁸⁴ The education, however, was not successful. Yuan Xun did not like reading the classics, and even escaped from Luoyang to Pingcheng, which directly caused him to be stripped of his role as heir apparent.²⁸⁵ Emperor Gaozu also applied Han rituals to the crown prince, such as the capping ceremony (*guanli* 冠礼), to highlight Yuan Xun's role. Yet the ritual also was applied wrongly.²⁸⁶

3.3.5 Chaotic Succession Again: Northern Qi and Northern Zhou

The power structure of renewed military decentralization inside the ruling group of Northern Qi and Northern Zhou was similar to events in the Sixteen Kingdoms discussed above, which caused a similar development of the institution of crown prince. In the early stage of Northern Qi and Northern Zhou, the lateral succession was applied. The early emperors in Northern Zhou, Yuwen Jue 宇文觉 and Yuwen Yu 宇文毓, both failed to appoint successors. The early emperors in Northern Qi, Gao Yang 高洋 and Gao Yan 高演, both appointed their successors; but their heirs apparent, Gao Yin 高殷 and Gao Bainian 高百年, failed to succeed to the throne. The third emperors in Northern Qi and Northern Zhou, Gao Zhan 高湛 and Yuwen Yong 宇文邕, respectively appointed

²⁸³ *Weishu*, *juan* 62, 1384-1385.

²⁸⁴ It is recorded that Emperor Gaozu did not allow Yuan Xun to take a rest in the noon inside his palace at the suggestion of his officials. *Weishu*, *juan* 22, 589.

²⁸⁵ *Weishu*, *juan* 22, 588.

²⁸⁶ *Weishu*, *juan* 108, vol.4, 2810-2811.

their crown princes, Gao Wei 高纬 and Yuwen Yun 宇文赟, who successfully succeeded to the throne. During Gao Wei's reign, however, Northern Qi was conquered by Northern Zhou. After the death of Yuwen Yun, the supreme power of Northern Zhou was taken over by the assistant minister Yang Jian 杨坚, who later became Emperor Wen of Sui.

To secure their crown prince's role as their successors, some emperors let their heirs apparent play the role of "inspector of the state" (*jianguo*),²⁸⁷ or even abdicated and handed over the throne to the heir apparent in advance to secure the process of the transition of power.²⁸⁸

3.3.6 Conclusion and Discussion

After the establishment of Northern Wei, Tuoba Gui tried to appoint his successor by killing his son's mother to exclude the maternal relatives' intervention in the succession. This later was treated as a Xianbei custom in the inner court, and was manipulated by the female leaders of the inner court. During the Northern Wei dynasty, the custom of killing the crown prince's mother served to distort the crown prince institution of Han tradition. On the other hand, however, it secured the succession of some crown princes because they were under the protection of the dowager empress. In the late period of Northern Wei, the imperial concubines did not want to give birth to sons because of this custom. This helped to cause its abolition in some way. After this

²⁸⁷ Gao Yang's crown prince, Gao Yin, and Yuwen Yong's heir apparent, Yunwen Yun, both played the role of inspector of the state.

²⁸⁸ Both Gao Zhan and Yunwen Yun abdicated and handed over the throne to their crown prince to secure the process of power transition. Gao Zhan's successor, Gao Wei, also did the same thing but it was because of the military pressure from Northern Zhou.

system was abolished, the Northern Wei also collapsed and a chaotic succession similar to the Sixteen Kingdoms period reappeared in Northern Qi and Northern Zhou.

3.4 Conclusion and Discussion

The ideology behind the crown prince mode of succession as part of the Han enthronement package was a culture of ancestor worship. As Li Biao argued in his memorial to the throne, “Yi (*Book of Changes*) says ‘Nobody but the eldest son can take charge of the sacrificial vessel.’ Zhuan (*Commentary of Zuo*) records ‘The crown prince should bear the vessel of millet in the great sacrifice.’²⁸⁹ If the sacrifice has no host, the imperial ancestral temple would enjoy no food; if the crown prince was removed, then the sacrificial vessel can be handed over to no one.”²⁹⁰ So the crown prince succession was the embodiment of this ancestral worship culture. Even for Inner Asian rulers, when someone seized the throne and claimed himself the emperor, it was expected that he would follow the emperorship custom in the Han tradition; there were no other options. This was different from rulership in the Inner Asian tradition. All the states in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties applied the crown prince system easily as part of the Han enthronement package. This was especially true for rulers in the Sixteen Kingdoms period who lived and studied in the Central Plain for a long time before becoming rulers, such as Liu Yuan and Shi Hu. The Tuoba Xianbei rulers, however, took

²⁸⁹ The original text by Li Biao was “太子奉冢嫡之粢盛。” Here “冢嫡” which means heir apparent should be a mistake for “冢祀.” The original text in Zuo Zhuan was “The crown prince should bear the vessels of millet for the state in the great sacrifices (太子奉冢祀社稷之粢盛).” *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, 1990, Second year of Duke Min, 268.

²⁹⁰ *Weishu*, *juan* 62, 1384-1385. The Chinese text is “《易》称：「主器者，莫若长子。」《传》曰：「太子奉冢嫡之粢盛。」然则祭亡主则宗庙无所飨，冢嫡废则神器无所传。”

two generations to adopt formally the crown prince institution since the establishment of Northern Wei. Perhaps this was because these rulers were not originally based in the Central Plain but in Inner Mongolia.

The research in this chapter shows that these Inner Asian rulers soon found that, unlike other Han institutions, it was almost impossible to successfully apply the crown prince system because the decentralization of military power among the ruling class brought potential powerful competitors to confront the heir apparent. Only six of the sixteen heirs apparent in the seven states during the Sixteen Kingdoms period succeeded to the throne and ruled for more than one year, although two of them were deposed about two years after their enthronement by imperial family members. The early emperors in Northern Wei, Northern Qi and Northern Zhou also faced similar problems. These difficulties can be interpreted in the Inner Asian tradition of the rulership and succession. The decentralization of military and political power among the ruling class determined the way of succession to some extent. So even when the emperor appointed his successor as the heir apparent, his heir apparent still had to face challenges from other powerful competitors among the ruling group.

During this period, emperors applied several measures to solve the problem. One of them was to appoint some of the powerful competitors as assistant ministers for the new emperors; they were the key military figures and needed during wartime. Meanwhile, when the crown prince was old enough, the emperor intentionally arranged for the heir apparent to manage state affairs, and sometimes even sent him to the front lines of war. In these ways, the heir apparent could accumulate experience and power in these affairs.

Some emperors even abdicated and handed over the throne to their heir apparent during their lifetime to secure the process of transition in advance.

In the Han tradition, the political status of the crown prince as the only legitimate successor and the importance of his proper education were both emphasized by Jia Yi, and applied in the Han political system. This description of the crown prince tradition left room in its actual application. For instance, should the crown prince participate in policy making, political administrative activity, and even military activity? How deeply should he be involved? Should the crown prince hold any other positions and titles, and even lead his own army? Divergent answers to these questions with justification from the classics is not necessarily a violation of the principles of the Han tradition of succession.

Inner Asian rulers usually had different answers to these questions compared to the emperors from native dynasties, such as Han, Song and Ming.²⁹¹ With the Inner Asian succession tradition, they worried more about the competence of the crown prince. Even when the crown prince had the title, he could still be challenged after the death of the ruler. Therefore, Inner Asian rulers applied those measures mentioned above to let their heirs apparent build up their political competence, military power and personal influence. These activities prepared them to compete with other nobles. Besides the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern dynasties, this practice also can be found in almost all the so-called conquest dynasties, such as Liao, Jin and Yuan and Qing.

²⁹¹ In the beginning of Tang and Song dynasty, the heir apparent and his organization Eastern Palace (Donggong 东宫) also played an important role. Along with the development of the dynasties, the role of the crown prince and his organization tend to become weaker and weaker. Fan Shuai 范帅, “Yanxi yu qushi: Songdai donggong shuaiwei zhi yuanyin 沿袭与趋势: 宋代东宫衰微之原因”, *Shixue yuekan*, 2016, no.11, 53–61.

These measures, however, did not essentially eliminate the threat to the heir apparent since the powerful competitors still existed. Also, a too powerful heir apparent sometimes became a severe threat to the emperor. With these measures, the crown prince was greatly empowered compared to both the Inner Asian and Han tradition, and actually became a bigger threat to the emperor himself, one comparable to the other nobles in the imperial lineage. Therefore, some emperors promoted another son to compete with the crown prince, or sometimes the heir apparent was removed.

Another more straightforward measure for successfully applying the crown prince system was to eliminate all potential competitors for the heir apparent and even the emperor. Removing or killing the powerful figures in the ruling group, which frequently happened during this period, altered the power structure; more specifically, the decentralization of military and political power among the ruling groups. This measure, however, could weaken the state in terms of military force, which was crucial during wartime. War was practically an ongoing event in the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties.

Part of the reason for the collapse of Former Zhao, Later Zhao, Former Yan and Northern Qi was this measure of eliminating the powerful military figures inside the elite. On the other hand, these measures also distorted the crown prince system. The Inner Asian rulers noticed that the power structure influenced the application of the crown prince system, but what they may not have realize was that in the Han tradition this application was actually also a restriction on the emperor's power. The Han crown prince system aimed to stabilize the process of power transition. To achieve stability, an heir

apparent was appointed, based basically on birthright. The emperor usually could not violate this principle. When the Inner Asian rulers were able to break away from the restraints of a decentralized power structure, they also did not have the restrictions of the Han tradition. So many times they manipulated the crown prince system by choosing the heir apparent first, and then appointing his mother as the empress to follow the system, or even chose whomever they wanted. In doing this, one of the functions of the crown prince system in the Han tradition, which restricted the emperor's power in choosing his successor, disappeared. To some extent, the emperor monopolized the power of choosing and appointing the crown prince. Therefore, through applying the crown prince system, the Inner Asian rulers achieved the centralization of authority, which was different from, and even more centralized, than the Han tradition.²⁹²

The succession problem, however, really was not solved till the end of the Northern Dynasties. In the Sui and early Tang, the succession struggles inside the ruling class were still one of the main issues regarding the stability of the regimes.²⁹³

²⁹² The typical example is the Qing dynasty. After Kangxi Emperor found the crown prince institute was faulted, this institute was not applied in the rest time of the dynasty. All the successors were secretly appointed by the emperors.

²⁹³ Sanping Chen, *Multicultural China in the early Middle Ages*, Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, 17–28.

CHAPTER 4 From “Tribe” to Village?

Unlike the succession system, which usually only directly involves the upper ruling members and is largely controlled by the central power structure, the local political structure has direct impact on a majority of the population. Because of the differences between the local political structures in Inner Asian tradition. and the tradition in the Han and Jin dynasties, after the migration of the Inner Asian groups into the Central Plain, their original local political structure was changed unavoidably either by them or by the Han style government.

The first question about this change is to ask how they lived after the migration. Were they isolated from the Han people, or did they mix with them? Then, the second question is how were they organized after the migration? Was their local political structure changed? If not, why? If so, how? What was the dynamic behind the change? The final question for this transition is about its impact on the polity and the future dynasties. In this chapter, I will examine the transition of Inner Asian people from the perspective of local community and institution, and try to answer these questions.

4.1 Local Political Structure in Han and Inner Asian Tradition

Before reaching the transition of the Inner Asian people in the Central Plain, the local political structures in the Han and Inner Asian traditions must be compared to show their similarities and differences. The local political structure discussed here essentially is the administrative way government controlled the people. One of the main purposes of ancient government administration was to extract human and material resources from the people while maintaining social stability.²⁹⁴ Different local institutions were imposed on the people by the state to achieve this goal.

4.1.1 Local Institution/Community in Han Tradition

Local communities can be formed on different principles. Without the intervention of the state, people can be organized based on bloodline; e.g., the village as a clan in modern Fujian Province in Southern China; or religious belief, e.g., a Buddhist monastery. In early Medieval China, local communities formed on different principles. Starting in 1936, Yang Lien-sheng studied the “magnate clans (haozu 豪族),” a powerful element in local and central government from the Han Dynasty to the Northern Dynasties.²⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the impact of Buddhism on local society during the Northern Dynasties has been examined by Hou Xudong, who also pointed out the difference

²⁹⁴ William G. Growell, “Northern Émigrés and the Problems of Census Registration under the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties,” in *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, edited by Albert E. Dien (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 173.

²⁹⁵ Here the translation of haozu as “magnate clans” is from *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* by Richard von Glahn, Cambridge University Press (2016), 129–167. For Yang’s research, refer to Yang Lien-sheng, Donghan de haozu (Magnate clans in Eastern Han), in *Tsinghua xuebao*, vol.11 (1936, no.4), 1007–1063. About the review on the research on the magnate clans, refer to Li Mingzhao 黎明釗, *Fucou yu zhixu: Han diguo difang shehui yanjiu* (辐辏与秩序: 汉帝国地方社会研究 Power Convergence and Social Order: The Study of Local Society of the Han Empire) (The Chinese University of Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2013), 27–62.

between the local communities as natural units, “villa hamlet (qiu 丘, cun 村, ju 聚, chuan 川, zhuang 庄)” and as administrative units “village (li 里)” in early Medieval China.²⁹⁶ Both types of units simultaneously existed in early Medieval China.²⁹⁷

The natural unit hamlet refers to an inhabited plot of land. The households gathered in a hamlet might have kinship ties to each other. In early Medieval China, however, such gatherings of households were usually not a single clan, but with a combination of different clans (people with different family names).²⁹⁸ These hamlets as natural units arose mainly because of suitability of the environment. For instance, they might be located close to a water source, farmland, or were convenient for transportation. During this period the size of these units vary. Yūichi Ikeda showed that there were only a dozen households in one hamlet.²⁹⁹ Rrtifacts and recently excavated remains also indicate that the scale of population in a hamlet (cun 村 or qiu 丘) was usually less than one hundred inhabitants.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ Hou Xudong 侯旭东, *Wu liu shiji beifang minzhong fojiao xinyang: yi zaoxiangji wei zhongxin de kaocha* (五六世纪北方民众佛教信仰: 以造像记为中心的考察 The Buddhist Belief in the Northern People during Fifth and Sixth Century: A Investigation by Focusing on the Inscriptions on the Buddhist Statues) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue Press 1998); Hou Xudong, *Beichao cunmin de shenghuo shijie* (北朝村民的生活世界, The Everyday World of Northern Dynasties Villagers) (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2005), 11–17. Here I use “village” versus “hamlet” as “administrative unit” versus “natural unit.” Although “the concept of village is extraordinarily ambiguous” (Léopold Genicot, *Rural Communities in the Medieval West* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1900], 3) it does have the meaning of rural administrative unit.

²⁹⁷ Some Japanese scholars argue that the natural unit hamlet in ancient China did not exist until the Northern Dynasties, or the administrative unit village dominated in the Han Dynasty unlike the later dynasties. This argument was influenced heavily by their theory of periodization, and they consider the appearance of “hamlet” as a sign of medieval period. Refer to Hou Xudong, 2005, 11–13.

²⁹⁸ Hou Xudong, 2005, 60–66; Li Mingzhao, 2013, 279–367.

²⁹⁹ Yūichi Ikeda, *Chūgoku kodai no shūraku to chihō gyōsei* (中国古代の聚落と地方行政, Ancient Chinese rural community and local administration) (Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2002), 130–134.

³⁰⁰ The hamlets’ population can be found in two types of materials. One is the official documents, such as the bamboo slips from Zoumalou 走马楼, Changsha 长沙. These documents are more accurate because

Administrative unit villages group natural unit hamlets into larger or smaller units into order to extract human and material resources from the populace for the government. For effective administration of the administrative unit, census and population registration is necessary. With the information from the population registration, the village was then allotted a set number of households, usually one hundred,³⁰¹ but it was not associated directly with a plot of land like the hamlet. So individuals in one village could come from different hamlets, and people in the same hamlet could also belong to different villages.³⁰² The head of the village, called *lili* (里吏, village official), was sent by the a higher authority, usually the county (*xian* 县).³⁰³ In *Jinshu*, it is recorded that,

The county appoints a village official for every hundred households. If the land is vast but sparsely populated, let [the county] appoint the village officials according to circumstances, but they should not be less than [one for every] fifty households.

縣率百戶置里吏一人，其土廣人稀，聽隨宜置里吏，限不得減五十戶。³⁰⁴

Under the village were smaller administrative units, “ten (*shi* 什)” and “five (*wu* 伍),” which consisted of ten and five households. A village usually comprised a “ten.”³⁰⁵ The

these are household registration documents. See Li Mingzhao, 2013, 320–356. The other type of material having the information of population is the inscription from the Buddhist statues. See Hou Xudong, 2005, 27–32.

³⁰¹ “Leader of the *li* (Likui 里魁) is in charge of one *li* including one hundred household,” in *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 118, 3625.

³⁰² Hou Xudong, 2005, 13.

³⁰³ Yan Gengwang 严耕望, *Zhongguo difang xingzheng zhidu shi: Weijin Nanbeichao difang xingzheng zhidu* (中国地方行政制度史: 魏晋南北朝地方行政制度 Chinese history of local political administrative institution: Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties local political administrative institutions) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji press, 2007), 347–349.

³⁰⁴ *Jinshu*, *juan* 24, 746–747.

heads of “ten” and “five” usually were selected from one of the members inside the households. Above the village, there were also several layers of higher authorities including town (*xiang* 乡), county (*xian* 县) and others towards the central government.³⁰⁶ The major officials in the town were sent by the county to collect taxes, conscript labor, and exercise jurisdiction, among other assignments.³⁰⁷

Besides maintaining social stability, one major purpose of these local administrative units was to use the population as needed for conscript labor (for armies and corvée) and taxation. The administrative units controlled the population, involved in agriculture, and strictly constrained the migration of population, which was also beneficial for social stability.

4.1.2 Local Institute/Community in Inner Asian Tradition

How the pre-modern Inner Asian polity was organized is a question still under debate, especially as to the characteristics of the local community. The Xiongnu polity was no exception. The confrontational theories on the Xiongnu polity can be described as

³⁰⁵ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 118, 3625.

³⁰⁶ In the “Table of Bureaucratic and Ministerial Posts (Baiguan gongqing biao, 百官公卿表) of *Hanshu*, it is recorded that “*ting* 亭” was also an administrative unit above village, and it was comprised of ten villages. But *ting* usually is considered as an organization for public security (like tracking down and arresting thieves) subordinate to commandant in chief (*duwei* 都尉) instead of civil officials, and *ting* was in the same rank as town (*xiang*). Li Mingzhao, 2013, 122; Yūichi Ikeda, 2002, 140–143; Yan Gengwang, 2007, 346–347.

³⁰⁷ At the county level, there were so-called “three elders (*sanlao* 三老)” who were selected among the elders (usually older than fifty) inside the town, and they collaborated with the county officials to administer and educate the people. Li Mingzhao, 2013, 122–124; Yan Gengwang, 2007, 344–345.

“Stateless Empire” versus “Headless State.”³⁰⁸ By describing the Xiongnu empire as “Stateless Empire,” scholars such as Thomas Barfield and Nikolai N. Kradin argue that the Xiongnu polity was a supratribal confederation, in which the power of the Chanyu was limited by internal and indigenous tribal leaders whose power derived from his own people from the conical tribes basing on the principle of seniority.³⁰⁹ Here the tribe refers to “an extensive patrilineal kinship organization in which members of a common descent group were ranked and segmented along genealogical lines.”³¹⁰ The tribal leaders largely retained autonomy at the local level partly because of the steppe ecology and pastoral lifestyle.³¹¹ The main reason that these autonomous tribes united and formed a centralized confederation is that they were confronting a common, centralized, powerful Han polity in the south. While confronting the Han Empire, the gifts from the Han court played a key role in supporting the supratribal confederation, since the extensive pastoral economy alone could not maintain it.³¹²

In the “Headless State” argument, the Xiongnu polity was described as a system of territorial fiefs which were managed by the Xiongnu aristocratic family in a largely

³⁰⁸ The two terms were from the titles of two academic works on Xiongnu. David Sneath, *The Headless State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Nikolai N. Kradin, “Stateless Empire: The Structure of the Xiongnu Nomadic Super-Complex Chiefdom,” in *Xiongnu Archaeology: Multidisciplinary Perspectives of the First Steppe Empire in Inner Asia*, edited by Ursula Brosseder, Bryan K. Miller (Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 2011), 77–98.

³⁰⁹ Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 37–39; Nikolai Kradin, 2011, 89–91.

³¹⁰ Thomas Barfield, 1989, 26.

³¹¹ Wang Mingke argues that the vulnerability of the steppe ecology and nomadic pastoralism requires the local units to have the autonomy to adjust their activity swiftly. He describes the Xiongnu social structure as “segmentary structure.” Wang Mingke, *Youmuzhe de jueze: miandui Handiguo de Bei Yayoumu buluo* (游牧者的抉择:面对汉帝国的北亚游牧部落; The nomad's choice: the first encounter between northern nomads and imperial China) (Nanning: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 142–147.

³¹² Thomas Barfield, 1989, 36–60; Nikolai Kradin, 2011, 77–98.

autonomous manner.³¹³ A military-civil decimal hierarchical official system was established to centralize the power on the aristocrat family. So, at the local level, the commoners or soldiers were not in the autonomous tribal unit or kin group, but rather under the rule of the aristocrats through a bureaucratic and military system. The local administrative units were organized in ten, hundred and thousand, and each level had its own head—“head of ten (*shizhang* 什長),” “head of a hundred (*baizhang* 百長)” and “head of a thousand(*qianzhang* 千長),” who were appointed by the aristocrats.³¹⁴ When appointing these local officials to maintain their authority over the local people, the aristocrats might avoid the local kin group leader or clan head to break the bond between them, similar to the Han government’s attitude to the local magnate clans.³¹⁵

For the two opposing theories on the Xiongnu polity, although it has already been pointed out that the “stateless empire” argument is heavily influenced by early anthropology,³¹⁶ the “headless state” argument is also criticized by some scholars.³¹⁷

³¹³ David Sneath, *The Headless State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3, 23; Nicola Di Cosmo, “Aristocratic Elites in the Xiongnu Empire as Seen from Historical and Archaeological Evidence,” in *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*, edited by Herausgegeben von Jürgen Paul (Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2013), 23–54; Christopher Atwood, “Chapter 5: Early Nomads in Chinese and Greek Imperial Ethnography,” in *Tribal Mirage* (draft).

³¹⁴ *Shiji*, *juan* 110, 2891. “Each of these twenty-four chiefs also establishes on their own authority Chiefs of a Thousand, Chiefs of a Hundred, Chiefs of Ten, Supporting Lesser Kings 裨小王, Administrators of Fiefs, Commandants, Household Managers, *Juqu* 且渠, and others.”

³¹⁵ Li Mingzhao, 2013, 179–180.

³¹⁶ Christopher Atwood, “Chapter 5: Early Nomads in Chinese and Greek Imperial Ethnography,” in *Tribal Mirage* (draft). David Sneath also discussed the influence of early anthropology and colonialism on the perception of Inner Asian peoples. But his discussion is more general and not limited on the Xiongnu polity. David Sneath, 2007, 39–92.

³¹⁷ The criticisms on the “headless state” theory, however, are in the overall argument of the book *The Headless State* by David Sneath, instead of focusing on the Xiongnu polity. Peter B. Golden, Review of *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* by David Sneath, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 68, no.1 (Feb., 2009), 293–296. Nikolay N. Kradin, Review of *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* by David Sneath, *Asian Perspectives*, 51:1, 130–138.

Therefore, a discussion about this topic is necessary to illustrate my opinion on these theories. I will review both theories based on a close reading of the textual evidence related to the Xiongnu polity, and then give my conclusions about the characteristics of Xiongnu polity.

4.1.2.1 The Political Structure of the Xiongnu Ruling group

First I examine the textual evidence related to the political structure in the ruling group of the Xiongnu polity. Here the political structure refers to how the power was distributed among the ruling class, and how Chanyu managed and centralized his power. The most important textual evidence for this is from the Biography of the Xiongnu in *Shiji*, it is said,

They establish Worthy (*xian* 賢) Kings (*wang* 王) of the Left and Right, Guli (谷蠡) Kings of the Left and Right, Grand Commanders (*dajiang* 大將) of the Left and Right, Grand Commandants (*duwei* 都尉) of the Left and Right, Grand Household Managers (*da danghu* 大當戶) of the Left and Right, and Gudu (骨都) Marquises (*hou* 侯) of the Left and Right. The Xiongnu call a worthy a *tuqi* (屠耆). Therefore, they usually take the Heir-Apparent to be the Tuqi [i.e., the Worthy] King of the Left. From the likes of the Worthy Kings to the Left and Right down to the Household Managers, the great ones have ten thousand horsemen [and] the small ones have several thousand, all twenty-four leaders (*zhang* 長) are appointed with the title of “[Commander of] Ten Thousand Horsemen”. All great ministers 大臣 have hereditary positions (*shiguan* 世官). The three surnames of the Huyan lineage (*shi* 氏), the Lan lineage, and later the Xubu lineage constitute their nobility (*guizhong* 貴種). All Kings and Commanders (*jiang* 將) of the Left direction reside in the Eastern region facing Shanggu and beyond,

border in the east on the Weimo and Chaoxian. The Kings and Leaders of the Right direction reside in the Western region facing Shangjun, border in the west on the Yuezhi, the Di and the Qiang. Chanyu's court faces Dai and Yunzhong. Each of them has its own area, within which it migrates in search of water and grassland. As to the Worthy Kings to the Left and Right and the Guli Kings to the Left and Right, these are the greatest. The *Gudu* Marquises of the Left and Right assist in the government.

置左右賢王，左右谷蠡王，左右大將，左右大都尉，左右大當戶，左右骨都侯。匈奴謂賢曰「屠耆」，故常以太子為左屠耆王。自如左右賢王以下至當戶，大者萬騎，小者數千，凡二十四長，立號曰「萬騎」。諸大臣皆世官。呼衍氏，蘭氏，其後有須卜氏，此三姓其貴種也。諸左方王將居東方，直上谷以往者，東接穢貉、朝鮮；右方王將居西方，直上郡，以西接月氏、氏、羌；而單于之庭直代、雲中。各有分地，逐水草移徙。而左右賢王、左右谷蠡王最為大國，左右骨都侯輔政。³¹⁸

A similar reference can be found in the *Hanshu*.³¹⁹ It is likely that all twenty-four leaders were from the four royal lineages—the Chanyu lineage Luandi (挛鞮) and other three royal lineage Huyan, Lan and Xubu.³²⁰ Members of the three other lineages often intermarried with the Chanyu lineage.³²¹ The Chanyu had his own territory in the north of Dai and Yunzhong with his court; all twenty-four leaders also had their own territories. The four kings' kingdoms were bigger than the others. These kings and generals normally

³¹⁸ *Shiji*, *juan* 110, 2890–2891. The translation is based on Nicola Di Cosmo's translation in his paper with my own revision. Nicola Di Cosmo, 2013, 26. For instance, the 24 leaders (zhang 长) was translated as "chief" by Di Cosmo.

³¹⁹ *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, 3751.

³²⁰ Di Cosmo states there were only three royal lineages in the Xiongnu polity based on *Shiji* (Di Cosmo, 2013, 28–29). But the Chanyu's surname, which was different from the three, was mentioned ahead of this paragraph of citation. Also in *Hou Hanshu* and *Jinshu*, the Chanyu's lineage is also listed, and the others royal lineages are recorded as "different surnames (异姓)" from the Chanyu lineage (*Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2944-2945; *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2550).

³²¹ In *Hou Hanshu*, it is recorded that the four lineages as "famous lineage (mingzu 名族)" who often intermarried with the Chanyu. *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2944-2945.

remained in their own area with their own court. One exception was the Gudu [骨都] Marquises [hou 侯] of the Left and Right,³²² who remained in the court instead in their own area because they assisted Chanyu in the court.

Among the four titles of king listed in the cited text, the Worthy King of the Left as the heir apparent, was surely of the Chanyu Lineage, and so should have been the other three kings. In *Hou Hanshu*, it is recorded that the four kings, which were called “four corners (*sijiao* 四角),” are all from the Chanyu lineage.³²³ When a new Chanyu was elected, he usually appointed his own heir apparent and other kings to help him secure the central power. An example is Huhanye Chanyu who appointed his older brother as Left King of Guli.³²⁴ Besides the four kings, there are also other kings mentioned in *Hanshu*, such as King of Xiutu 休屠王, King of Kunye 昆邪王, King of Rizhu 日逐王 and King of Xiuxun 休旬王. The latter two were clearly also of Chanyu lineage according to the *Hanshu*.³²⁵

Besides the kings, one Grand Commander of the Left was also of the Chanyu Lineage, and was even appointed as Chanyu later.³²⁶ Other key information, such as other titles of the twenty-four leaders or the existence of other lineages inside the Xiongnu polity, however, was not in the *Shiji* or *Hanshu*. Some of the missing information,

³²² The court of the Right King of Guli (右谷蠡庭) is mentioned in *Hanshu*. *Han shu*, *juan* 94, 3786.

³²³ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2944.

³²⁴ *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.2, 3795.

³²⁵ It is recorded that the Hulugu (狐鹿姑) Chanyu once appointed the son of the Worthy King of the Left as the Rizhu King, and the Tuqi (屠耆) Chanyu's younger cousin was Xiuxun King, who later claimed himself as the Chanyu. In *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.1, 3778; *juan* 94, vol.2, 3796

³²⁶ *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.1, 3778. One of Qietihou Chanyu's son was appointed as Grand Commander of the Left.

fortunately, was included in the biography of Southern Xiongnu in *Hou Hanshu* and the biography of Xiongnu in *Jinshu*. Although in the later period, there was more impact from the Central Plain on the political structure of the Xiongnu, especially after they migrated to the South and were close to the Han people, the Southern Xiongnu still maintained their independence from the Han court for a long time. Meanwhile, because of a closer relationship between the Xiongnu and Han court, the officials of the Eastern Han were able to obtain more accurate information about the Xiongnu polity. In *Hou Hanshu*, it is recorded that,

The noblest ones among the great ministers are Worthy King of the Left, then the lower one Luli King of the Left, then Worthy King of the Right, then Luli King of the Right, who were collectively called four corners (*sijiao* 四角); then Rizhu (日逐) King of the Left and Right, then Wenyudi (温禺鞮) King of the Left and Right, then Jianjiang (渐将) King of the Left and Right, who were together called six corners (*liujiao* 六角). These are all the descendants of the Chanyu family, and they could be Chanyu in sequence. The great ministers with different surnames were the Gudu Marquises of the Left and Right, then Shizhu Gudu Marquises of the Left and Right. The other official titles such as Rizhu, Qiequ (且渠), and Household Manager were all ranked by their power and number of subordinates. The Chanyu's surname is Xulianti (虚连题). The lineages with different surnames are Huyan, Xubu, Qiulin and Lan, all of which were the famous lineages of the state and intermarried with the Chanyu. The Huyan lineage are the left, Lan and the Xubu lineages are the right. They hear and pass judgment on the cases, and decide the degree of the crimes. Then verbally report to Chanyu without official documents and written confessions.

其大臣贵者左贤王，次左谷蠡王，次右贤王，次右谷蠡王，谓之四角；次左右日逐王，次左右温禺鞮王，次左右渐将王，是为六角；皆单于子弟，次第当为单于者也。异姓大臣：左右骨都侯，次左右尸逐骨都侯，其余日逐、且渠、当户诸官号，各以权力优劣、部众多少为高下次第焉。单于姓虚连题。异姓有呼衍氏、须卜氏、丘林氏、兰氏四姓，为国中名族，常与单于婚姻。呼衍氏

为左，兰氏、须卜氏为右，主断狱听讼，当决轻重，口白单于，无文书簿领焉。³²⁷

In the Southern Xiongnu, the four kings recorded in *Shiji* also were listed as “four corners (*sijiao* 四角).” Like the other six kings listed above as “six corners (*liujiao* 六角), they were all of the Chanyu lineage (Chanyu *zidi* 单于子弟).

Besides the three lineages mentioned in *Shiji*, another lineage recorded as Qiulin 丘林 became part of the nobility in the Southern Xiongnu during the Eastern Han dynasty.³²⁸ These four lineages intermarried with the Chanyu lineage, and also served in the Chanyu court as judicial officers. Therefore, there was an expansion of both the Chanyu royal lineage and the bureaucratic system, which also is indicated in the biography of Xiongnu in *Jinshu* where sixteen kings are listed, and all of them are of the Chanyu lineage.³²⁹

Based on the description of the central political structure of the Chanyu polity in *Shiji* and *Hou Hanshu*, all 24 leaders (*zhang* 长), most of who were from the Chanyu lineage, were appointed by the Chanyu. Each of these leaders had his own territory ruled by his court. At least the authority of the Chanyu lineage members among the 24 leaders was from the top instead of from the bottom, which is the so-called local “autonomous tribal units.” In Thomas Barfield’s argument, he considers the 24 leaders as tribal leaders,

³²⁷ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2944. The translation is by the author.

³²⁸ Qiulin 丘林 is recorded as Qiao 乔 in *Jinshu*. *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2550.

³²⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2550.

who can command loyalty from their own tribal people.³³⁰ This argument is not in accordance with the textual evidence. Barfield's argument, however, does correctly note the loose control of the Chanyu over the fief-holders.

Despite the fact that a large number of the leaders in the Xiongnu ruling group were from the Chanyu lineage, which indicates the power structure of "feudalism," there were still other kings in the historical record. It is unclear if these kings were also from the Chanyu lineage or were local leader integrated into the Xiongnu polity. Barfield argues that the King of Xiutu 休屠, King of Kunye 昆邪 and King of Aojian 奧鞬 were all local tribal leaders, who led people and easily walked away from the Chanyu's rule.³³¹ The King of Xiutu's and King of Kunye's case happened during the reign of Emperor Wu 武 of Han. After they were defeated by the Han army, it is recorded that,

The Chanyu was angry at the King of Xiutu and King of Hunye, who lived in the western part of his domain, because they allowed the Han to capture or kill twenty or thirty thousand of their men; he wanted to send them a summons, intending to execute them. The Hunye and Xiutu kings, terrified, planned to surrender to the Han. The Han dispatched General Piaoqi to go and meet them, but on the way the Hunye king murdered the Xiutu king and combined the latter's forces with his own.

單于怒昆邪王、休屠王 居西方為漢所殺虜數萬人，欲召誅之。昆邪、休屠王 恐，謀降漢，漢使票騎將軍迎之。昆邪王殺休屠王，并將其眾降漢，³³²

³³⁰ Thomas Barfield, 1989, 40–41.

³³¹ Thomas Barfield, 1989, 40–41.

³³² *Hanshu, juan* 94, vol.1, 3769. The translation is based on Thomas Barfield's translation with my revision. Thomas Barfield, 1989, 40–41.

Because of their military failure, which irritated the Chanyu, the Xiutu and Hunye kings wanted to break away from the control of the Chanyu. After surrendering to the Han, the Hunye king resettled inside Han territory with 40,000 of his people. The Han Emperor bestowed the title of Luoyin Marquis 潞陰侯 on Hunye.³³³ One of the sons of the Xiutu king, Midi 日磾, later became a significant official in the Han court; Emperor Wu of Han gave him the surname of Jin 金.³³⁴ Although they lived under the control of and served the Han court, there is no record showing that the Hunye or Xiutu king's family were of the Chanyu lineage.

The case of the Aojian king happened during Woyanquti Chanyu's rule. It is recorded that,

The next year, the Chanyu also killed two younger brothers of Xianxianshan. Wushanmu remonstrated, but was not accepted. Then he became angry. Later, the Left King of Aojian died, and Chanyu appointed his own young son as the King of Aojian, who was retained in the Chanyu's court. The Aojian nobles all elected the son of the deceased King of Aojian as the new king, and migrated to the east with him. The Chanyu sent the Right Prime Minister to attack them with ten thousand horsemen, but was defeated with the loss of several thousand people.

明年，單于又殺先賢揮兩弟。烏禪幕請之，不聽，心恚。其後左奧鞬王死，單于自立其小子為奧鞬王，留庭。奧鞬貴人共立故奧鞬王子為王，與俱東徙。單于遣右丞相將萬騎往擊之，失亡數千人，不勝。³³⁵

³³³ *Shiji*, *juan* 111, 2933.

³³⁴ It is recorded that he was bestowed with the surname Jin because the custom of Xiutu King of using Bronze Statue (jinren 金人) to do sacrifice. *Hanshu*, *juan* 68, 2967.

³³⁵ *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.1, 3790.

In this case, after the death of the Left King of Aojian, the Chanyu wanted to expand his power over the local populace by appointing his own son as the Aojian king, who would remain in the Chanyu court. The Aojian nobles, however, rejected this proposal and instead elected the son of the deceased Aojian King as their next king; then they migrated to the east. The Chanyu tried to attack them for their disobedience, but was defeated. In both cases, the local kings chose not to obey the order of the Chanyu and severed their ties with him. As with the other kings, there was no evidence showing that they were of Chanyu lineage.

What was the origin of these kings in the Xiongnu polity? The case of Mushanmu might shed some light on this question. In the biography of Xiongnu in Hanshu, Wushanmu, as a name of the small state and its leader, was recorded.

Wushanmu originally was a small state between Wusun and Kangqu 康居, and was often invaded and looted. He led his a few thousand people to surrender to the Xiongnu. The Hulugu 胡鹿姑 Chanyu married him to the elder sister of the Rizhu King, and had him lead his people, staying in the western area.

烏禪幕者，本烏孫、康居間小國，數見侵暴，率其衆數千人降匈奴，狐鹿姑單于以其弟子日逐王姊妻之，使長其衆，居右地。³³⁶

After the invasion of the powerful neighboring states, Wushanmu decided to surrender voluntarily to the Xiongnu, a dominant group in the area. After placing his people under the protection of the Xiongnu polity, Wushanmu still was able to be a relatively independent leader of his own people; he also married members of his family into the

³³⁶ Ibid.

Chanyu lineage. He himself wed the elder sister of Rizhu King and married his daughter to the son of Xulüquanqu 虛閭權渠 Chanyu, Jihoushan 稽侯獮.³³⁷

The Aojian king, Xiutu king and Kunye king also were group leaders who submitted to the Chanyu voluntarily or forcibly, and were integrated into the Xiongnu polity. Although they joined the Xiongnu and lived inside the Xiongnu territory, they too still led their own people and could be given the title of “king” by the Chanyu.

Besides the groups and their leaders inside the Xiongnu territory, there were other polities along the Xiongnu border who were controlled by the Xiongnu polities. This was true of the states in the Western Regions before falling under the influence of the Han court. In the beginning of the Biography of Western Region in *Hanshu*, it says,

The various kingdoms of the Western Regions are mostly sedentary, and have cities, villages, cultivated fields and domestic animals. The inhabitants differ in their customs from the Xiongnu and Wu-sun people. They all used to be enslaved by the Xiongnu. The Rizhu King, on the western border of the Xiongnu territory, appointed a Commandant of Boy Servants (putong duwei) to rule the Western regions, and he always dwelt between Yanqi (Karasahr), Weixu and Yuli. He levied taxes on these kingdoms, and took wealth from them.

西域諸國大率土著，有城郭田畜，與匈奴、烏孫異俗，故皆役屬匈奴。匈奴西邊日逐王置僮僕都尉，使領西域，常居焉耆、危須、尉黎間，賦稅諸國，取富給焉。³³⁸

According to *Hanshu*, in the early period of the Western Han Dynasty, the Western Region states, including Wusun and Kangqu,³³⁹ were all controlled and “enslaved” by the

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ *Hanshu, juan 96*, vol.1, 3872.

Xiongnu through the instructions of the Rizhu king. They had to pay “taxes” to the Xiongnu. Later, along with the rising Han military power, however, the states in the Western Regions had to start dealing with both Han and Xiongnu, and gradually changed their attitude toward the Xiongnu. When the Han court wanted to unite the Wusun to fight against the Xiongnu, in the beginning the Wusun ruler showed his interest by marrying a Han princess. At the same time, however, he also married a Xiongnu princess.³⁴⁰

A similar situation happened in the Loulan state, which sent princes to both Han and Xiongnu as hostages.³⁴¹ Under pressure from both the Han and Xiongnu, the Western Regions states usually chose to cooperate with both sides, but also kept a distance from the two powers to maintain their security. During the Western Han Dynasty, one of the Han commanders of the Western Regions (Xiyu duhu 西域都护), Guo Xun, mentioned above, in his memorial to the throne said, “When the Xiongnu was powerful, it did not annex the Wusun and Kangqu in the first place. When the Xiongnu submitted to us, it also did not lose the two states because of this.”³⁴² The Eastern Han historian Ban Gu also discussed the relationship between the Western Region states and Xiongnu, saying,

The states in the Western Regions all have their own rulers. Their troops were divided and weak, and not unified. Although they submitted to the Xiongnu, there is no mutual attachment. The Xiongnu could get their horses and cattle, felts, and rugs from them, but the Xiongnu couldn't lead them to attack or withdraw.

³³⁹ *Hanshu, juan 96*, vol.1, 3891-3893; vol.2, 3901.

³⁴⁰ *Hanshu, juan 96*, vol.2, 3903.

³⁴¹ *Hanshu, juan 96*, vol.1, 3877.

³⁴² *Hanshu, juan 96*, vol.1, 3892.

西域诸国，各有君长，兵众分弱，无所统一，虽属匈奴，不相亲附。匈奴能得其马畜旃罽，而不能统率与之进退。³⁴³

Both statements describe the loose control over the Western Regions by the Xiongnu. Although the Xiongnu received “tax” from the Western Regions, their control easily could have been overthrown by another power, largely because these were small scattered states with a sedentary populace and far from the Xiongnu court.

Three different groups inside the Xiongnu ruling group have been discussed to show its political structure. In the first group, the core of the Xiongnu ruling group is the Chanyu and the other three or four lineages. The Kings in major positions at the Chanyu’s court were all from these lineages, which were appointed by the Chanyu. In the second group, there were other group leaders around the core group, such as the Xiutu King and Wushanmu, who submitted to the Xiongnu polity forcibly or voluntarily and stayed inside the Xiongnu territory. Besides these two groups, outside the Xiongnu territory were leaders associated with the Xiongnu polity. The earlier discussion of the three groups shows that the Chanyu had limited control over them, and the relationship between the Chanyu court and the three groups was fragile. Whether the kings in the ruling group were from the Chanyu lineage or not, they could decide to sever ties with the Chanyu court if they were dissatisfied with decisions made by Chanyu, or with the Chanyu himself.

³⁴³ *Hanshu, juan 96, vol.2, 3930.*

The core of the Xiongnu ruling group, such as the Chanyu lineage members, usually chose to break away from the control of the Chanyu's court during the process of succession. In the Xiongnu succession institution, all the Chanyu lineage members could participate in the competition for the position of Chanyu. When they were considering the selection of the new Chanyu, a candidate could decide to break ties with the Chanyu court if he or his chosen candidate were deemed unworthy to serve as the Chanyu. This demonstrates the interaction between the central political structure and the succession tradition of Inner Asia, in which the successor should be competent and able to unite all the leaders within the polity. If the new Chanyu were able to do that, the central authority would be reestablished.

So the central power structure (core) of the Xiongnu ruling group can be defined as “authoritative feudalism,” in which in the maintenance of the feudalistic centralization is largely decided by the authoritativeness of Chanyu. The other kings or group leaders from the second group had more reasons to leave the Chanyu's court.

In the case of the Aojian king, the Aojian nobles decided to migrate to the east because the Chanyu wanted to appoint his own son as the Aojian king instead of letting the descendant of the Aojian King succeed, since “all great ministers 大臣 have hereditary positions [shiguan 世官].”³⁴⁴ When the Chanyu broke the rule and caused an imbalance of power between the Chanyu and the local kings, the kings could decide to detach from the polity.

³⁴⁴ *Shiji, juan* 110, 2890–2891.

The Hunye king and Xiutu king decided to break their connections with the Chanyu court because they were defeated by the Han army. Because they realized the strong military power of the Han, they decided to switch sides in the battle between Han and Xiongnu.³⁴⁵ As for the other polity leaders not inside the Xiongnu territory but controlled by the Xiongnu, such as the Western Region states, they could be more easily separated from the Xiongnu polity by another power. So the relationship between the other two groups and the Chanyu court can be defined as “authoritative dependency.”

The discussions on the three groups show the significance of the authority of the Chanyu to maintain the Xiongnu polity. An authoritative Chanyu can not only unite the core of the ruling group, but also maintain the stability of the whole ruling mandate of the Chanyu. How did the Chanyu control the other members of the ruling group with his authority? This question will be discussed in the next section.

4.1.2.2. Authoritative Institutions in the Xiongnu Ruling Group

Since all the leaders usually stayed in their own territory and had their own court, yet the three ruling classes accepted the authority of the Chanyu, how could he efficiently control these ruling members? Although the historical records did not directly discuss this question, some hints can be found. For instance, the use of intermarriage and hostages

³⁴⁵ The weak control of the Chanyu over his local kings was shown more clearly in the Southern Xiongnu polity. In the Biography of Southern Xiongnu in *Hou Hanshu*, there are several cases showing the Chanyu was arrested, killed or even forcibly committed suicide because he was not able to control his local kings. *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2939-2971.

giving, regular meetings of the Chanyu with other elites, and the imposition of taxes. All these institutions, however, could only be effective under the authority of Chanyu.

Using intermarriage was a very common way to build blood relationships between the Chanyu lineage and other lineages. As the nobles of the Xiongnu polity, the other three lineages inside the core of the Xiongnu ruling group usually intermarried with the Chanyu himself.³⁴⁶ For the nobles from the second group, the Chanyu could marry them with one of the female or male members of his lineage. After Wushanmu surrendered to the Xiongnu, the Hulugu Chanyu married him to the elder sister of Rizhu King, and one of his daughters married Jihoushan 稽侯獬, son of Xulüquanqu (虚闾权渠) Chanyu.³⁴⁷ As for the third Xiongnu ruling group, there are records about their intermarriage relationship with the Xiongnu, specifically the Jushi (车师) king and Wusun.³⁴⁸ It is, however, unclear which lineage from the Xiongnu polity had the intermarriage relationship with the third ruling group members.

Compared to intermarriage, which was used by all the three groups, the Chanyu, based on historical documentation, seemed to only require the crown prince as a hostage from the third class to assure its loyalty. During Emperor Zhao 昭 of Han's reign, because the Jushi Kingdom built diplomatic relationship with the Han, the Xiongnu summoned the crown prince of the Jushi Kingdom as a hostage to the Xiongnu court. The crown prince, however, refused to act as a hostage and escaped.³⁴⁹ Certain states

³⁴⁶ *Hou Hanshu*, juan 89, 2945.

³⁴⁷ *Hanshu*, juan 94, vol.1, 3790.

³⁴⁸ *Hanshu*, juan 96, vol.2, 3903, 3922.

³⁴⁹ *Hanshu*, juan 96, vol.2, 3922.

sometimes sent hostages to both the Han and Xiongnu, which shows the struggle between the two powers to control the Western Regions.³⁵⁰ The hostage would remain friendly to the court where he once lived as a hostage, and they would support him in his quest to attain power on his return home. This would help to solidify the relationship between the Xiongnu and these satellites kingdoms.

Regular meetings with all the elite affiliates in the Chanyu court was another way to secure effective rule. In *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu*, it is recorded that,

In the first month of each year, all the leaders have a small meeting in the Chanyu court, and offer sacrifice. In the fifth month, [they] have a mass meeting in Longcheng (龙城 Dragon City),³⁵¹ offer sacrifice to their ancestors, heaven and earth, spirits and gods. In the autumn, when the horses are sleek, [they] have another mass meeting in Dailin (蹕林) [the place for sacrifice by going around the tree], then examine and check the number of the people and their cattle.

歲正月，諸長小會單于庭，祠。五月，大會龍城，祭其先、天地、鬼神。秋，馬肥，大會蹕林，課校人畜計。³⁵²

In the Xiongnu custom, there were three yearly sacrifices. Usually, these sacrifices to the heavenly deity were on the wu (戊) day of the first, fifth and ninth months of each year.³⁵³ Since the Southern Chanyu submitted [to the authority of Han], they also offer sacrifice to the Han emperor. During the meeting, Chanyu meets all the groups to discuss the state affairs, and they all enjoy themselves by galloping on horseback or camel.

³⁵⁰ For instance, the Loulan Kingdom. See note 341.

³⁵¹ Here the “Dragon City” should not be a city with permanent residence but a gathering of tents. Wang Mingke, 2008, 124.

³⁵² *Hanshu, juan* 94, vol.1, 3752.

³⁵³ Wu day refers to the days with the terms combining with the heavenly stem *wu* 戊 in the Chinese sexagenary cycle, such as wuxu 戊戌, etc..

匈奴俗，歲有三龍祠，常以正月、五月、九月戊日祭天神。南單于既內附，兼祠漢帝，因會諸部，議國事，走馬及駱駝為樂。³⁵⁴

It is recorded that there were three meetings per year; they usually convened in the first, fifth and ninth month. The autumn (ninth month) meeting was the largest.³⁵⁵ During these meetings, besides offering sacrifice to the ancestors and deities, the participants discussed important state affairs (*guoshi* 國事), such as war or peace with the Han. At the autumn meeting, the population and the number of cattle were calculated and checked. Although it is mentioned that the attendees at these meetings were “all the leaders (*zhuzhang* 諸長)” from “all the units (*zhubu* 諸部),” it is unclear who they were and which groups they represented.

Among the three groups of the Xiongnu ruling members, the core definitely attended these meetings. In the *Hanshu*, there are two cases in which the appanage-holders from the core of the Xiongnu group, decided to not participate in the meetings. This was to demonstrate their disobedience to the Chanyu. Both events happened during the process of the Chanyu’s succession, and they were not willing to accept the authority of the new Chanyu.³⁵⁶

As for the other two groups, it seems that attending the meetings was necessary to confirm their submission and loyalty to the Chanyu. In the biography of the Western

³⁵⁴ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2944.

³⁵⁵ Wang Mingke pointed out the time of the three meetings was associated with the pastoral way of life in the steppe. Wang Mingke, 2008, 122–125.

³⁵⁶ *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.1, 3781-3782. In *Hou Hanshu*, there is another case showing the significance of the meetings. *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 89, 2954.

Regions, it is recorded that, along with the rise of Wusun power, the king decided not to attend the meeting at the Xiongnu court,³⁵⁷ which implies the second and third ruling groups also regularly attended the meetings.

It is usually argued that the financial system of the Xiongnu polity heavily relied on the exploitation of surrounding agrarian societies, such as the Han Dynasty. It is questionable if a taxation system existed inside the Xiongnu polity. In the biography of Xiongnu in *Shiji*, Sima Qian recorded the story of Zhonghang Yue 中行说, who was a defector from the Han to the Xiongnu. He reminded the Laoshang Chanyu that, for the Xiongnu people to maintain their strength, they should keep their own customs, which were suited to their terrain and lifestyle, and refuse the temptations of Han luxuries. Then it is recorded that he “taught the Chanyu’s assistants writing and recording, to record and examine the populace and the cattle (於是說教單于左右疏記，以計課其人眾畜物),”³⁵⁸ as was done during the autumn meeting. This record indicates that the Xiongnu court was taught to calculate and record their properties. But it is still questionable if a taxation system was developed since no more specific documentation exists.

Nevertheless, it is recorded that the Xiongnu court imposed a “tax” on the third ruling group, such as the Western Regions kingdoms and Wuhuan. The reason the term “tax” was used is because the character “*shui* 稅” appeared in the records regarding the imposition of tax by the Xiongnu. As quoted above, the Rizhu king of the Xiongnu

³⁵⁷ *Hanshu*, *juan* 96, vol.2, 3901.

³⁵⁸ *Shiji*, *juan* 110, 2899. Here “以計課其人眾畜物” also can be translated as “examine the popular and the cattle basing on the amount.” Here I translate “課” as “examine”, although it also has other meanings, such as “tax”, “urge”, “divine” and “levy”. Here the meaning of “examine” fits in the context better than the others.

appointed a Commandant of Boy Servants (*putong* 仆僮) to levy the “tax” (*shui* 税) on the kingdoms in the Western Regions, and he took the wealth from them.³⁵⁹ But what are the “taxes”? Later in Ban Gu’s discussion, he states that the Xiongnu received “the horses and cattle, felt and rugs” from these kingdoms.³⁶⁰ So these probably were the “taxes” paid by the Western Region kingdoms to the Xiongnu.

There is another record in the *Hanshu* regarding the “tax” imposed by the Xiongnu on the Wuhuan 乌桓 people. It is recorded that the Han court asked the Wuhuan to no longer pay “leather and cloth tax (*pibushui* 皮布税)” to the Xiongnu.³⁶¹ Despite this, the Xiongnu still sent an envoy to the Wuhuan to require the “tax” because it was an established practice (*gushi* 故事).³⁶² The Wuhuan refused to pay, which angered the Xiongnu envoy. The envoy punished the Wuhuan leader, which also enraged the leader’s brothers. They killed the Xiongnu envoy and other people along with him. Eventually, the Xiongnu received their tax of horses, cattle, leathers and cloth from the Wuhuan by waging war against them.³⁶³

In both cases, the Xiongnu court only sent their envoy (commandant and envoy) to collect the “tax” from the Western Region kingdoms and Wuhuan. In other words, the Xiongnu court did not build a taxation system inside the Western Region kingdoms and

³⁵⁹ *Hanshu*, *juan* 96, vol.1, 3827.

³⁶⁰ *Hanshu*, *juan* 96, vol.2, 3930.

³⁶¹ One reason that leather and cloth were taken as “tax” by the Xiongnu court is that they are easy to preserve in the arid weather of Mongolia. Perhaps because a large amount of leathers (*pi* 皮) was transported to and preserved in the Xiongnu court as tribute by the surrounding states, it is recorded that Xiongnu leather (Xiongnu *pi* 匈奴皮) was seized by the Xianbei people when they attacked and defeated the Northern Xiongnu in 87 CE. *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 98, 2951.

³⁶² *Hanshu*, *juan* 94, vol.2, 3820.

³⁶³ *ibid.*

Wuhuan. The rulers of the Western region kingdoms and Wuhuan belonged to the third group of ruling members, and their relationship with the Chanyu court was precarious. Therefore, the “tax” paid by the Western Region kingdoms and Wuhuan to the Xiongnu was more like tribute instead of tax. The *Hanshu* used the term “tax (*shui* 税) because the Western Region kingdoms and Wuhuan already had a taxation system within their states. These kingdoms and Wuhuan had to pay part of the government income to the Xiongnu. The third ruling group paid tribute for their dependency to the Xiongnu polity, and the Chanyu then would provide “protection” for them, which is another means of exploitation.

4.1.2.3 “Non-Uniform” Institutional Complexity of the Xiongnu Polity

In the last two sections, three different groups of the Xiongnu ruling members, and how they were controlled by the Chanyu court have been discussed. As the core of the Xiongnu ruling class, the first group refers to the Chanyu and the other three or four lineages, which were the nobles and famous lineage (名族) inside Xiongnu. The majority of the Kings and high ranking officials of the Chanyu polity were all from these lineages. The distribution of power among the first group is defined as “authoritative feudalism.” The second group was composed of the leaders who submitted to the Xiongnu polity forcibly or voluntarily, and stayed inside the Xiongnu territory, keeping their autonomy.

Besides the two groups, outside the Xiongnu territory, there were polity leaders associated with the Xiongnu polity. The latter two groups’ relationship with the Chanyu

is described as “authoritative dependency.” As research shows, the control over the three ruling groups by the Chanyu, however, was limited. The intermarriage with the Chanyu lineage, sending hostages to the Chanyu court and regular meetings were the three major institutional measures to link and control the three ruling groups. The limited means of control over the ruling groups indicates the significance of the Chanyu’s authority for maintaining the stability of the Xiongnu polity.

Neither the “stateless empire” nor “headless state” theories can explain fully the political complexity of the Xiongnu polity. The “stateless empire” theory overlooked the “authoritative feudalism” inside the core group of the Xiongnu polity. It is possible that part of the Xiongnu ruling group derived their power from conical tribes instead of the Chanyu. As the earlier discussion shows, the authority of the Chanyu still played a significant role in incorporating them into the Xiongnu polity. As for the “headless state” theory, it also downplayed the Chanyu’s authority inside the Xiongnu polity.

Meanwhile, although the military-civil hierarchical official system might be applied to centralize the power, it is questionable how widely the system was applied. According to Sima Qian, at least inside the core ruling group, the decimal hierarchical official system existed.³⁶⁴ Whether the system was applied by the second and third ruling groups is hard to answer because of a lack of evidence. For instance, in the third ruling group, it is recorded that there were similar official titles in the Western Region states,³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ *Shiji*, *juan* 110, 2891.

³⁶⁵ *Hanshu*, *juan* 96, vol.2, 3928.

which might be imposed by or adopted from Xiongnu. Among the Wuhuan people, the political system was more close to the conical tribal system.³⁶⁶

As for the second ruling group, after they were included in the Xiongnu polity, their original political institutions still remained and could be the decimal administrative system or tribal system. Although some scholars argue that in the Xiongnu polity the decimal administrative system was developed based on the tribal system,³⁶⁷ it is still reasonable to speculate that both institutional systems existed in the Xiongnu polity. Therefore, the political structure of the Xiongnu polity can be defined as an authoritative system with non-uniform institutional complexity.³⁶⁸ With the authority of the Chanyu, this system can incorporate the groups with different complexities into the Xiongnu polity. Characteristic of the Xiongnu polity will be helpful understanding the discussion of the transition of the local institution of the Inner Asian peoples below.

4.2 Local Institutions of Inner Asian peoples in the Central Plain during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period

Beginning with the discussion on the accommodation of the Inner Asian peoples by the Han and Jin government, this section examines the influence of the way of

³⁶⁶ *Houhanshu*, juan 90, 2979; Ma Changshou, *Wuhuan yu Xianbei* (Wuhuan and Xianbei), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1962, 119–130.

³⁶⁷ Xie Jian, “Xiongnu zhengzhi zhidu de yanjiu (Research on the Xiongnu political system),” in *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*, vol.41, 1970, 231–237; Lin Gan, *Xiongnu Tongshi*, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986, 8–9, 127.

³⁶⁸ I borrowed this term, “non-uniform institutional complexity,” from Michael D. Frachetti, “Multiregional emergence of mobile pastoralism and nonuniform institutional complexity across Eurasia,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (February 2012).

accommodation in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, and how the Inner Asian tradition of local organization changed during that time.

4.2.1 Accommodating of the “Barbarians”

For the Han and Jin government, accommodating the Inner Asian groups, who submitted to the Han and Jin court for various reasons, was a common task. These groups not only included the Xiongnu people, who confronted the Han for a long time, but also the Qiang 羌, Wuhuan and other groups living along the northern border of the Han. After they submitted to the Han or Jin governments, the leaders were given different titles depending on the size of their groups, and they were assigned certain areas for living. Meanwhile, the Han and Jin governments also needed to supervise these groups by putting them under the supervision of officials inside the civil or martial administrative system.

After submitting to the Han and Jin court, different titles were bestowed on the leaders of the Inner Asian groups by the court ranked according to their original titles and the sizes of their groups. The titles included four ranks: king (*wang* 王), marquis (*hou* 侯), lord (*jun* 君) and chief (*zhang* 长).³⁶⁹ The difference between the latter two was the size of the groups they led.³⁷⁰ For the assigned living area, the Inner Asian peoples can be

³⁶⁹ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 118, 3632.

³⁷⁰ According to the Biography of State Officials in *Hou Hanshu*, when the amount of the households in a county (*xian* 县) was more than 10,000, the head of the county was called *ling* (令). Otherwise, he was called *zhang* (长). Bestowing the titles of *jun* and *zhang* for the Inner Asian group might not have required the same number of households. But their difference should still mainly be the size of their groups. *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 118, 3623.

assigned inside or outside the borders of the Han Dynasty. For instance, during the reign of Emperor Wu 武帝 of Han, the Wuhuan people were moved to a contiguous area of the northeastern border in order to spy on the Xiongnu, and also to stop them allying with the Xiongnu.³⁷¹ To manage the Inner Asian peoples more effectively, the most common way was to move them inside the territory of the Han Dynasty. The Inner Asian groups were administered depending on the number in their group. If the size was big, they could be divided into smaller groups settled in different areas and enjoying autonomy. For example, the group of more than 10,000 people led by the Hunye king that surrendered to the Han court were divided into five groups and became five “affiliated states (*shuguo* 属国)” of the Han Empire.

To supervise these Inner Asian groups, the Han or Jin government usually placed them under the supervision of the officials from the civil or martial administrative system. The civil administrative system refers to the local governments of the counties and prefectures. The groups placed under the civil administrative system were usually small. Thus, they could not become a threat to the local government. For instance, after the Yuezhi people surrendered during the Emperor Wu of Han’s reign, they lived with the Han people and were controlled by the local county officials.³⁷² If the group was originally large, it would be divided into smaller groups, which were separately governed by local counties or prefectures. After the Southern Xiongnu led by the Huhanye Chanyu surrendered to the Han, although Huhanye still held the title of Chanyu and was treated as

³⁷¹ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 90, 2981. The Wuhuan people migrated outside the border of Shanggu, Yuyang, Right Beiping, Liaoxi and Liaodong prefectures.

³⁷² *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 87, 2899.

a nobleman, his people lived in the counties or prefectures and were administrated by the head of local governments. They “were almost the same as the registered households, but did not pay tax [to the local government]”(與編戶大同，而不輸貢賦)³⁷³ When the original group surrendering to the Han was small, they were usually also under the administration of the local government. A martial administrative system was sometimes created referring to the local military institutions. For instance, for the Wuhuan people, the Han and Jin government both set up the position of Protector Commandant of the Wuhuan (Hu wuhuan xiaowei 護烏桓校尉).³⁷⁴ Under the lead of the military officials, these groups usually were required to provide military service for the Han and Jin government.

With the officials appointed by the Han or Jin court after the move inside the Han border, did the Inner Asian group still keep its autonomy within the original local political structure? In other words, did they became registered households organized the same as the Han local administrative way? This answer is clear from the number of registered households in the prefectures at the north and northwest borders of the Western Han and Eastern Han Dynasties. Compared to the Western Han, the number of registered households in Sili 思隸, Bingzhou 并州, Liangzhou 凉州 and Youzhou 幽州 administrative units during the Eastern Han Dynasty decreased dramatically and was less than half of the number in the Western Han.³⁷⁵ The dramatic decrease of registered

³⁷³ *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2548.

³⁷⁴ *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 118, 3626. There were other officials appointed to administer the Xiongnu and Qiang peoples.

³⁷⁵ Liao Boyuan, “Lun Handai xizhi bianjiang neiqian minzu yu sainei zhi zhengce (On the policy of migrating the peoples in the frontier area inside the border during Han Dynasty),” in *1-6 shiji Zhongguo*

household is best explained by the resettlement of the Inner Asian group into this area, which caused the original residents to move away from there. The Inner Asian groups, such as the Southern Xiongnu, “did not pay tax (*bushu gongfu* 不输贡赋)” for each registered household, so they were not part of the registration system of the Han government.³⁷⁶ If the Han government did not enroll the Inner Asian units into the household registration system, then the original local political structure should have remained after their migration.

Meanwhile, the maintainance of some form of separate local political structure was shown by the large number of titles given to the local Inner Asian leaders by the Han and Jin government. These titles were not the same as the Han domestic official titles in the administrative bureaucratic system. This type of title usually started with “Han” or “Jin;” followed by the group name, like Xiongnu or Qiang 羌; and ended with “chief (*zhang* 长)” or “lord (*jun* 君),” which signified the rank of their leaders. In the Jin Dynasty, there were different ranks inside the “*zhang* 长” title, which were marked with a number “hundred (*bai* 佰)” and “thousand (*qian* 仟).” This could also indicate the existence of the decimal administrative system inside the Inner Asian groups. In front of the “*zhang*” or “*jun*,” there usually was a decorative term to praise the local leaders, such

beifang bianjiang, minzu, shehui guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji (Collected Papers from the Conference on the Chinese Northern Frontier, Ethnic Groups and Society during 1st to 6th Century), Beijing: Science Press, 2008, 68–75.

³⁷⁶ It is necessary to point out that although the Inner Asian groups did not have to pay tax to the Han and Jin government; they usually provided the military service for the Han and Jin government. See Liao Boyuan, 2008, 83–85. Meanwhile, Ma Changshou pointed out that in the Western Jin, there were Di people in the household registration system based on two records in the works by Pan Yue (潘岳). In Pan’s works, both records are about the revolt of Di people. It is likely that the revolt was because the Jin government applied the household registration system on the Di people.

as *qinhan* 亲汉(Pro-Han), *shuaishan* 率善 (Leading to Goodness); or to mark their achievement including military deeds, such as *polu* 破虏 (Destroy the Enemy).³⁷⁷

These titles have been found not only in historical records but also on many seals unearthed in Northern China. These seals usually were found in the tombs of the local leaders. Unlike the noble titles (king or duke) bestowed on the high ranking members of the ruling class of the Inner Asian groups, who also enjoyed privileges but were isolated from the populace after migrating to the Han and Jin territory, bestowing this type of title implied that these local leaders remained in power. The Han and Jin government needed them to oversee their Inner Asian subjects since the high ranking members were not in charge, and county and prefecture governments were unable to intervene very much in the affairs of local non-Han. Meanwhile, accepting the titles and keeping the seals even after death demonstrated that the local leaders of the Inner Asian groups tried to emphasize that their authority derived from the Han and Jin government, which replaced the original status of the authority of Chanyu.

In sum, for the Han and Jin governments, after the Inner Asian group migrated within the Han and Jin borders, they were either divided into smaller groups administrated by the local county or prefecture, or they became “affiliated states” after being divided and were supervised by the officials sent by the Han and Jin governments. In both cases, the local political structure was largely kept intact. The local leaders were given titles by the Han and Jin governments, which helped them to continue to manage

³⁷⁷ Huang Shengzhang, “Xiongnu guanyin zonglun (Research on the Xiongnu official seals),” *Shehui kexue zhanxian*, no.3, 1987, 136–147.

their people. The existence of a large group of Inner Asian people inside the Han and Jin borders was the foundation of the Inner Asian polities in the Central Plain during the Sixteen Kingdoms period.

4.2.2 Local Organization of the Inner Asian Peoples during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period

The intact local political structure of the Inner Asian groups greatly accelerated the process of the establishing a constellation of polities in the Central Plain. The Jin officials, such as Guo Qin 郭钦 and Jiang Tong 江统, already noticed the threat from the Inner Asian groups to the Jin court before its collapse. They suggested to the emperor that the Inner Asian groups be moved far from the capital or even outside the border.³⁷⁸ The Inner Asian groups living in the Central Plain were not controlled directly by the Jin government, and they easily could have been convinced to turn against the Jin. The history of the Sixteen Kingdoms verified Guo and Jiang's forebodings, and several Inner Asian groups built their own polities. In these polities, the Inner Asian groups, either as the core ruling group or as a dependency group, still maintained their political organization at the local level.

The founding of the Former Han relied on the five units of Xiongnu (Wubu Xiongnu 五部匈奴) who lived in the Southern Shanxi 山西 area at that time.³⁷⁹ After the establishment of the regime during Liu Cong's reign, he divided the core group—five

³⁷⁸ *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2549; *juan* 56, 1529.

³⁷⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 97, 2548. Because of the growing population, Cao Cao (曹操) divided the Southern Xiongnu into "five groups." The five groups of Xiongnu were managed by the "aristocrats (*guizhe* 贵者)" among them was the general (*shuai* 帅), who was supervised by the Sima appointed by Cao.

units of Xiongnu into seventeen subunits stationed in different locations. Each subunits had 2,000 soldiers and was led by Liu Cong's lineage members as generals. Besides the Xiongnu people, he separated the population inside the original household registration system from the Inner Asian groups. For the population inside the household registration system, Liu Cong appointed an official called clerk (*neishi* (内史)) for 10,000 registered households; there were 43 clerks in total. On top of the clerks, two Metropolitan Commandants (*sili* 司隸) were appointed to manage the two groups of more than 20,000 people. For the people who were not inside the household registration system and were usually called “yi 夷,” Liu Cong kept and used the Inner Asian administrative system to manage them. A Chanyu, who was not Liu Cong himself but his crown prince Liu Yi, was appointed to oversee them.

For these Inner Asian groups, every 10,000 tents (*luo* 落) had a commandant (*duwei* 都尉) appointed, and two assistants of the Chanyu were over the commandants. Each assistant was in charge of 100,000 people.³⁸⁰ This was usually called the “Hu-Han (胡-汉)” dual ruling system.³⁸¹ This system, in which the “Chanyu” was the “Hu” and the “emperor” was the “Han”, however, did not accurately describe the political structure of the Former Han. The main reason is that the five groups of Xiongnu people were not part of either the “Hu” or “Han” system. Here, the concept of the Inner Asian authoritative system with non-uniform institutional complexity fits in the context better. There were

³⁸⁰ *Jinshu*, *juan* 102, 2665.

³⁸¹ Chen Yong, *Hanzhaoshi lungao – Xiongnu Tuge jianguo de zhengzhishi kaocha* (Collected works on the Hanzhao history: Research on the political history of the state founding by the Xiongnu Tuge), Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009, 145–162.

three major groups inside the Former Han: five groups of Xiongnu as the core group, the group originally inside the Jin household registration system, and the Inner Asian group “*six yi* 夷” except for the Xiongnu. The political structure inside the core group, which was divided into small subgroups that were led by the Liu lineage members, was similar to the “authoritative feudalism”. Under the ruling of the core group, five groups of Xiongnu, both the Inner Asian groups of “*six yi*” and the population inside the household registration system, were integrated into the polity, keeping their original institutional complexity, which here refers to the local political structure. In other words, the Inner Asian tradition of the local political structure remained in the Inner Asian groups of the Former Zhao.

This system with non-uniform institutional complexity also can be found in other succeeding kingdoms. In the Former Qin, after conquering Luoyang, Fu Jian divided the core group, the Di (氐) people of 150,000 households, and sent the subgroups into different major cities to be stationed.³⁸² In the Later Zhao, the “*six yi*” were also under the lead of Shi Le’s crown prince, Shi Hong.³⁸³ Besides the commandant (*duwei*) from the Former Han, there was another title for the commander of the Inner Asian groups, Military Protector (*Hujun* 护军).³⁸⁴ The Inner Asian groups under the lead of Hujun was sometimes called miscellaneous households (*zahu* 杂户), which were comprised of miscellaneous Hu (*zahu* 杂胡). For instance, in the inscription from the hall stele of

³⁸² *Jinshu*, *juan* 113, 2903.

³⁸³ *Jinshu*, *juan* 105, 2743.

³⁸⁴ Gao Min, *Weijin nanbeichao bingzhi yanjiu* (Research on the military institutes in Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties), Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2000, 223–224; Hou Xudong, “Beiwei jingnei huzu zhengce chutan (Preliminary research on the policy on the Hu people in the Northern Wei),” *Zhongguo shehui kexue*, 2008, no.5, 168–182.

Grand Commandant Deng (Deng taiwei ci bei 邓太尉祠碑), it is recorded that under the Protector of Army in Fengyi (冯翊) were 7,000 miscellaneous households including twelve kinds of Yi (夷), such as the Sogdian, Qiang, etc..³⁸⁵ Although because of war, the defeated groups were often divided or exiled to other places, the original local political structure was retained. For instance, after Fu Jian pacified a mutiny of Xiongnu people led by Cao Gu 曹轂, he moved more than 6,000 households of the Xiongnu elites to Chang'an. The majority of the Xiongnu, however, still remained in their original places. After Cao's death they were divided into only two groups, which still were led by Cao's sons.³⁸⁶ In 391 CE, after He Ne (贺訥) was defeated by Murong Chui's army, he even sent the captured groups back to He Ne.³⁸⁷

4.2.3 Transition to Household Registration System (bianhu 编户)?

As discussed above, during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain kept maintained some form of distinctive local political structure with non-uniform institutional complexity. In the system, the Inner Asian groups usually were excluded from the household registration system of the central government. Based on the inscription from the stele of Grand Commandant Deng (Deng taiwei ci bei), Ma Changshou argued that in the Former Qin Qiang people were inside the household registration system. The major evidence is the recorded Qiang names attached to place

³⁸⁵ Ma Changshou, *Beiming suojian Qianqin zhi Sui chu de guanzhong buzhu* (The Guanzhong tribes from the Former Qin to the Early Sui shown in the inscriptions), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, 12–14.

³⁸⁶ *Jinshu*, juan 113, 2889.

³⁸⁷ *Zizhi tongjian*, juan 107, 3399.

names (cities and towns). Because these Qiang people were associated with an administrative unit of the government, they were registered as household (*bianhu* 编户) members.³⁸⁸ This argument, however, is not convincing because since the Han Dynasty, some of the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain were administrated by the head of the local prefectures or counties and still were not inside the household registration system. Were the Inner Asian groups then always excluded from the household registration system? There were two cases, which are worth discussing.

In 394 CE, after Yao Xing defeated Fu Deng, he “dissolved Deng’s troops, who went back to agricultural work.” (散其部眾，歸復農業)³⁸⁹ It is argued by scholars that since Fu Deng’s troops were mostly Di, Yao Xing reorganized the Di people and incorporated them into the household registration system to practice agriculture.³⁹⁰ There was, however, one flaw in this argument. Because these people went “back” to the agricultural work, it means they originally belonged to an agricultural population. At this time, it is reasonable to speculate that the majority of Fu Deng’s troops were from the agricultural population. It could be because some Di started to practice agriculture after they migrated into the Central Plain, or were levied from the registered households.

The other example concerned the Former Qin and Dai (代) Kingdom. After Fu Jian defeated the Dai Kingdom in 376 CE, he dissolved the Dai people in southern Inner Mongolia, “appointed military officers and supervisors to deal with them, and officers to

³⁸⁸ Ma Changshou, 1985, 17–18, 36–38.

³⁸⁹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 117, 2976.

³⁹⁰ Hou Xudong, 2008, 176.

lead and restrain them.”³⁹¹ These people were taxed on their income and levied based on household size. He also gave them land tax exemptions for three years to encourage them to practice agriculture. Meanwhile, he required the local chiefs (*qushuai* 渠帅) among them to send tribute at the end of every year and restricted their social interaction with others.³⁹² This case clearly shows that Fu Jian changed the local political structure of the Xianbei by incorporating them into the household registration system.³⁹³ The Xianbei of the Dai Kingdom were administrated by the officials appointed by Fu Jian, and their original local leaders were removed from power. Although they might still enjoy some privileges, they had lost control over their people. The requirement for them to send tribute to the capital was a way to monitor them. Meanwhile, the tax and levy on the Xianbei also indicates the application of a household registration system.

Both cases imply that there were Inner Asian groups incorporated into the household registration system in the Sixteen Kingdoms period. Both instances happened after the leaders of these groups were defeated, and they were the core groups of both polities. They were dissolved by the winning side and became registered household members to control them more effectively inside the household registration system, especially when the Former Qin and Dai Kingdom were the strong enemies, such as Yao Xing and Fu Jian. To increase the revenue of the government was the other reason.

³⁹¹ *Jinshu*, *juan* 113, 2899.

³⁹² *Jinshu*, *juan* 113, 2899.

³⁹³ Li Ping, *Beiwei Pingcheng shiqi* (Pingcheng era of Northern Wei), Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000, 40-41.

4.2.4 Conclusion and Discussion

Since the Han and Jin Dynasties, after the Inner Asian group moved inside the Han and Jin borders, they were either divided into smaller groups which were administrated by the local county or prefecture, or, after being divided became “affiliated states”, which were supervised by the officials sent by the Han and Jin government. In both cases, the local political structure was largely kept intact. The existence of the large group of Inner Asian people inside the Han and Jin borders with their autonomous local political structure greatly accelerated the process of polity building by the Inner Asian rulers in the Central Plain. These polities can be described as the Inner Asian authority system with non-uniform institutional complexity. In the system, the majority of the Inner Asian groups still kept some form of autonomous local political structure, and were not incorporated into the household registration system. A few cases show some Inner Asian groups as the core ruling group, however, who were incorporated into the system after the polity collapsed following their military defeat. They were dissolved by the winning side and became registered household members.

4.3 Local Institutions of Inner Asian Peoples in the Central Plain during the Northern Dynasties

This section examines the policies regarding the local institution towards the Inner Asian people in the Central Plain and the changes throughout the Northern Dynasties. Beginning with the discussion on the “scattering the *buzu* (*lisan buzú* 離散部族)” polity by Tuoba Gui, Emperor Taizu of Northern Wei, this section continues

discussing the accommodating of the Inner Asian groups by the Northern Wei government. Then, this section examines the transition of the local institution of the Inner Asian groups during the Northern Dynasties.

4.3.1 “Scattering the units (*lisan zhubu* 離散諸部)”

The specific content of scattering the units applied by Emperor Taizu of Northern Wei has always been debated, and the major controversial issue is whether the “scattering” reached the local level; in other words, if the people in the units were incorporated into the household registration system during the application of the policy.³⁹⁴ The implication of “units” should be examined first. The literal translation of “*bu*” could be “tribe” if the “*bu*” were understood as “*buluo* 部落 (tribe)”. As Christopher Atwood’s research shows, however, the polities along the border of China would not be the primary tribes but the “secondary tribes,” which were created by the strong political powers in both China and Mongolia.³⁹⁵

Meanwhile, one major *buzu*, which was scattered by Emperor Taizu, was the Helan 賀蘭. According to the *Weishu*, the Helan ancestors used to be rulers with more than ten units (*bu* 部) under their control.³⁹⁶ It indicates the *buzu* is not a kin-based primary tribe but rather refers to all the armed units under the lead of the group leader. In Helan’s case, it was He Ne (賀訥). In his biography, it records that as the eldest brother

³⁹⁴ Hou Xudong, 2008, 176.

³⁹⁵ Christopher Atwood, “Chapter 6: Tribal Vocabulary in Imperial Ethnography,” in *Tribal Mirage* (draft).

³⁹⁶ *Weishu*, *juan* 83, vol.1, 1812.

of the empress, He Ne was highly respected but without commanding any groups until his death;³⁹⁷ this was because of the policy of scattering the units.

There are only three historical records that refer directly to the policy of scattering the units by Emperor Taizu, and the most important one was in the biography of He Ne. After pacifying the Central Plain with Emperor Taizu, He Ne was given the title of Anyuan (安远 Settling the Distant) General. Later, Emperor Taizu started to “scatter the units, settling them in assigned area, and not allowing them to migrate. The leaders and Great Men (*daren* 大人) were the same as registered household members (其後離散諸部，分土定居，不聽遷徙，其君長大人皆同編戶).”³⁹⁸ A similar description also can be found in the biography of state officials in *Weishu*, it says, “Early in the Dengguo era, Emperor Taizu scattered the units,³⁹⁹ and they first started to become the same as registered household members. (登國初，太祖散諸部落，始同為編民)”⁴⁰⁰ Because of these records, even with a different interpretation of “bu/buluo” in this article, scholars like Tang Zhangru and Tian Yuqing argue that all the members inside the units were incorporated into the registered household system of the Northern Wei, and the original local political structure was removed because of the change.⁴⁰¹ Hou Xudong further supports this argument with evidence from a stele inscription, which records two people

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ The term for unit here in Chinese is “*buluo* 部落”. For the same reason mentioned earlier, I still translated it as unit.

⁴⁰⁰ *Weishu*, *juan* 113, 3014.

⁴⁰¹ Tang Zhangru, *Weijin nanbeichao shi luncong*, Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000, 196; Tian Yuqing, “Helan buluo lishan wenti,” *Lishi yanjiu*, 1997, no.2, 31–39;

with the surname Helan who lived with other people and had their own farmland.⁴⁰² Some scholars disagree with this point because they find some “units” still existed during and after Emperor Taizu’s reign; the most famous example is the Erzhu Rong 爾朱榮 case.⁴⁰³ The grandfather of Erzhu Rong had led his own unit since Emperor Taizu’s reign; Erzhu Rong’s father inherited the title and unit, and then passed it down to his son.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, they argue that the “scattering the units,” policy only broke up the stronger units, and the local-level structure of these units remained. These Inner Asian unit members were not incorporated into the household registration system. Then how can the conflicting evidence be explained?

It is very likely that the policy of scattering the units only targeted the units from the core ruling groups. These two units became members of the eight lineages for the meritorious generals (*xunchen* 勳臣).⁴⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the Helan and Dugu lineages had an intermarriage relationship with the Tuoba lineage. The maternal relative in the early Tuoba history was powerful and always interfered with the Tuoba succession. Even Tuoba Gui himself succeeded because of the support from his maternal relatives.⁴⁰⁶ So the purpose of this policy was to eliminate the competing rivals inside the ruling group for Tuoba lineage. For this purpose, in the Northern Wei, Emperor Taizu also started the practice of appointing the heir apparent and killing his mother at the same time. By doing this, Emperor Taizu tried to eliminate the threats to himself and his descendants. So it is

⁴⁰² Hou Xudong, 2008, 168.

⁴⁰³ Yoshiaki Kawamoto, *Gi Shin Nanbokuchō jidai no minzoku mondai*, Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 1998, 143–166.

⁴⁰⁴ Weishu, juan 74, 1643.

⁴⁰⁵ *Weishu*, juan 113, 3014.

⁴⁰⁶ Tian Yuqing, 2011, 1–49.

plausible to assume that the policy of scattering the units only targeted the powerful units that potentially threatened the authority of the Tuoba lineage.

Emperor Taizu tried to incorporate the members of these units into the household registration system to weaken and control them. Even though these unit members were organized as “eight states (*baguo* 八國)” inside the Xianbei polity,⁴⁰⁷ within the household registration system, they still were separate from the commoners who were managed by the local prefectures and counties.⁴⁰⁸ The eight states indicated a higher status for their separation. Meanwhile, Emperor Taizu did not scatter the remaining Inner Asian units. Therefore, the conflicting part in the historical records mentioned earlier can be explained. If there were Inner Asian units that still remained intact in the local level inside the Northern Wei, how were they administrated by the Northern Wei government? This question will be discussed below.

4.3.2 Accommodation of the Inner Asian Groups in the Northern Dynasties

Scholars already have indicated that there were Inner Asian groups that remained as “units” inside the Tuoba Xianbei polity.⁴⁰⁹ The most obvious case is the High Carts (Gaoche 高车) people. It is recorded that “During Taizu’s reign, he scattered the units. Only the Gaoche, because of their rough and unmanageable character, were permitted to separately remain as a group. (太祖時，分散諸部，唯高車以類粗獷，不任使役，故

⁴⁰⁷ Kubozoe Yoshifumi, *Gi Shin Nanbokuchō kanryōsei kenkyū*, trans by Zhao Lixin, Tu Zongcheng and Hu Yunwei, Taipei: Guo li Taiwan da xue chu ban zhong xin, 2015, 29–31.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ Zhou Yiliang, *Weijin nanbeichao shi lunji*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963, 177–198; Yoshiaki Kawamoto, 1998, 143–166.

得別為部落)” in the *Weishu*.⁴¹⁰ This description by the *Weishu* compiler is not accurate, however, because the Gaoche was not the only group that remained as a unit in Northern Wei. The case of Erzhu Rong, discussed above, was another major example.

Besides the two, there were still many other Inner Asian groups that remained; this is evident from the appearance of the unit leader titles in both historical records and stele inscriptions. The titles include *qiuzhang* 酋长, *qiuha* 酋豪, *qiuda* 酋大, *qiushuai* 酋帅, *buda* 部大,⁴¹¹ which indicate that these leaders were originally from the local group leaders and were given these titles after being incorporated into the Xianbei polity. But how were these groups administrated by the Northern Wei government? Were they managed by following the Han and Jin traditions?

In the early period of Northern Wei, the method of managing the submitted groups was recorded in the Biography of State Officials in *Weishu*, it says,

The miscellaneous peoples who came from everywhere in submission, were called “Wuwan (烏丸)”. Their leader was called “chieftains (*qiuzhang* 酋)” or “militia leaders (*shuzhang* 庶長)” based on the sizes of the groups. They were divided into southern and northern groups, which were managed by the appointed Great Men (*daren* 大人) of the two units. At that time, the younger brother of the emperor Gu (觚) administrated the northern group, and the son Shijun (寔君) managed the southern group. With managing the peoples by dividing them, the two were like the two earls (*bo* 伯) of antiquity.⁴¹² In the first year of the Dengguo Reign of Emperor Taizu, he followed it without any

⁴¹⁰ *Weishu*, *juan* 103, 2309. Here I continue translating “buluo” as “groups.” with consulting Atwood’s research. Christopher Atwood, “Chapter 5: Early Nomads in Chinese and Greek Imperial Ethnography,” in *Tribal Mirage* (draft).

⁴¹¹ Zhou Yiliang, 1963, 177–198; Hou Xudong, 2008, 172.

⁴¹² The two earls refer to the Duke Zhou and Duke Shao from the Zhou Dynasty. About the “two earls (erbo 二伯)”, refer to *Zhouli zhushu* (周礼注疏), *juan* 18, 474.

adjustment. The Great Men were still appointed for the south and north to rule the two groups.

其諸方雜人來附者，總謂之「烏丸」，各以多少稱酋、庶長，分為南北部，復置二部大人以統攝之。時帝弟觚監北部，子寔君監南部，分民而治，若古之二伯焉。太祖登國元年，因而不改，南北猶置大人，對治二部。⁴¹³

According to this record, in the early period of Northern Wei after the groups had submitted to the Tuoba polity, their leaders were assigned titles based on the size of their groups. All the people were divided into two big group: southern and northern, which were administrated by the “Big Men.” The big men were usually from the core ruling group, especially the Tuoba lineage. They were not only the Tuoba lineage, however. There were Big Men also from the other major lineages that had an intermarriage relationship with the Tuoba lineage. For instance, Liu Luo Chen (劉羅辰, also known as Dugu Luo Chen), who was the elder brother of Empress Xuanmu (宣穆), was once the southern unit big man. His father also had been the northern unit big man.

Later, along with the increasing number of the subordinate Inner Asian groups, other Big Men appeared with similar titles, such as “Central Great Man (Zhongbu *daren* 中部大人) and “Heaven Great Man (Tianbu *daren* 天部大人).⁴¹⁴ In year 417, the groups for administering them expanded into six—Heaven, Earth, Eastern, Western, Southern

⁴¹³ *Weishu*, juan 113, 2972.

⁴¹⁴ *Weishu*, juan 30, 709; juan 27, 676.

and Northern —and every group had a Great Man as a leader.⁴¹⁵ In the year 444, 5000 tents of the Northern Group (*beibu* 北部) revolted and tried to escape the control of Northern Wei by migrating to the north.⁴¹⁶ This incident shows that the people in the six groups all remained in the units of the Inner Asian local institution.

Later, along with the conquest of Northern China, the Northern Wei started to adopt the institutions and official titles from the conquered states. One of them, the Military Protector (*hujun* 护军), was inherited from Later Yan around 396 CE.⁴¹⁷ As mentioned above, the Protector of the Army usually was appointed to supervise the Inner Asian groups in certain areas. Initially, the Protectors of the Army could be under the lead of the Big Men. In 401 CE, Emperor Taizu moved all the Protectors of Army under the control of the Great General (*Dajiangjun* 大将军).⁴¹⁸ The Great General was the highest rank in the military administrative system, and Tuoba Tao obtained this title when he was the crown prince.⁴¹⁹ Moving all the Protectors of Army to be under the lead of the Great General indicates that Emperor Taizu intended to centralize the power. Meanwhile, the military town (*junzhen* 军镇) system was also gradually developed to coordinate the ruling of Protectors of the Army. For instance, the Tujing (吐京, roughly today's Shilou County of Shanxi Province) Town was established in 434 after the Tujing Protector of the Army already had existed for several years. The establishment of the Protector of the

⁴¹⁵ *Weishu, juan* 113, 2975. Kubozoe Yoshifumi argues the “six groups” were developed from the “eight states” mentioned earlier. It is problematic because the groups under the administration of the Southern and Northern Big Men were not imposed with the household registration system, which was applied in the eight states because of the “scattering the groups” policy by Emperor Taizu.

⁴¹⁶ *Weishu, juan* 4, vol.2, 97.

⁴¹⁷ Hou Xudong, 2008, 170–171.

⁴¹⁸ *Weishu, juan* 113, 2973.

⁴¹⁹ *Weishu, juan* 3, 61.

Army and the military town suggests the existence of a military administrative system for the Inner Asian groups in the beginning of Northern Wei Dynasty. Under the Protector of the Army and the military town, the Inner Asian local institution remained, and the people were not incorporated into the household registration system.⁴²⁰

Because the groups organized within the Inner Asian local institution were not incorporated into the household registration system, it was doubly important for them had to serve the Northern Wei government militarily. For the groups regulated inside the military administrative system, providing military service for the Northern Wei was a common obligation. It is recorded in several cases that the High Cart people under the military town tried to escape from the military obligation by rebelling or migrating.⁴²¹ Besides providing military service for the Northern Wei,⁴²² the Six Groups (liubu 六部) people also had to pay tax to the government. In 421, Emperor Taizong imposed a property tax on the Six Bu people, who had to pay one war-horse to the government if they owned 100 sheep.⁴²³ This tax also indicates that the Six Groups people still kept their pastoral way of life.

4.3.3 Transition to Household Registration System

The policy of scattering the units by Emperor Taizu targeted the powerful units to eliminate the competing powers inside the core-ruling group for the Tuoba lineage. With

⁴²⁰ Zhou Yiliang, 1963, 177–198.

⁴²¹ *Weishu*, *juan* 7, vol.2, 184; *juan* 103, 2308-2310.

⁴²² *Weishu*, *juan* 54, 1201. In Gao Lü's memorial, he suggested to use the troops from the Six Groups to fight the northern enemies and even built the Great Wall.

⁴²³ *Weishu*, *juan* 3, 61.

this policy, Emperor Taizu broke up the Inner Asian local institutions among these units and incorporated the members of these units into the household registration system to weaken and control them. These unit members still were separated from the commoners, who were managed by the local prefectures and counties, but they were organized as “eight states (baguo 八国)” inside the Xianbei polity.⁴²⁴ Meanwhile, as discussed above, there were other groups that kept the Inner Asian local institution inside Northern Wei, such as the Six Group people and people under the administration of the military town. These groups, however, also could be scattered and the people incorporated into the household registration system of the local civil administration. This happened when these groups tried to break away from the control of the Northern Wei, which was demonstrated by several cases recorded in *Weishu*.

For the Six Groups, there were at least three cases of rebellion recorded, and two of them were successful. In 471 and 472, the High Cart people in the Western Group and Eastern Group revolted and successfully broke away from the control of the Northern Wei.⁴²⁵ It was mainly because their settlements were in the borderland of the Northern Wei. The revolt by the Northern Group people did not end well. In 444, 5,000 tents of the Northern Group (*beibu* 北部) revolted and tried to escape from the control of Northern Wei by migrating to the north. The group leader was executed, and the captured people were moved to the Ji (冀), Xiang (相) and Ding (定) prefectures as members of camp

⁴²⁴ Kubozoe, 2015, 29–31.

⁴²⁵ *Weishu*, *juan* 6, 131; *juan* 7, vol.1, 136.

households (*yinghu* 营户).⁴²⁶ The camp households in the Sixteen Kingdom period and early Northern Wei refer to the military households managed by the military administrative system who provided military service hereditarily. In 427, to weaken the military leaders, Emperor Shizu removed all the miscellaneous and camp households and placed them under the lead of the local counties and prefectures.⁴²⁷ Therefore, the captured people of the Northern Groups were put in camp households managed by the Ji, Xiang and Ding prefectures. Meanwhile, moving them into the interior of the Northern Wei territory made it more difficult for them to break away again.

The military town had the same problem of groups trying to escape. One early case happened in 429. The Xiutu (休屠) leader Jin Ya (金崖) rebelled because of a conflict with a military town general and the head of the local prefecture. After Jin's death in 433, however, the group still remained and continued being led by Jin's younger cousin.⁴²⁸ Later, in 471, the High Carts people were managed by the military town of Woye (沃野) and Tongwan (统万) in the borderland rebelled. They were defeated by the Northern Wei army, and more than 30,000 people were executed. The rest were also moved to the Ji, Xiang and Ding prefectures as camp households.

Another similar case regarding the High Cart people happened the next year.⁴²⁹ As the *Weishu* states, "because of their rough and unmanageable character," the High

⁴²⁶ *Weishu*, *juan* 4, vol.2, 97.

⁴²⁷ *Weishu*, *juan* 110, 2851.

⁴²⁸ *Weishu*, *juan* 4, vol.1, 83.

⁴²⁹ *Weishu*, *juan* 7, vol.1, 136.

Cart “separately remained as group.”⁴³⁰ When they were regulated by the local prefecture, because the camp household still belonged to the military household, the original local institution of the High Cart people still remained, even though the prefectures and counties should have intervened in the local administration of these groups in some way. In 445, when the revolt of Tujing Town was pacified, the revolutionaries were moved out of the military town and allocated to the local prefectures and counties.⁴³¹ The goal was to weaken them and more effectively control them. It is, however, unclear if these revolting people were incorporated into the household registration system of the local government instead of still remaining as a military household.

Along with and after the unification of Northern China, there was a transition of the military administrative system into the civil administrative system inside the Northern Wei government. During peace time, the large number of military households was not necessary, and it was also a threat when the Inner Asian groups stayed as a military power inside the Northern Wei polity. Also, the Northern Wei government was able to recruit troops from the registered households.⁴³² Meanwhile, a military household did not enjoy much privilege anymore when they had to stay in the military administrative system and were not able to enjoy the booty from the Central Plain, but instead had to face the ferocious enemy from the northern steppe. So the Inner Asian people, like the High Cart, revolted because of their refusal to participate in the military service for the Northern Wei. Therefore, it is recorded that in 457, all the protectors of the army (*hujun*

⁴³⁰ *Weishu, juan 103*, 2309. Here, I continue translating “*buluo*” as “groups” with consulting Atwood’s research. Christopher Atwood, “Chapter 5: Early Nomads in Chinese and Greek Imperial Ethnography,” in *Tribal Mirage* (draft).

⁴³¹ *Weishu, juan 4*, vol.2, 98.

⁴³² Gao Min, 2000, 316–317.

護軍), who regulated the Inner Asian groups were changed into prefecture chiefs (*taishou* 太守).⁴³³ This change indicates the establishment of the civil administrative system, mainly the household registration system, inside the Inner Asian groups.

Later, in 524, Emperor Suzong of Northern Wei switched the military households under the regulation of prefectures, such as the camp households and military towns, into civil households, which were regulated by the household registration system.⁴³⁴ Meanwhile, the military towns also were changed into prefectures.⁴³⁵ This policy incorporated a large number of people from the Inner Asian units, which used to be in the military administrative system, into the civil administration of household registration system. This policy also was largely followed by the Northern Zhou. The Di (氐) and Jihu (稽胡) peoples inside the Northern Zhou polity were regulated under the prefectures and counties as members of registered households.⁴³⁶

4.3.3 Conclusion

In the early stage of Northern Wei, around 398 CE, Emperor Taizu applied the policy of scattering the units, thus targeting only the powerful units to eliminate the competing powers inside the ruling group of the Tuoba lineage. With this policy, Emperor Taizu tried to incorporate the members of these units into the household

⁴³³ *Weishu*, juan 113, 2975.

⁴³⁴ The members of the registered households still were required to provide labor service, including military service, and the number of people in one household who should provide the military service was dependent on the size of the households. *Weishu*, juan 9, 236-237.

⁴³⁵ *Weishu*, juan 9, 236-237.

⁴³⁶ *Zhoushu*, juan 49, 896-897.

registration system to weaken and control them. The people from these powerful units, however, were still separated from the commoners who were managed by the local prefectures and counties, but organized as “eight states (*baguo* 八国)” inside the Xianbei polity. The eight states still indicated the possible higher status of their members, which makes them different from the local prefectures and counties.

Meanwhile, Inner Asian units existed inside the Northern Wei polity since its establishment and had not been scattered by Emperor Taizu. These people were organized as “Southern” and “Northern” Groups initially. Later, along with the increasing number of subordinate Inner Asian groups, the group number grew bigger. In 417, the groups for administrating them expanded into six—Heaven, Earth, Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern—and every group had a Great Man as leader. The Northern Wei government also fashioned a military administrative system, such as the protector of an army and military town, to manage the Inner Asian peoples inside Northern Wei territory. In this system, the Inner Asian local institution of these groups still remained.

Because of the frequent revolt of the Inner Asian groups regulated in the military administrative system of Northern Wei, a certain number of the groups were moved out from the military town or “Six Groups,” and regulated by the prefectures and counties as military households. Along with the transition of the military administrative system into the civil administrative system inside the Northern Wei government, the military households, regulated either by the military town or prefectures and counties, all transferred into registered households, and many military towns also became prefectures. This process incorporated a large number of people from the Inner Asian units, that used

to be in the military administrative system, into the civil administration of household registration system.

4.4 Conclusion and Discussion

Concerning the tradition of the local institution in the Han and Jin Dynasties, the gatherings of households were usually not a single clan but combined with different clans.⁴³⁷ As natural units, the hamlets were generated mainly because of suitability of the territories' environment for peoples' life. As an administrative unit of the government, with the application of the household registration system, the village normally was associated with a certain number of households, usually 100, instead of directly being associated with a plot of land like the hamlet. So individuals in one village could be from different hamlets, and people in the same hamlet could also belong to different villages.⁴³⁸

There were several layers of authorities in the local institution of early medieval China. The heads of the lowest “ten” and “five” were usually assigned to one of the members inside the households. Above the village, there were also several layers of higher authorities including town (xiang 乡), county (xian 县) and others around the central government. These administrative units all tended to maintain the population

⁴³⁷ Hou Xudong, 2005, 60–66; Li Mingzhao, 2013, 279–367.

⁴³⁸ Hou Xudong, 2005, 13.

attached to the farmland to practice agriculture, and strictly limited the migration of people, to weaken and control them.

To understand the local institution of Inner Asian tradition, I examined the political complexity of the Xiongnu polity first. In the Xiongnu polity, there were three different groups within the Xiongnu ruling class. As the core of the Xiongnu ruling class, the first group refers to the Chanyu and another three or four lineages, which are the nobles and renowned lineage (*mingzu* 名族) inside the Xiongnu. The power distribution among the first group is defined as “authoritative feudalism.” The second group was the group leaders who submitted to the Xiongnu polity either forcibly or voluntarily, and stayed inside the Xiongnu territory while keeping their autonomy. Besides the two groups, outside the Xiongnu territory, there were polity leaders associated with the Xiongnu polity. The latter two groups’ relationship with the Chanyu is described as “authoritative dependency.”

Control over the three ruling groups by the Chanyu was limited. The intermarriage with the Chanyu lineage, sending hostages to the Chanyu court and regular meetings were the three major institutional measures to link and control the three ruling groups. The limited ways of control over the ruling groups indicate the significance of the Chanyu’s authority for maintaining the stability of Xiongnu polity. Based on the complexity of the Xiongnu polity, I define the political structure of the Xiongnu polity as an authoritative system with non-uniform institutional complexity. With the authority of the Chanyu, this system could incorporate the groups with different complexities into the Xiongnu polity. Therefore, in the local level, both the decimal hierarchical administrative

system and conical tribal system existed in different groups of the Xiongnu polity. The decimal hierarchical official system existed inside the core ruling group. Whether the system was applied by the second and third ruling groups is hard to answer because of lack of evidence. Among the Wuhuan people, the political system was closer to the conical tribal system.

Since the Han and Jin Dynasties, after the Inner Asian group migrated inside the Han and Jin borders, they were either divided into smaller groups which were administrated by the local county or prefecture, or became “affiliated states” after being divided, which were supervised by the officials sent by the Han and Jin government. In both cases, the local political structure of these groups was largely kept intact. The existence of the large group of Inner Asian people inside the Han and Jin borders with their intact local political structure greatly accelerated the process of polity building by the Inner Asian rulers in the Central Plain. These polities can be described as Inner Asian authoritative system with non-uniform institutional complexity. In the system, the majority of the Inner Asian groups still kept their original local political structure and were not incorporated into the household registration system. A few cases show some Inner Asian groups as the core ruling group; they were incorporated into the system after the polity collapsed because of their military defeat. They were dissolved by the winning side and became registered household members mainly because they could be controlled more effectively inside the household registration system since they were the major threat of their old polity.

As for the Northern Dynasties, early in the Northern Wei, around 398 CE, Emperor Taizu applied the policy of scattering the units; he only targeted the powerful units to eliminate the competing powers inside the ruling group for the Tuoba lineage. With this policy, Emperor Taizu tried to incorporate the members of these units into the household registration system to weaken and control them. The people from these powerful units, however, still were separated from the commoners managed by the local prefectures and counties, but organized as “eight states (bago 八国)” inside the Xianbei polity. The eight states could mark the possible higher status of their members, which made them different from the local prefectures and counties.

Meanwhile, Inner Asian units existed inside the Northern Wei polity since its establishment and were not scattered by Emperor Taizu. These people were organized as Southern and Northern groups initially. Later, along with the increasing number of the subordinate Inner Asian groups, the group number grew bigger. In 417, the groups for administering them expanded to six—Heaven, Earth, Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern— and every group had a Great Man as its leader. The Northern Wei government also adopted the military administrative system, such as the protector of an army and military town, to manage the Inner Asian groups inside Northern Wei territory. In this system, the Inner Asian local institution of these groups still remained.

Because of the frequent revolt of the Inner Asian groups regulated in the military administrative system of Northern Wei, a certain number of the groups were moved out from the military town or Six Groups, and regulated by the prefectures and counties as military households. Along with the transition of the military administrative system into

the civil administrative system inside the Northern Wei government, the military households were regulated either by the military town, or prefectures and counties. and transferred into registered households; many military towns also became prefectures. This process incorporated a large number of people from the Inner Asian units, which used to be in the military administrative system, into the civil administration of household registration system.

In general, the separation between the Inner Asian groups on the Central Plain and the domestic groups, which were managed with the household registration system, existed both in Han-style dynasties and in the polities mainly built by the Inner Asian groups. The existence of the Inner Asian units in the Central Plain both threatened the safety of the Han and Jin polities, and the polities in the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties. When facing the threat, the suggestions given by the officials during the Wei and Jin dynasties, like Jiang Tong, usually were further separation. According to them, the Inner Asian people should be removed to the borderland or even outside the border because the separation between the Hua and Yi should be maintained. Even when they lived in and around the Central Plain, they still could not be trusted. The Jin government was not able to handle the migration of the Inner Asian group because of the constant internal turmoil, and also they needed the military services from them. Therefore, these suggestions were not adopted in the Jin Dynasty.

The polities of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties largely followed the Inner Asian political tradition and the Inner Asian groups remained as units inside the polities. The military service provided by these groups played a significant role

in these policies. The imposition of the household registration system on some of the Inner Asian groups happened when these groups were too powerful, especially when these groups were led by the core ruling group members.

On the other hand, in the Northern Wei, when the military service provided by these Inner Asian groups was no longer as significant as before, the military administrative system gradually transferred into the civil administrative system. In this process, the household registration system was imposed and three layers of authorities were built in the local level of these Inner Asian groups to monitor and regulate them.⁴³⁹ The Inner Asian groups, however, did not disappear after this process. There were still a certain number that remained.⁴⁴⁰ Once the peaceful situation was broken, they would be ready to engage militarily. After all, the one who caused the decline and even collapse of the Northern Wei, Erzhu Rong, was one of them.

⁴³⁹ The three layers of authorities refers to the “three heads (*sanzhang* 三长)” system, which included the neighborhood head (*linzhang* 鄰長) controlling five households as a neighbourhood (*lin* 鄰), the village head (*lizhang* 里長) supervising five neighborhoods, and the dang heads (*dangzhang* 黨長) overseeing five villages with 125 households. *Weishu*, *juan* 110, 2855.

⁴⁴⁰ In 536, the Xianbei and High Cart group leaders still were listed separately as a military power. *Weishu*, *juan* 12, 300.

CHAPTER 5 Conclusion and Discussion

This dissertation began with an examination of the evolution of the Sinicization (Hanhua 华化) theory. The research shows this theory in different contexts and interpretations to engage in some criticism of the theory. Since the 1920s, the Sinicization theory in the context of Chinese nationality has flourished in China. Later it re-appeared in the West through the works of Jing-shen Tao and Ping-ti Ho. The basic conclusion of Hanhua theory, that the Chinese absorbed the non-Chinese regardless of their status as rulers, a belief that already was held by the early European Sinologists, received both acceptance and criticism in Western academic writing. Scholars noted the broad and vague content covered by Hanhua, so they tried to divide it and create distinct terms for different parts of Hanhua's content. For instance, the Hanhua in the context of Chinese nationality covered many topics so that it failed to distinguish between different aspects, such as politics and customs, inside the transition of the non-Chinese people. So as Dardess and Bol suggested, the Hanhua theory in the context of Chinese nationality had problematic analytic value, and should be applied with caution and clear restriction on its content.

As discussed in the first chapter, the Hanhua theory has been adopted in the construction of the history of Chinese Nationality since the early 20th century rather than Han ethnicity in uniting all the peoples inside China. Therefore, the Hanhua in the

context of Chinese Nationality tried to be inclusive and flexible, and to connect different peoples with different cultural backgrounds inside Chinese territory. As Ping-ti Ho suggested, culturalism behind the Hanhua theory would not “obliterate” the other patterns of culture and forms of identity inside the Chinese Nationality.

Although the Hanhua theory plays an important role in the concept of Chinese Nationality, it is of limited and problematic analytic value. By applying the Sinicization or Hanhua theory to every dynasty, the historical interpretation becomes a deterministic narrative. As a reaction to the flourishing of Hanhua theory in China and its adoption by some Western scholars, with misinterpretations and criticism about the Hanhua, the ethnicity of the non-Chinese peoples in Chinese history is emphasized more and more in the works of Western scholars as represented by the New Qing historians. This research, however, does not explain why and how the non-Chinese peoples adopted Chinese culture after entering the Central Plain. Meanwhile, the Hanhua theory often makes scholars focus on the result of the transition of the non-Chinese people and neglect the process of that transition. Therefore, in the second and third chapters, I present two case studies to explore the process of the transition of non-Chinese.

These case studies are about the transition of the institutions of the central and local government during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties. The example for the central government is the succession system, and that for the local government is the local administrative system.

In the first case study, I point out that there were diverse institutional traditions on the succession system in the Inner Asia and the Central Plain. The institution of the crown prince in the succession of the Han imperial family was the embodiment of this ancestral worship culture. Meanwhile, the Inner Asian succession tradition usually required a selection to legitimize the ruler's leadership through a peaceful or tanistic process, and the successor had to prove himself as the best-qualified candidate. The qualification of the candidate can be enhanced by the designation of the former ruler, and sometimes the former ruler appointed him to this high position. .

For the Inner Asian rulers, when they took the throne and claimed themselves as emperor, it was expected that they would follow the emperorship in the Han although it was different from the rulership in the Inner Asian tradition. All the states in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period discussed in the second chapter and Northern Dynasties unexceptionally applied the crown prince system that was attached to the emperorship.

The research shows that these Inner Asian rulers soon found that it was almost impossible to successfully apply the crown prince system. The problem was that the decentralization of military power among the ruling group brought potential powerful competitors to the heir apparent. These difficulties can be attributed to the Inner Asian tradition of rulership and succession. The decentralization of military and political power among the ruling group determined the method of succession to some extent. The Inner Asian rulers noticed that the power structure influenced the application of the crown prince institution, so they applied different measures to let their heirs apparent acquire political and military power and personal influence, and make them able to compete with

other nobles. These measures sometimes even distorted the crown prince system. What may not have been obvious, however, was that the crown prince institution in the Han tradition was actually also restricted the emperor's power.

The Han crown prince system aimed to stabilize the process of the transition of supreme power. When the Inner Asian rulers were able to break out from the restraints of the decentralized power structure, they also had no restrictions from the Han tradition. One of the functions of the crown prince system in the Han tradition, which restricted the emperor's power in choosing his successor, had disappeared. To some extent, the emperor monopolized the power of choosing and appointing the crown prince. Therefore, through applying the crown prince system, the Inner Asian rulers attained a centralized authority, which was different from and more centralized than the Han tradition. The succession problem, however, really was not resolved until the end of the Northern Dynasties. In the Sui and early Tang, the succession struggles inside the ruling group were still one of the main issues regarding the stability of the regimes.

In the second case study in the third chapter, the transition of the local institution of the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain has been discussed. In the Han and Jin Dynasties, the local administration was based on the application of a household registration system. There were several layers of authorities in the local institution. These administrative units were intended to maintain the population, attaching them to the farmland to practice agriculture, and to constrain the migration of people/ Both these were factors promoting social stability. As for the Inner Asian tradition, based on the complexity of the Xiongnu polity, I define the political structure of the Xiongnu polity as

an authoritative system with non-uniform institutional complexity. With the authority of the Chanyu, this system could incorporate groups with different complexities into the Xiongnu polity. Therefore, at the local level, both the decimal hierarchical administrative system and conical tribal system existed in different groups of the Xiongnu polity. The decimal hierarchical official system existed inside the core ruling group. Whether the system was applied by the second and third ruling groups is hard to answer because of lack of evidence.

Since the Han and Jin Dynasties, after the Inner Asian group migrated within the Han and Jin borders, they were either divided into smaller groups that were administered by the local county or prefecture; or became “affiliated states” after being divided, which were supervised by the officials sent by the Han and Jin governments. In both instances, the local political structure of these groups largely was kept intact. The polities of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties mainly followed the Inner Asian political tradition, and the Inner Asian groups also remained as units inside the polities. The military service provided by these groups played a significant role in these polities. The imposition of the household registration system on some of the Inner Asian groups happened when these groups became too powerful, especially when they were led by the core ruling group members.

Meanwhile, in the Northern Wei, when the military service provided by these Inner Asian groups was no longer as significant as before, the military administrative system gradually transferred into the civil administrative system. In this process, the household registration system was imposed, and three layers of authorities were built in

the local level of these Inner Asian groups to monitor and regulate them. The Inner Asian groups, however, did not disappear after this process. There were still a certain number of them that remained. Once the peaceful situation was disrupted, they were prepared to engage militarily. After all, the one who caused the decline and even collapse of the Northern Wei, Erzhu Rong, was one of them.

The two case studies show the transition of the institutions of the Inner Asian polity in the Central Plain. The transition is neither a one-way change from Inner Asian institutions to Han and Jin institutions nor a simple hybrid. For different institutions, here the succession system in the central government and the administrative system in the local level, the dynamics for the transition were not the same. The power centralization can be considered as one shared dynamic in both cases. As an important part of the emperorship package from the Central Plain, the crown prince institution was associated directly with the legitimacy of the ruling house and also labeled as the “Han-style” institution.

Compared to the crown prince system, the local institutions—including the civil and military administrative system—did not have a strong ideological package bound with them. Therefore, unlike the succession institution case, in which the Inner Asian rulers adopted the crown prince system when they started to practice emperorship in the Han tradition, the Inner Asian rulers did not impose the household registration system on the Inner Asian groups in the Central Plain right after the establishment of their polities. The adoption of the household registration system as the local administrative system was mainly for the practical purposes instead of ideological purposes along the transition from

the military administrative system to civil administrative system. The household registration system and the multiple layer of authority in the civil administrative system maintained control more effectively over the population. At the same time, the Inner Asian tradition of the succession institution and local administrative system never disappeared in polities during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and Northern Dynasties. The two cases show that the Inner Asian tradition was organically integrated into the transitional process, imbedded into polities, and led to different and unexpected outcomes that reshaped Chineseness since then.

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