

# Manchu Words Referring to the Qing Emperor: *han* and *ejen*

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**Abstract:** In Qing documents produced in Manchu during the Qianlong reign, the term *ejen* signifies the sovereign, i.e., the Qing emperor, and it is used with overwhelming frequency when compared with other words to refer to the Qing emperor. This brief essay undertakes a basic inquiry into the historical circumstances and background that led to the establishment of a schema equating *ejen* with the Qing emperor. In the end, I point out that the main reasons for this were the submission to the Qing dynasty by the three khan families of the Khalkhas in the late seventeenth century and the creation of the *han* peerage for them. The resultant problematic situation of both the sovereign and his subjects having the same title of *han* led to the avoidance of the use of *han* to refer to the Qing emperor and reinforced the tendency to use only *ejen*.

# 談滿文中用以指代清帝的兩箇詞： 「han」、「ejen」

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**摘要：**於乾隆年間撰寫的滿文檔案中，「ejen」（額真）一詞被用以指代君主「（即清帝）」，且較所有其他可用來指代清帝的詞（如在清朝初期更爲常用的「han」）相比出現次數甚多。是怎樣的歷史環境和背景，促使了這樣一箇將「ejen」等同於「清帝」的用詞習慣和體系形成的？本文旨在對這箇話題進行一些基本的探究。

筆者的結論爲：十七世紀末期，三支家主頭銜爲「汗」（qayan）的喀爾喀蒙古族家族併入清朝，並得以保留「汗」（han）之名號，導致了君主和位於君主之下的一級爵位同時擁有發音爲「汗」的頭銜的不便局面。因此，大清境內開始逐漸拋棄用「han」指代清帝的習慣，造就了幾乎僅用「ejen」指代清帝的用詞體系的形成。

## Introduction

In Qing documents produced in Manchu during the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–1795), two characteristics can be observed regarding the term *ejen*. The first is that it signifies the sovereign, i.e., the Qing emperor, and is very rarely used in its original sense as a common noun meaning “master” of various groups and social classes. Secondly, the word used to refer to the Qing emperor is primarily *ejen*, and it is used with overwhelming frequency when compared with *han*,<sup>1</sup> *hūwangdi* (transcription of Chinese *huangdi* 皇帝 “emperor”), and *dergi* (originally “above,” by extension “His Majesty”), which are also used to refer to the Qing

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1. As Greg Afinogenov has pointed out, the Manchu word *han* used as a title for Outer Vassals (Ch. *wai fan* 外藩) and foreign rulers (e.g., *cagan han* for the Russian tsar) is differentiated from the word *han* referring to the Qing emperor by the addition of a dot over the final *-n*; it is rendered *haṅ* in this essay. See Greg Afinogenov, “Not All Khans Are Equal,” Manchu Studies Group, posted October 21, 2013 (<https://www.manchustudiesgroup.org/2013/10/21/not-all-khans-are-equal/>). In addition, according to the anonymous reviewer’s suggestion, the added dot to the Mongol word *qan* to distinguish the Mongol khans from the emperor appears inconsistently in Mongolian documents of the Qing period and is often omitted.

emperor. In this brief essay, I undertake a basic inquiry into the historical circumstances and background that led to the establishment of a schema equating *ejen* with the Qing emperor.

## 1. Designations for the Qing Emperor in the Initial Stages of the Qing Dynasty

The Manchu word *ejen*, a loanword from Mongolian, generally means “master.” In Mongol nomadic society after the Yuan period, *ejen* was used to refer to the heads of various groups, great and small (from the paterfamilias of a household to the sovereign of a state). This was also the case in Manchu society in the initial stages of the Qing dynasty. Ishibashi Hideo 石橋秀雄, tracing the change of a method of using *ejen* in the *Old Manchu Chronicles* (Jp. *Manbun rōtō*, Ch. *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔), has pointed out that the referents of Manchu *ejen* were originally varied, and after the establishment of the eight banners it was also used in official titles such as *gūsa i ejen* (later *dutong* 都統, or “commander”), *meiren i ejen* (*fu dutong* 副都統, or “deputy commander”), *jalan i ejen* (*canling* 參領, or “regimental commander”), and *niru i ejen* (*zuoling* 佐領, or “company captain”). From the reign of Taizu 太祖 (Nurhaci, r. 1616–1626) to the early reign of Taizong 太宗 (Hong Taiji, r. 1626–1643), the Manchus used *han*<sup>2</sup> to refer to the sovereign, and *ejen* was rarely used in this sense. Even when it was used with this meaning, it appeared in general expressions such as *gurun ilde ejen* (“lord of/in the country”), and it was also used to refer to the Mongol khans and the Ming emperor. However, in 1634, the word *ejen* in the above titles of officers of the eight banners was changed to *janggin* (Ch. *zhangjing* 章京) except in the case of the highest-ranking *gūsa i ejen*. Furthermore, from around the time of the founding of the *Daicing gurun* (or Great Qing Dynasty) in 1636, there begin to appear designations for the Qing emperor ending in *ejen* (e.g., *han ejen*). Thereafter, *ejen* came to be used as a designation for the Qing emperor alongside *han* and *hūwangdi*, the latter of which appeared around this time.<sup>3</sup> However, *ejen* was still widely used in its general meaning of “master,” and its usage was not constrained by imperial authority.<sup>4</sup>

However, tracing changes after the founding of the *Daicing gurun*, the word *ejen* comes to refer to the Qing emperor even when not accompanied by *han*, and one can

2. According to the kind instruction from Iguro Shinobu, a specialist in the Jin/Jurchen history, there is no character that signifies *han* in the Jurchen script. This suggests that *han* in Manchu is a loanword from Mongolian, which was probably imported after the period of Mongol empire (Yuan dynasty).

3. Although the criteria for differentiating the usage of *ejen*, *han*, and *hūwangdi* in Qing sources are not clear, *hūwangdi* is often used together with *akba* “heaven.”

4. Ishibashi Hideo 石橋秀雄, “Shinsho no ejen: Taizo, Taisō-chō o chūshin ni” 清初のエジェン ejen: 太祖・太宗朝を中心に, in *Kanda Nobuo sensei koki kinen ronshū: Shinchō to Higashi Ajia* 神田信夫先生古稀記念論集: 清朝と東アジア, ed. Kanda Nobuo Sensei Koki Kinen Ronshū Hensan Iinkai 神田信夫先生古稀記念論集編纂委員会 (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1992), 6–13.

recognize a tendency for designations for the Qing emperor to converge on *ejen*.<sup>5</sup> In the following section, I first wish to consider why the use of *han* came to be avoided.

## 2. Avoidance of the Use of *han*

In 1626, Nurhaci, who was known as *Genggiyen han* (“Brilliant Khan”), entered into an offensive and defensive alliance against the Chakhars with Ooba, leader of the Khorchins, and on this occasion he bestowed the title of *Tušiyetu han* on Ooba. This title was granted by Nurhaci to an ally of the same standing as himself and differed from the *han* peerage in the subsequent peerage system for Outer Vassals. However, after Ooba’s death, Hong Taiji refused to allow his successor Badari to inherit the title of *Tušiyetu han* and instead granted him the title of *Tušiyetu jinong*. After the founding of the *Daicing gurun* in 1636, successive generations of the lineage of Ooba and Badari (Middle Banner of the Khorchin Right Wing) inherited the title of *Tušiyetu cinwang*. In the case of the Chakhars, too, in 1634, when Ligden Khan died and his son Ejei submitted to the Qing dynasty, he was granted a *cinwang* peerage. In other words, at the time of the founding of the *Daicing gurun* in 1636, the only person using the title *han* within Qing territory was Hong Taiji.<sup>6</sup>

However, if we turn our attention to the outer periphery of Qing territory, there existed several royal families possessing the traditional title of khan (Mo. *qayan*, Tu/Pe. *khān*) of which the Qing was aware at the time of its seizure of Beijing in 1644. The three khans, namely Jasaghtu Khan, Tusiyetu Khan, and Chechen Khan, had mushroomed among the Khalkhas from the late sixteenth century to about 1630.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, despite not belonging to the Chinggisid family, or Borjigin clan, tribal leaders emerged among the Oyirads who had khan titles such as the “khan of Tibet” of the Qinghai Khoshuds<sup>8</sup> (lineage of Güüsi Khan and his eldest son). In Jungharia, Ochirtu, the eldest

5. This tendency is to be observed in Manchu sources, and it is difficult to confirm in Chinese sources, where *ejen* and *han* are not necessarily translated as *ezhen* 厄真/額真 and *han* 汗, respectively. However, to the best of my knowledge, in the Manchu versions of bilingual documents that were probably initially written in Chinese and composed in China proper during the Yongzheng 雍正 and Qianlong reigns, the terms *huangdi* and *huangshang* 皇上 (or “His Majesty”) are often translated as *ejen*.

6. The Manchu translation of Hong Taiji’s imperial title *Kuan’en rensheng huangdi* 寬恩仁聖皇帝 is *Gosin onco hūwaliyasun enduringge han*. In the *Da Qing Taizong Wen huangdi shilu* 大清太宗文皇帝實錄 first compiled during the Shunzhi 順治 reign, there is a change in designation around the time of Hong Taiji’s accession to the position of “Emperor of the Great Qing” 大清皇帝 from *han* to *hūwangdi* in the Manchu text and from *han* to *huangdi* or *huangshang* in the Chinese text. See Ishibashi Takao 石橋崇雄, “Shinsho kōteiken no keisei katei: Toku ni *Heishinen shigatsu* ‘hiroku’ tōhan taii tō ni mieru Taisō Hon Taiji no kōtei sokui kiji o chūshin to shite” 清初皇帝権の形成過程: 特に『丙子年四月〈秘録〉登ハン大位檔』にみえる太宗ホン・タイジの皇帝即位記事を中心として, *Tōyōshi Kenkyū* 東洋史研究 53.1 (1994): 108–111.

7. Wuyunbilige 烏雲畢力格, “Ka’erka sanhan de dengchang” 喀爾喀三汗的登場, *Lishi Yanjiu* 歷史研究 3 (2008): 23–33.

8. The ruling family of the Khoshuds, considered to have joined the Oyirads in the mid-fifteenth century, is said to be the only tribe among the Oyirads to be descended from Chinggis Khan’s younger brother Jochi Khasar, the founder of the Khorchin

son of Baybaghas who was the elder brother of Gūüsi Khan, was also bestowed the title of *Čečen Qayan* by the fifth Dalai Lama in 1666. During this period, the title of khan had undergone rapid inflation in Inner Asia, as I will discuss further below.

For a time after the Manchu conquest of China proper, the Qing was not unduly concerned if foreign entities used the title of khan. In the case of the Khalkhas, when a khan died, a successor would be selected from among his sons, and this would be reported to the Qing emperor for his approval, but this was no more than a perfunctory procedure. In 1679, Galdan of the Junghars assumed the title of *Bošuytu Qayan* and sent an envoy to the Qing court. Although, on this occasion, the Court of Vassal Affairs (Lifanyuan 理藩院) expressed concern that there was no precedent for chieftains of the Khalkhas and Oyrads arbitrarily styling themselves *han/qayan* and the Qing accepting tribute from them, the Kangxi 康熙 emperor did not regard it as a problem and received the envoy.<sup>9</sup>

However, around the time of the Khalkhas' submission to the Qing dynasty, the Kangxi emperor began to become actively involved in inheritance of the title of khan among the Khalkhas. The first sign of this appeared in connection with succession to the position of Chechen Khan.<sup>10</sup> When the Chechen Khan Norbu died of ill health in early 1687, the Kangxi emperor sent an imperial edict to the Tusiyetu Khan, Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, and Jasaghtu Khan and urged them to swiftly install Norbu's eldest son Ildeng Arabtang Tayiji as khan.<sup>11</sup>

Galdan interfered in these moves by the Qing. At the time, the Khalkha Left Wing, centered on Tusiyetu Khan, and the Khalkha Right Wing, centered on Jasaghtu Khan, were in conflict with each other. Galdan, who had finished unifying Jungharia, intervened in this conflict among the Khalkhas, strengthening ties with the Right Wing, and in 1688 he advanced into Khalkha lands at the head of more than thirty thousand troops.

The Khalkha princes fled to Southern Mongolia, which was already under Qing rule, and swore allegiance to the Kangxi emperor, whereupon there arose the question of whether or not to recognize the continuing use of the title of *han/qayan* by the three khan families. The first of the three khan families to have its use of the title of *han/qayan* recognized by the emperor was Chechen Khan. In early 1687, Chechen Khan Norbu died and his eldest son Ildeng Arabtang succeeded to the position of khan; however,

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tribe. However, they do not have the clan name Borjigin, and it is not certain whether they had any actual connections with the Khorchins. See Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, *Mongoru teikoku kara Daishin teikoku e* モンゴル帝国から大清帝国へ (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2010), 393–395.

9. Wenda 温達 et al., comp., *Yuzhi qinzheng pingding shuomo fanglüe* 御製親征平定朔漠方略, 1: 35a–36a, KX 18.9.wuxu (1679/10/10).

10. Oka Hiroki 岡洋樹, *Shindai Mongoru meiki seido no kenkyū* 清代モンゴル盟旗制度の研究 (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoten, 2007), 82–83.

11. *Yuzhi qinzheng pingding shuomo fanglüe*, 4: 3b–4b, KX 26.2.bingzi (1687/4/9).

he also died of illness before long.<sup>12</sup> Immediately afterwards, the family of the Chechen Khan submitted to the Qing dynasty as a result of Galdan's invasion. Although Ildeng Arabtang's son Umehei was still an infant, according to Qing sources, in early 1689 Ildeng Arabtang's wife had an audience with the Kangxi emperor together with Umehei and requested that her son should be allowed to inherit the khanship, and the emperor gave his consent.<sup>13</sup> However, an account of this incident,<sup>14</sup> using the memoirs of Jean-François Gerbillon (1654–1707) serving in the Qing court as an information source, differs somewhat from Qing records.

This same Year also dy'd *Tchetching han*, whose Widow likewise intreated the Emperor to receive her Son among the Number of his Vassals, and to give him the Investiture and Title of *Han*. At first some scruple was made of granting him this Title, because, as was alleg'd, it properly belong'd to none but the Emperor, and therefore was incompatible with the quality of a Vassal: Nevertheless this ambitious Woman insisting that her Son should not be depriv'd of a Dignity which her Husband had possessed, and representing that his Rank could not be debased by his Submission to the Emperor, they yielded to this Reason, and granted him the Title of *Han*; but with Restriction that it should not pass to any of his Descendants, but die with him.<sup>15</sup>

It is thus evident that at the time the word *han* referred within Qing territory to the Qing emperor, and that the existence of the three khan families of the Khalkhas, who had newly submitted to the Qing, clashed with this general principle. In the end, the Kangxi emperor abolished the Khalkha princes' existing titles such as *jinong* and *noyan* at a meeting for an alliance at Doloon Noor and bestowed in their place Qing peerages such as *cinwang*, *junwang*, and so on. However, he sanctioned the continuing use of the title of khan by the families of Tusiyetu Khan and Chechen Khan.<sup>16</sup> The *han* peerage was thus added anew to the Qing peerage system for Outer Vassals, and as a result there now existed within Qing territory *han* apart from the Qing emperor.

12. Qi Yunshi 祁韻士 et al., comp., *Qinding waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biaozhuan* 欽定外藩蒙古回部王公表傳, 53, KX 27.

13. *Yuzhi qinzheng pingding shuomo fanglüe*, juan 5: 16a–17a, KX 27.12.dingmao (1689/1/19).

14. Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise: enrichie des cartes générales et particulières de ces pays, de la cartes générales & des cartes particulières du Thibet, & de la Corée, & ornée d'un grand nombre de figures & de vignettes gravées en taille-douce*, tome 4 (Paris: P.G. Le Mercier, 1735), 50. Here, I quote the account from the English translation in 1736.

15. Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *The General History of China: Containing a Geographical, Historical, Chronological, Political and Physical Description of the Empire of China, Chinese-Tartary, Corea and Thibet*, vol. 4 (London: J. Watts, 1736), 173.

16. From 1687 (KX 26), when Jasaghtu Khan Shira was attacked and killed by Tusiyetu Khan and others, until 1701 (KX 40), when Shira's younger brother Chewangjab was promoted from *cingwang* to *han*, there was no *han* in Jasaghtu Khan's territory.

In light of the above, the submission of the three khan families of the Khalkhas may be given as a reason for the avoidance of the use of *han* to refer to the Qing emperor in Manchu sources. That is to say, whereas until then the emperor had been the sole *han* within Qing territory, the creation of a *han* peerage for the Khalkhas led to a situation in which the sovereign and his subjects had the same title. It is to be surmised that consequently the use of *han* to refer to the Qing emperor gradually came to be avoided in Manchu texts, as a result of which *ejen*, which was already being used alongside *han* to refer to the Qing emperor, came to be used instead.

To corroborate this view, in Mongolian documents addressed to the Qing court by Khalkha princes prior to their submission to the Qing, both *qayan* and *ejen* (translated without exception as *han* and *ejen* in Manchu) were used to refer to the Kangxi emperor, but in memorials submitted after 1689, when Umehei's inheritance of the title of khan was sanctioned, "ejen" (Ma. *ejen*; Mo. *ejen*) is almost invariably used.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in Mongolian and Manchu memorials from the Oyrads and Tibet, which lay outside Qing territory at the time, both "khan" (*han/qayan*) and "ejen" continued to be used for a time. For example, to refer to the Qing emperor, "khan" had been originally used in memorials from Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas.<sup>18</sup> As the end of the Kangxi reign drew near, there was a tendency for usage to converge on "ejen" in the main text of memorials.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, after Tibet was put under Qing control in 1720 (KX 59), memorials previously addressed to "Manjusiri khan" were changed to address "Manjusiri ejen."<sup>20</sup>

In addition, in 1723, when the Yongzheng emperor ascended the throne, the words *gūsa i ejen* on the commander's official seal were altered to *gūsa i amban* (properly, *gūsa be kadalara amban*) on the grounds that "the two characters *e-zhen* (< *ejen*) pertain to great sublimity and should not be used improperly by subjects" 額真二字, 所關甚鉅, 非臣下所可濫用.<sup>21</sup> By this time, the Manchu word *ejen* was no longer a word

17. The above observations are based on Mongolian and Manchu documents included in Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan 中國第一歷史檔案 and Nei Menggu daxue Mengguxue xueyuan 內蒙古大學蒙古學學院, eds., *Dayicing gürün-ü dotuyadu yamun-u mongyul bičig-ün ger-ün dangsa* (Qing neige Menggutang dang 清內閣蒙古堂檔), 22 vols (Huhehaote: Nei menggu renmin chubanshe, 2005). In many cases, the words such as "great" (Ma. *amba*, Mo. *yeke*), "sacred" (Ma. *enduringge*, Mo. *boyda*), and "supreme" (Ma. *dergi*, Mo. *deger-e*; *degedu*) are prefixed to *han/qayan* and *ejen/ejen*.

18. Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan 中國第一歷史檔案館, ed., *Qinggong zhencang lishi Dalai Lama dang'an huicui* 清宮珍藏歷世達賴喇嘛檔案薈萃 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2002, hereinafter DLD), doc., no.7 (SZ 10/1653), no.11 (KX 19/1680); id., ed., *Qinggong zhencang lishi Banchan E'rdeni dang'an huicui* 清宮珍藏歷世班禪額爾德尼檔案薈萃 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2004, hereinafter BED), doc., no.1 (KX 19/1680); no.2 (KX 23/1684), and no.3 (KX 23/1684).

19. DLD, doc., no.12 (KX 36/1697), and no.13 (KX 39/1700), and no.15 (KX 42/1703); BED, doc., no.7 (KX 36/1697), no.13 (KX 48/1709), no.18 (KX 52/1713), and no.19 (KX 53/1714).

20. DLD, doc., no.23 (YZ 5-7/1727-39); BED, doc., no.29 (YZ 12/1734).

21. E'tai 鄂爾泰 et al., comp., *Da Qing Shizong Xian Huangdi Shilu* 大清世宗憲皇帝實錄 9: 18a-b, YZ 1.7.renchen (1723/12/5). Also see Ishibashi Takao, "Shinsho kōteiken no keisei katei," 4.

that subjects could use, and it had become established as a term referring to the Qing emperor.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. *han* in the Qing Peerage System

Meanwhile, the word *han* changed into a peerage bestowed on subjects by the Qing emperor, and the Qing court began to show its disapproval of the title *khan* used by chieftains outside its territory.<sup>23</sup> As relations between the Qing and Tibet deteriorated after the end of the war with Galdan, the Qing court began to ignore the conferral of the title of *khan* on Mongol and Oyrat chieftains by the Dalai Lama and to intervene in such moves.<sup>24</sup>

The Qing formed relationships with Central Asian forces during the western campaigns in the mid-eighteenth century. At that time, a tendency of the inflation of the *khan* title was also seen in Central Asia. With the death of Tauke Khan in 1715 or 1718, the Kazakh khanate, an offshoot of the Ulus of Jochi, was divided into three groups: Junior Juz, Middle Juz, and Senior Juz; each *juz* had one or two *khan*s. In 1757, the Qing dispatched the Nusan mission to negotiate directly with Ablay, a leader of the Kazakh Middle Juz. In the stage, they held a debate on the bestowal of peerages by the Qing emperor, and then the *han* peerage was bestowed on Ablay even though he was outside the Qing territory. Afterward, the Qing peerage was effective in enhancing the authority of his influence within the Kazakh society.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, there even arose instances in which, for example, the Qing emperor reprimanded Irdana, the non-Chinggisid ruler of the Khoqand khanate lying outside Qing territory, for using the title of *khān* without the emperor's permission and forbade him from using it.<sup>26</sup> In 1783, there arrived an envoy of Ablay Sultan, son of Nurali (Nūr 'Alī) Khan of the Kazakh Junior Juz, referred to by the Qing court as the

22. However, the use of *ejen* in the sense of “master” as a common noun did not completely disappear. In Mongolian, the term *ejen* remained widely used in a variety of contexts.

23. When one compares the Manchu *Jun gar i ba be necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe* with the corresponding Chinese *Pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe* 平定準噶爾方略, *han* referring to the Qing emperor is used in cases where there was an awareness of the lineage of the imperial family, as in *han i mafa* (Ch. *huangzu* 皇祖, “emperor's ancestor”) and *han i ama* (Ch. *huangkao* 皇考, “emperor's father”).

24. Ishihama Yumiko 石濱裕美子, *Chibetto bukyō sekai no rekishiteki kenkyū* チベット仏教世界の歴史的研究 (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoten, 2001), 135–137.

25. For further details, see Onuma Takahiro. “Dispatch of the Nusan Mission: The Negotiations between Qing and Ablay in 1757,” *GLOBAL-Turk*, 1/2 (2018): 69–70, 72. Ablay was from the collateral line of the Kazakh khan clan and, as of 1757, had not yet been elected the *khan* of Middle Juz (elected in 1771 formally).

26. Saguchi Tōru 佐口透, *18–19 seiki Higashi Torukisutan shakaishi kenkyū* 18–19 世紀東トルキスタン社会史研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1963), 351–352. In the Khoqand khanate, 'Alim Khan (r. 1799–1810) was the first monarch to use publicly the title of *khan*. See Scott Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709–1876: Central Asia in the Global Age* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 87–88.



“Western Kazakhs” (Ma. *wargi hasak*, Ch. *xi hasake* 西哈薩克). The contents of the edict issued by the Qianlong emperor on this occasion are intriguing:

The *hañ* title of the Western Kazakh Nurali is that which the Kazakhs of his pastureland have called him of their own accord and was not imperially bestowed [by me]. Therefore, if we refer to him as *hañ*, it will be contrary to reason. Recently, because Wali Sultan, the son of Ablay, asked me to bestow [the title], I did a favor to bestow *hañ* and gifts on him and issued him an Imperial edict; therefore, we are finally able to call him *hañ*. Inform [the Military Governor of Ili] Iletu of this, and, hereafter, even if the Western Kazakh Nurali calls himself *hañ* in his letter for some reason, we should not meddle in the matter; however, in the reply [to him], call him only by his name Nurali. If he sends a letter with a sincere desire to receive [the *hañ* peerage], I will bestow a favor on him; then, we should refer to him anew as *hañ*. We should send a letter [to the frontier administrators] to inform them that the Imperial edict addressed to Nurali on this occasion, which will be taken back by the envoy Kharatokho, calls him only by his name Nurali.

*wargi hasak nurali i hañ i colo oci, ini nuktei hasak se, ini cisui hūlahangge umai hesei fungnehengge waka be dahame, aika imbe hañ seme araci, giyan de acanarakū. Tē bici, hasak abulai i jui wali sultan fungnere be baiha turgunde, bi kesi isibume, hañ fungnefi jaka hacin šangname, hesei bithe wasimbuha ofi, teni imbe hañ seme araci ombi. Erebe iletu de jasifi, ereci Julesi wargi hasak nurali, yaya baitai jalin, alibuha bithede, i beye hañ seme araci, inu dara ba akū, karu afabure bithede damu gebu be jorime nurali seme arakini. I unenggi fungnere be baimē bitehe alibuci, bi kesi isibume fungnehe manggi, jai imbe hañ seme arakini. Ere mudan elcin haratoho marifi nurali de wasimbuha hesei bithede, damu nurali seme araha babe suwaliyame jasifi, sakini.*<sup>27</sup>

After Ablay, the *hañ* peerage holder, passed away in 1780, the succession of *hañ* by his eldest son, Wali, was admitted by the Qing. By contrast, the Qing avoided referring to Nurali as *hañ*, since the *hañ* peerage had not been bestowed upon him even though he was a *khān*. There exists a draft of the Turkic edict issued on this occasion, and in fact it has only “the Western Kazakh Nur ‘Ali” (Tu. *Maghrīb Qazāq Nūr ‘Alī*) and *khān* is not used.<sup>28</sup> This example clearly illustrates the significance of the title of khan at the Qing court at the time.

27. Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dang’anguan 中國第一歷史檔案, ed., *Qianlong chao Manwen jixin dang yibian* 乾隆朝滿文寄信檔譯編 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2011), vol. 16, 145–146.

28. *Junjichu manwen lufu zouzhe* 軍機處滿文錄副奏摺, First Historical Archives of China, 03–0190–2962–029, QL 48.4.

On the other hand, in Turkic letters sent to the Qing court by Central Asian rulers, there are examples of the use of *khān* or *ulugh khān* to refer to the Qing emperor.<sup>29</sup> However, in the corresponding Manchu translations these terms are translated as *ejen* in the majority of cases, and even when they are translated as *han*, *han* is rarely used alone and they are often translated as *ejen han*. In addition, Liaoning Provincial Museum holds a trilingual imperial decree in Manchu, Oyirad (Todo script), and Turkic (Arabic script) that was drafted in 1788 to be sent to Narbuta Bi (r. 1768/69–98/99), ruler of the Khoqand khanate.<sup>30</sup> The Manchu text begins with the words “Decree of the emperor holding the course of time by order of Heaven” (Ma. *abkai hesei forgon be aliha hūwangdi i hese*), corresponding to the standard phrase (Ch. *fengtian chengyun huangdi yu* 奉天承運皇帝諭) used in Chinese decrees. However, the corresponding passage in the Turkic texts reads “Decree of the emperor holding the [course of] time by order of God” (Tu. *hudāning farmāni bilä waqt-zamānni igälägän pädsähning yarliği*), and *khān* is not used.<sup>31</sup> It would seem that in its correspondence with Central Asia, too, the Qing court was avoiding the use of *han* to refer to the Qing emperor.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

In the above, I have clarified the circumstances in which the word *ejen* came to be used almost exclusively as the Manchu term for referring to the Qing emperor. The main reasons for this were the submission to the Qing dynasty by the three khan families of the Khalkhas in the late seventeenth century and the creation of the *han* peerage for them. The resultant problematic situation of both the sovereign and his subjects having the same title of *han* led to the avoidance of the use of *han* to refer to the Qing emperor and reinforced the tendency to use only *ejen*.

29. In Turkic documents from the Kazakhs, there are instances where *ezen* has been used under the influence of Oyirad. For details, see documents included in Noda Jin and Onuma Takahiro, *A Collection of Documents from the Kazakh Sultans to the Qing Dynasty* (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo, 2010).

30. This decree is written on yellow paper (1615 mm × 945 mm) used by the emperor from left to right in Manchu, Oyirad (Todo script), and Türkic (Arabic script). For a transcription and Chinese translation of the Manchu text, see Li Qinpu 李勤璞, “Qianlong wushisannian gei Huohan Boke santi chiyu Manzhouwen shiyi” 乾隆五十三年給霍罕伯克三體勅諭滿洲文試譯, *Manyu yanjiu* 滿語研究 2 (1999): 81–90. In October 2012, I visited Liaoning Provincial Museum and had the chance to examine the actual decree.

31. When compared with the decree held by Liaoning Provincial Museum, the opening phrase in a Chagatai decree addressed to the Kazakh Nurali Khan in 1783 differs in wording (Tu. *hodāning buyurği bilä waht* [sic] *zamānni igälägän pädsähning yarliği*), but the meaning is the same.

32. This tendency is particularly notable in the Qing official documents and authorized writings. The Mongolian texts of non-administrative writings produced during the middle and late Qing period, some of which are quoted in Christopher Atwood’s “‘Worshiping Grace’: the Language of Loyalty in Qing Mongolia” (*Late Imperial China* 21.2 (2000): 86–139), examines that term *qayan/qan* as well as *ejen* was continuously used for signifying the Qing emperor.

Viewed in broader perspective, this could be described as a measure taken in response to the inflation of the title of khan that advanced throughout Eurasia in the post-Mongol period. At the incipient period of Qing dynasty, Manchus had used *han*, which is also a loanword from Mongolian, to refer to the Qing emperor. However, as the Qing expanded its territory to Inner Asia, the Qing emperors were faced with such an inflationary tendency. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in order to show their absolute authority, it was not enough for the Qing emperors just to call themselves *han*.

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