Introduction

The modern traveler arriving in Beijing today finds a bustling metropolis in which the physical reminders of the city's historic past are rapidly disappearing. Even though the former imperial residence, the Forbidden City, still stands, virtually everything else has changed. The massive city walls have been leveled to the ground to make way for ring roads and expressways. New high-rises have destroyed the numinous atmosphere of the Altar of Heaven, and ordinary citizens and tourists crowd into the formerly sacred precincts of the state altars. The traveler might assume that the citizens of the People's Republic of China have no need to remember the Qing, the last imperial dynasty that ruled this land from 1644 to 1911. But that would be a mistake.

Many geopolitical issues confronting policymakers in the People's Republic of China derive from the Qing heritage. The Qing (1644–1911) was the last and arguably the most successful dynasty to rule China. It was also the last conquest regime. The rulers came from Northeast Asia and claimed descent from the Jurchen, who had ruled part of North China during the Jin dynasty (1115–1260). In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a minor tribal chieftain named Nurgaci (1559–1626) successfully united many of the northeastern tribes. His son Hongtaiji (1592–1643) transformed these diverse peoples into a new solidary group, the Manchus. Although he died before the Manchus entered the Ming capital, scholars identify Hongtaiji as the central figure in the creation of the Qing imperial enterprise.[1]

Manchu banner troops swept south of the Great Wall in 1644. After pacifying the Ming territories, they turned to the consolidation of the Inner Asian frontiers. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the fixing of the border with Russia and the incorporation of the Mongolian

steppe, the Tibetan plateau, and the Tarim Basin into the Qing empire. The Qing conquests laid the territorial foundations of the modern Chinese nation-state, but Qing policies also created the ethnic problems that accompanied the growth of nationalism. The Qing conceived of themselves as rulers of a pluralistic, multiethnic empire. They regarded the peoples inhabiting the strategic Inner Asian peripheries as major participants in the imperial enterprise, imperial subjects on equal footing with Han Chinese. Peoples speaking a variety of non-Sinitic languages and adhering to Islam, Tibetan Buddhism, and shamanism were encouraged during the eighteenth century to develop and sustain their separate cultures and belief systems. The issue of how these non-Han peoples were to be accommodated within Chinese nationalism remains unresolved today.

This book explores issues of ethnicity and historical interpretation within Qing history from the perspective of the Manchu rulers. It addresses a major theme in modern histories of the dynasty, the early Manchu rulers' adoption of "a policy of systematic sinicization" as the key to their success.[2] What Pamela Crossley calls the "sinicization model" in Chinese history emerged from debate about how the nation was to be defined after the end of the Qing dynasty in 1912. In the late nineteenth century Chinese intellectuals like Liang Qichao, reacting to social Darwinism, introduced the concepts of "race" and "ethnicity" to a Chinese audience. The term *Hanzu*, or "Han ethnic group," entered the Chinese political vocabulary. With its lineage/descent group (*zongzu*) connotations, *Hanzu* enabled Chinese to "imagine" the nation as a "Han lineage."[3]

Hanzu became conflated with race. Some Chinese thinkers argued that the Han dominated the "yellow race," which, like the white race, could claim a distinguished history of cultural achievement. Manchus, Japanese, and Mongols were at best peripheral and, in the opinions of some writers, did not even belong to the same biological group.[4] Sun Yat-sen, who was subsequently identified as the "father of the Chinese Republic," argued that China's inability to resist European and American aggression stemmed from the foreign origins of its rulers, the Manchus. Because they were not Chinese, not members of the Han ethnic group, the Qing lacked the will to wholeheartedly combat Western imperialism. Sun sought to mobilize the Han people to rise up and overthrow the Manchus, to create a Han nation.

Who belonged to the Han *ethnos?* Sun Yat-sen asserted that the *Hanzu* were a "pure biological entity." Despite the historical evidence that many different peoples had lived in China, he asserted that "for the most part, the Chinese people are of the Han or Chinese race with common blood, common language, common religion, and common customs—a single, pure

race."[5] The different peoples who invaded or migrated into China had, over the centuries, blended into the Han Chinese population: they became "sinicized" (*hanhua*). This was one of the primary themes developed by Sun after 1912, when he and other nationalist leaders attempted to form a new Chinese nation from the regions that had been part of the Qing empire. Although Sun occasionally spoke about the need to create a new "national people" out of China's many peoples, he also assumed that eventually the minorities would be assimilated into the Han majority.

As Prasenjit Duara notes, "Historical consciousness in modern society has been overwhelmingly framed by the nation-state."[6] The emergence of Chinese nationalism and a discourse focusing on national identity directly affected Chinese historiography. The task that lay before Chinese scholars, according to Liang Qichao, was to discard the dynastic framework of earlier histories and to write a "history of the nation." The depiction of the non-Han conquest regimes that had ruled over the territory of the modern nation ranked high on the nationalist agenda. Writers like Fu Sinian tried in the 1920s to present Chinese history as a history of the Han race. The history of cultural contact among different peoples in the territory of China was rewritten as the triumph of Chinese culture (whatever that might be). Perhaps conquest dynasties had defeated Chinese ruling houses through sheer brute force, but they all succumbed to the more sophisticated Chinese system and ended up being absorbed by Chinese culture.[7]

An influential example of the "sinicization" interpretation as applied to the Qing house is Mary C. Wright's 1957 work, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* (critiqued by Pamela Crossley). In answering those historians who blamed the Manchus for the imperialist victories in the nineteenth century—an echo of Sun's revolutionary theme—Wright also rejects the argument that conquest dynasties like the Liao and Qing were not sinicized. She points to the erosion of the cultural barriers that separated the conquest elite from the subjugated population to argue that Qing and Chinese interests were "virtually indistinguishable" by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Tongzhi restoration is for her an example of the working out of Chinese Confucian political ideals, and the failure of the reforms, the failure of Confucianism.[8]

Crossley cites several reasons why Wright's assumptions concerning the assimilation of Manchus into Chinese society were mistaken. Even if, as Wright noted, the Manchu homeland was increasingly infiltrated by Chinese immigrants, and bannermen lost many legal privileges during the late Qing, these developments did not destroy the cultural life of the garrisons. Crossley's monograph on the Suwan Gūwalgiya magnificently documents

the distinctive identity of this banner family in late Qing and early Republican times. Proof that Manchus were separate, in their own eyes and in the view of the Han Chinese, is found in the mob actions against Manchus during the Taiping rebellion and the 1911 Revolution. Crossley argues that the Manchus had certainly not disappeared into the Chinese *ethnos* or, in light of the antagonism expressed toward them by Han Chinese, thought of themselves as "Chinese." Moreover, twentieth-century Manchus developed a modern ethnic identity in counteropposition to the growth of a Han nationalist identity.

Mary Wright wrote during a period when the rich archival materials of the Qing dynasty were unavailable for scholarly use. Crossley's study of the garrison culture also relied on other kinds of primary sources. My study, which uses archival materials produced by the Imperial Household Department and housed in the First Historical Archives in Beijing, will show that one of Wright's assumptions, which Crossley did not challenge, is also mistaken. Wright assumed that the Tongzhi court was sinicized. For Crossley, "Knowledge of life at the court sheds no light upon the life of the Manchu people in China. . . . The behavior of the Qing emperors was not intended to serve as a model for the bannermen."[9] What the archival materials now available show is that the Qing rulers kept their Manchu identity. An explanation of why this is so requires a further examination of the issue.

The academic use of sinicization has not been very rigorous. Studies of Manchu-language use at court, for example, almost all conclude that the loss of Manchu as the first language of the rulers and the conquest elite implies their absorption into Chinese culture. As Pamela Crossley and I explain elsewhere, historians who ignore the Manchu-language documents that exist throughout the history of the dynasty do so at their peril.[10] The language did not die but remained alive, not only in the capital but in garrisons in Xinjiang and in the northeast (see chapter 1). Bilingual shop signs and lingering shamanic traditions in the northeast prompted one Manchu scholar to conclude, "In this region, Manchu traditions live together with the traditions of the other Minorities and with those of the Han people, in a compact amalgam where it is not always possible to distinguish the separate elements."[11]

More importantly, Manchu identity is not contingent on whether individuals speak Chinese or Manchu as their "native speech." Nineteenth-century Qing rulers seem to have been more comfortable using Chinese, but that did not mean that they ceased to identify themselves as Manchu. Anyone who assumes that Manchu identity was solely a product of the

Manchu language needs to reflect on the comparable situations of English speakers. The fact that American colonists spoke English did not prevent them from creating a separate identity for themselves and declaring independence from Britain. English did not prevent the Indian nationalist elites from using that language to promote self-rule for India. It is absurd to assume that language and identity are always coterminous.[12]

A growing body of secondary literature demonstrates that the issue of the creation and maintenance of primary identities is complex and historically contingent. Ethnicity is a concept that developed fully with the nineteenth-century emergence of the modern nation-state, first in Europe and then elsewhere.[13] As Crossley points out, applying the term to earlier periods is anachronistic and distorts the historical reality. That does not mean that the Qing rulers did not have concepts concerning their own identities and the identities of other peoples, but the political context and the definitions of self were significantly different. The Qing political model was not the nation-state; the goal of the government was not to create one national identity, but to permit diverse cultures to coexist within the loose framework of a personalistic empire. Ethnicity in its modern sense did not exist, nor did the state seek to create it.

Modern ethnicity implies not only the bonds that create a solidary group but also ones that set off that group from other groups. These social boundaries were very fluid in the Jurchen homeland of Northeast Asia, where three different ecosystems—the Mongolian plateau, the densely forested *taiga*, and the fertile Liao River plain—came together and brought pastoralists, hunting and fishing peoples, and sedentary agriculturalists in contact with one another. The seventeenth-century Jurchen were agriculturalists whose close cultural interactions with Mongols were revealed in shared vocabulary words, the Jurchen use of Mongolian in both spoken and written form, and the adoption of Mongol names and titles by some of Nurgaci's kinsmen. Pointing to Mongol sources for the banner organization, David Farquhar shows that many Chinese elements in the early Manchu state were actually filtered through the Mongols.[14]

The Manchus incorporated individuals from many different cultural traditions into the banners and tried to remake these people "like Manchus"—governed by the same laws, dress codes, and social rules. Prior identities were subsumed under a new banner identity, at least until the eighteenth century, when the court moved significantly toward defining identity in terms of descent. Even then, the conquest elite remained explicitly multicultural. New Muslim, Tibetan, and Mongol notables who were incorporated into the Qing ruling group in the eighteenth century ensured

that there could not be one single ethnic focus or identity for the conquest elite.[15] Similarly, despite a few "xenophobes" like Wang Fuzhi, most Confucian scholars stressed the universal nature of their doctrines; their primary mission was to "transform" (*jiaohua*) or to "civilize" (*wenhua*), without regard to racial or ethnic categories.[16] In both groups, identity was not fixed and unchanging, but rather the opposite.

Moreover, the attitude of Qing rulers toward issues of culture depended very much on the object of their attentions. As individuals, they were intent on preserving their lineage, the Aisin Gioro, and the conquest elite. As rulers, however, they did not espouse policies that would transform or change the cultures of their subjects. Their status as rulers of multiple peoples instead dictated that they patronize and promote the cultures of their subjects and address each of the different constituencies within the realm. Most Qing rulers, until the end of the dynasty, were multilingual: they studied Mongolian, Manchu, and Chinese. Some rulers, like the Qianlong emperor, took the trouble to go further and to learn Tibetan and Uighur. Hongli himself said:

> In 1743 I first practiced Mongolian. In 1760 after I pacified the Muslims, I acquainted myself with Uighur (Huiyu). In 1776 after the two pacifications of the Jinquan [rebels] I became roughly conversant in Tibetan (Fanyu). In QL 45 [Qianlong 45, or 1780] because the Panchen Lama was coming to visit I also studied Tangut (Tangulayu). Thus when the rota of Mongols, Muslims and Tibetans come every year to the capital for audience I use their own languages and do not rely on an interpreter . . . to express the idea of conquering by kindness.[17]

During the seventeenth-century conquest period, the Shunzhi and Kangxi emperors sought to win over Han Chinese literati by presenting themselves as Confucian monarchs. They studied Chinese, accepted the Confucian canon as the foundation for the civil service examinations, and adopted the civil service examinations as the primary mode of recruitment for the bureaucracy. Manchu emperors patronized Chinese art and literature, issued Confucian decrees, and reformed Manchu marriage and burial practices to conform to Chinese customs. Filiality became an essential prerequisite of rulership. These strategies were successful. Despite the persistence of an underlying tension in their relationship, Manchu patronage gradually eroded Han Chinese resistance and encouraged support of the dynasty.[18]

The Sinitic aspects of Qing rule, and the intense scholarly focus on their governance of the former Ming territories south of the Great Wall, cause

many scholars to gloss over the non-Han origins of the rulers, and to emphasize sinicization as the main historical trend during the dynasty. The chapters that follow show that Qing rulers never lost their awareness of their separation from the mass of the Ming population and never shed their Manchu identity. They adopted Chinese customs when it was politically expedient for them to do so and rejected them when it did not help them achieve their political goals. Qing rulers studied Jin history with equal fervor and built on many of the Jin policies. Crossley analyzes the importance of these precedents for Qing rule: "Attempts to use the examinations for the promotion of commoners or for restricting aristocratic access to high office were consistent, in the Jin empire, with aggressive state programs to limit the privilege and influence of the nobility, to centralize the state, and to prepare the dynastic constituency for a very broad role in the maintenance of a civil system. These practices were all forerunners of the bureaucracy of the Qing empire."[19]

Recent studies of the conquest regimes that ruled China's northern and northwestern territories from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries provide a fresh interpretation of the distinctive political style brought to rulership by these non-Han states. The Khitan, Tangut, Jurchen, and Mongol rulers all incorporated Chinese-type bureaucracies into their own polities, but at the same time they adapted the Chinese political model to suit their own circumstances. They focused on how to control an empire with nomadic as well as sedentary subjects that spanned Inner and East Asia. All the conquest regimes created administrations that were differentiated according to region. Different laws applied to different peoples, and officials were recruited from different groups. Moreover, although Han Chinese were employed in government, all four states resisted sinicization. Each created its own national script. All pursued bilingual or multilingual language policies. Each carried out extensive translation projects, seeking legitimacy not only in the Confucian but in the Buddhist realm.[20]

The Qing was neither a replica of the Chinese dynasties nor a simple duplicate of its non-Han predecessors. Representations of the Qing must acknowledge the non-Han origins of the rulers but go beyond that to analyze the innovations of Qing rulership. Rather than cite sinicization as the primary cause of Qing success, this work lays out the case for a very different conclusion: the key to Qing achievement lay in its ability to implement flexible culturally specific policies aimed at the major non-Han peoples inhabiting the Inner Asian peripheries in the empire. Whereas a native ruling house would have to throw off the dominant Confucian ideology to

pursue a multicultural policy, the Qing expanded on precedents set by previous conquest regimes. These findings point indirectly to the need to reexamine the historical contributions of earlier Inner Asian states to Chinese history.

The full scope of Qing policies relating to its peripheral regions lies outside the scope of this study, which focuses instead on the Qing imperial court itself. The book is divided into three parts. The first, "The Material Culture of the Qing Court," consists of a chapter on court society and identifies several significant features of Qing rule that link the rulers to their non-Han predecessors. The Qing court and administration moved in seasonal rhythms between multiple capitals, located outside the Great Wall and in the North China plain, in order to maintain important linkages with Inner Asian allies and the Han Chinese population. Like their predecessors, the Qing spatially divided capital cities in order to segregate the conquest elite from the subjugated population. Having created a Manchu identity for the northeastern tribes in the early seventeenth century, the rulers issued regulations governing hairdo, dress, language, and the martial arts, which defined and perpetuated the separate identity of the conquest elite. Although the content of Manchu identity varied over time, it never disappeared. At the same time, Qing rulers created through the arts an image of cosmopolitan rulership to stress the spatial breadth and catholicity of the imperial charisma.

The second part, "The Social Organization of the Qing Court," consists of four chapters. Chapter 2 analyzes the construction of the Qing conquest elite in the early seventeenth century out of multiethnic coalitions formed with Mongols, Manchus, and northeastern "transfrontiersmen." The rulers incorporated these diverse subjects into a military-civilian organization called the banners and created a banner nobility to lead them. The primus inter pares of the banner elites, however, were all imperial kinsmen. The imperial lineage, the Aisin Gioro, claimed descent from the Jurchen Jin who ruled North China and Northeast Asia in the twelfth century and constituted an "inner circle" of support for the throne. In comparison with their predecessors, the Ming, Qing rulers severely limited the number of imperial princes whose titles could be passed on without reduction in rank. The regulations governing hereditary transmission of titles produced a highly stratified imperial lineage. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the fiscal cost of subsidies rose, emperors upheld the privileged status of their kinsmen while curbing their claims to employment and special favor.

Chapter 3 examines the internal rivalries among the imperial kinsmen. Manchu rulers had to eliminate the autonomous powers of their brothers and close kinsmen before they could wield centralized authority over the state. The "domestication" of the banner princes, and the concomitant transition from collegial to one-person rule, was accomplished by the 1730s. Although the sibling politics set off by the Qing refusal to adopt the Chinese dynastic principle of eldest son succession continued until the middle of the nineteenth century, imperial princes also reverted to earlier patterns of fraternal solidarity and support. The late Qing prominence of princes Gong and Chun in governance thus paralleled earlier political structures.

Manchu attitudes toward women also contrasted with Han Chinese norms. Chapter 4 argues that the treatment of the emperor's mother, sisters, consorts, and daughters cannot be understood without reference to non-Han models of political rule. Han Chinese regimes barred imperial agnates from governance and used affinal kinsmen as allies in the throne's struggles against the bureaucracy; the Qing strategy focused on maintenance of solidarity within the conquest elite. Marriage policy amounted to political endogamy within the conquest elite. Intermarriage with the subjugated Chinese population and their descendants was prohibited.

Qing marriage policies reduced the political importance of empresses' families and incorporated consorts into the imperial lineage, forcing them to cut their relationships with their natal families. In sharp contrast to Han Chinese ruling houses, Qing empresses dowager consistently formed regencies not with their natal kin but with their husband's brothers. Since imperial princesses did not lose membership in their natal families on marriage, the alliances brought their grooms into the inner circle.

The final chapter (chapter 5) in part 2 focuses on palace servants and analyzes the master-servant relationship in terms of the ruler's political and symbolic agenda. The size and diverse composition of the palace establishment was a corollary of the emperor's preeminence. The very size of the staff, however, created control problems. The Qing resolved the age-old issue of eunuch subversion by employing another subordinated status group, the imperial bondservants, in supervisory roles within a bureaucratized palace administration. Together with inner-court and banner officials, the bondservants formed the Imperial Household Department (Neiwufu) and enabled the emperors to bypass the Han-dominated civil service (the outer-court staff) in many arenas, extending far beyond the rulers' domestic affairs. Palace politics had its own dynamic. The complex hierarchy of servants within the palace was a mirror image of the court's internal structure;

master-servant relations gave favored eunuchs and bondservants informal authority that subverted the normative order. That rulers were keenly aware of these challenges is evident from the vigor with which they attempted to enforce palace regulations and keep servants "in their place."

The third part, "Qing Court Rituals," consists of three chapters, each of which explores a different cultural realm. Rituals were essential in the construction of imperial legitimation. The Qing understood very well that compliance was not merely a matter of coercive force, but rather the result of successful attempts to persuade subjects of the moral and ethical correctness of the dominant political structure. The Qing constructed a personalistic empire, held together at its pinnacle by a charismatic ruler, who was able to speak directly in the cultural vocabularies of each of his major subject peoples. Qing rulers patronized Confucianism for the Han Chinese, shamanism for the northeastern peoples (the Manchus), and Tibetan Buddhism for the Mongols and Tibetans. The rulers also supported Islam, the religion of the Turkic-speaking Muslims of Central Asia, but were much less successful in winning over this group (see chapter 7).

Chapter 6 focuses on the Confucian state ritual arena. Within Confucian political thought there was a basic tension between two principles of legitimation—virtue or heredity—that remained unresolved. Qing emperors sought to raise "rule by virtue" over "rule by heredity," but as analysis of ritual delegation shows, heredity continued to be an element in imperial legitimation. When their legitimacy, as defined by Confucian political theory, was directly challenged by drought, political exigencies demanded that rulers pursue an eclectic policy of religious patronage. Efficacy mattered more than consistency: Confucian virtue could not be the sole arbiter of imperial legitimation.

Chapter 7 turns to the court's patronage of shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism, and thus to the court's pursuit of a multicultural policy directed at different subject peoples in the empire. Shamanism was the avowed traditional belief system of the Manchus but originally focused on the resolution of individual problems. State shamanic rites developed as an alternative and counterpart to the Han Chinese political rituals; then, in the eighteenth century, the court attempted to preserve shamanic rituals through codification. Shamanism provided not only the foundation myths legitimating the Qing ruling house but also a cultural umbrella for integration of northeastern tribal groups. Tibetan Buddhism attracted Manchu rulers because it was the belief system of the Mongols and in the seventeenth century a key to supremacy in Inner Asia. Manchu patronage of the dGe lugs pa sect sustained that order's dominance in Tibet and enabled the

Qing emperors to use the religion as a means of integrating and stabilizing Mongol society.

Chapter 8 examines the religious life of the inner court, in which palace women as well as men participated. Shielded from official scrutiny, the private altars erected in palace residences, as well as the halls in Jingshan, north of the palace compound, were ritual spaces within which private emotion and sentiment could prevail over the strict hierarchical order dictated by dynastic regulations. Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist, Taoist, and shamanic observances commingled in the imperial household's performance of the calendrical rituals common to residents of the capital. The private or domestic rituals of the Qing court were a synthetic, eclectic blend of the many cultural and religious traditions espoused by Qing rulers. As such, these rituals symbolized the final denouement of Qing imperial institutions, which created a fusion of the diverse cultures of the empire.

The foundation for this book's argument is a large body of primary and secondary materials on Qing imperial institutions that became accessible during the 1960s: the Chinese- and Manchu-language palace memorials in Taipei and Beijing, the official records and regulations published along with a flood of works on Qing rulers, the Qing banner system, and the governance of different regions within the Qing empire.[21] To assess the full value of these records and documents for historical analysis, we must understand the context in which they were produced.

Every Qing historian relies on the Collected Regulations ([*Qinding*] *da Qing huidian*) and the accompanying collections of historical precedents (*huidian shili*) for a grasp of the bureaucratic framework that structured official action. Collected regulations were also periodically compiled for each ministry in the central government, as well as for the Imperial Clan Court, Imperial Household Department, and other offices within the palace administration. These specialized regulations record details of historical changes that supplement the archival records.

It is hard for historians to remember that the Veritable Records (*Da Qing shilu*) were not accessible during the Qing itself. We know that emperors read—or said that they read—the Veritable Records of their predecessors. With the partial exception of the Kangxi emperor, most rulers permitted recording officials to be present at imperial audiences in order to compile the Diaries of Rest and Repose (*Da Qing qijuzhu*). Compiled in both Manchu and Chinese, these accounts of the daily activities of the Qing emperor were collected and bound together on a monthly, then yearly, basis.

After an emperor died, his successor would commission a group of scholar-officials to peruse the diaries and relevant official documents from the ministries and the History Office in order to compile the Veritable Records of the reign. As Feng Erkang notes, the diaries and the Veritable Records are therefore not identical. Those with recourse to the archives know that both also omit certain kinds of activities amply documented in the "working papers" housed in the archives.[22]

Even though they were not intended for wide circulation, the Veritable Records were addressed to a future audience of descendants and, eventually, historians. Moreover, the many transcripts of imperial communications with officials included in the Veritable Records show the emperor speaking to the bureaucracy, and representing himself in their ideal discourse. Rhetorical flourishes in Chinese-language imperial edicts were most often couched in Confucian language.

Those who would study the Qing imperial lineage must also consult the genealogical information found in the *Aixin juelo zongpu* (1937). Printed in Mukden during the Manchukuo period, the genealogy seems to be relatively rare. The compilers must have referred to the manuscript genealogy, *Da Qing yudie,* which was periodically revised throughout the course of the dynasty. Produced in Manchu as well as Chinese, and kept in Shengjing (Mukden) and Beijing, the working genealogy provides information on the birth and marriage of daughters (omitted from the printed version) but lacks the brief official biographies outlining the careers of kinsmen found in the printed genealogy.[23]

This book could not have been written without the archival materials that have become available to scholars in the 1980s. The archival materials housed in Taiwan's National Palace Museum and Beijing's First Historical Archives were never intended to be presented to a public readership, as were the Veritable Records and the Diaries of Rest and Repose. They were rather "working documents," such as are found in any large-scale bureaucracy. Their value for historical research has been amply demonstrated by recent monographs on topics as diverse as the evolution of the Grand Council and millenarian uprisings.[24]

This book relies primarily on the archival materials of the Imperial Household Department held in Beijing at the First Historical Archives. In contrast with the high-level documents emanating from the Grand Council, which treat all the major affairs of the Qing state, these are papers of the palace administration, which was in charge of the inner court. Rather than confine itself to the emperor's private and personal affairs, the Imperial Household Department supervised a broad range of activities, which

included foreign relations with the newly conquered territories and rituals of the state. Similarly, archival materials of the Imperial Clan Court, which I have read, touch on matters related to the imperial clan outside the normal purview of the Qing bureaucracy. Manchu-language documents, found in the Imperial Household Department files, are often not duplicated in the Chinese language, despite the general bilingual policy.

Qing archival materials include a substantial body of Manchu-language as well as Chinese-language documents. Elsewhere, Pamela Crossley and I argue for the importance of using these Manchu-language documents, which have all too frequently been assumed to be duplicates of those written in the Chinese language. Recent analysis by scholars in China indicates that the Manchu language served as a security language for the early Qing rulers, protecting communications on military activities, relations with Mongolia, Russia, and Tibet, and affairs within the imperial lineage from scrutiny.[25]

In every society, the perspective of the rulers is likely to differ significantly from the perspective of the ruled. The Manchu- and Chinese-language archival documents provide an unrivaled depth of information concerning the life of the inner court and are doubly valuable because they were never intended for public consumption. The Qing period has an additional source in the Jesuit reports that cover activities at the court from the late seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. Published in Europe, these observations are frequently unique in their perspective, and valuable for that reason.

All the materials cited above, regardless of the language in which they were written, are "insider's views"—produced either for working purposes or as part of the imperial communication with the bureaucracy. When combined with other documentation, they enable us to look at the dynasty from the perspective of its rulers. That this perspective excludes much that is familiar to us from readings of the Chinese-language sources should not be surprising, nor does it in any way reject the importance and relevance of the Chinese view. Nonetheless, in part because that view has dominated our understanding of the Qing dynasty for at least the last seventy years, it is time to change the lenses and reorder the narrative. The result is analyzed in chapters that follow.