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Ethnicizing Artillery Technology:

The Formation of the Hanjun Eight Banners

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Abstract

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The Formation of the Hanjun Eight Banners
By Yan Hon Michael Chung

By tracing the formation of the Hanjun Eight Banners, this study argues that the early Qing ethnic policy was not shaped by a straightforward imperial blueprint but emerged from extended negotiations between Manchu ruling elites and ethnic elites, centering on the acquisition and deployment of European-style artillery. In response to the Ming's formidable artillery corps, Hong Taiji—the founding emperor of the Qing dynasty—assembled a specialized Han artillery force, the Hanjun, in 1631. Recognizing the strategic value of their technology, Han elites leveraged this expertise to secure social and political concessions in return for military service. Over the next twelve years, they persistently negotiated with Hong Taiji, demanding elevated status and privileges for themselves and other subjugated Han bondservants, while Hong Taiji required tangible proof of their loyalty and military effectiveness. Successive rounds of negotiation led to the gradual institutionalization of the Hanjun. Finally, the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners in 1642 formally codified the special legal status, political privileges, and obligations of these Han soldiers. More importantly, it integrated the Hanjun into the broader Eight Banners system, thereby inadvertently reinforcing the Manchu-Mongol-Han "ethnic trinity" that underpinned the emerging Qing empire.

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Introduction

In a matter of decades, the Later Jin/Qing, an embryonic polity, superseded the great Ming dynasty of China and became one of the most powerful multi-ethnic empires in the world.[1] How did it do this? More specifically, how did the numerically inferior Jurchen/Manchu people govern their vast and diverse subjects, composed of numerous ethnic groups? Many historians have shown how ethnicity served as an important tool for the Manchu Qing ruling house to effectively rule over its various kinds of subjects. By categorizing its subjects based on ethnic background, the Qing developed tailored governance strategies for each group. This approach also enabled the construction of distinct facets of legitimacy for different ethnic communities, unifying the empire through a multifaceted and adaptable ruling identity.[2] A prominent example of Qing ethnic policy was the Eight Banners system, which served as the empire's central political and military institution. Divided into three ethnic branches—Manchu, Mongol, and Hanjun—the Eight Banners system institutionalized an ethnic hierarchy that allowed the Manchu ruling house to mobilize the unique military and political strengths of each group while ensuring their loyalty through differentiated governance.

We know far less, however, about how the Manchu ruling elites came up with these effective ways to exploit ethnic identities as a political tool and to build up the relevant multi-ethnic administration that endured for centuries. This study tackles the question by examining the formation of the Hanjun (Ch: 漢軍 Ma: *nikan cooha/ ujen cooha*) —the Later Jin/Qing's

[1] The Later Jin (1616–1636) was the Jurchen khanate established by Nurhaci in 1616. In 1635, Nurhaci's successor, Hong Taiji, renamed the Jurchen people as Manchu, and in 1636, he formally renamed the Later Jin khanate as the Qing dynasty. For convenience, this study uses "Qing" and "Manchu" as general terms to refer to the Later Jin/Qing polity and the Jurchen/Manchu people, respectively. However, in cases where time specificity is necessary, the study adheres to the terminology appropriate to the historical context.

[2] Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 1-3; Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3; Mark C. Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 31.

Han Chinese military division, which later on became one of the three ethnic branches of the Eight Banners.[3] This study argues that the Hanjun was not a product of imperial design but a byproduct of negotiations between the Manchu ruling house and Han elites, centered around the adoption of European artillery technology into the Qing military.

The Hanjun was established in 1631 as a temporary Han Chinese artillery task force under the Later Jin 後金 (1616–1636), the predecessor of the Qing dynasty (1636–1911). Initially formed to address the pressing need for effective artillery in the Later Jin's campaigns against the Ming, the Hanjun played a pivotal role in overcoming the technological and strategic advantages of its rivals. Over the next twelve years, the Hanjun underwent significant expansion and institutionalization, eventually evolving into a permanent and independent military and ethnic-political entity: the Hanjun Eight Banners (Ch: 漢軍八旗 Ma: *ujen cooha gūsa*), established in 1642.

Founded in 1615, the Eight Banners system was the fundamental organizing institution of Later Jin society. Initially, only the Manchu Eight Banners existed. Every Manchu household was registered under one of eight banners (Ma: *gūsa*), each identified by a distinct color—Yellow, White, Red, Blue, and their four bordered variations. However, banners were more than just military divisions; they were also political and social institutions that determined taxation, labor obligations, and legal status. Importantly, banners were not simply administrative units under a centralized state; they were personal domains controlled by either the Khan or high-ranking aristocrats known as *Beile* (Ch: *baylor* 貝勒). Each *Beile*

[3] The Hanjun is a complicated concept as its nature and composition morphed over time. In this study, the Hanjun refers to the Han Army (Ma: *nikan cooha/ fe nikan i cooha*) created in 1631, which was renamed the Heavy Army (Ma: *ujen cooha*) in 1634, and became the Hanjun Eight Banners/ *Hanjun Baqi* (Ma: *ujen cooha gūsa*) in 1642. The Chinese term Hanjun, which means "Han Army" in Chinese, however, was only officially created in 1660. Wang Ting, "Zhidu yu shenfen: Baqi Hanjun zhi yanjiu (1627–1661)" (master's thesis, National Chung Cheng University, 2015), 113–28.

de facto owned his banner and the bannermen under his command, exercising control over management, discipline, and resources.

As the Later Jin expanded, it absorbed large numbers of Mongol and Han Chinese subjects. To integrate these populations while maintaining Manchu dominance, the ruling elites extended the banner system beyond the Manchus. In 1635, Hong Taiji created the Mongol Eight Banners to incorporate Mongol allies and subjects.[4] Meanwhile, most Han Chinese subjects under the Later Jin—referred to in Manchu as *Nikan*—remained subjugated bondservants in Manchu households, especially after a series of Han revolts in the mid-1620.[5] These Han bondservants performed various roles, from manual labor to military service, but they were legally considered property and could be bought, sold, or inherited. Only the Khan had the authority to free them from servitude.[6]

The creation of the Hanjun initiated a dual process with both military and political dimensions, which elevated the social-political status of the *Nikan*. On the one hand, the Hanjun emancipated and conscripted a portion of these Han bondservants, segregating them from the Manchus, and organizing them into a distinct military institution. On the other hand, within the Qing court, the Hanjun unified Han Chinese officials, providing them with a political platform to represent Han interests. This dual role carried profound ethnic and political ramifications: the Hanjun not only served as a specialized artillery corps crucial to the Qing's military strategy but also became a key institution that integrated *Nikan* into the Manchu-led regime.

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[4] Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 29-31. The remaining Mongol subjects were registered into units outside the Eight Banners system.

[5] According to Crossley, *Nikan* denotes a spectrum of people who "lived in the west, in towns or in farming villages, and spoke primarily Chinese." In this article, *Nikan* refers to the Later Jin Han population who are ethnically Chinese and/or those who came from a Sinicized cultural background. I use *Nikan* instead of Han to denote this group of people, but I continue to use Han as an adjective to modify objects that are related to Han/Chinese. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 90.

[6] Du Jiaji, *Baqi yu Qingchao zhengzhi lungao* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), 95–96.

In 1642, as the Hanjun's political and military influence grew, Hong Taiji 皇太極 (1592–1643)—the founding emperor of the Qing—officially established the Hanjun Eight Banners, granting it equal standing with the existing Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. This reform completed the transformation of the Eight Banners system into a multi-ethnic institution, with the Hanjun formally recognized as one of its three ethnic branches. More importantly, it marked the full integration of the Eight Banners structure. By this time, each of the eight banners was composed of three parallel divisions—Manchu, Mongol, and Hanjun. While a single *Beile* commanded the entire banner, each ethnic division maintained its own Banner leader (Ma: *gūsa ejen*), responsible for internal administration. In total, the system comprised eight Banner Lords and twenty-four Banner leaders, reflecting the Qing's complex and hierarchical approach to governance.[7] The resulting "ethnic trinity" of the Eight Banners endured as a cornerstone of Qing governance and military organization until the dynasty's fall in 1911. The institutional development of the Hanjun illustrates the Qing's broader strategy of ethnic integration and demonstrates how military necessity and ethnic policy converged to create one of the dynasty's most enduring institutions.

My central argument is that the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners—and more broadly, Hong Taiji's general ruling policies—were less of an imperial design imposed from the center than a product of constant negotiation between the ruling elites and ethnic elites. Many studies on the subject matter look from an imperial perspective, positing the ruling house as the mastermind behind the policies;[8] this study adopts a bottom-up approach by

[7] This structure reflects the complexity of the Eight Banners system, which was rooted in Manchu language and culture. The Manchu term for "banner" encompasses two distinct levels of organization: it can refer to an individual banner of a specific color and ethnic branch within the Eight Banners (e.g., the Yellow Manchu Banner), as well as the broader banner unit composed of the three ethnic divisions (Manchu, Mongol, and Hanjun) of the same color. Du Jiaji, *Qingdai baqi guanzhi yu xingzheng* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2015), 1–2.; Du, *Baqi yu Qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 229-233.

[8] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 89-128; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 75-77; Zhang Jinfan and Guo Chengkang, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1988), 299-355; Chen Jiahua and Fu Kedong, "Baqi Hanjun kaolüe," *Minzu yanjiu* 1981, no. 5: 17–30; Sun Jing, *Qingdai baqi Hanjun yanjiu* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2017).

shifting the focus from the Manchu ruling elites to the Han ethnic elites, concentrating on how the latter negotiated with the state for the interests of their subjugated ethnic fellows. The formation of the Hanjun Eight Banners exemplifies a defining characteristic of Qing statecraft: the ability to incorporate diverse groups by accommodating their interests, rather than imposing a fixed ethnic hierarchy from above.

Ostensibly, the Manchu court held the ultimate power in formulating its ethnic policies. The Khan, Hong Taiji, cleverly exploited the existing ethnic categories of Manchu, Mongol, and *Nikan* to classify and rule his subjects.[9] But the Han officials and military personnel, noticing the strategic value of the artillery technology they possessed, tactfully negotiated with the Manchu state for political privileges. They encouraged the Khan to expand and institutionalize the Hanjun under the excuse of enhancing the Later Jin's artillery capability. Eager to build an artillery corps capable of breaching the Ming walled cities, Hong Taiji accepted the reform proposals of the Han military elites. In return, the Han elites secured their political interests through the Hanjun, which gradually expanded and turned into a Han-representing institution in the Manchu court. Rather unexpectedly, this institutional reform laid the foundation of the future Hanjun Eight Banners and spawned the Manchu-Mongol-Han ethnic trinity of the Eight Banners system.

The experience of the Hanjun shows that the Qing ethnic policy was more of a compromise than an imperial design, a product of sustained negotiation and improvisation. Hong Taiji merely saw the Hanjun as a temporary military unit upon its creation; it was the Han military elites who "ethnicized" it and turned it into an ethnic Han institution. This suggests that ethnicity was not only a political tool for the state; it was also a tool for ethnic elites, who exploited and manipulated this malleable idea for their own political agenda. The state did not always prevail in manipulating the ethnic discourse. Moreover, ethnic

[9] Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 27-57.

background was just one of several overlapping categorizations within Qing political discourse; class, occupation, and lineage were equally significant in shaping governance and policy. Nevertheless, while the Manchu ruling elites might not have had the ingenuity to devise all the strategies of "politicized ethnicity," they did have the boldness and flexibility to negotiate with different ethnic groups and experiment with new administrative settings to accommodate ethnic diversity.[10] This flexibility was one of the keys to their success.

Hanjun Reconsidered—An Ethnic or a Military Policy?

It took the Hanjun almost twelve years to become one of the three divisions of the Qing Eight Banners. Originally founded in 1631 as a temporary task force, the Hanjun (Ma: *Nikan cooha*) was designated as a banner in 1633 and renamed *Ujen Cooha*—meaning "Heavy Army"—in 1634. It was then split into two banners in 1637, expanded into four banners in 1639, and finally reorganized into the Hanjun Eight Banners in 1642. Historians have generally agreed that Hong Taiji created the Hanjun in 1631, at least partly due to the need for the heavy artillery.[11] By 1627, it had become evident that the Later Jin lacked the means to capture Ming walled cities, which were defended by cutting-edge European-style heavy cannons. The Manchu Khan desperately needed an effective artillery corps to break the Ming's chain of forts in the Liaoxi corridor, which was slowly encroaching on the heart of the Khanate. Since, within the realm of the Later Jin, only the Han population had the skills and knowledge to produce and fire the latest European-style heavy cannons, the Khan created

[10] The idea of "politicized ethnicity" came from Victor Lieberman. Victor B. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830. Volume 1, Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42. For discussion of the Qing and "politicized ethnicity," see Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 105–15, 142.

[11] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 77; Frederic E. Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 168-69; Huang Yi-Long, "Hongyi dapao yu Huang Taiji de baqi Hanjun," *Lishi yanjiu* 2004, no. 4: 74–105, Zhang and Guo, Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi, 304-5, Korehiro Anami, *Shinsho gunjishi ronkō* (Tokyo: Kōyō Shobō, 1980), 357; Yoshimichi Kusunoki, "Tensou 5 nen dairyouga koujousen kara Mita aishin kokuseiken no kouzou," *Tôyôshi Kenkyû: The Journal of Oriental Researches* 59, no. 3 (2000): 406.

the Hanjun. However, few scholars have further investigated the impact of the artillery technology on the development of Hanjun and the Manchu court's Han policy. To date, most studies examine the development of Hanjun Eight Banners from ethnic and political perspectives.

English-language scholarship sees the developmental process of the Hanjun as a reflection of the Manchu court's cautious and inconsistent Han policy. As Mark Elliott has written: "The step-by-step creation of the Chinese banners reflects the caution and uncertainty characteristic of Manchu policy toward the Han generally before (and after) the conquest."[12] Pamela Kyle Crossley also regards the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners as an ethnic policy, stating that "the emergence of a professional military sector of the *Nikan* was one product of a larger development in the expansion of the state's capacity to create and enforce status rule, while simultaneously fretting the *Nikan* with new distinctions of rank."[13]

Some other scholars see the creation and expansion of Hanjun as part of Hong Taiji's centralization project. Frederick Wakeman argues that Hong Taiji, constrained by other powerful *beile*—who also served as Banner lords of the Eight Banners—turned to his Chinese subjects as a source of political support. The Khan started using Han subjects as advisors and implemented a series of institutional centralization measures proposed by them, such as establishing a Chinese-style bureaucracy.[14] The creation of the Hanjun was another of Hong Taiji's centralization policies. By creating a new military force under his direct command, the Khan bolstered his comparative military strength against other nobles. After the capture of the Ming walled city Dalinghe 大凌河 in 1631, as Han defectors poured into

[12] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 75. See also David Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor: Service, Privilege, and Status in the Qing Eight Banners* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 4-5.
[13] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 96.
[14] Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise,* 162-63.

the Khanate, Hong Taiji increasingly relied on the Han turncoats for military support. The expansion of the Hanjun was thus an institutional solution to absorb the expanding Han troops and buttress the Khan's authority.[15]

Chinese-language scholarship likewise generally sees the creation of Hanjun as part of the Manchu state's ethnic policy. The scholars argue that the Manchus, skeptical of the *Nikan*'s loyalty, experimented with different institutional solutions to effectively rule the growing Han population.[16] However, these scholars, paying close attention to the details of the Hanjun's institutional changes, also point out how its institutional flaws propelled its development. One fundamental structural problem was the institutional affiliation issue of the Hanjun. As Du Jiaji's study shows, before the Hanjun Eight Banners were formally established in 1642, all Hanjun troops were still registered under the Manchu Banners and were legally the subjects of their respective banner lords.[17] At the same time, however, in matters concerning *Nikan* affairs and military operations, the Hanjun often fell under the command of their own Hanjun leaders. In other words, the Hanjun were simultaneously under the authority of Hanjun commanders and their respective Manchu banner lords. This dual affiliation frequently caused confusion and conflicts of command and authority. The problem worsened as the Hanjun expanded in size and complexity.[18] Hong Taiji, however, was still unsure if the *Nikan* could be trusted. So, he took small steps, expanding Hanjun only when the previous institutional setting proved inadequate to deal with its current scale.[19]

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[15] Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 200-201. See also Chen and Fu, "Baqi Hanjun kaolüe," 21-22; Testuro Watanuki Tetsurō, "Zailun Zu Dashou yu 'Zujiajiang,'" *Jilin Normal University Journal* 45, no. 6 (2017): 39.
[16] Xie Jingfang, "Baqi Hanjun de jianli ji qi lishi zuoyong," *Shehui kexue jikan* 1987, no. 3: 69–74; Chen Shengxi, "Menggu baqi yu Hanjun baqi jianli de guocheng," *Shixue yuekan* 1988, no. 2 (1988): 100-102; Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 32-42; Sun, *Qingdai baqi Hanjun yanjiu*, 62.
[17] Du Jiaji, "Qingdai baqi lingshu wenti kaocha", *Minzu yanjiu*, no. 5 (1987): 83-92.
[18] Yao Nianci, "Luelun baqi Menggu he baqi Hanjun de jianli," *Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao: Zhexue shehui kexue ban* 1995, no. 6 (1995): 27-8.
[19] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 310-11.

Teng Shaozhen's idea of "bannerization" provides a particularly useful framework for periodizing the institutional development of the Hanjun. Teng argues that, between 1631 and 1642, the Hanjun gradually adopted the institutional structures of the Eight Banners. In 1634–1635, the Hanjun began organizing its soldiers into companies (Ma: *niru*), similar to the structure of the Manchu Eight Banners. By 1637, it had been reorganized into two banners with standardized companies. In 1639, the Hanjun, now divided into four banners, adopted the command structure of the Eight Banners, establishing its own Banner leaders (Ma: *gūsa-i ejen*), Garrison lieutenants (Ma: *meiren-i janggin*), and Regiment colonels (Ma: *jalan-i janggin*). Finally, in 1642, it became a division of the Eight Banners, thus attaining institutional status commensurate with the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners.[20] Teng's theory handily encapsulate the institutional transformation of the Hanjun Eight Banners.

Nevertheless, while these studies have greatly enhanced our understanding of the Hanjun, most overlook its military nature, despite acknowledging that it was originally created as an artillery unit. This omission leaves an important question unanswered: Why did the Hanjun undergo major bannerization processes in 1633, 1637, 1639, and 1642? What were the driving forces behind these structural reforms?

Huang Yi-long's comprehensive survey of the Hanjun was the first to draw a direct connection between artillery technology and the Hanjun's bannerization process. His work examines how the Qing acquired European artillery technology from the Ming and developed its artillery corps. He compared the evolution of the Hanjun with that of the Hanjun artillery corps, suggesting a possible relationship between the institutional development and the artillery technology. Huang also offers a detailed account of the battles in which the Hanjun artillery corps participated during the Hanjun's formative years (1631–1643). However, he

[20] Teng Shaozhen, "Qingchu Hanjun ji qi niulu tan yuan," *Manzu yanjiu*, no. 1 (2007): 60-72.

stops short of asserting that these battles directly influenced the institutional development of the Hanjun.[21]

Building on Huang's study, I further conceptualized the relationship between the performance of the Hanjun artillery corps and the development of the Hanjun in my previous article.[22] In this work, I argue that each step in the Hanjun's "bannerization" was directly linked to its military performance in preceding campaigns. For instance, the 1637 division into two banners was a response to the lack of discipline exhibited by the Hanjun during the Joseon campaign. Similarly, the 1639 division into four banners resulted directly from the Hanjun artillery corps' failure during the siege of Songshan 松山. Finally, in 1642, the Hanjun artillery corps proved their military value by capturing Xingshan 杏山 and Tashan 塔山 cities within days. Two months after the sieges, a delighted Hong Taiji established the Hanjun Eight Banners, elevating its status to that of the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. In other words, each structural development of the Hanjun was closely tied to its performance in these critical battles.

Nevertheless, my previous approach, which focused primarily on the military perspective, falls short in addressing the sensitive ethnic dimensions of the Hanjun. It is clear that the Han ethnic distinction of the Hanjun played a significant role in the prolonged twelve-year process for the Manchu court to elevate it to an ethnic branch of the Eight Banners. The analytical challenge, therefore, lies in constructing a framework that effectively integrates both the military and ethnic distinctiveness of the Hanjun.

[21] Huang, "Hongyi dapao yu Huang Taiji de baqi Hanjun," 74-105.
[22] Chung Yan Hon Michael, "The Development and Impact of Hong Taiji's Artillery Corps (1631–1643)," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 10, no. 1 (2021): 1–40.

Some historians have considered that the military and ethnic dimensions of the Hanjun may have influenced each other and shaped its developmental trajectory. Zhang Jinfan and Guo Chengkang suggest that the Hanjun might have evolved into another purely military organization, similar to the infantry corps (Ma: *beki cooha*). The infantry corps, which lacked any special ethnic distinction, was led by a permanent commander but comprised troops temporarily assembled during wartime by conscripting bannermen from the Eight Banners and disbanded once the campaign ended. The Hanjun initially began as a military organization akin to the infantry corps. However, unlike the infantry corps, which maintained its temporary structure throughout the Qing's formation, the Hanjun underwent a significant transformation and became the independent and permanent Hanjun Eight Banners. Zhang and Guo argue that the differing ethnic compositions of the Hanjun and the infantry corps were key factors in their divergent trajectories. According to their theory, if not for its *Nikan* ethnic distinctiveness, the Hanjun might have remained solely an artillery corps within the Qing military, devoid of the defining features of the Eight Banners system.[23]

Nicola Di Cosmo, on the contrary, suggests that Hong Taiji's need for artillery technology may have dictated the Manchu's ethnic policy. He writes: "It was because of this overarching requirement (to accommodate artillery technology in the Manchu military) that the Chinese military personnel recruited in Liaodong were allowed to enter the ranks of the Jin army. Hence, the argument in favor of a Manchu military revolution would claim that the early formation of the Jin-cum-Qing ruling elite, in particular of the Manchu-Han compact, was rooted in the need to modernize the military." [24] In other words, the *Nikan* would not have been incorporated into the Later Jin military if not for their specialized artillery expertise. Both studies propose a possible scenario in which the Hanjun's ethnic and military

[23] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 230.
[24] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter? Firearms and the Qing Formation," in *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, ed. Lynne A. Struve (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 157.

roles may have influenced each other. Regrettably, neither study pursues these ideas further with systematic research to trace the origins of the Hanjun.

Hanjun as Ethnic Soldiers

To address both the ethnic and military dimensions of the Hanjun, this study adopts Cynthia Enloe's concept of the "ethnic soldier" as an analytical framework. Enloe introduced the term in 1980 to describe the practice of a ruling ethnic group recruiting another ethnic group for military purposes, thereby maintaining state control while leveraging the specific skills or strategic value of the subordinated group. According to Enloe, the creation of ethnic soldiers involves three key actors: state elites, ethnic military elites, and the military itself. This process is gradual and dynamic, requiring state elites to adjust the ethnic composition of the military while incorporating ethnic elites into the state apparatus. The framework offers a powerful lens to understand how ethnic groups are managed and integrated within multiethnic empires like the Qing.[25]

A central component of Enloe's theory is the "ethnic security map," a mental model used by state elites to evaluate ethnic groups based on their perceived reliability and strategic utility. At the core of the concentric model lies Ethnic Group A, typically the ruling ethnic group, which enjoys the highest trust and integration within the state apparatus. Surrounding the core is Ethnic Group B, highly valuable but not entirely trustworthy, often utilized for their specific skills or strategic importance. Further out is Ethnic Group C, seen as somewhat useful but even less reliable. At the periphery lies Ethnic Group D, the least politically dependable and the least essential to the state. Importantly, this map is not static. Ethnic

[25] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 27.

groups can shift positions based on changes in their perceived loyalty, dependency on the state, or demonstrated strategic value.[26]

Enloe's "ethnic security map" provides a compelling framework for analyzing the development of the Hanjun under Qing rule. Initially, in the 1620s, Han soldiers were situated at the outermost rim of this map, categorized as Ethnic Group D due to their perceived low reliability and limited strategic value, especially during Nurhaci's 努爾哈赤 time. However, as the Qing state's strategic position changed, particularly under Hong Taiji, the need for advanced artillery technology—something the *Nikan* excelled in—elevated their strategic importance. This shift moved Han military elites into Ethnic Group C, where they were considered useful but still not entirely trustworthy.

During the critical campaigns of the early 1640s, particularly in sieges of fortified cities like Tashan and Xingshan, Han artillery units demonstrated their reliability and effectiveness. These successes enabled Han military elites to move closer to Ethnic Group B on the security map, signifying their growing integration and trustworthiness. By 1642, Han artillery specialists and military elites had reached a level of integration that culminated in the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners. This shift exemplifies Enloe's assertion that ethnic groups can transition closer to the core of the state's security apparatus when their strategic value and demonstrated loyalty increase.

Enloe's concept of the "ethnic soldier" also helps contextualize the Hanjun within the broader framework of Qing state-building and ethnic integration. The Hanjun Eight Banners was not just a military innovation but also a political mechanism that allowed the Qing to co-opt Han elites while maintaining ethnic hierarchies. The banners symbolized a delicate

[26] Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, 23-25.

compromise: while Han military elites gained influence and upward mobility, they remained under the watchful eye of the state, minimizing the disruption of the existing power balance brought by their integration. The "ethnic soldier" framework underscores how the Qing effectively managed this duality, using the Hanjun as both a tool of military expansion and a means of consolidating control over *Nikan*.

However, while Enloe's model captures the state's perspective, it underemphasizes the agency of ethnic military elites and their active role in shaping their positions within the state apparatus. Enloe acknowledges this limitation, noting that state security evolution is best understood as an interaction between the mental security maps of state elites and those of ethnic groups.[27] Yet the model stops short of offering a dynamic explanation of how ethnic groups negotiate their roles. This study builds on Enloe's insights by highlighting the agency of Han military elites, who strategically leveraged their expertise to negotiate with Qing state elites. Recognizing the importance of their artillery skills, Han officials advocated for structural reforms within the military, such as incorporating more Han soldiers into the banner system. These negotiations secured not only greater military influence but also social and political privileges, ultimately placing Han elites closer to the core of Qing power.

Hanjun as a Product of Negotiation

Most studies of the Hanjun, looking from an imperial perspective, tend to overlook the active role played by Han soldiers and officials. The *Nikan* are often portrayed as passive subjects of Qing court policies, a perspective that limits a comprehensive understanding of the early development of the Hanjun. Positing the Hanjun as ethnic soldiers—more specifically as the Han artillery corps of the Later Jin/Qing military—this study addresses this

[27] Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, 186.

gap by proposing a new approach: instead of viewing the Hanjun solely as a product of top-down state policy, it examines the Hanjun as the outcome of a negotiation process between the Manchu ruling house and the Han military elites. From the very beginning, this negotiation intertwined Han ethnicity and artillery technology, shaping the institution in unique ways.

While it is undeniable that Hong Taiji initiated the Hanjun project, the policies of the Manchu Khan represented only one side of the negotiation. On the other side, Han military elites, fully aware of the strategic value of their artillery expertise, actively "ethnicized" this technology as a means to secure political privileges. This process of ethnicization inaugurated a prolonged negotiation that ultimately defined the institutional framework of the Hanjun Eight Banners, clarifying the duties, political privileges, and social status of Hanjun bannermen as ethnic soldiers.

Mark Elliott has introduced the concept of "negotiation" in defending the use of ethnicity as an analytical framework for understanding the Manchus in Qing China. He argues that "ethnicity is flexible and open to negotiation," meaning that it evolves according to the needs of a group. He even cites the Hanjun as an example to illustrate this negotiation:

> The Chinese bannermen are a clear instance of a people who, according to a strict interpretation of descent lines, were not entitled to membership in an ethnic group but acquired ethnicity anyway by virtue of their adoption of the symbols of the system of persistent identity.[28]

[28] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 17.

However, Elliott does not clarify what he means by "flexible" or how this process of ethnic negotiation functioned. This omission limits a deeper analysis of the political role of ethnicity in the pre-conquest period and its broader political implications.

To better analyze and illustrate the Hanjun negotiation, this study adopts a bottom-up approach, shifting the focus from the Manchu ruling elites to the Han military elites. The series of memorials submitted to the throne by Han officials advocating for Hanjun reforms serve as key evidence of a collective, though sporadic, campaign by the Han elite to negotiate with the Khan. The effectiveness of this bottom-up perspective is evident in previous scholarship, such as Johan Elverskog's study on Qing rule over the Mongols. Elverskog demonstrates that Qing-Mongol relations were not static but involved an ongoing process of negotiation between the state and Mongol elites. By reinterpreting Qing ethnic policies at the frontier, Mongol elites constrained the Manchu ruling agenda and renegotiated their position within the state.[29]

In parallel, other works highlight instances where negotiation shaped the relationship between the Qing state and various ethnic elites, even if not explicitly framed as such. Lu Cheng-Heng's seminal study examines how southeastern maritime elites, termed "maritime brokers," leveraged their naval expertise and local knowledge to secure political privileges from the Qing state. In exchange for their critical role in incorporating Taiwan into the empire, the Qing enrolled members of these elite lineages into the Hanjun Eight Banner system.[30] Similarly, David Porter notes that after the Revolt of the Three Feudatories, the

[29] Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 7-13, 34-39.
[30] Lu Cheng-Heng, "The Art of Being an Imperial Broker: The Qing Conquest of Taiwan and Maritime Society (1624–1788)" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2020), 21, 168-179.

Qing integrated the remaining members of the feudatories into the Hanjun Eight Banners to ensure their loyalty and political assimilation.[31]

After the conquest of China, negotiations also took place within the Eight Banners as its members sought to elevate their political status. For instance, the two leading Hanjun lineages—the Tong and the Si—claimed Manchu rather than Han ancestry and petitioned the Kangxi Emperor for transfer to the Manchu Eight Banners, which held a more prestigious status. [32] Other longstanding Hanjun bannermen sought to distinguish themselves by emphasizing their ancestors' "Mukden background," asserting that their forebears, though being *Nikan*, had originated from Mukden during the pre-conquest period. This claim aimed to elevate their status above later entrants to the Hanjun.[33] Such cases underscore how the Qing state consistently engaged in negotiations with different elite groups to manage power disputes and redistribute political privileges.

Utilizing pre-conquest Manchu sources, in particularly *the Early Manchu Archives of the Imperial Historiographical Office* (Ch: *Neiguo Shiyuan Dang* 內國史院檔, NGSYD) and *the Old Documents in Manchu* (Ch: *Manwen Laodang* 滿文老檔, MWLD), this study expands the analysis in two significant ways. First, it argues that the Hanjun Eight Banners—the institution that hosted these negotiations—was itself a product of negotiation between the Manchu ruling elites and the Han military elites. These negotiations were not ad hoc but reflected a long-standing practice of balancing competing political interests. Second, this study examines the logic and mechanics of the negotiation process in greater detail. Conducted primarily in court, the negotiations unfolded in two directions. Han elites engaged

[31] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor*, 55-57.
[32] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 111-14; Sun, *Qingdai baqi hanjun yanjiu*, 100-14.
[33] Watanuki Tetsurō, "Cong 'guifu Hanren' zhuandao 'Hanjun qiren,'" *Journal of Chinese History*, no. 4 (2022): 81-92.

the throne through a series of memorials, often submitted collectively but at irregular intervals, to articulate their political demands. In return, Hong Taiji countered with a growing ethnic rhetoric, using court trials to suppress the Han elites' demands and requiring them to demonstrate loyalty and military value. Ultimately, it took twelve years of negotiation to arrive at an institutional solution that clearly delineated the duties and privileges of Hanjun soldiers, laying the foundation for their role within the Qing state.

Rethinking Ethnicity in Pre-Conquest Qing

The negotiation framework also prompts us to reevaluate the role of ethnicity in the pre-conquest Qing. Over the past few decades, historians have debated when Manchu ethnicity first emerged. Pamela Crossley contends that "Manchu" was largely an imperial construct that crystallized only after the Taiping Rebellion; [34] from her perspective, the Manchu–Mongol–Han classification, introduced by Hong Taiji in 1635, was more a socio-political innovation than an outgrowth of earlier ethnic realities. [35] In contrast, Mark Elliott conceptualizes ethnicity as a discourse rooted in the assertion of cultural or descent-based differences, arguing that ethnic boundaries were already politically relevant during Hong Taiji's time.[36] He views labels such as Manchu, Mongol, and Han as historically contingent but grounded in existing perceptions, which Hong Taiji then "politicized" under what Elliott terms "ethnic sovereignty." [37]

This study contributes to these debates by shifting attention from Manchu to *Nikan* ethnic identity, widening our perspective on the pre-conquest Qing's ethnic landscape. Following Elliott's argument, I suggest that ethnicity, as a historically contingent discourse,

[34] Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11, no. 1 (1990): 27.
[35] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 3.
[36] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 16.
[37] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 4; Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 34.

was already influential in Hong Taiji's era. The formation of the Hanjun in 1631 illustrates how existing ethnic ideas shaped his actions: although he aimed primarily to build an artillery corps, he deliberately designated it as a *Nikan* force. While sources do not outline his precise reasoning, it is likely that a shared language and cultural background among the troops aided efficiency in forging and operating advanced weaponry. Thus, although the Hanjun began as a specialized artillery unit, "*Nikan*" became one of its defining characteristics, underscoring how ethnic discourse influenced Hong Taiji's political decisions.

However, this study also challenges the primacy of "ethnic sovereignty" within Qing statecraft. The Hanjun's development highlights how ethnicity—one among several social markers, including class, occupation, legal status, and lineage—was not always the decisive factor. For instance, Hanjun conscription can be interpreted equally as an ethnic or class-based liberation, emancipating Han bondservants from Manchu households. Focusing too heavily on ethnicity risks obscuring the interplay of these other determinants in shaping Qing society. Moreover, ethnicity in this period was far from fixed; it functioned as a malleable marker that could be emphasized or downplayed according to changing political objectives. In the mid-1630s, the Manchu court used two different Manchu titles—*Nikan gūsa* (Han Banner) and *ujen cooha* (Heavy Army)—to name the Hanjun, thus capturing both its ethnic and military roles. This flexibility also opened up room for hybrid forms of identity. In the Hanjun's case, combining a *Nikan* background with specialized artillery service produced a distinct "ethnic soldier" identity, which subsequently evolved into a formally recognized status with its own set of rights and obligations under Qing rule. The Hanjun thus illustrates the fluidity and reinterpretability of ethnic categories, countering the idea that ethnic sovereignty was a rigid principle of Qing governance.

Most importantly, the Hanjun's trajectory complicates the idea that the Manchu court singlehandedly orchestrated ethnic policies. Han military elites did more than passively comply with official dictates; by fusing ethnic identity with artillery expertise, they transformed what began as a provisional military unit into an arena for both ethnic and political negotiation. This bottom-up dynamic calls into question the extent to which "ethnic sovereignty" alone propelled Qing policymaking in the pre-conquest era. To push further, by placing artillery at the core of Hanjun negotiations, this study argues that the Qing conceived of ethnicity not as a primordial identity but rather as a pragmatic means of harnessing critical human resources. Instead of adhering strictly to ancestry or geographic origin, both the Manchu ruling house and Han military elites recognized the strategic importance of specialized knowledge—particularly in the production and operation of European-style heavy cannons. In this view, ethnicity became one among several malleable markers, reconfigured to secure indispensable technological expertise. Thus, the Qing emerges not merely as an empire defined by rigid ethnic hierarchies, but as an "early modern empire of technologies," wherein mastery of military innovations frequently transcended traditional notions of ethnic affiliation.

Artillery Technology, Military Revolution, and the Qing Formation

Known to the Ming Chinese as red-barbarian cannons (Ch: *hongyi pao* 紅夷炮) and to the Manchus as red-shirt cannons (Ch: *hongyi pao* 紅衣炮; Ma: *hūng i poo*), the European-style heavy cannons had much greater firepower than any cannon in China.[38] Ranging in

[38] The "red-barbarian cannon" was named after the people who introduced it to China—the Dutch and the English, who were called the "red barbarians" (Ch: *hongyi* 紅夷) or the "red-haired barbarians" (Ch: *hongmao yi* 紅毛夷). Hence, red-barbarian cannons were sometimes called the "red-haired-barbarian cannon" (Ch: *hongmao yi pao* 紅毛夷炮). When the cannon was introduced to Manchuria, because the Manchus regarded "barbarian" as a distasteful word (the Ming Chinese also regarded them as barbarians), they instead called it the "red-shirt cannon."

length from 2 to 4.8 meters, and in weight from 885 to 3,000 kg, these cannons were manufactured according to scientific principles, which endowed them with longer range, greater precision, and superior destructive power. [39] Over the past two decades, historians have produced an exciting body of research on these European-style heavy cannons in Ming-Qing China.[40] It is generally agreed that European-artillery technology had brought a revolution in the way of war in early modern China.[41]

However, the broader social and political impact of this artillery technology remains open for debate. Many historians are captivated by the idea of a Chinese military revolution, one that mirrors the Western European concept proposed by Michael Roberts and expanded by Geoffrey Parker. [42] This school of thought argues that a series of tactical, strategic, and technological innovations brought about by gunpowder weapons led to the creation of modern European states. A central problem with applying the military revolution paradigm to early modern China is that China had already established a central government and tax institutions centuries before the arrival of European cannons. Therefore, historians must first identify a political revolution in seventeenth-century China before arguing for a military revolution.

A recent study by Zhang Jian offers a compelling perspective on this issue. He argues that the introduction of European artillery forced Hong Taiji to expand his army to include

[39] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?" 141; Yunlu, and Fulong'an, *Huangchao liqi tushi*, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, vol 16, 25.
[40] Huang Yi-long, *Hongyi dapao yu Ming-Qing zhanzheng* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2022); Yin Xiaodong, *16–17 shiji Xifang huoqi jishu xiang Zhongguo de zhuanyi* (Jinan: Shandong Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2014); Zheng Cheng, *Ming-Qing huoqi shi congkao*. (Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian, 2022).
[41] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?" 147. Huang, *Hongyi dapao yu Ming-Qing zhanzheng*, 380-81.
[42] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?"156-160; Huang Yi-Long, "Ouzhou chen chuan yu Mingmo chuan Hua de xiyang dapao," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 75, no. 3 (September 2004): 622; Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560–1660," in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 13–36; Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

infantry and artillery corps. Consequently, Hong Taiji conscripted soldiers from other ethnic groups—Chinese bondservants, Joseon captives, surrendered Mongols, and New Manchus of other tribes. These multi-ethnic individuals were not only given the status of soldiers but were also admitted into the Eight Banners. This altered the ethnic and social composition of the Manchu state and eventually led to the creation of the Mongol and Hanjun divisions of the Eight Banners. Furthermore, the conscription of non-Manchu soldiers disrupted the original Jurchen tribal social-military structure embedded within the Eight Banner system. The new army branches diminished the political and military authority of the Manchu banner lords and facilitated Hong Taiji's centralization of political power. The Qing gradually transformed from a confederation into a state. In other words, Hong Taiji's revolution in military affairs inadvertently led to a full-blown military revolution that laid the foundation for the emerging Qing empire. [43]

While I am sympathetic to Zhang Jian's argument that artillery technology played a pivotal role in the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners and reshaped the ethnic composition of the Qing, I hesitate to frame this as a military revolution. The formation of the Mongol Eight Banners in 1635—seven years before the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners—suggests that the Qing state's ability to integrate non-Manchu groups into its military system did not hinge on gunpowder technology or artillery. The Mongol Eight Banners were built upon the pre-existing traditions of Inner-Asian nomadic cavalry, which had long been central to military organization and political expansion across the steppe.[44] This shows that the multi-ethnic composition of the Qing military was achievable through established social and military practices without requiring technological innovation.

[43] Zhang, *Qing ruguanqian bubing yanjiu*, 324-29.
[44] Pavel I. Osinsky, "The Nomadic Empires as State Formations," *Евразийство и мир* 1 (2019): 42–57.

That said, artillery technology's role in the formation of the Hanjun Eight Banners was far deeper than previously assumed, particularly when examined through a material perspective.[45] The integration of these new weapons was not a simple process; it required the development of specialized siege tactics, command structures, logistical support, and training programs. These reforms were not merely technical adjustments but were intertwined with the broader political and institutional evolution of the Hanjun. Unlike traditional cavalry or infantry, artillery required a permanent team of gunsmiths, craftsmen, and trained gunners, fostering the early institutionalization of the Hanjun as a specialized military unit.

The logistical and tactical challenges of artillery deployment directly shaped the bannerization process. During the 1636–37 Joseon campaign, the Qing artillery corps struggled with mobility, slowing siege operations and leaving the army vulnerable to counterattacks. This prompted the initial division of the Hanjun into two banners in 1637 to improve command efficiency. Similarly, the failed 1639 siege of Songshan, where inadequate artillery tactics and supply shortages stalled the Qing offensive, led to a further restructuring into four banners. These setbacks not only exposed the limitations of Qing siege warfare but also intensified internal tensions, as some Manchu elites questioned the loyalty of the Han artillery troops. The Qing response was twofold: improving artillery coordination and refining the institutional framework of the Hanjun.

By 1642, the Qing military had overcome these early deficiencies. Adjustments in bombardment timing and logistical support allowed the Hanjun artillery corps to capture Xingshan and Tashan with unprecedented speed, demonstrating the effectiveness of these

[45] I borrow the idea of materiality from sociology, which focuses on the material qualities of objects and the contingent ways those qualities shape the meaning and use of those objects. Terence E. McDonnell, "Cultural Objects, Material Culture, and Materiality," *Annual Review of Sociology* 49, no. 1 (2023): 200. I also take reference to Thomas Highes's theory of large technological systems in analyzing the integration of the artillery technology into the Qing army. Thomas Hughes, "The Evolution of Large Technological Systems," in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*, ed. W. Bijker et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 45–76.

reforms. Two months later, Hong Taiji formally established the Hanjun Eight Banners, institutionalizing the role of Han artillerymen within the Qing military structure. This moment marked the culmination of a process in which technological innovation and military organization evolved in tandem, reinforcing the material agency of artillery technology in shaping Qing governance and ethnic policies.

From this perspective, artillery was not merely an instrument of war but a force that actively shaped the political and institutional trajectory of the Qing state. The structural demands of artillery warfare—requiring specialized personnel, dedicated logistical networks, and refined command hierarchies—drove the evolution of the Hanjun from a temporary task force into a permanent military and ethnic institution. This integration of technology into governance demonstrates that Qing military transformations were not dictated solely by strategic necessity or centralized state planning, but also by the material constraints and possibilities of the weapons they sought to wield.

Sources and Methods

This study draws primarily on two pre-conquest Manchu sources: *The Early Manchu Archives of the Imperial Historiographical Office* (NGSYD) and *Old Documents in Manchu* (MWLD). Together, they provide the core narrative of the Hanjun's formation and development. The Early Manchu Archives of the Imperial Historiographical Office were compiled in response to Hong Taiji's 1629 initiative to organize and record significant documents and events.[46] The archives begin in the first year of the Tiancong reign (1627) and continue beyond Hong Taiji's era, detailing political, military, economic, and judicial affairs in a raw, day-by-day format. While the original microfilms of the NGSYD are housed at the

[46] QNMDY, 1.

First Historical Archives of China, various sections have also been translated and published. This study relies on a combination of the original microfilms, the Japanese-translated segments covering the fifth, seventh, and eighth years of Tiancong (1631, 1633, 1634) and the second and third years of Chongde (1637, 1638), and a Chinese translation covering 1633 to 1662.

Old Documents in Manchu, which is more widely recognized and frequently used among historians, is similarly arranged in chronological form but contains material not present in the NGSYD, making the two sources highly complementary. This study draws chiefly on the 2009 publication of the Cabinet Collection's Old Documents in Manchu (*Neige Cangben Manwen Laodang* 內閣藏本滿文老檔) by Liaoning Minzu Chubanshe, as well as the two-volume collection of Old Manchu Archives (*Chiu Man Chou Tang* 舊滿洲檔) published by Tōyō Bunko in 1972 and 1975.

To illuminate the experiences of individual Hanjun bannermen—particularly those of mid-to-lower ranks—this research also incorporates Qing official genealogies (*Qingdai pudie dang'an* 清代譜牒檔案).[47] Compiled by the Imperial Household Department (Ch: *Neiwufu* 內務府) and the Grand Secretariat (Ch: *Neige* 內閣), these genealogical records trace banner-company memberships and title successions. They include command papers (Ch: *chishu* 敕書) issued by the throne, which detail how a bannerman originally gained his title or appointment; in cases of artillery service, these documents often reference that role explicitly. Such genealogies reveal how specialized gunnery skills could translate into social and political advantages for the Hanjun bannermen. The genealogies consulted for this study come from multiple repositories, including the First Historical Archives, the Kuo Ting-yee

[47] For more discussion of the pu'dang, see Seishi, "Hachiki Niru no kongen to Niru bunrui ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 65, no. 1 (2006): 169–92.

Library of Academia Sinica's Institute of Modern History, Tōyō Bunko, and digitized materials from the Grand Secretariat archives at Academia Sinica.

These archival sources are augmented by the first volume of the History of the Eight Banners (*Baqi Tongzhi Chuji* 八旗通志初集, BQTZ), commissioned by Emperor Yongzheng in 1727 and completed in 1739. Despite being a compiled historical work rather than a contemporary primary source, the BQTZ remains indispensable because of its structured documentation of banner companies, regiments, and biographical entries (Ch: *liezhuan* 列傳). Both the Chinese and Manchu editions of the BQTZ were consulted. The Manchu version, held at the National Palace Museum in Taipei and digitized at the Berlin State Library, proved especially beneficial for cross-referencing Manchu names and original texts.

Given that these records present an immense volume of fragmented or contradictory information, this study employed a custom Python text-mining algorithm to reorganize the material into a structured data format. Each entry captured the bannerman's military action, location, approximate date, rank or office, relevant artillery use, and the source reference. Where applicable, the corresponding Manchu text was also extracted. The unified dataset was then cross-checked with the genealogies for discrepancies, omissions, or clarifications. Supplementary data from NGSYD, MWLD, and Qing Veritable Records (*Qing Shilu* 清實錄) further enriched the dataset. To enhance analysis, an interactive map with customizable filter options was developed, providing a clearer and more comprehensive view of the geographic and temporal dimensions of Hanjun military engagements. By harmonizing these varied sources and visualizing the data in multiple ways, the study is able to address long-standing questions about the Hanjun—most notably the mechanisms by which artillery specialists attained enhanced socio-political positions and how, in aggregate, these individual trajectories influenced the institution's development.

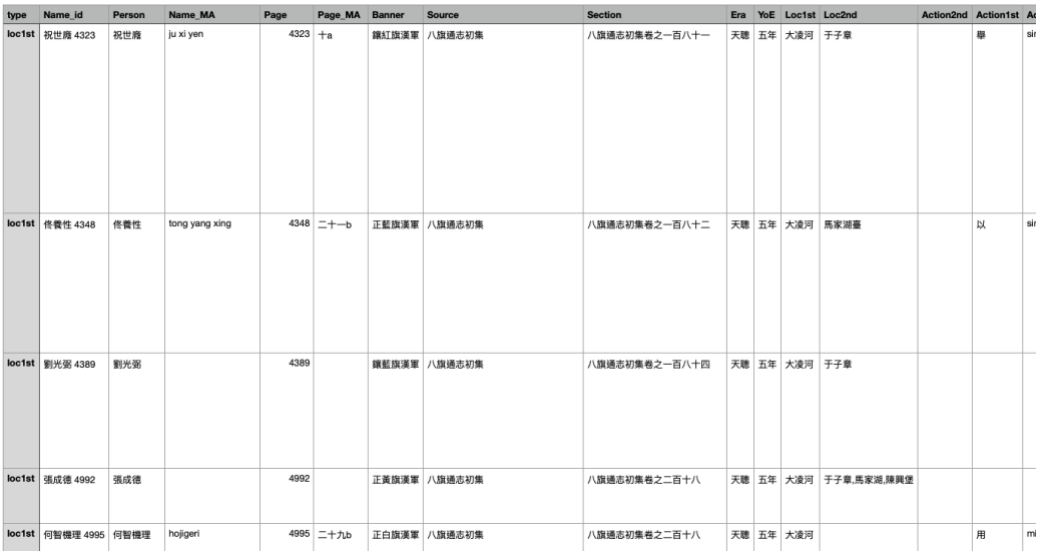

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Figure 1. Screenshot of the dataset (initial).

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	NA/unknown			備禦					1631		大凌河	41.17137	121.35494	張成德，漢軍正黃旗人，初任百總，以擒獲間諜，	Pla
	鳥鎗								1631		大凌河	41.17137	121.35494		Pla

Figure 2. Screenshot of the dataset (continued).

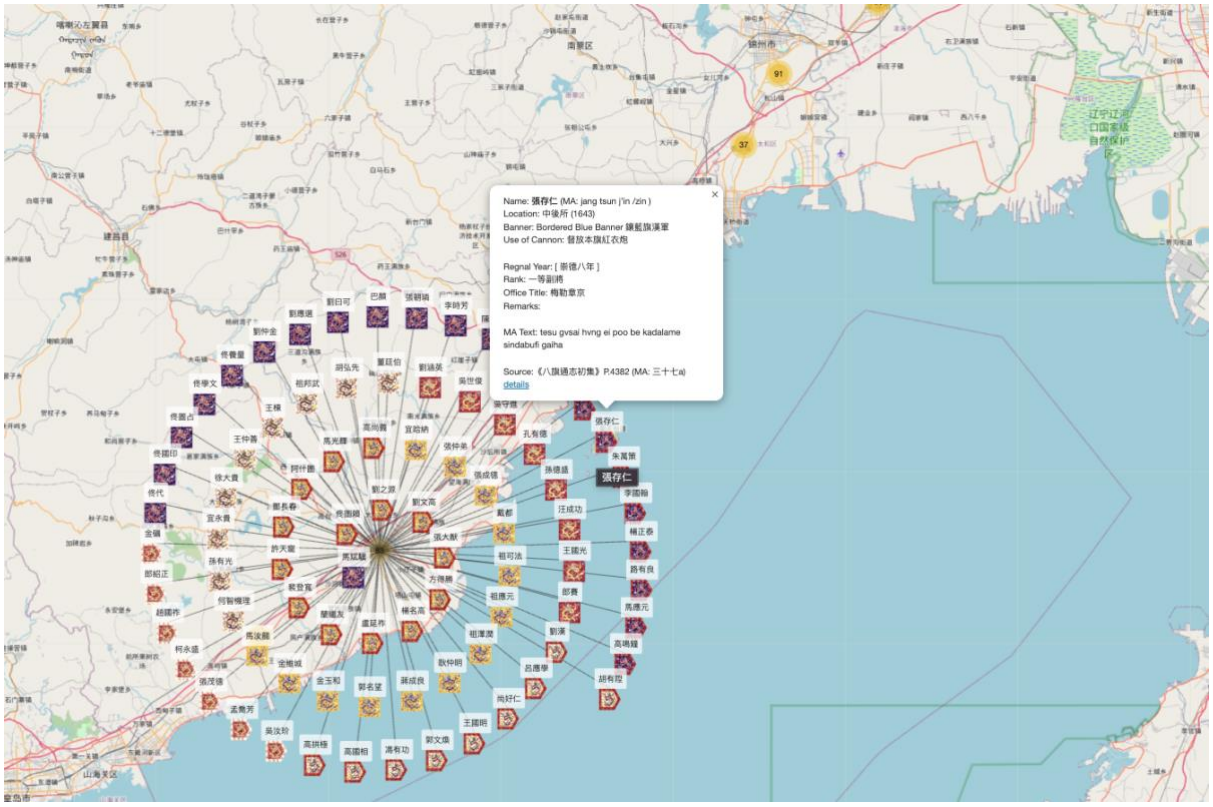

Figure 3. Screenshot of the Hanjun interactive map.

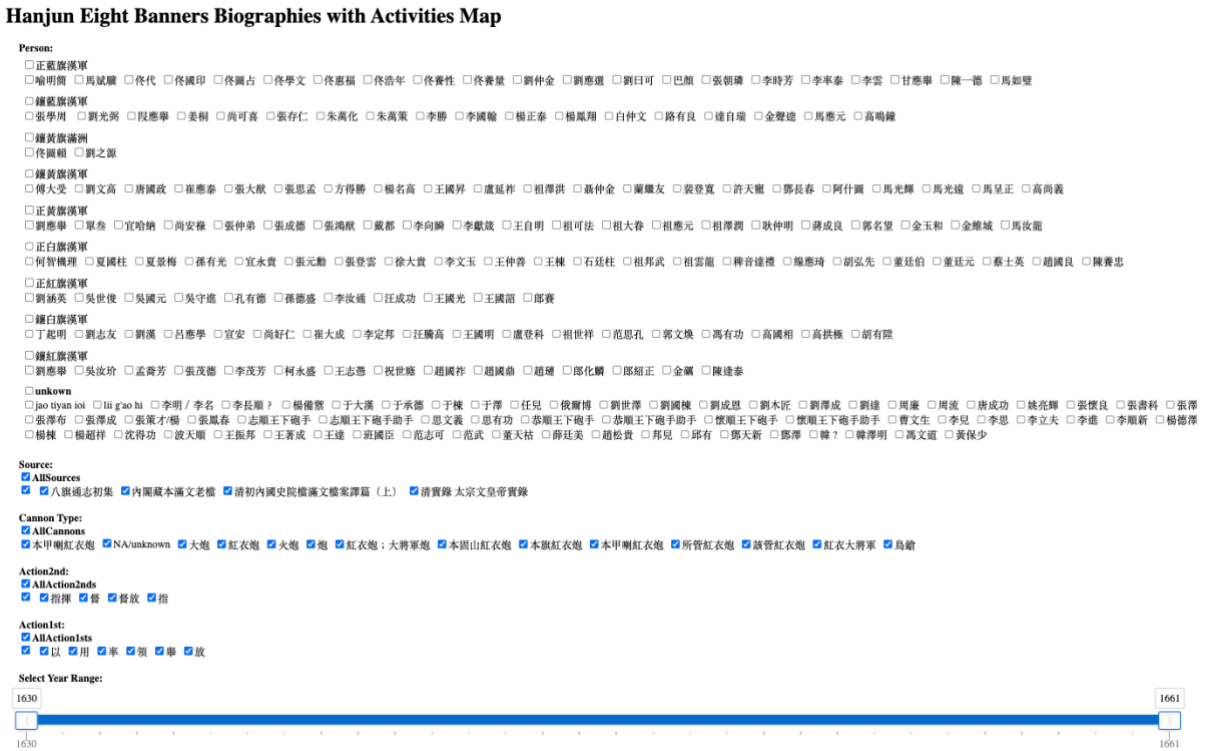

Figure 4. Screenshot of the Hanjun interactive map filter panel.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, generally organized in chronological order, tracing the development of the Hanjun from its genesis to its institutional establishment and role in the early Qing conquest of China proper. Chapter One explores the genesis of the Hanjun and its debut at the 1631 siege of Dalinghe. While the Hanjun's performance during the siege was acknowledged by both Hong Taiji and later historians, it did not play a decisive role in the victory. Institutionally, the Hanjun at this stage was merely a temporary military task force with minimal political and military power. This limited status prevented the Han military elites from attaining significant social and political influence.

Chapter Two examines the "artillery ethnicization" project initiated by Han elites. Recognizing Hong Taiji's reliance on their artillery expertise, Han officials submitted multiple memorials urging reforms that would strengthen the Hanjun artillery corps and enhance their own political standing. Hong Taiji responded positively to these proposals. In 1633, he conscripted 1,580 *Nikan* into the Hanjun, and in 1634, he formally designated the Hanjun as the artillery corps of the Later Jin army. These reforms not only bolstered the Hanjun's military role but also elevated the political influence of Hanjun officers in the Later Jin court, positioning the Hanjun as a representative institution for *Nikan* interests.

As the Han elites gained political influence, tensions emerged between Manchu and *Nikan* interests. Chapter Three focuses on these conflicts, particularly the emancipation of Han soldiers, which undermined the interests of Manchu bondservant owners who had originally owned the *Nikan*. This chapter examines how these disputes unfolded into years-long negotiations. To suppress the growing political demands of the Han elites and appease discontented Manchu nobles, Hong Taiji developed a new ethnic rhetoric that elevated the Manchus while curbing the *Nikan*. The ambiguous institutional identity of the Hanjun—

oscillating between an ethnic institution and a military branch—further complicated the situation. Additionally, logistical and disciplinary issues within the Hanjun were exposed during the 1637 Joseon Campaign. To address these challenges, Hong Taiji divided the 10,000-strong Hanjun into two banners, marking a significant step in its structural evolution toward bannerization.

Despite these reforms, the structural development of the Hanjun did little to mitigate the growing Manchu-*Nikan* tensions. Chapter Four examines the escalation of ethnic rhetoric against the Han elites. The Hanjun's failure to capture walled cities during the 1639 siege of Songshan incensed Hong Taiji, who accused Hanjun officers of treason, alleging that their ethnic loyalty to their Han ethnic brothers undermined their military effectiveness. In this context, the military performance of the Hanjun artillery corps became inextricably linked to questions of ethnic loyalty. To regain favor, the Han elites were compelled to demonstrate their loyalty and strategic value through military actions.

Chapter Five traces the recovery and eventual success of the Hanjun artillery corps. Learning from earlier setbacks, the Hanjun improved its siege capabilities. During the decisive Battle of Songjin in 1642, the Hanjun artillery corps executed successful sieges at Tashan and Xingshan, capturing both cities within days and achieving Hong Taiji's decade-long strategic vision. Elated by this success, Hong Taiji formally established the Hanjun Eight Banners as one of the three ethnic branches of the Eight Banners system. After 12 years of arduous negotiations and military campaigns, the institutional structure of the Hanjun was finally settled.

Chapter Six continues to follow the development of the Hanjun Eight Banners, focusing on its critical role in the Qing conquest of China proper, a defining phase in the empire's state-building process. While conquest was driven by military might and strategic

innovation, the Hanjun artillery corps emerged as a cornerstone of Qing military dominance. Though initially shaped by contingent circumstances, its development exemplified the Qing's ability to adapt and integrate specialized units into a broader framework of conquest and governance. This transformation highlights the Hanjun's enduring significance in both military and state-building context

1. Hanjun: A Temporary Artillery Task Force

The Later Jin's Strategic Dilemma

The Later Jin had been holding the initiative against the Ming since the epic victory of the battle of Sarhū 薩爾滸 in 1619. Since then, the Manchus, under the command of Hong Taiji's father, Nurhaci, had been annexing Ming territories in the Liaodong area. By 1621, the Ming had been driven back as far as the Shanhai Pass 山海關 of the Great Wall. However, the Ming revised their strategy and started erecting walled cities in the Liaoxi corridor. Nurhaci struck again in 1626, besieging the newly built Ningyuan City 寧遠. But this time, he was defeated. For the first time in eight years, the Ming withstood and repelled an assault by the Later Jin's formidable army.[48]

In 1627, the Manchus failed for the second time to capture the city of Ningyuan. On their retreat, they attempted to besiege Jinzhou 錦州, another strategic stronghold of the Ming, but were also repelled. In the end, the expeditionary force returned to Shenyang in disgrace. Hong Taiji now faced a serious dilemma: the Ming controlled the strategically important Liaoxi corridor with a chain of walled cities, which the Later Jin had no means to capture, as they were defended by formidable European-style cannons. The Ming was extending its line of defense northward by erecting more walled cities, and the Manchu Khan was now in a very passive position.[49]

Many contemporaries attributed the victory of the Ming to the European-style cannon, which had been adopted by the Ming army only a few years earlier.[50] This daunting weapon

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[48] Kenneth Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty, 1618–44* (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 19–49; For Chinese readers, Chen Shengxi provides a concise overview of the strategic situation in the early Ming-Qing transition. See Chen Shengxi, "Lun Ming-Qing Songjin zhi zhan yu Hong Chengchou yuan liao wenti (shang)," *Cangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* 1988, no. 1 (1988): 8-16.
[49] Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty*, 56–68.
[50] *Mingshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 6958; *Ming shilu: Da Ming Xizong Zhe Huangdi shilu*, ed. Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology (Taipei: Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology, 1966), 3211.

destroyed the shields and scaling ladders of the besiegers and inflicted huge casualties. But Di Cosmo points out that the Ming's tactical advancement was as crucial as the new weapon. Before the battle of Ningyuan, the Ming had deployed the cannons in front of the cities, exposing them to the dreadful charge of the Manchu heavy cavalry. In this siege, however, the Ming dragged the heavy cannons up to the top of the city walls, allowing the rampart to protect the cannons while the cannon fire defended the city. This new tactic effectively prevented the Manchus from getting near the city and scaling the walls.[51] Eight months after the battle of Ningyuan, Nurhaci, the founding Khan of the Later Jin, died. While Hong Taiji busied himself to secure his throne, the Ming was laboriously constructing a chain of forts in the Liaoxi corridor, extending its control to the bank of the Daling River. Hong Taiji responded quickly but, as noted above, unsuccessfully.

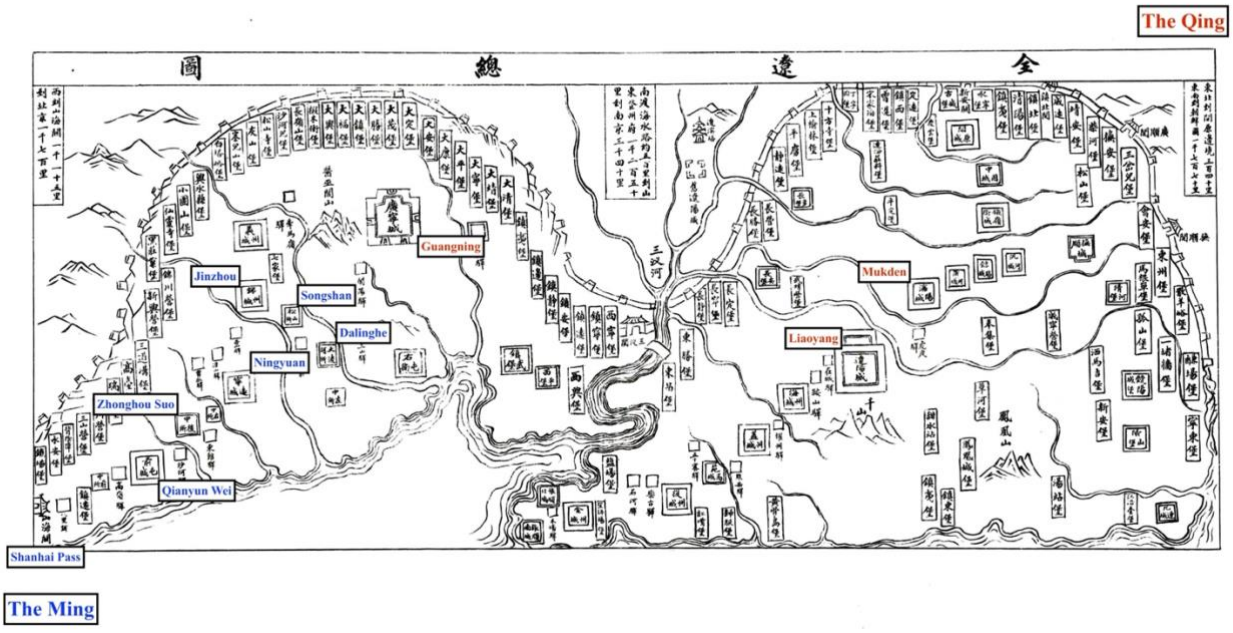

Figure 5. Map of 16th-century Liaodong with city names indicated as of the 1630s.[52]

[51] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?" 142.
[52] Li, *Quan Liao zhi*, 12-13.

Knowing that the Liaoxi defense line could not be breached, Hong Taiji attempted to bypass the Liaoxi corridor and invade China via Mongolia. The Manchus successfully reached the walls of Beijing in 1629. However, they could not sustain a siege as their supply line was too long. After leaving Beijing, Hong Taiji left some of his troops in four captured cities — Zunhua 遵化, Yongping 永平, Luanzhou 灤州, and Qian'an 遷安 — within the Great Wall, hoping to establish permanent footholds for future campaigns. But the Ming, supported by European-style cannons, swiftly recaptured Luanzhou on June 22, 1629. In the siege, the Ming artillery effectively broke the battlements and burned the gate tower. The Manchus retreated in a chaotic manner. Soon, the Later Jin abandoned all its footholds within the Great Wall.[53] These battles in 1626 and 1627 set the course of the Ming-Qing war for the coming decade. Hong Taiji realized that the Later Jin needed a way to break the walled cities. He cast his eyes on the European-style cannons mounted on the city walls.

The European-style cannon, known as the red-barbarian cannon by the Ming, was far more powerful than any contemporary Chinese gun. Ranging in size from 1.70 to 3.66 meters, the red-barbarian cannon had a longer range and superior firepower than contemporary Chinese cannons, making it capable of breaching city walls. The secret of this advanced weapon technology lay in its use of cutting-edge European discoveries in ballistics and physics.[54] As Di Cosmo puts it:

> The hongyi cannon is regarded as the first example of an artillery piece made according to scientific principles, that is, by accurate calculation of the ratio between caliber, length, and thickness of the wall. In general, the length of the bore (the interior of the barrel from the loading chamber to the muzzle) was

[53] QSL, 97/2–98/1; Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty*, 85–87.
[54] Tonio Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 197. Yin, *16–17 shiji Xifang huoqi jishu xiang Zhongguo de zhuanyi*, 76-92, Zheng, *Ming-Qing huoqi shi congkao*, 250-65.

> supposed to be twenty times or more greater than the diameter of the bore (caliber). The thickness of the metal at the breech, moreover, had to be greater than at the muzzle in order to sustain the force of the explosion and likewise had to be proportioned to the caliber. Therefore, every element of the gun was made according to fixed proportions of length, width, and thickness.[55]

The red-barbarian cannon was first introduced to the South-eastern China theatre in the early seventeenth century through maritime traders and pirates. In the 1620s, some red-barbarian cannons, salvaged from the wreck of the East-Indian Company ship *Unicorn*, were sent to Beijing and introduced to the Ming army. Several of these cannons were later sent to Ningyuan, bringing about the Ming's first victory over the Later Jin. In the following years, more cannons salvaged from shipwrecks were sent to the north. In 1627, a group of Portuguese gunnery trainers were sent to Beijing from Macau, transferring the latest artillery technology to the Ming army.[56] The Ming were widening their advantage in gunpowder weapons technology over the Manchus.

The Genesis of the Artillery Corps

Back in Liaodong, Hong Taiji promptly inaugurated his artillery project. The Later Jin had been experimenting with the use of *Nikan* as gunners since Nurhaci's time.[57] In the early 1620s, after conquering Ming territory in Liaodong, the Khan conscripted one out of every twenty adult *Nikan* males and armed them with firearms.[58] This Han contingent, nonetheless, was disbanded in 1625 after the Han revolts. After Hong Taiji succeeded to the throne in 1627, he re-created a firearms contingent that participated in the 1629 raid of northern China.

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[55] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?" 141.
[56] Dong Shaoxin and Huang Yi-Long, "Chongzhen nianjian zhaomu Pu bing xinkao," *Lishi yanjiu* 2009, no. 5 (2009): 68-9. Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*, 198-200.
[57] The first three chapters are adopted and expanded from my published article, Yan Hon Michael Chung, "Negotiation and Innovation: Artillery Technology, Ethnicity, and Formation of the Hanjun," *Late Imperial China* 45, no. 2 (2024): 153–91.
[58] MWLD vol. 19, 108.

Yet, while many *Nikan* were conscripted as gunners, not all gunners were *Nikan*. There were also Manchu officers and gunners among the ranks. In other words, although *Nikan* had a close linkage to artillery technology, their relationship was not exclusive.[59]

As the technology was a Ming Chinese specialty, Hong Taiji created a new Han division specialized in the production and use of artillery. He started acquiring gunsmiths and other artillery specialists among his Han subjects, many of whom were captured during the 1629 raid of northern China.[60] Finally, the Later Jin's first European-style cannon was cast on February 8, 1631. This cannon, named the "*Heavenly-blessing-assisting-might* generalissimo cannon" (Ch: *Tianyou zhuwei dajiangjun* 天祐助威大將軍)," is already lost. According to Hong Yi-long's study, this muzzle-loading artillery piece weighed 1,800–3,000 kg, measured 248–336 cm in length, had a caliber of 10.7–13.5 cm, and fired cannonballs weighing 8–16 kg. These specifications are similar to those of the demi-culverin or culverin used in contemporary Europe.[61]

[59] Zhang Jian and Liu Xiaomeng, "Qing ruguanqian 'huoqi ying' xianyi," *Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Social Science)* 2018, no. 3 (2018): 26.
[60] Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 169–70.
[61] Huang, "Hong Yi dapao yu Huang Taiji de baqi Hanjun," 78.

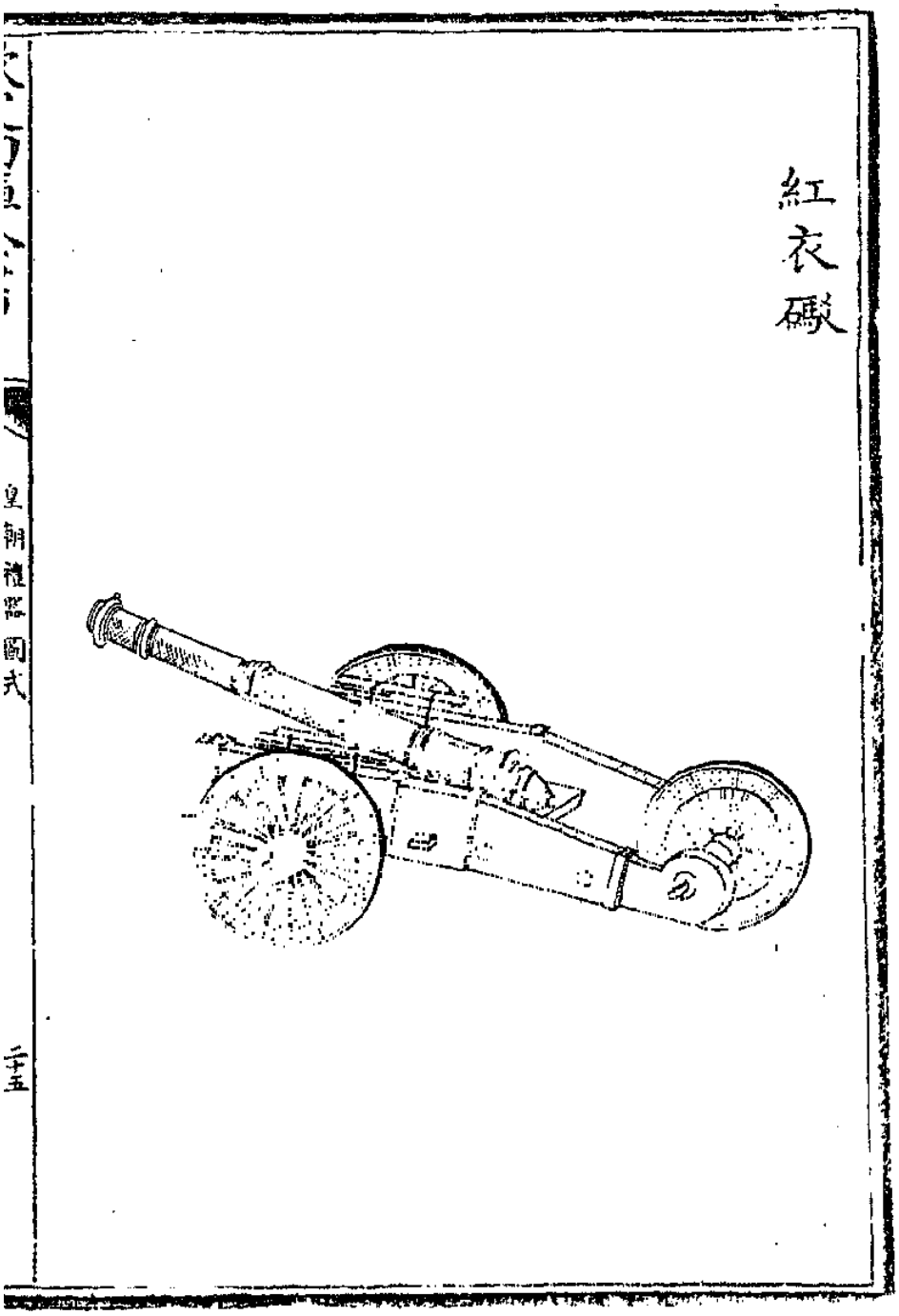

Figure 6. Illustration of the red-shirt cannon.[62]

The cannon was cast under the supervision of the regional commander (Ch: *zongbingguan* 總兵官; Ma: *sumingguwan*) Tong Yangxing 佟養性.[63] Tong came from an

[62] Yunlu and Fulong'an, *Huangchao liqi tushi*, 25.
[63] TC-5 I, 10. The Manchus, seeing "barbarian" as a derogative word aimed at them, changed its name from "red-barbarian cannon" to "red-shirt cannon."

influential lineage of Fushun 撫順, Liaodong, where his ancestors had served the Ming as regional commanders since the fifteenth century.[64] Starting as a merchant, Tong was drawn to the rising Nurhaci, feeding him with Ming intelligence. He was subsequently imprisoned by the Ming for spying before escaping to Nurhaci. Nurhaci rewarded his loyalty by making him an imperial son-in-law, while Tong's military service earned him promotions in rank. Trusting Tong despite his Han cultural background, Hong Taiji designated him as head of Han officials and put him in charge of the artillery project.[65] Thirteen days after the cannon was cast, on February 21, Hong Taiji officially made Tong the commander of all *Nikan* with the following edict:

> All affairs concerning Han civilians and military personnel are entrusted to you for overall management. All officials shall heed your commands. If there are subordinates who do not comply with your orders, do not show favoritism or leniency. Report their merits or shortcomings impartially. You, too, must exert your utmost loyalty and sincerity, selecting the virtuous and dismissing the wicked."
>
> (Ch: 凡漢人軍民一切事務。付爾總理。各官悉聽爾節制。如屬員有不遵爾言者。勿徇情面。分別賢否以聞。爾亦當殫厥忠忱。簡善絀惡。恤兵撫民。竭力供職。
>
> Ma: *gurun i nikan/ cooha irgen i ai ai weile be uhereme kadala. geren hafasa gemu sini gisumbe donjikini: ya/ hafasa sini gisumbe donjirakū ambakilaci sit ere be ume dere banire: ehe sain be iletu/ ala bi icihiyara: si inu tondo*

[64] Some historians argue that the Tong lineage was Jurchen/Manchu, but it remains debatable. I regard Tong as a "Sinicized Liaodongese"——those who came from the region but with a Han cultural background.
[65] BQTZ, 4348-9.

mujilen i akūnbume sain be elbime_ ehe be bederebume/ cooha be gosi: urgen be bilu: si ere welie be utu hūsun muterei teile faššaci acambi:)[66]

On April 14, Hong Taiji inspected the "newly established Hanjun" (Ma: *nikan i ice inibuha cooha*) in a military parade, marking the genesis of the Hanjun.[67] The Hanjun had a total of 3,608 soldiers and officers, divided into field troops (Ma: *yabure cooha*) and garrison troops (Ma: *tere cooha*).[68] The field troops had 1661 soldiers and 165 officers; the garrison troops had 1620 soldiers and 162 officers. In addition, there were 24 Han gunners (Ma: *poo sindara nikan*) and two gunpowder makers (Ma: *poo okto arara nikan*).[69]

While the Hanjun were divided into field and garrison troops militarily, in terms of organization, they were divided into six regiments.[70] The Hanjun commanding officers were mostly early defectors who joined the Khanate voluntarily, which included Shi Guozhu (Ch: 石國柱; Ma: *Xi guwe ju*), Jin Yuhe (Ch: 金玉和; Ma: *Gin ioi ho*), Gao Hongzhong (Ch: 高鴻中; Ma:), Jin Li (Ch: 金礪; Ma: *Gin lii*), Li Yan'geng (Ch: 李延庚; Ma: *Lii yan geng*), Tu Zhan (Ch: 圖瞻; Ma: *Tujan*), Zhu Shichang (Ch: 祝世昌; Ma: *Ju xi cang*), and Shi Tingzhu (Ch: 石廷柱; Ma: *Xi ting ju*).[71]

The Hanjun's primary role was to serve as an artillery corps. It filled several exclusive posts relating to artillery, such as troops for the fire brigade (Ma: *tuwa baicame yabuha*), drivers of war carts (Ma: *sejen gaifi yabuha*), and of course, artillery (Ma: *poo kadalame yabuha/ poo gaifi yabuha*).[72] The Hanjun was also in charge of transporting and managing the artillery train in military campaigns.[73] In fact, a closer examination of the Hanjun

[66] QSL, 109/2; TC-5 I, 19-20.
[67] TC-5 I, 82-83.
[68] TC-5 I, 82.
[69] TC-5 I, 82-3.
[70] QSL, 154/1.
[71] QSL, 154/1, 2. MWLD, 615.
[72] MWLD, 615.
[73] TC-5 II, 168; 204.

composition suggests that most of the Han soldiers were playing a supporting role. After the siege of Dalinghe, a total of 57 Hanjun soldiers were awarded for their service. The list only records the military posts of half of the awardees. Among them, only seven served as artillerists, seven others served with war carts, and six with fire brigade.[74] Furthermore, most of the artillerists were mid-to-low-level ranking officers. Two of them were Brigade Commanders (Ch: 游擊, Ma: *iogi*), three Captains (Ch: 備禦官, Ma: *beiguwan*), and two unranked soldiers. This suggests that artillerists only made up a small portion of the Hanjun. Besides the artillery troops, the Hanjun also had cavalry and infantry that fought in pitched battles.[75]

[74] The seven were lii g'ao hi, lii cang xun, lii ming, jang cang de, dung ting yuwan.
[75] TC-7, 161.

Table 1. List of awarded Hanjun soldiers in 1632.

Rank	Manchu name (Chi. Name)
Garrison lieutenant regional vice commander	xi guwe ju (石國柱)
Regional vice commander	gin ioi ho (金玉和)
Regional vice commander	xi ting ju (石廷柱)
Regional vice commander	gin lii (金礪)
Regional vice commander	g'ao hūng jung (高鴻中)
Brigade commander	lii yan geng
Assistant regional commanders	ju xi cang (祝世昌)
Captains/ *beiguwan*	tujan (佟圖占)
Regional vice commander	lii guwe han (李國翰)
Regional vice commander	sun de gung (孫得功)
Assistant regional commanders	u hiyo jin
Assistant regional commanders	g' o yung mao
Brigade commander	yen ting lu
Brigade commander	tulai (圖賴)
Brigade commander	yang wen peng
Brigade commander	yang io xui
Brigade commander	tung jeng (佟正)
Brigade commander	hvwang ts'an boo
Brigade commander	ts'ui ing tai (崔應泰)
Brigade commander	jang tsi yan
Brigade commander	lii siyan ts'an
Brigade commander	g' ao gong gi (高拱極)
Brigade commander	ma yuwan lung (馬汝龍)
Brigade commander	lu yan su
Brigade commander	lang xi dzai
Brigade commander	lii g'ao hi
Brigade commander	dzang ting yuwan
Brigade commander	lio ting jao
Brigade commander	jang da io (張大猷)
Brigade commander	wang i bing
Brigade commander	lang sio jeng(郎紹正)
Captains/ *beiguwan*	uxan
Tung yan i jui	tung yang hoo
Fujiyang Xi guwe ju's	jui darhan (達爾漢) beiguwan i

Yan geng's g'ao jioi el	beiguwan's
Tujan's	jao tiyan ioi
Captains/ *beiguwan*	lii cang xun
Yan geng's	lii ming (李明)
Yan geng's	lii guwe jeng
Captains/ *beiguwan*	xin ming xi
Captains/ *beiguwan*	jeo dai mo
Tujan's	cen ki sin
G'ao fujiyang's	ni hiong xin
Xi guwe ju i	ioi deng jeo
Captains/ *beiguwan*	yang hing guwe
Captains/ *beiguwan*	fung jing yvn
Captains/ *beiguwan*	gin io lai
Captains/ *beiguwan*	jang cang de (張成德)
Captains/ *beiguwan*	dung ting yuwan (董廷元)
Captains/ *beiguwan*	jao meng ts'ai
Captains/ *beiguwan*	ju xi yen
Captains/ *beiguwan*	g'o xao gi
Captains/ *beiguwan*	ma xu lung
Captains/ *beiguwan*	dzeng guwe dzo
Captains/ *beiguwan*	jang wen hvwan
Captains/ *beiguwan*	bejise
Captains/ *beiguwan*	i xang

The Siege of Dalinghe (1631)

The newly established corps did not have much time for training as the Ming continued extending its defense line northward. In early September of 1631, the Hanjun commanders and their forces found themselves outside the new walled city of Dalinghe. As part of the Ming Jinzhou defense complex, Dalinghe lay at the frontier between the Ming and the Later Jin. Originally built in the early 15th century, the city had been abandoned by the Ming in 1626. [76] However, as the Ming regained their foothold with European cannons, they began rebuilding this strategic bridgehead. Dalinghe's city wall measured 1.76 km in length. While the condition of the newly reconstructed wall is unknown, the previous one was an earth wall reinforced with bricks, standing 8 meters high and 32 meters wide.[77] By the time the Later Jin forces surrounded the city, it was defended by a garrison of 13,802 troops.

[76] QSL: TZ., 134/1.
[77] Liu Yuanpu and Sun Cheng, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, in *Liaohai congshu*, vol. 18, ed. Jin Yufu (Shenyang: Liaohai shushe, 1931), vol. 3, 1; Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*, in *Liaohai congshu*, vol. 10, ed. Jin Yufu (Shenyang: Liaohai shushe, 1934), vol 1, 13.

Figure 7. Map of Liaodong in the 1630s.

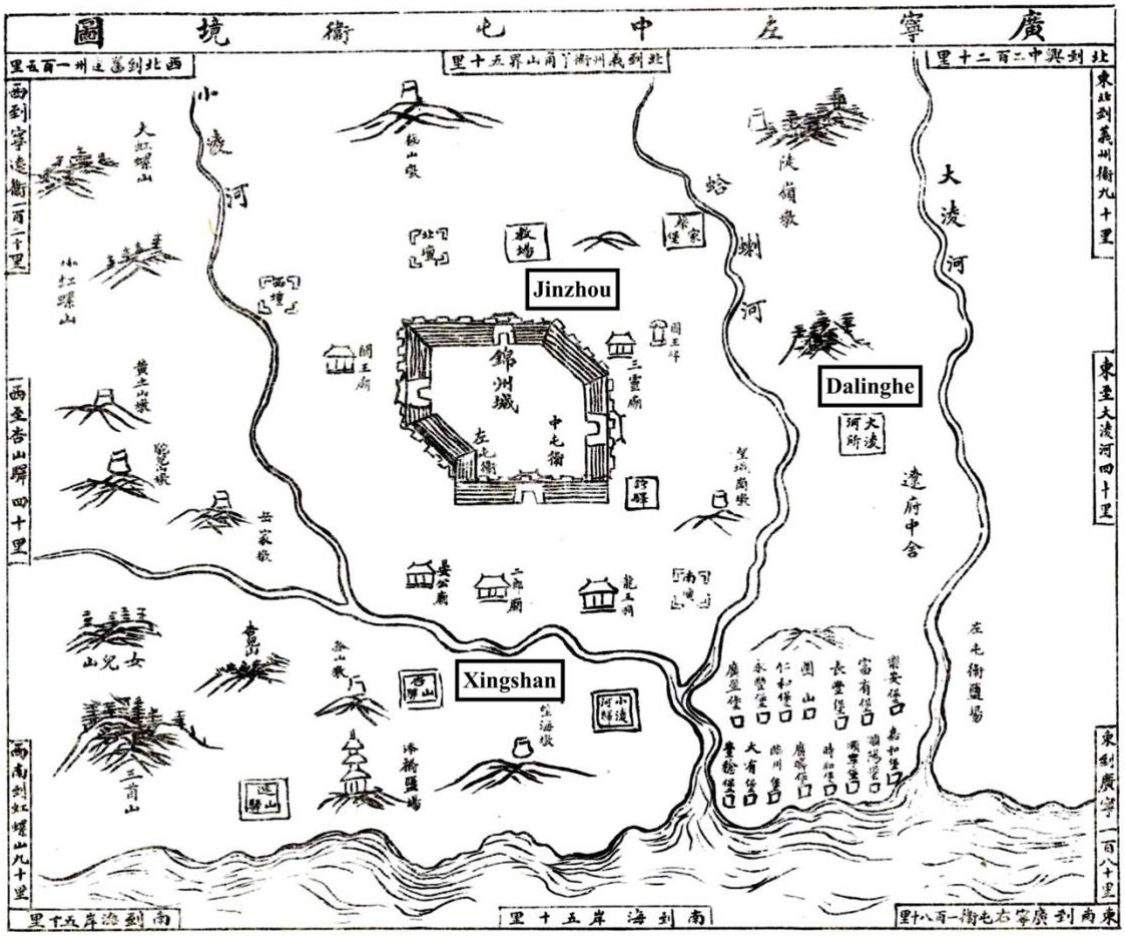

Figure 8. Illustration of the Ming Jinzhou defense complex.[78]

Facing Dalinghe's formidable defenses, Hong Taiji ordered his army to dig a ditch and construct a surrounding wall in preparation for a prolonged siege. However, before they could begin fortifying their position, the Manchus first had to clear the detached forts outside the city—an operation that provided the Hanjun artillery corps with its first opportunity to prove itself.[79] On September 7, the artillery corps bombarded a detached fort to the southwest of Dalinghe. The cannonballs destroyed the battlements and killed a defender. The rest of the Ming soldiers, terrified, capitulated right away. The next day, the corps bombarded another fort to the east of the city, killing six defenders. The rest abandoned the fort and fled that

[78] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*, 12-13.
[79] Fang Yujin, "Ming yu Houjin Dalinghe cheng zhizhan shiliao pianduan," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 1 (1981): 29.

night, but they were intercepted and killed.[80] Hong Taiji seems to have been very pleased by the corps' maiden action, as he specifically praised Tong's forces the following day. The Khan also personally managed affairs involving the artillery corps, ordering the corps to check the amount of their remaining powder and ammunition and report back to him.[81] Earlier, learning that a soldier of the corps had been shot in action, the Khan dispatched one of the best doctors to take care of the wounded man, demonstrating how the Khan valued this corps.[82]

However, as the siege went on, there were not many missions assigned to the artillery corps. The gunners only saw their next action on October 24 in a field battle against a numerically superior Ming relief force. In the battle, the artillery corps effectively barraged the Ming camp with cannons and fire arrows. To defend themselves, the Ming set fires in the grass to burn down toward the Manchu gunners. But suddenly, rain fell, and the wind blew back towards the Ming. Seeing the Ming line shattered, Hong Taiji ordered a final frontal assault. Despite heavy casualties, the assault routed the Ming relief force.[83]

More than a week later, the artillery corps was again deployed to capture Yuzizhang Tai (Ch:于子章臺; Ma: *io su jiyang tai*), a fort with almost six hundred defenders. The artillery corps deployed six red-shirt cannons, some probably captured from the Ming in the field battles, and fifty-four general cannons (Ch: *jiangjun pao* 將軍炮 Ma: *jiyangjiyūn poo*). The general cannons were most likely Ming Chinese-style cannons, whose design can be traced back to the 15th century. They were the heaviest type of cannon in the Ming army before the advent of European-style artillery. General cannons were further classified into different types based on their size and caliber. The first-class general cannon, also known as

[80] TC-5 II, 197.
[81] TC-5 II, 204.
[82] TC-5 II, 201.
[83] TC-5 II, 264-66. QSL, 134/2–135/1. Some details are different in the two accounts, but they basically concur.

the generalissimo cannon, had a length of 80–100 cm and a caliber of 15–22 cm.[84] According to records, the Later Jin deployed at least two classes of general cannons at Dalinghe.[85] After three days of bombardment, which smashed the battlements and killed fifty-seven defenders, the survivors surrendered. All the supplies in the fort, allegedly enough to supply the besieging army for one month, were confiscated.[86]

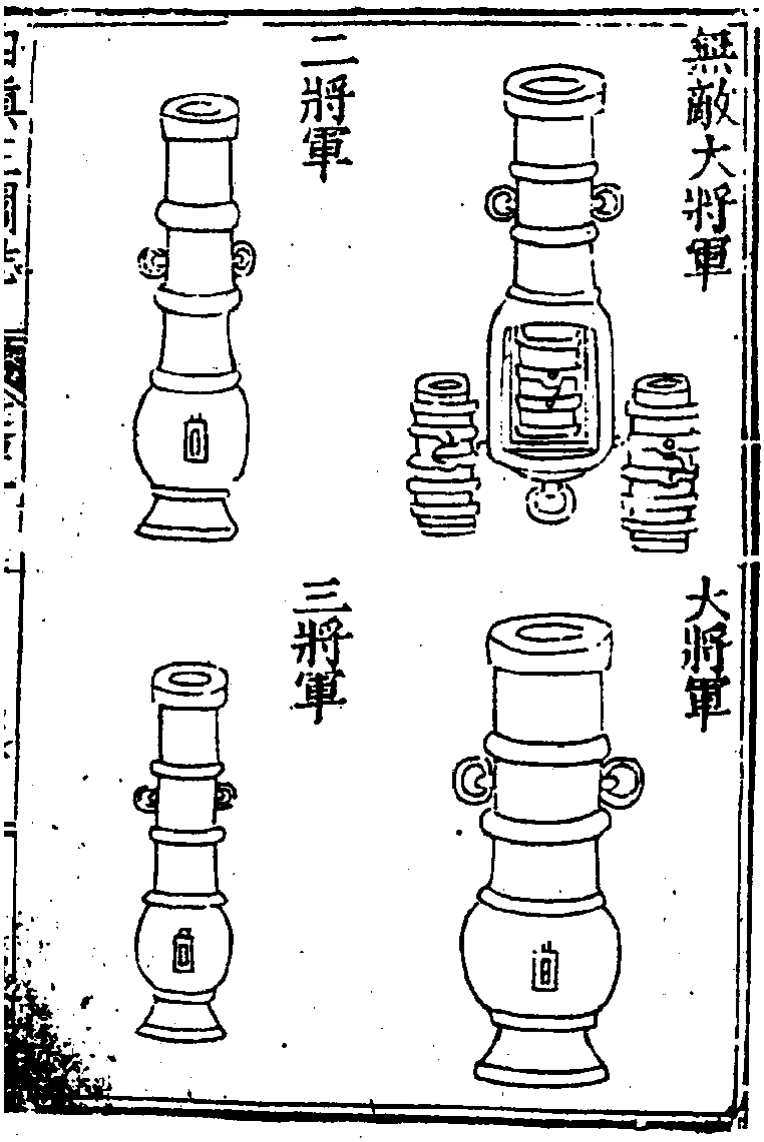

Figure 9. Illustration of general cannons of different types.[87]

[84] Zheng, *Ming-Qing huoqi shi congkao*, 113-119.
[85] TC-5 II, 207.
[86] QSL, 138/1, 2; TC-5 II, 272-73.
[87] Liu Xiaozu, *Sizhen sanguan zhi* (1576), vol1, 41a. The cannon at the upper right is not general cannon, but the breech loading Frankish cannon.

The capture of Yuzizhang Tai notwithstanding, the Manchus could not capture Dalinghe. The defenders, who by now had resorted to cannibalism, still refused to come out. Only on November 21 did the commander, knowing that no relief force would be coming, open the gate and surrender. The siege of Dalinghe, which had lasted for eighty-two days, finally ended.[88]

The use of the European-style cannon was regarded, both by contemporaries and today's historians, as the key to the Manchus' success at Dalinghe.[89] As the *Qing Shilu* commented, "The main reason for our success in the siege of Dalinghe is the Khan's artillery program."[90] Hong Taiji also seems to have been very impressed by the performance of the artillery corps. On March 15, 1632, after a laudable demonstration of artillery shooting in a military parade, Hong Taiji generously rewarded Tong, his deputies, and all the troops in the artillery corps for their service in the siege of Dalinghe.[91]

Di Cosmo argues that the success at Dalinghe was not only because of the cannons but also because of the whole new strategy devised by Hong Taiji. The Manchus, for the first time, did not assault a heavily armed walled city immediately; instead, they put on a prolonged siege. As he points out, "The genius of Hong Taiji had been to avoid any frontal attack on a city well defended by resolute troops heavily armed with artillery, to instead engage the enemy in the open field."[92] This allowed Hong Taiji to regain the advantage of the Manchu heavy cavalry against the Ming.

The artillery corps played a significant role in this new strategy. By quickly subduing several detached forts, it helped to clear the outer defense line of Dalinghe, enabling the Manchus to seal off the city with a ditch and wall within a short period of time. In addition,

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[88] TC-5 II, 294-95.
[89] Chen and Fu, "Baqi Hanjun kaolüe," 19–20.
[90] QSL, 138/1, 2.
[91] MWLD, 615-16.
[92] Di Cosmo, "Did Guns Matter?" 147.

the capture of *Yuzizhang Tai* gave the Manchus a huge amount of supplies to sustain the prolonged blockade. That said, the corps' contribution was at best assistive. It only participated in three major military actions during the siege. Tactically speaking, the artillery did not directly challenge the fortifications of the city. The bombardments of the detached forts did not break down the walls for the infantry assault but only eradicated the battlements. All forts were taken only because the terrified defenders capitulated. The psychological effect of the artillery may have been much stronger than the physical damage it inflicted. All in all, it was Hong Taiji's new tactic of prolonged blockade that brought the Manchu its ultimate victory.

Institutional Limitations of the Hanjun

Apart from its tactical shortcomings, the Hanjun also faced severe institutional limitations. It was, at best, a temporary task force specializing in artillery and dominated by Han troops, wielding limited political and military authority. This is best reflected by its organizational structure. In the pre-conquest period, the Eight Banners were made up of three layers: the basic unit was the company (Ch: *niulu* 牛彔 Ma: *niru*), five companies formed a regiment (Ch: *jia la* 甲喇 Ma: *jalan*), and five regiments made up one banner (Ch: *gu shan* 固山 Ma: *gūsa*). All Manchus were enrolled in a company, which served as the basic social unit of Manchu society.[93] The company captain (Ch: *niulu ezhen* 牛彔額真; Ma: *niru i ejen*) decided on all the affairs within a company, military and civilian alike.

[93] Liu Xiaomeng, *Manzu cong buluo dao guojia de fazhan* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2001), 185-6; Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 30.

The early Hanjun, however, did not have many companies and was not a banner.[94] It was only organized into six regiments.[95] In the pre-conquest period, the regiment had a limited administrative role. It was mainly a military unit, facilitating the distribution of weapons, horses, supplies, and booty and maintaining the discipline of the troops. In fact, the regiment was formed in the first place because Nurhaci needed a larger military unit comprised of five companies.[96] As Hanjun had no company, this means that it had limited jurisdiction over the civilian life of its troops. Its Han soldiers were still enrolled in the Eight Banners as bannermen or bondservants under the jurisdiction of their Manchu lords.[97]

Moreover, in the early 1630s, most Hanjun officers only had military ranks but no banner office titles. This indicates that the Hanjun did not have a banner structure. For instance, Tong Yangxing was a regional commander but not the leader (Ch: *ezhen* 額真 Ma: *ejen*) of the Hanjun.[98] The other officers also held military ranks such as regional vice commander (Ch: *fujiang* 副將; Ma: *fujiyang*), assistant regional commanders (Ch: *canjiang* 參將 Ma: *ts'anjiyang*;), brigade commander (Ch: *youji* 遊擊 Ma: *iogi*) etc.; only one was addressed as "regiment colonel" (Ch: *jala ezhen* 甲喇額真 Ma: *jalan i ejen*;) and none was designated as company captain.[99]

Regional vice commander and other such military ranks were also common in the Later Jin army. Indeed, during the pre-conquest period, especially before the mid-1630s, Eight Banners office titles and military ranks often shared the same name, creating confusion.

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[94] On some occasions Hanjun was called the Tong Yangxing banner (Ma: *si uli efu i gūsa*). However, as several scholars point out, the *gūsa* here only refers to the military division commanded by Tong Yangxing. It was not the same as the Eight Banners, which was comprised of regiments and companies. MWLD, 586, 615; TC-5 II, 266; Yoshio Hosoya, "Qingchao baqi zhidu de 'gūsa' he 'qi,'" *Manxue yanjiu* 2 (2010): 52; Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi* 310; Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 229-32.
[95] MWLD, 620.
[96] Liu, *Manzu cong buluo dao guojia de fazhan*,185-86; Tanii Toko, *Hakki seido no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2015), 269.
[97] Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 33-42. See also Du, "Qingdai baqi lingshu wenti kaocha, 83-92; Kusunoki, "Tensou 5 nen dairyouga koujousen," 406.
[98] Anami, *Shinsho gunjishi ronkō*, 363.
[99] MWLD, 615.

Take *beiyuguan* for example, which could denote a military rank, the banner office position of company captain, or both. But the MWLD Hanjun rewarding record of March 15, 1632, differentiates between office title and military rank. Shi Guozhu, for example, was the "regiment colonel regional vice commander," which means that his military rank was regional vice commander, but his banner position was regiment colonel. Shi was the only Hanjun officer who held both office title and a military rank. All other officers only had military rank; for example, his brother Shi Tingzhu was only addressed as regional vice commander (Ma: *fujiyang xi ting ju*), meaning that he was not a banner officer.[100] This nomenclature suggests that the Hanjun was a military unit with limited banner features. Its setting was similar to the other temporary military units, such as the Guard Corps (Ch: *hujun* 護軍 Ma: *bayara*) — all formed in wartime by conscripting troops from the banners and disbanded once the campaign ended.[101]

Apart from its temporary nature, the Hanjun faced several institutional limitations that constrained the authority of Han officials and the artillery force's effectiveness. Most important was the Hanjun's lack of troops. When it was founded in 1631, it had a total of 3,608 soldiers and officers, 24 Han gunners, and two gunpowder makers.[102] Hong Taiji soon felt the need for more Han soldiers. Around two months after the commencement of the Dalinghe siege, the Khan ordered officials in Mukden to transfer 1,600 more Han troops to the frontline to fire the newly captured guns and firearms.[103] However, the expansion was only temporary. The new recruits were probably returned to their Manchu lords, as Tong complained that he still only had three thousand troops in 1632.[104]

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[100] MWLD, 615, For more discussion of rank and Eight Banners title, see Lei Bingyan, *Qingdai baqi shijue shizhi yanjiu* (Changsha: Zhongnan daxue chubanshe, 2006), 15-7.
[101] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi* 226.
[102] TC-5 I, 82-3.
[103] TC-5 II, 263, 286; MWLD, 589-90.
[104] TCCZ, 7.

Second, the Hanjun, despite being the artillery task force, did not have control of all the guns, not even the heavy cannons. When the Manchu expedition force set out for Dalinghe, Hong Taiji ordered all the Eight Banners commanders to transfer their red-shirt cannons and generalissimo cannon, totaling 40 heavy cannons, to the Hanjun. The Eight Banners also sent the Hanjun 140 oxen and donkeys for the artillery carts.[105] This only means that the Hanjun was responsible for transporting the cannons. After arriving at Dalinghe, at least some of the cannons were returned to the Eight Banners. For instance, on September 14, two weeks after the siege commenced, each banner provided one red-shirt cannon, ten generalissimo cannon (Ch: *dajiangjun pao*; 大將軍炮; Ma: *amba jang jiyūn*), ten vice-general cannons (Ch: 副將軍; Ma: *ilhi jang jiyūn*), and 100 muskets to form a joint strike group against a detached fort, suggesting that the Eight Banners still controlled the heavy cannons.[106]

Undoubtedly, the Hanjun frequently fought with heavy cannons; after all, it was the Han gunners who helped capture the outlying forts.[107] Yet no heavy cannons were assigned specifically to the Hanjun. A war record of October 11 indicates that Hong Taiji left three regiments of the Hanjun and one red-shirt cannon to the command of Ajige Taiji 阿濟格台吉, suggesting that the red-shirt cannon was under the direct deployment of the Khan.[108] Only after the siege did Hong Taiji assign all the captured guns and ammunition, including two red-shirt cannons, to Tong's unit.[109]

Likewise, the Hanjun did not have its own Han gunners; rather, Han soldiers were registered under the Eight Banners, meaning they were only temporarily conscripted to the Hanjun. Furthermore, even the newly captured Han gunners from Dalinghe were distributed

[105] TC-5 II, 167-8.
[106] TC-5 II, 207.
[107] TC-5 II, 204; TC-5 II, 272.
[108] TC-5 II, 241.
[109] TC-5 II, 306.

among the Eight Banners, like other captives.[110] The same situation applies to gunsmiths and gunpowder smiths, who were spread among the Eight Banners households.[111] In other words, the Hanjun did not control many, if any, gunners, gunsmiths, and gunpowder smiths.

Moreover, the Later Jin army also had Manchu gunners, who had fought alongside Han gunners since the 1620s. These Manchu units continued to exist after the siege of Dalinghe.[112] In a grand military parade held on March 12, 1632, the Manchu gunners fired muskets and cannons before the Han gunners fired their heavy cannons.[113] Despite the different caliber of guns wielded by Manchu and Han artillery units, the fact remains that there were Manchu firearms units beside Hanjun. Furthermore, according to BQTZ, the Mongolian commander Ebendui 鄂本兌 fired cannons with the Han gunners during the siege of Dalinghe, suggesting there might also be Mongolian gunners.[114]

To sum up, although the primary role of the Hanjun was firing heavy artillery, it did not have its own cannons or gunners, and it was not the only artillery unit in the Later Jin army. Even after the Dalinghe siege, in which Hanjun performed unexpectedly well and greatly facilitated the blockade, Hong Taiji still showed little intention to expand it or to give it a more permanent structure. Some guns and ammunition were given to Tong, but the captured gunners were distributed to the Eight Banners. Gunsmiths and gunpowder makers were likewise spread among different Manchu households. The Han officials had very limited authority over the Han soldiers or the cannons. Thus, the linkage between the *Nikan* and artillery technology remained weak and non-exclusive after the creation of Hanjun. In their study of the Eight Banners gunners in 1629, Zhang Jian and Liu Xiaomeng argue that

[110] The captives were not given the status of bannermen but were only attached to the banners. Teng, "Qingchu hanjun jiqi niulu tanyuan," 67.
[111] TCCW, 47
[112] Zhang and Liu, "Qing ruguanqian 'huoqi ying' xianyi," 25.
[113] MWLD, 615.
[114] BQTZ, 4992.

"before the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners, firearms were not a marker of any ethnic group." The condition apparently did not change after the creation of the Hanjun.[115] This hindered the Han elites within the army from exploiting the political premium of the artillery technology they possessed.

Conclusion

The Manchus' strategic need for artillery technology presented the *Nikan* with an opportunity to improve their social and political status. However, even after the success of Dalinghe, the political influence of the *Nikan* remained weak. They were still in the outer zone of the Manchu's "ethnic security map," with limited strategic values and questionable loyalty. The Han elites must prove their value and loyalty in order to get closer to the state apparatus. To do so, they pushed forward a political agenda that advocated for institutional reform of the military. This reform would create a more independent Hanjun and enhance its artillery capabilities. In return, the Han elites secured their control of the Hanjun and monopolized the artillery-related resources, gathering political momentum to negotiate with the Manchu state elites.

[115] Zhang and Liu, "Qing ruguanqian 'huoqi ying' xianyi," 26.

2. Ethnicizing Artillery Technology and the Hanjun Reform

Despite the institutional and military limitations of the Hanjun, some Han military personnel astutely recognized the strategic value of the artillery technology they controlled. Beginning in 1632, the Han court officials started sending memorials to Hong Taiji, proposing a series of reforms aimed at transforming the Hanjun into a formidable artillery corps. They argued that these reforms would enable the Hanjun to conquer the Ming walled cities in the Liaoxi corridor.

Behind the Hanjun institutional reform proposals, the Han elites endeavored to advance their political interests by "ethnicizing" the artillery technology. This "artillery ethnicization" project was a twofold process. On the one hand, the Han military elites, by highlighting their shared Han ethnic background with the Han subjects in the Khanate, claimed the legitimacy to mobilize and extract the *Nikan* from the Eight Banners to the Hanjun – an institution headed by themselves. On the other hand, by extracting the Han troops, including the Han artillery specialists like the gunners and gunsmiths, from the Eight Banners to the Hanjun, the Han military elites buttressed the *Nikan*'s monopoly on the artillery technology. By 1635, the Hanjun became the one and only artillery corps of the Later Jin military and the Han-representing institution in the Manchu court. This strengthened the military value of the *Nikan*, bolstered the Han elites' political momentum, and buttressed the Hanjun's role as "ethnic soldiers."

By emphasizing the *Nikan*'s proficiency in artillery, the Han elites advocated for greater inclusion of Han soldiers within the Manchu-dominated power structure. Their proposals addressed the Khanate's immediate military needs while advancing the socio-political standing of the Han. In essence, they leveraged their exclusive knowledge of artillery technology to negotiate greater influence within the Manchu state. This set the stage

for the Hanjun's future development as a crucial entity within the Qing militaries, reshaping ethnic and power dynamics within the emerging multi-ethnic empire.

Artillery Knowledge and the Empowerment of Han Artillery Specialists

Despite the early Hanjun's institutional limitations, some individual Han artillery specialists already enjoyed benefits brought by their exclusive gunnery knowledge. The most obvious benefits were valuables granted by the Khan. When the Hanjun was first established in early 1631, every Han soldier and gunner was granted two pieces of smooth cotton fabric, while every officer was given three pieces.[116] After the siege of Dalinghe, Han soldiers and officers who fought well were rewarded silver and other valuables.[117]

More importantly, some Han artillery specialists were emancipated from their servitude. On April 16, 1631, two days after Hong Taiji inspected the newly established Hanjun, the Han gunsmith Wang Tianxiang 王天相 , his two assistants, and a gunner were rewarded for their service.[118] All four were originally captured bondservants serving in Manchu households. After forging the cannon, Wang, who had been captured from Yongping in 1629, was emancipated and promoted to company commander (Ch: *qianzong* 千總 Ma: *Censun*), a minor official position.[119] For the two assistants and the gunner, it is unclear whether they were emancipated, but each was granted ten green garments.[120]

Other Han artillery specialists were conscripted from their Manchu households. On February 25, four days after the appointment of Tong as regional commander of the *Nikan*, seven gunsmiths, mostly bondservants in Manchu households, were conscripted. Among the

[116] TC-5 I, 83.
[117] MWLD, 615-16.
[118] TC-5 I, 83. For information about the gunsmiths, see Huang, *Hongyi dapao yu Ming-Qing zhanzheng*, 342-9.
[119] Chen and Fu, "Baqi Hanjun kaolüe," 19.
[120] TC-5 I, 83-84.

seven gunsmiths, two helped cast the Khanate's first cannon. It is, however, not known whether these craftsmen were emancipated or remained as bondservants and which unit they were transferred to.[121]

Several Han gunnery specialists received a promotion in military rank. Ding Qiming 丁啟明, also a captive of the 1629 raid of Northern China who supervised the production of the first heavy cannon, was promoted from brigade commander to regional vice commander.[122] This promotion was substantial and extraordinary since the next rank after the brigade commander was assistant regional commander, meaning that Ding received a two-level promotion. He also received sizeable material rewards. Ding was awarded specifically because he was able to find a crew of gunsmiths who knew how to forge red-shirt cannons.[123] This shows that Hong Taiji was fervently in search of artillery specialists. Zhu Shiyin 祝世廕, the craftsman who forged three red-shirt cannons and manufactured cannonballs for Dalinghe, was also promoted to brigade commander.[124]

Witnessing Hong Taiji's generosity toward Han artillery specialists, Han officials must have realized how artillery technology could empower them politically and economically. In the 1632 New Year's Day court greeting, Tong Yangxing and the Han officials were, for the first time, placed in front of the Eight Banners leaders, further reflecting how much Hong Taiji valued Hanjun.[125] All these signs encouraged the Han officials to use the militaries as a platform to secure political privileges.

[121] TC-5 I, 26.
[122] QSL, 89/2.
[123] TC-5 I, 83
[124] MWLD, 620; BQTZ, 4324.
[125] QSL, 150/2.

Han Elites' Hanjun Reform Proposals (1632–1633)

In the two years following the Dalinghe siege, multiple Han officials memorialized to the Khan, encouraging him to reform and expand the Hanjun and its artillery corps. The first memorial was submitted by Tong Yangxing on March 12, 1632, three days before a grand Hanjun award ceremony for the siege of Dalinghe.[126] The second was submitted by two mid-level Han advisors (Ch: *qixinlang* 啟心郎) of the Ministry of War, Ding Wensheng 丁文盛, and Zhao Fuxing 趙福星, on February 27, 1633.[127] Ding was an early turncoat from Liaodong, defecting to the Later Jin in 1622 when Nurhaci captured Guangning.[128] As a literatus rather than a military officer, he was appointed as an advisor in the Manchu court.[129] The third memorial was submitted by Ma Guangyuan (Ch: 馬光遠; Ma: *ma guwang yuwan*) on April 29. 1633.[130] Ma Guangyuan defected to the Later Jin in 1630 when the Manchus raided northern China and captured Yongping.[131] Originally only a Ming assistant regional commander, Ma was promoted to the rank of regional commander, probably because he switched camps voluntarily.[132] Ma quickly gained political prominence. In 1632, he co-submitted a memorial with Tong to the throne, claiming the responsibility to punish any misbehaving Han officials.[133] In the 1633 New Year court greeting, he led the "new Han officials" who defected after the siege of Dalinghe to greet the Khan, while Tong led the "old Han officials."[134]

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[126] TCCZ, 7-8.
[127] TCCZ, 44.
[128] TCCZ recorded that it was Liu Fuxing who submitted the memorial, but multiple entries in QSL confirm that it should be Zhao Fuxing. TCCZ, 44; QSL, 384/1.
[129] For more about Qixinliang, see Shen Yimin, "Qixinlang yu qingchu zhengzhi," *Shixue yuekan* 2006, no. 6 (2006): 31–36.
[130] Chen Zhanqi, ed., *Houjin hanguo (Huang Taiji) Tiancong chao gaobu zoushu* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2010), 251.
[131] QSL, 92/2.
[132] QSL, 128/2.
[133] TCCZ, 42.
[134] TC-7, 2

Although the authors of these three memorials came from different backgrounds and received different treatment from the Later Jin state, they shared similar views and may be characterized as forming Han elites within the nascent regime.[135] Through their reform proposals in 1632-1633, these Han elites endeavored to advance their socio-political interests. As many historians have pointed out, *Nikan* were in a precarious position in the pre-conquest Manchu Khanate. Pamela Crossley describes them as "economically insecure, vulnerable to arbitrary punishment or abuse by powerful Jurchens, and perpetually distrusted by those who controlled the state after 1616."[136]

The situation was particularly severe for *Nikan* after the major Han revolt in the mid-1620s. Many were massacred during the suppression, and the rest were distributed to Manchu households as bondservants. Only a small portion of the Han population remained as freed households but were assigned under the Eight Banners. After Hong Taiji succeeded the throne in 1627, he adopted a more conciliatory policy toward the *Nikan*, reinstating some of the *Nikan*'s civilian (Ch: *min* 民; Ma: *irgen*) status and putting them into Han agricultural settlements.[137] Nonetheless, there was no institution that represented *Nikan* in the Manchu court until the Hanjun's creation in 1631.[138] After success in the Dalinghe siege, it was quite clear that the army could bring Han elites political and social benefits and ameliorate their precarious circumstances. Yet, the distrust of *Nikan* was still strong in the Manchu court. The Han elites needed to negotiate with the Khan carefully. Hence, the reform policies were proposed in the name of enhancing the Hanjun's artillery capabilities.

[135] The memorialists may be separately categorized as "transfrontiersmen" (Tong), "old Han officials" (Ding and Zhao), and "new Han officials" (Ma). Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 75. Ma's timing of joining the Later Jin made him a late "old Han officials." However, he was made the representative of the "new Han officials" after 1632.
[136] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 93.
[137] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 301-2.
[138] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 302-6.

One of the most pressing problems of Hanjun was its lack of troops, which was already felt in the siege of Dalinghe. This forced Hong Taiji to transfer 1,600 more Han troops to Dalinghe in order to fire all the newly captured guns and firearms. However, the new recruits were disbanded after the siege. According to Tong's memorial, Hanjun still numbered around 3,000 in early 1632. Tong thus tried to request more Han troops in his memorial to the throne, carefully.

The proposal to widen Han soldier conscription was a sensitive ethnic-political issue. At the time, most *Nikan* were bondservants, and conscription might violate the rights of their Manchu owners. The Khan conceivably would have been expected to give the owner a replacement for conscripted bondservant, which would make the cost of conscription prohibitive. Forced conscription required strong justification. In making such an audacious proposition, Tong tactfully "ethnicized" the artillery technology, fusing together Han ethnicity and artillery technology. Tong's political rhetoric followed three stages of reasoning. First, he equated Han soldiers and artillerists. Tong asserted that "in the past, we did not use Han soldiers because we did not use gunpowder weapons," intimating that soldiers in the Hanjun were supposed to be artillerists, and now was the time to use them.[139] He then claimed that the Later Jin was capable of breaching the Ming's chain of fortifications as long as more troops were trained in gunpowder weapons and more heavy cannons were acquired. Finally, he proposed conscripting more *Nikan* into Hanjun. He assured the Khan that his various Han subjects "all are Your Highness's loyal and sincere servants; all should serve you for Your Highness's benevolence."[140] With proper training, Tong claimed, the *Nikan* could be a formidable force. By equating *Nikan* and artillerists and stressing the strategic importance of artillery technology in the war against Ming China, Tong created the

[139] TCCZ, 7.
[140] TCCZ, 7.

legitimacy to enlist ordinary *Nikan* bondservants who were not trained in artillery into the Hanjun under his command.

Tong's proposal tactfully transformed Han ethnicity into the criterion for joining the Hanjun, opening the opportunity for all *Nikan* to acquire soldier status. This bridged the Hanjun and the general *Nikan* population in the Khanate. The rhetoric of "artillery ethnicization" foregrounded the ethnic feature of the Hanjun, paving the way for it to become one of the three ethnic branches of the Eight Banners.

In their memorial, Ding and Zhao reiterated the idea of further conscription of Han soldiers. Their memorial reveals that there had already been a *Nikan* conscription system — conscripting one soldier from every ten Han adult men. However, many Han subjects, healthy, wealthy, and strong, evaded conscription by hiding from officials or paying others to perform their military service. Ding and Zhao requested the Hanjun regiments to implement the conscription policy strictly among the Han settlements and enlist those who were young, strong, and well-fed. Given that the size of the Hanjun remained unchanged from 1631 to 1632, Ding and Zhao might be referring to the initial conscription, and what they proposed might have been a re-conscription of the Hanjun.

Besides conscription, another major reform policy proposed by Han officials was the centralization of the Han artillery corps, effectively making the Hanjun the only specialized artillery force of the Later Jin. This was achieved by transferring all the artillery-related resources—in particular, heavy cannons and gunnery specialists—to the Hanjun. Also, some Han elites proposed establishing more permanent structures to supervise the maintenance and production of artillery and ammunition and to systematically train more Han gunners by utilizing captured and defected Han artillery specialists.

After proposing the conscription of *Nikan*, Tong suggested transferring all heavy cannons in the realm of the Manchu state to Hanjun. At the time, Tong had already gained

control of cannons and ammunitions captured from Dalinghe, but the size of his artillery train was still too small.[141] Tong urged the Khan to issue an edict ordering Manchu and Han local officials to check if any generalissimo cannon was left in their jurisdiction and send them to the Hanjun. Tong also asked the Khan to cast more cannons, noting, "A hundred heavy cannons are not too many, and ten thousand catties of gunpowder are not enough."[142]

While Tong focused on the cannons, Ding and Zhao were aware of the Han gunners. In their memorial to the throne, they suggested the Khan create a professional position for Han gunners:

> In the siege of Dalinghe, we could capture the detached forts thanks mainly to the artillerists. Recently, we observed that the artillerists from Yongping [many Han artillerists were captured or defected to the Later Jin during the 1629 raid] were lacking clothes and food; they were also mistreated by their senior officers. How would they serve in the next war? We should select those who are skilled in using cannons and firearms and promote them to company commanders. These artillerists will act as military trainers for other gunners and shall be rewarded the same as the cannon crafters. Treated well, the artillerists shall fight fearlessly on the battlefield.[143]

What Ding and Zhao were proposing was actually a Han gunnery training program. By turning the Han gunners into gunnery trainers, this policy not only secured the economic support for these impoverished gunners but helped train more Han gunners, thus buttressing the Hanjun's monopoly of the technology.

Two months later, in a more extensive proposal, Ma Guangyuan drove home this idea of supporting the professional Han gunners. He proposed assigning the 200 gunners, who had

[141] TC-5 II, 306.
[142] TCCZ, 7-8.
[143] TCCZ, 45.

defected or been captured at Yongping and Dalinghe, to six Hanjun regiments. According to Ma's plan, these gunners would be led by Han officers who understood gunnery, forming artillery units in which they would train together in peacetime and fight together in wartime.[144] The transfer of Han gunners would further "ethnicize" artillery technology, as it weakened the Eight Banners' control of these gunners while strengthening the Hanjun's control over them.

Furthermore, Ma proposed regular inspections of Hanjun soldiers and weapons. According to his plan, the weapons should be inspected biweekly by their respective regiment colonels and monthly by the regional commander. On the lower level, the Han settlement captains should check on their Han soldiers every month to see if they are healthy, if their horses and weapons are well maintained, and if their farmlands are well taken care of. For artillery and ammunition, the Hanjun garrison and field commanders should be responsible for managing their cannons; the artillery carts should also be manufactured and maintained by the designated supervisors. A documentation system was needed to record the production, transfer, and storage of gunpowder. The city-based garrison troops should be gathered at the city after autumn harvests for training; everyone would be given a firearm and a fixed defense position.[145] All these maintenance and management policies would strengthen the Hanjun's control of its troops and weapons in peacetime, making it a more permanent and independent military institution.

These Han officials were not only focusing on strengthening the artillery corps. They were also concerned about the livelihood of the Han gunners and gunsmiths. Ma concisely pointed out that, being full-time professional gunnery trainers, these people they did not have time to cultivate their own land and sustain themselves. In the early 1630s, the Manchu state

[144] TCCZ, 47-8.
[145] TCCZ, 46-8. The city-based garrison troops were another Han firearms unit different from Hanjun.

sustained its army by giving the soldiers farmland, but this model was not applicable to gunnery trainers. The same problem was also faced by other artillery specialists, such as the gunsmiths and the gunpowder makers, since they were working at the foundry throughout the year. Ma urged the Khan to grant the gunners some estate laborers so that they could make a living while serving as gunnery trainers. For the gunsmiths and gunpowder makers, Ma suggested providing them with ample clothing and food so that they could concentrate on their specialties. In addition, Ma also fought for a better working environment for the gunsmiths and powder makers.[146] All these welfare proposals reveal a less political dimension of the reform. We can only speculate about the Han official's true intention. Maybe Ma was motivated by practical concerns, such as keeping the artillery specialists working effectively, or maybe he was genuinely looking after their Han counterparts.

In sum, Han elites exploited artillery technology to expand their political and social privileges in the name of enhancing the Khanate's artillery capabilities. Gunners were recruited from the Eight Banners for gunnery training programs; Han bondservants were conscripted from Manchu households to provide enough hands to fire all the guns; heavy artilleries were transferred from other forces to Hanjun for better maintenance; special economic support was offered to gunners and gunsmiths to support their full-time professions. It was through these piecemeal policies that the Hanjun built institutional structures and gained more autonomy. In turn, Hanjun officials were given a constant presence in the Manchu court, and more official positions were created exclusively for *Nikan* within the Hanjun. An expanding and institutionalized Hanjun thus facilitated the Han military elites' advancement of their political interests.

Tong's memorial inaugurated the decade-long Hanjun negotiation between the Manchu ruling elites and the Han military elites. Astutely noticing Hong Taiji's strategic

[146] TCCZ, 48-9.

need for artillery technology, the Han military elites tactfully "ethnicized" the technology by conflating the *Nikan* ethnic identity with artillery expertise, laying the groundwork for the future conscription of the *Nikan*. More importantly, this maneuver inadvertently created a distinct Hanjun ethnic soldier identity. By distinguishing Han gunners from the general *Nikan* population, the Han military elites established a new social and military category within the Manchu state. This served as the prototype of the Hanjun ethnic soldier identity, which accommodated both its soldier and *Nikan* identities and would become the foundation for the future Hanjun Eight Banners.

Beyond that, the Han military elites strove to further monopolize the technology. They urged the Khan to transfer all weapons, resources, and personnel related to artillery to the Hanjun. This further "ethnicized" the artillery technology and solidified the Hanjun's role as the artillery corps. The establishment of artillery production and maintenance teams, along with gunnery training programs, provided the Hanjun with a semi-permanent institutional structure, preparing them to become an independent branch of the Eight Banners in the long run.

Throughout the artillery ethnicization project, the Han military elites demonstrated a strong political acumen. Anticipating that mass conscription of the *Nikan* would meet with staunch opposition from the Manchu aristocracy—who owned many Han bondservants—the Han elites tapped into Hong Taiji's centralization agenda. In his memorial, Tong emphasized that all *Nikan* were subjects of the Khan and ready to serve, constructing legitimacy for large-scale conscription. Viewed in this light, it was the Han elites who proactively reached out to Hong Taiji to form a political alliance against the Manchu aristocracy. The conscription would curtail the authority of the Manchu Banner lords while strengthening the power of the throne.

This perspective challenges the conventional argument that Hong Taiji solely used the Hanjun to centralize his political power within the formative Manchu state.[147] Instead, it may be more accurate to assert that Hong Taiji and the Han elites formed a mutual political alliance against the entrenched Manchu aristocracy, leveraging the Hanjun to reshape the state's power dynamics. By orchestrating this alliance, both parties advanced their interests: the Han elites secured significant roles within the military hierarchy, and Hong Taiji moved closer to his goal of centralized authority. The creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners not only redefined ethnic and military identities but also had lasting implications for the Qing dynasty's military structure and governance. The strategic actions of the Han military elites exemplify how subordinate groups could navigate and influence the political landscape of their time.

The Hanjun Reform

While all the reform proposals sound persuasive, it is hard to evaluate their impact as the sources do not tell Hong Taiji's response to the memorials. Nevertheless, the development of the Hanjun in 1633 and 1634 suggests that Hong Taiji was very receptive to the Han military elites' proposals—particularly regarding conscription and the transformation of the Hanjun into the designated artillery corps of the Later Jin army. In 1633, he ordered the conscription of 1,580 Han bondservants from Manchu households into the Hanjun. This not only expanded the Hanjun's manpower but also began altering the social dynamics within the Khanate by transforming Han bondservants into military personnel. More importantly, after the conscription, the Hanjun started to have its own companies. These companies were commanded by Hanjun officers and made up of Han subjects. Simultaneously, the Hanjun started to be addressed as a banner, commensurate with the Manchu Banners. This signifies

[147] Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 200-201. See also Chen and Fu, "Baqi Hanjun kaolüe," 21-22; Watanuki, "Zailun Zu Dashou yu 'Zujiajiang,'" 39.

that the Hanjun was attaining banner structure following the Manchu Eight Banners model—a pivotal step of bannerization.

In the following year, 1634, Hong Taiji solidified the Hanjun's role by officially renaming it the "Heavy Army" (Ch: *Wuzhen chaoha* 烏真超哈 Ma: *ujen cooha*). This renaming was a formal declaration of the Hanjun's specific function as the artillery corps of the Later Jin. By assigning this new title, Hong Taiji acknowledged the unique military role and expertise of the Han soldiers in artillery technology, bolstering their status within the military hierarchy.

As the Hanjun's political and military influence grew, the Han military elites who commanded it advanced their social and political standing. Hanjun commanders like Ma Guangyuan and Shi Tingzhu gained greater visibility at court, and they were in a better position to negotiate with Hong Taiji and the Manchu elites. The conscripted Han soldiers, freed from servitude, also enjoyed a better life. More importantly, the Hanjun assumed the role of the *Nikan*-representing institution in the Manchu court, signifying a significant enhancement of the *Nikan*'s ethnic-political influence.

The Defection of Kong Youde and the Artillery Fervor

On May 2, 1633, a few days after Ma submitted his memorial to the throne, a piece of terrific news reached Hong Taiji's court. The mutinied Ming commanders Kong Youde 孔有德 and Geng Zhongming 耿仲明, former commanders of the Ming Dengzhou artillery corps, sent forth messengers to express their wish to defect to the Later Jin.[148] The commanders had ravaged Shandong province since their mutiny in early 1632. They sacked Dengzhou 登州, the headquarters of the Ming's cutting-edge artillery corps, and captured more than twenty

[148] QNMDY, 9

red-barbarian cannons.[149] The Ming forces only managed to drive away the rebels from the city in April 1633, but Kong and Geng successfully escaped through the sea.[150] On the run, Kong and Geng decided to take refuge with the Later Jin. In his letter to the throne sent on May 18, Kong claimed that he had tens of thousands of armored troops, more than a hundred light vessels, and numerous cannons and firearms. With such armaments, Kong boldly suggested he could ally with Hong Taiji and, together, they would defeat the Ming through an amphibious attack.[151]

On 24 June, Kong sent the court two lists of his forces and family, which reveal that he had greatly exaggerated the strength of his forces in his previous letter. He only had a total of 3643 troops and 448 sailors; together with their families, Kong and Geng's group numbered 12151.[152] The size of the forces was nonetheless impressive, as it was equivalent to the entire Hanjun. Moreover, Kong and Geng's troops appear to have specialized in the use of European-style heavy artillery. According to the list, among the lieutenants were regional vice commander of firearms (Ch: *huoqi fujiang* 火器副將), one assistant regional commander of the firearms unit (Ch: *huoqiying canjiang* 火器營參將), two assistant regional commanders in charge of red-barbarian cannon (Ch: *guan hongyidapao canjiang* 管紅夷大炮參將), and an assistant regional commander of gunpowder bureau (Ch: *huoyaoju canjiang* 火藥局參將).[153]

Back in Hong Taiji's court, the news of Kong and Geng's defection exploded an artillery fervor among the Han officials. In May and June 1633, at least six memorials were

[149] Mao Bin, *Pingpan ji* (Tainan: Zhuangyan wenhua, 1996), 678.
[150] Mao, *Pingpan ji*, 743-745.
[151] Zhang Cunwu and Ye Quanhong, *Qing ruguanqian yu chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian* (1619-1643) (Taipei: Academia Historia Office, 2000), 578-581.
[152] In another name list sent later by Kong, the total number augmented to 13127. *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), vol.1, 27, 29.
[153] *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian*, vol. 1, 26.

sent to the throne from various Han officials urging the Khan to make use of Kong's warships and cannons to invade the Ming. With the newly acquired flotilla, they suggested, the Khan could attack the Shanhai Pass from behind through a water route. This plan was well illustrated in the memorial submitted by Ning Wanwo 寧完我 on 9 May, which states:

> I always consider the red-barbarian cannons the perfect siege weapons, which are unfortunately difficult to transport. If Kong and Geng submit to the Later Jin, we will have more than a hundred ships and six to seven red-barbarian cannons; we can also load our own red-barbarian cannons onto their ships and put our troops onboard. If we must first attack Lushun, then we will take Lushun first and then set sail westward; if there is an alternative route, we will sail our ships directly to the Shanhai Pass while the army marches southward at the same time. By attacking from the outside and behind, we will take the Shanhai Pass.[154]

Some Manchu nobles also agreed that it was the time to invade the Ming. On July 23, after Kong and Geng had come to the Later Jin court, Hong Taiji summoned his noble advisers and asked them whether the Later Jin should launch an invasion on the Ming, the Chahars Mongols, or Joseon. Most nobles suggested invading the Ming first, either capturing the Shanhai Pass or Beijing. Of course, not every Manchu noble shared the excitement about the cannons and ships, but at least Hong Taiji's son, Hooge 豪格, had high hopes for the Hanjun, as he memorialized:

> When our horses are strong and ready, [we can] order the Hanjun to bring the heavy cannons and split into two wings—one advancing from Ningyuan and

[154] TCCZ, 49.

the other following the old route [through Mongolia]—to attack Shanhai Pass from both the front and the rear.[155]

Institutional Reform (1633–1635)

Hanjun Conscription and Creation of Hanjun Banner (1633)

It was under this artillery fervor that Hong Taiji initiated the Hanjun reform. On August 5, 1633, Hong Taiji ordered the first conscription for the Hanjun. According to his edict, for every Manchu household that had ten Han adults, one was to be conscripted. A total of 1,580 Han adults were conscripted from Manchu households, a number close to that of Han troops temporarily recruited during the 1631 Dalinghe siege. The new troops were to be organized into companies and fill the vacancies in existing Hanjun regiments, under the command of Ma Guangyuan and Shi Tingzhu.[156] The conscription pushed forward two big steps of bannerization. First, the Hanjun started to be frequently referred to as a banner. Second, in the following year, Hanjun companies were created en masse.

Before the conscription, the Hanjun had generally been referred to without the term "banner" (Ma: *gūsa)*. In fact, in the August 5 edict ordering Hanjun conscription, Shi and Ma were still referred to as the leaders of the Hanjun (Ma: *Nikan coohai ejen*).[157] This changed after the conscription. On September 30, Shi Tingzhu was promoted to the position of the

[155] QSL, 196/2.
[156] QSL, 199/2; TC-7, 96. It must be noted that only the side text of the NGSYD recorded that Hong Taiji organized Hanjun into a banner-regiment-company hierarchy. The relevant entry in QSL only states that Hong Taiji "ordered the old Hanjun ejen (Ch: *jiu hanjun ezhen*) Ma Guangyuan to command the newly conscripted Han soldiers," and that the new conscripts were to fill the vacancies of the old Hanjun regiments. Nothing is mentioned about the Hanjun banner or company. Further, some may question the credibility of the side text since it was possibly added decades after the original entry. However, the fact remains that Hanjun started to be frequently addressed as a banner, and Hanjun companies were organized en masse right after the edict. For more discussion of the Manchu text, see Zhang, *Qing ruguanqian bubing yanjiu*, 213-6; TC-7, x-xvi.
[157] The term Old Hanjun Banner (Ch: *jiu hanbing yiqi*) first appeared in a QSL entry of February 19, 1633. However, this entry does not appear in the older chronicle NGSYD, in which the Hanjun continued to be referred to as Hanjun but not Hanjun Banner until mid-1633.[157] Since QSL was compiled based on NGSYD and other primary sources, I believe that Hanjun was only referred to as a banner after the conscription. QSL, 180-81; MWLD, 582; TC-7, 88; 96.

Banner leader of Hanjun (Ma: *Nikan cooha de gūsai ejen*).[158] Henceforth, chronicles started referring to the Hanjun as a banner. In the 1634 New Year's Day Court Greetings, for example, Shi Tingzhu led "officials of the *Nikan* banner" (Ma: *Nikan i gūsai geren hafasa*) to kowtow to the Khan.[159] Likewise, in the joint-forces military exercise held on April 10, the "*Nikan* one Banner" (*Ma: Nikan i emu gūsa*), together with the Manchu Eight Banners and Mongol Two Banners, were referred to as the eleven banners.[160] Further, Hong Taiji, on February 13, 1634, explicitly claimed that he extracted the *Nikan* from the Manchu households and put them into a banner.[161] (Ma: *manju i ambasa ci/ faksalafi suwenbe enculeme gūsa araha*). These developments signal the Hanjun's transformation into a semi-autonomous military institution commanded solely by *Nikan* officers.

However, it is crucial to distinguish the Hanjun "Banner" at this stage from the Eight Banners system formally established in 1642. Before this institutionalization, the Hanjun "Banner" nominally functioned solely as a military unit and lacked the administrative structure of the Manchu Eight Banners, which were organized along a hierarchical company-regiment-banner system.[162] Indeed, as will be explained below, the formation of Hanjun companies began gradually in 1633. Yet, as Du Jiaji points out, these companies did not fall into the jurisdiction of the Hanjun, but belonged to the Manchu Eight Banner lords, and Hanjun soldiers were still registered under the Manchu Eight Banners. The Hanjun Banner in the 1630s was in no way commensurate with the Manchu Eight Banners.[163]

[158] QSL, 205/2; TC-7, 133
[159] TC-8, 3.
[160] TC-8, 95.
[161] QSL 223/1; TC-8, 24; 26.
[162] Kusunoki, "Tensou 5 nen dairyouga koujousen," 395–428. See also, Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 229-32.
[163] Du Jiaji, "Qingdai baqi lingshu wenti kaocha," 83-92.

Nonetheless, the creation of the Hanjun Banner as a military unit undoubtedly marked a milestone in the development of the Hanjun. It elevated its status from a mere task force to a branch of the military. It also provided Han military elites and conscripted *Nikan* soldiers with a semi-independent institution within the Qing court. More significantly, the conscripted Han soldiers were organized into newly established Hanjun companies, each led by Han company captains. The formation of these Hanjun companies represented an important step toward segregating the *Nikan* population from the Manchus.[164]

After Hong Taiji succeeded to the throne in 1627, part of the Han population was reinstated as freed households. These freed Han subjects were put under the rule of Han officials, but most of them were organized into agricultural settlements (Ch: *bao* 堡) instead of companies like the Manchus.[165] Only two Han companies were created before 1634.[166] From 1634 to 1636, at least thirty-one Hanjun companies were created— wenty in 1634, five in 1635, one in 1636, and at least five more were created "during the Tiancong era" (1627-1636).[167]

[164] Yao, "Luelun baqi," 27.
[165] QSL, 315/1. Liu, *Jiumanzhoudang yanjiu*, 258. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi* 350; Wang, "Zhidu yu shenfen," 34.
[166] BQTZ, 243-44.
[167] BQTZ, 233-93. According to Teng, there should be more than 32 Hanjun companies created between 1633 and 1636. However, many companies were reorganized in 1642 when the Hanjun Eight Banners was created. The records thus state that these companies were created in 1642 instead of earlier. Teng, "Qingchu hanjun jiqi niulu tanyuan," 69. See also Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 349-55.

Table 2. Hanjun companies created between 1634 and 1636.

Banner	Year of creation	Company Captain	Source	Remarks
Transformed from existing Han settlements				
Bordered Yellow Banner	1634	Zhang Dayou (張大猷)	BQTZ 233	
Bordered Yellow Banner	1634*	Cui Yingtai (崔膺泰)	BQTZ 239	Created in Taizong's reign, year not specified.
Plain Yellow Banner	1634	Lü Fengchun (呂逢春)	BQTZ 277	
Plain Red Banner	1634	Zang Guozuo (臧國祚)	BQTZ 263	
Bordered Red Banner	1634	Zhu Shiyin (祝世廕)	BQPD-AS MC02998-00357-0056-0065	
Bordered White Banner	1635	Gao Yongfu (高永福)	BQTZ 271	
Bordered Red Banner	1635	Li Maofang (李茂芳)	BQTZ 274; BQPD-AS MC 2990-00254-0272	
Plain Blue Banner	1635*	Tong Dai (佟代)	BQTZ 284;185055-015	Created in Tiancong Reign; creation year not specified.
Plain Blue Banner	1635*	Fan Su (范素)	BQTZ 284; 185055-016	Created in Tiancong Reign; creation year not specified.
Plain Blue Banner	1635*	Tong Yangliang (佟養量)	BQTZ 284; 185055-017	Created in Tiancong Reign; creation year not specified.
Plain Blue Banner	1635*	Tong San (佟三)	BQTZ 285; 185055-018	Created in Tiancong Reign; creation year not specified.
Companies awarded to decorated Han officials				
Bordered White Banner	1634	Cui Mingxin (崔明信)	BQTZ 271; BQPD-FHA B033-085	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Liu Zhongjin (劉仲錦)	BQTZ 281; NGDK 185055-001	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Li Ming (李銘)	BQTZ 281; NGDK 185055-002	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Gao Yingdi (高應第)	BQTZ 281: NGDK 185055-003	

Plain Blue Banner	1634	Bayan (巴顏)	BQTZ 282; NGDK 185055-004	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Li Ming (李名)	BQTZ 282; NGDK 185055-005	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Chen Jin (陳錦)	BQTZ 282; NGDK 185055-006	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Tong Xuewen (佟學文)	BQTZ 282; NGDK 185055-008; BQPD-FHA B037-111;B037-112	
Plain Blue Banner	1634	(Tong) Tuzhan (佟圖占)	BQTZ 283; 5261; BQPD-FHA B037-112	Tuzhan's father died in 1634 and he succeeded his position.
Unspecified Origin				
Bordered Yellow Banner	1634	Guan Dadeng (管大登)	BQTZ 240	
Plain Red Banner	1635	Wang Guoguang (王國光)	BQTZ 261	
Plain White Banner	1634	Shen Tui (神推)	BQTZ 251	
Plain White Banner	1634	Zang Diaoyuan (臧調元)	BQTZ 252	
Plain White Banner	1634	Sun Degong (孫得功)	BQTZ 255	
Plain White Banner	1634	Guo Zhaoji (郭肇基)	BQTZ 259	
Plain Red Banner	1634	Wang Yiping (王一屏)	BQTZ 261; 4303	Created in Mukden; Wang Yiping died in 1634, the company should be created on or before 1634.
Plain Blue Banner	1634	Tong Chengnian (佟成年)	BQTZ 282; 4349	Created in Tiancong Reign; Tong Chengnian died in 1634, the company should be created on or before 1634.
Plain Red Banner	1635	Wu Shoujin (吳守進)	BQTZ 259; 4299	
Plain Red Banner	1635	Jiang Yikui (姜一魁)	BQTZ 262	
Bordered Yellow Banner	1636	Yan Guoqing (嚴國卿)	BQTZ 233	

No extant source explicitly claims that the companies were created because of the conscription. Nonetheless, given that most companies were created in 1634, soon after Hong Taiji proclaimed the conscription in the previous August, it is very probable that the two events were related. Some scholars maintain that the Hanjun was only organized into companies in 1637 when it was finally turned into a banner structure.[168] Indeed, *Qing shilu* explicitly states that Hong Taiji, in 1637, ordered the by-then Hanjun to be split into two banners and to be organized into companies according to the model of the Manchus.[169] However, the fact that only six companies were further created in 1637 suggests that the company structure was already in place when Hong Taiji turned the Hanjun into two banners. The true function of the 1637 edict was to streamline existing companies, as their size was not as standardized as the Manchu ones, and some of them did not have an appointed company captain.[170]

Nevertheless, the mass creation of the Hanjun companies was not solely due to the conscription; it was also a development outcome of Hong Taiji's changing Han ruling policy. Firstly, of the thirty-one companies created between 1634 and 1636, at least ten were transformed from existing Han settlements. For instance, the settlement supervised by Tong San, which had around a thousand men, was split into four companies, commanded by Tong San, his son, and two of his bondservants respectively.[171] Secondly, some companies were granted as awards to decorated early Han turncoats. In these cases, the companies were made up of the captain's clansman and bondservants. For example, Li Yongfang 李永芳, who brought his clan to join Nurhaci in 1622 and became an imperial son-in-law, was in 1634 granted six companies, made up of his subordinates and the bondservants of his imperial

[168] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 77
[169] QSL, 494/2.
[170] Chen and Fu, "Baqi hanjun kaolűe," 22.
[171] NGDK, 185055-015-018.

wife, the granddaughter of Nurhaci.[172] Similarly, Tong Yangxing's descendants were granted seven companies, of which at least two were created before 1637.[173]

While political and social factors played a key role in the formation of Hanjun companies, the influence of artillery technology remains unclear. Artillery expertise does not appear to have given Han individuals any particular advantage in becoming company captains. Zhu Shiyin, who oversaw the production of the first Qing red-shirt cannon and thousands of cannonballs, was granted a company in 1634 not for his artillery knowledge but because the population of his settlement had grown under his supervision.[174] On the other hand, poor marksmanship could undermine one's position. In 1639, Wang Xiyan 王希顏 lost his company captaincy because he failed to fire a cannon properly.[175] This suggests that while artillery technology played a role, civilian factors were equally significant in the formation of Hanjun companies.

All in all, the mass creation of Hanjun companies marked a milestone of the Hanjun bannerization, paving its way to become the Hanjun Eight Banners. Moreover, the creation of companies signifies a convergence of Hong Taiji's Hanjun and more general *Nikan*-ruling policies. The Hanjun was slowly transformed into the *Nikan*-representing institution in the Later Jin court. Through the Hanjun companies, Han officials asserted more direct authority over the *Nikan* population while the authority of the Manchu banner lords diminished.

[172] NGDK, 185055-001-012.
[173] BQPD-FHA, B037-111; B037-112
[174] BQPD-AS, MC02998-00357-0056-0065.
[175] BQPD-AS, MC02995-0312-0120; MC02995-0312-0069

Becoming the Artillery Corps of the Later Jin (1634)

The institutional reform not only pushed forward the conscription and organization of Hanjun companies but also buttressed its position as the artillery corps of the Later Jin army. At the requests of Han elites, heavy artillery, gunpowder, and gunnery experts were transferred to the Hanjun from every corner of the Khanate. By mid-1634, the Hanjun's arsenal included more than thirty red-shirt cannons.[176] The Hanjun also oversaw the production of weapons and equipment for the artillery train.[177] The expanding number of gunners is more difficult to chart in extant sources; however, by 1639 the artillery corps already had 54 gunners and reloaders, in comparison to 24 gunners in 1631.[178]

Meanwhile, the Han military elites continued to call for transferring all artillery resources to the Hanjun and advocated for a more extensive use of heavy artillery. Three weeks after the 1633 conscription, Zhu Shichang, a founding member of the Hanjun, submitted a memorial to the throne. Like Tong, he urged Hong Taiji to transfer all artillery-related resources, especially gunpowder, to the Hanjun. Furthermore, he suggested that the Khan designate the Hanjun as the heavy artillery siege force. At the time, many officials preferred lighter firearms over heavy cannons, complaining that the red-shirt cannons were too cumbersome. Most of the heavy cannons were placed in cities for defense. Anticipating this concern, Zhu claimed that only heavy cannons were capable of taking walled cities. He urged the Khan to transfer most of the heavy cannons from the Hanjun garrison troops to the field troops, making it a formidable siege train.[179]

[176] TCCW, 66.
[177] TC-8, 151.
[178] MWNGSYD, The 4th year of Chongde (The 4th to 5th month), 50-53.
[179] TCCZ, 66.

Around the same time, the Hanjun was becoming more specialized in artillery, as its artillery unit emerged as an independent unit. When the Hanjun was founded, its troops were split into field troops and garrison troops; the 24 gunners and two gunpowder smiths were put into another category, but there was no independent artillery unit.[180] In a military exercise held on November 8, 1633, however, the Hanjun artillery corps formation (Ma: *poo i faidan i cooha*) appeared for the first time, in which it fired empty rounds at the charging Hanjun infantry and cavalry (Ma: *morin, yafahan i cooha*).[181]

The Han artillery unit reappeared in the Later Jin joint force military parade on April 10, 1634. In the parade, the Later Jin forces formed into a five-layer formation. The first line was the Hanjun artillery troops (Ma: *poo sindame afara Nikan cooha*), followed by the Manchu-Mongol infantry in the second line, the cavalry in the third, the city defense garrison in the fourth, and the city defense artillery unit at the rear.[182] From the lines of formation, we can see that the division of military branches was roughly following ethnic lines. It was specified that the artillery corps in the front row were *Nikan*, while the infantry in the second row were Manchus and Mongols. This suggests that the Hanjun had further buttressed its position as the artillery corps.

The Hanjun's military role as the artillery corps was finally declared on May 31, 1634, when its title was changed from the "old Hanjun" (Ma: *fe Nikan i cooha*)" to the Heavy Army (Ma: *ujen cooha*).[183] Significantly, according to the 1742 *Baqi tongzhi*, the title *ujen cooha* was named not by Hong Taiji but by Zhu Shiyin, one of the earliest Han artillery

[180] TC-5 I, 82-3.
[181] TC-7, 161.
[182] TC-8, 95.
[183] Teng, "Qingchu hanjun jiqi niulu tanyuan," 68; Xie Jingfang, "Baqi Hanjun de mingcheng ji hanyi yange kaoshi," *Beifang wenwu* 1991, no. 3 (1991): 84–88; Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi* 309; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 77. Pamela Crossley has a different view regarding the meaning of *ujen cooha*, see Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 96-8.

specialists in the Later Jin and the brother of the aforementioned Zhu Shichang.[184] This further proves that it was the Han military elites' idea to designate the Hanjun as the artillery corps of the Later Jin.

This change in title and recognized function should be viewed in the broader context of Hong Taiji's centralization and state-building project. The Hanjun was but one of the many military branches that acquired a new name on that day. Previously, the Later Jin armed forces had been named after their commanders, a practice that undermined the Khan's authority over its military. By streamlining these forces with new Manchu titles, Hong Taiji reiterated that they all belonged to the Later Jin army under his direct command.[185] Seemingly, declaring the Hanjun's role as the Heavy Army was of secondary importance to the Khan. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Han military elites achieved their goal — to turn the Hanjun into the artillery corps of the Later Jin.

The Historical Impact of the Hanjun Reform

The reform proposed by the Han elites shaped the Qing state's Hanjun policy and laid the foundation for the future Hanjun Eight Banners. It also empowered the *Nikan* in the Manchu Khanate and improved their social-political circumstances. Many Han military elites were promoted because the Hanjun reform created new positions exclusively for *Nikan*. For example, by 1635, Shi Tingzhu, Ma Guangyuan, and Wang Shixuan, as Hanjun commanders, were all promoted to the rank of regional commander.[186] These high positions reinforced the political influence of these Han elites. An expanding Hanjun also bolstered *Nikan* representation in the Manchu court as a whole. The Hanjun's political momentum was already felt in the court New Year greeting ceremony of 1632 when Tong and his Han

[184] BQTZ, 4324.
[185] TC-8, 135-36.
[186] TC-8, 195, Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 324.

subordinates were placed in front of the Eight Banners lords at the line to greet the Khan.[187] Subsequently, Hanjun officials maintained a constant presence in court ceremonies and meetings. It is clear that the Han military elites had moved closer to the state apparatus in the state security map through the institutional reform of the Later Jin militaries.

With the mass creation of the Hanjun companies, the Han elites also asserted stronger influence over the *Nikan* population. As Korehiro Anami argues, when the Hanjun was created in 1631, as a temporary artillery task force, it had no authority over any company, and thus could assert no control over the *Nikan* civilian lives.[188] However, as more Han elites received their own Hanjun companies, they attained a higher degree of control over their *Nikan* subjects. Although the Hanjun companies, as well as the *Nikan*, were still registered under the Manchu Banners and were legally the subject of their respective banner lords, in reality, the Han elites assumed the role of the liaison between the *Nikan* and the Qing court.[189] This started the process of differentiating the *Nikan* population from the Manchus.

Furthermore, signifying its increasing political influence, the Hanjun became the umbrella institution for *Nikan* to negotiate with the Manchu state. As the officials overseeing all *Nikan*-related affairs, the Han commanders were often in the position to petition for their ethnic fellows. Ma Guangyuan, for example, pleaded for Han civilian officials who were to be punished because their Han settlement populations had declined.[190] Conversely, Han commanders, instead of the Manchu Banner lords, were held accountable for the actions of the Han officials. When a group of Han settlement captains complained to the Khan about their corvée in 1634, an allegation that Hong Taiji deemed unjustifiable, it was the Hanjun

[187] MWLD, 601.
[188] Anami, *Shinsho gunjishi* ronkō, 363.
[189] Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 34-9. More discussion on the legal status of *Nikan* and the Hanjun company will be discussed in Chapter 4.
[190] TC-9, 221-3.

commanders who needed to explain the Han officials' action and propose disciplinary action.[191] Seemingly, the jurisdiction of Han subjects and officials had by then transferred from the Manchu banner lords to Han commanders.

The Hanjun also facilitated the formation of a Han ethnic-political interest group, which later became the crux of the Hanjun community. In the pre-conquest Qing, *Nikan* were divided into different groups according to their backgrounds. The state officially differentiated them into "old *Nikan*" (Ma: *fe Nikan*) and "new Nikan" (Ma: *ice Nikan*), "new Han official" (Ma: *fe hafasa*), and "old Han official" (Ma: *ice hafasa*), according to when they joined the Khanate.[192] Hanjun brought them all under one institution through conscription and transfer of gunnery experts. The fact that the first two leaders of the Hanjun Banners were Shi Tingzhu and Ma Guangyuan, representing the old and new Han officials respectively, best illustrates the alliance.[193] Nevertheless, by this time, the "new *Nikan*" who joined after the siege of Dalinghe were still not incorporated into the Hanjun.

This is not to say that the distinctions between the different groups of *Nikan* disappeared immediately. When Hanjun started organizing companies in 1634 and 1635, most of the company captains were old Han officials. Further, the old Han officials were entrusted with the task of monitoring the allegiance of the new Han officials as late as 1635, revealing Hong Taiji's mistrust of the Han latecomers.[194] Notwithstanding, the Hanjun brought together all these *Nikan* of different origins under the same banner, gradually aligning their political interests and identities. By 1642, when the Hanjun Eight Banners was created, both old and new Han officials were appointed banner officers.

[191] TC-8, 36-7.
[192] TC-8, 29; TC-9, 186.
[193] TC-7, 2.
[194] TC-8, 151.

On the lower level, Hanjun improved *Nikan*'s living standards. Thanks to the mass conscription, many *Nikan* who originally served as bondservants under Manchu households became soldiers. As soldiers, they were entitled to more rights and benefits, as the Khan explained himself in 1634:

> I extracted you from the Manchu Prince's households and put you into a banner. Since then, you can ride your own horse, and use your own cattle; your wives are exempted from being bondservants (after their husbands die); you can choose fertile land to farm and consume your own harvest.[195]

As the Hanjun expanded, more Han bondservants would be emancipated from their servitude and enjoy a better life. This carved out part of the *Nikan* population from the Manchu and reshaped the ethnic landscape of the emerging Qing empire.

Conclusion

The Hanjun reform was a transformative milestone for the Han military elites and the *Nikan* community within the Later Jin state. By expanding and institutionalizing the Hanjun, the reform granted unprecedented social and political privileges to the Han elites, elevating their status in a court previously dominated by Manchu aristocrats. Conscripted Han soldiers also saw their status dramatically improved, as they transitioned from bondservants to military personnel with rights and responsibilities comparable to their Manchu counterparts. The Hanjun's growing presence as the *Nikan*-representing institution in the Manchu court further empowered Han elites to negotiate directly with the throne and advocate for their community's interests. Most importantly, the reform laid the groundwork for the eventual

[195] QSL, 223/1.

creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners, signaling the Hanjun's full institutional integration into the Qing state alongside the Manchu and Mongol banners.

However, this rapid ascent of the *Nikan* also generated significant tension. As the Hanjun gained political momentum and influence, the Manchu ruling elites began to perceive it as a potential threat to the delicate ethnic balance of power. The Hanjun's institutionalization and growing autonomy, particularly its ability to oversee the *Nikan* population and maintain a distinct banner identity, exacerbated existing conflicts of interest between the Manchu aristocracy and Han elites. The reform, while empowering the *Nikan*, also highlighted the vulnerabilities and fractures within the multiethnic framework of the Later Jin state.

3. Changing Ethnic Rhetoric: The Rising Manchu-*Nikan* Conflict

The honeymoon for Hong Taiji and the Han elites ended as quickly as it came. As the Hanjun gained political momentum in the court, conflict and tension between the Manchu ruling elites and the Han elites loomed, kickstarting the next phase of the Hanjun negotiation. This phase of negotiation, which lasted from approximately 1634 to 1642, centered around two major issues: 1) the competing interests of the Manchus and the *Nikan*, and 2) the institutional position of the Hanjun, i.e., how to institutionally accommodate both its military and ethnic distinctions.

A major point of contention between the Manchus and the *Nikan* centered on the emancipation of Han bondservants, for such a policy undermined the Manchu bondservant owners. As the Han elites' political influence grew, they repeatedly urged the Khan to emancipate more *Nikan*; they also asked for economic support and tax relief for their ethnic group at the expense of the Manchus' interests. To maintain the delicate balance of interest between Manchu and *Nikan* and counter the ever-growing demands of the Han elites, Hong Taiji developed a new ethnic rhetoric that suppressed the *Nikan* and elevated the Manchu. This ethnic rhetoric was made up of a growing set of ethnic expressions and historical narratives that recurringly appeared in the negotiation between the Manchu ruling elites and the Han military elites. By highlighting the privileges enjoyed by the *Nikan* and emphasizing the disproportionate level of contribution of the Manchu over the *Nikan*, Hong Taiji suppressed the Han elites and forced them to demonstrate loyalty and military value in return for more privileges. This new ethnic rhetoric redrew the line of the Hanjun negotiation and dictated the Hanjun's course of development.

Furthermore, the Hanjun faced serious problems in institutional positioning. As ethnic soldiers, the Hanjun was in nature both a military branch and an ethnic institution, but there was no institutional setting that could accommodate both distinctions. In 1634, Hong Taiji

declared the Hanjun as a military branch by naming it the Heavy Army; in reality, however, it continued to be the *Nikan*-representing institution in the court. The Hanjun's ethnic distinctiveness became more pronounced as Hong Taiji proclaimed himself the emperor of the Manchu-Mongol-Han multiethnic Qing empire in 1636. In the same year, the term Han Banner (Ma: *Nikan gūsa*) emerged as a substitute for the Heavy Army, used especially when Hanjun was juxtaposed with the Manchu and Mongol Banners. The dual-title situation created huge institutional confusion in the Manchu court. More importantly, it belies Hong Taiji's dilemma: the emperor wanted an independent Han artillery corps, but he was not ready for a Han institution on par with the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. This structural dilemma would haunt the Hanjun until the eventual establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners in 1642.

The escalating struggle between the Manchus and the *Nikan*, along with the institutional predicament of the Hanjun, set the stage for the forthcoming negotiations. These discussions would revolve around reconciling the competing demands of maintaining Manchu dominance while accommodating the growing political influence of the Han elites. Central to these negotiations was the challenge of defining the Hanjun's role and status in a manner that accommodated its dual identity as both a military branch and an ethnic institution. The outcome of these negotiations would bring profound implications for the balance of power among ethnic groups in the centralizing Manchu court, ultimately shaping the trajectory of the emerging Qing dynasty.

The Corvée Dispute (1634) and the Origin of the Ethnic Rhetoric

Bondservant (Ma: *aha/ booi aha*) was a crucial component of the pre-conquest Manchu society. All nobles and commoners, from royal families to ordinary households, had bondservants. Constituting a large population, if not the largest, of the Manchu society, bondservants performed important military and production functions, for they followed their

owners to war and farmed their land at home.[196] The bondservant was also considered a type of asset, often listed alongside cattle, women, clothing, and other possessions. They were often captives of war and granted to their owners as booty.

Due to the repeated raids of Ming territories, a large portion of bondservants were *Nikan*.[197] In particular, after the Han revolts in the mid-1620s, Nurhaci turned a lot of *Nikan* commoners into bondservants, distributing them into Manchu households. After Hong Taiji came to power, he reinstated some of the *Nikan* as commoners and put them in Han settlements, but there was still a large population of Han bondservants. Some Han elites were keen on emancipating their fellows. They sent memorials to the throne, encouraging the Khan to employ the *Nikan* with talents, especially the literati. In 1629, the Later Jin held the first examination for literati, in which bondservants who had passed the exam were emancipated. Another exam was conducted in 1634.[198] The Hanjun conscription, mentioned above in detail, was another Han initiative to free the *Nikan* from slavery.

While emancipation was good news to the *Nikan*, it was not to their owners. In the early 1630s, when Hong Taiji conscripted the Han literati (Ch: *shengyuan* 生員), their owners were often given another bondservant as compensation; similarly, some conscripted artillery experts were replaced by another bondservant.[199] As the scope and scale of conscription widened, however, the Khan no longer compensated the owners with fresh manpower. The 1633 Hanjun conscription, for example, did not mention anything about compensation to the owner. This intensified the struggle between Manchu and Han. As the Han elites continued to press for further emancipation of *Nikan*, the Manchu elites needed to

[196] Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 93.
[197] Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 92.
[198] QSL 73/2.
[199] QSL 73/2.

find a way to check the Han elites' ever-growing demands, and the 1634 corvée dispute provided the Khan with a start.

On February 13, 1634, a group of Han settlement captains approached the Minister of Revenue, requesting a reduction in their corvée. They argued that their corvée burden was heavier than that of ordinary Manchus, as they were also responsible for providing food and clothing for newly admitted captured or defected *Nikan*. The Minister of Revenue reported the complaint, and Hong Taiji sent his advisers to investigate. After the investigation, the two Manchu advisers reported that the allegation was false. According to them, the Han captains complained because some women were taken from them and given to the new recruits without reimbursement. Hong Taiji ordered them to be reimbursed but then decided to issue an edict to the complainers. He noticed that he needed to suppress the ever-growing demands of the *Nikan*, as he said to the Minister of Rite official Sahaliyan 薩哈廉:

> These useless people (*Nikan*) dare to speak these disgraceful words because they forget the hardship they suffered in Liaodong. I shall talk them through; otherwise, their resentment persists.[200]

After Sahaliyan summoned the Han officials into the inner court, Hong Taiji started pronouncing his lengthy edict. Hong Taiji started by recounting the *Nikan*'s miserable living circumstances before his reign. But after he came to power, despite some *Nikan* acting as Ming spies and sending out intelligence through letters, he still forgave them and improved their livelihood:

> I extracted you from the Manchu princes' households and put you into a banner. Since then, you can ride your own horse and use your own cattle; your

[200] QSL, 223/1; TC-8, 23.

> wives are exempted from being bondservants (after their husbands die); you can choose the fertile land to farm and consume your own harvest.[201]

All these privileges, according to the Khan, were given on behalf of his extraordinary grace, which was greater than the grace he had shown to the Manchus. Hong Taiji then compared the promotion path of Han and Manchu commanders. Most Manchu commanders and soldiers fought forty to fifty battles, some of them even a hundred, but the Han commanders easily got promoted to regional commanders after seeing the slightest action in wars. This further reflects the grace of the Khan.

> Let us compare the military merits of you Han officials and the Manchu officials. Who received a promotion in an easier way? The Manchus spared no pains fighting for the country, many of whom fought a hundred battles and many forty or fifty battles. How many battles have you Han officials fought? I quickly promoted you when I saw you contributing slightly. This grace is not granted to the Manchus. If I promote you like how I promoted the Manchus — promoting them according to the wounds one suffered, then I do not know what rank your general commander would be right now.[202]

Apart from promotion, the Han officials were often given more subordinates than the Manchus. In the pre-conquest period, Later Jin officials were given a number of adult commoners as subordinates proportionate to their rank. Officials with first-class merit (Ch: *yiden gongchen* 一等功臣; Ma: *uju jergi gungge niyalma*) were given a hundred men, and the number goes down as the rank descends. Some Han settlements, however, had more than a thousand or eight to nine hundred men; even the smaller settlements comprised more than a hundred. According to Hong Taiji, the Manchu elites were well aware of this, but they never

[201] QSL, 223/1; TC-8, 24-25.
[202] TC-8, 25-6; QSL 222/2.

intervened and redistributed the excess headcounts in the Han settlements. This, again, shows that *Nikan* were treated better than the Manchus.

Lastly, Hong Taiji compared the level of corvée between Manchus and *Nikan*. For the Manchus, one adult was conscripted out of every three, but according to the Hanjun conscription edict in 1633, only one out of ten *Nikan* adults was conscripted. On top of this, the Manchus were required to perform all other forms of service, such as producing salt, hunting animals, raising horses, extracting ice, forging iron products, harvesting ginseng, and many more. Hong Taiji then moved to the conclusion:

> Manchu and *Nikan* are both my people. Why do you not know your level of corvée is disproportionately lower than the Manchus? They take up thirty more items of corvée than you. Compare what I said and what you had said, and judge fairly. Do you think you suffer more, or do the Manchus suffer more? You may speak freely.[203]

Although claiming that both Manchu and *Nikan* are his subjects, Hong Taiji's lengthy edict set the new ethnic rhetoric that targeted the *Nikan* and the Hanjun. This rhetoric includes three elements. First, it claims that the *Nikan* got their own banner and elevated social-political privileges solely because of the Khan's grace, a grace much greater than the grace granted to the Manchus. In addition, it asserts that the *Nikan* had an easier promotion track in the military and the court, again, out of the Khan's grace. Second, it recounts the incidents of *Nikan* spying for the Ming, casting doubt on their loyalty. Third, it compares the military contributions of the Manchus versus the *Nikan*, claiming that the Manchus were braver and stronger.

At the end of the edict, Hong Taiji forced the Han officials to conform to his new rhetoric by demanding responses. The general commanders of the Hanjun and the leaders of

[203] QSL 225/1; TC-8, 35-36.

all Han officials—Shi Tingzhu, Ma Guangyuan, and Wang Shixuan 王世選—apprehended the eight Han settlement captains who filed the complaint. The Han elites presented the captains in the court and claimed that they did not know about the complaint in advance. But Hong Taiji ordered the release of the eight captains, claiming that he did not wish to gag people from talking bluntly in the court. In response, the Han officials thanked the Khan for his grace using the newly developed rhetoric. The Han officials started by apologizing for not stopping the eight captains from complaining and thanked the Khan and the eight *Beile* for raising them with food and gifts. They thanked the Khan for giving them their own banner, allowing them to have their own clothes, food, bondservants, and horses. They admitted that these were all granted by the Khan's grace. They also admitted that their military rank was disproportionately higher than their military contribution, and their Han settlements were extraordinarily large. The Khan's grace, they continued, could not be paid even with their brain and liver lying on the ground. The conclusion shows that the Han elites were forced to conform with Hong Taiji's new ethnic rhetoric. Hong Taiji gained the upper hand and redrew the rules of the Hanjun negotiation.

Ujen cooha vs. *Nikan gūsa*: Hanjun's Institutional Dilemma

As tensions between the Manchu and Han elites deepened within the Qing court, the Hanjun faced an escalating identity crisis. The institutional ambiguity surrounding the Hanjun—whether it was an ethnic representative body or a specialized military corps—became increasingly evident. In 1634, three months after the corvée incident, the Hanjun was officially renamed the Heavy Army (Ma: *ujen cooha*). This renaming marked a significant step in its development, emphasizing its military function over its ethnic distinctiveness. However, this also signifies a deliberate effort by Hong Taiji to harness the artillery expertise that Han elites had used to bolster their political influence, effectively "de-ethnicizing" the

Hanjun. Unlike the Mongols, who received their own Mongol Eight Banners in 1635, the Hanjun remained embedded within the military framework as an artillery corps for another eight years.[204]

For the next two years, the Hanjun was consistently referred to in official records as the Heavy Army, with occasional mentions of its full military designation as the "Black Banner *ujen cooha* Banner" (Ma: *yacin tui ujen coohai gūsa*).[205] Some records went further, describing it as part of the Manchu army (Ma: *manju i cooha*),[206] with one even calling it the "*ujen cooha* of the Manchu."[207] These terms downplayed the Hanjun's ethnic identity, framing it instead as a functional component of the Manchu-led military apparatus.

The military setting, however, did not constrain the Hanjun's role as the *Nikan*-representing institution in the Manchu court. During the 1636 New Year court meeting, the two Hanjun Banner leaders (Ma: *ujen coohai gūsa ejen*), Shi Tingzhu and Ma Guangyuan, led the Han officials who were officially registered under the Manchu Eight Banners in greeting the Khan. They were placed behind the Manchu Eight Banners leaders and preceded the Mongol Eight Banners leaders. Seemingly, in this setting, the Hanjun Banner had an equivalent status as the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners, suggesting its ethnic identification was recognized. Further, the two leaders assumed the leading position of the

[204] Hong Taiji wanted an effective artillery corps under his direct command, but he did not entirely trust his Han subjects. It was fine for him that the Nikan improved their social and political status through the Hanjun, but the Khan was not ready to have an independent Han civil and military institution commensurate to the existing Eight Banners. The Hanjun was thus a compromise. As long as the Hanjun stayed as a military branch, in which its troops registered under the Manchu Eight Banners, the Khan could allow for a degree of political autonomy for the Han military elites on Nikan affairs.
[205] TC-8, 156,195; TC-9 I, 138. Note that the meanings of *tu* and *gūsa* are different in Manchu, although both words are translated as banner in English. For discussion of the difference between *tu* and *gūsa,* see Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 229-233.
[206] In 1634-35, Hong Taiji might have wanted to put all institutions, including the Manchu Eight Banners, into a military setting to centralize his power. In the New Year Greetings of 1635, even the Manchu Banner lords were addressed in their full military titles. And, in 1635, the combined Manchu forces were often called the Manchu army (Ma: *manju i cooha*). This practice, however, was also discontinued after 1636. TC-9, 3; TC-9, 139.
[207] TC-8, 203.

Han officials, who were registered under the Manchu Eight Banners.[208] This suggests that the Manchu court recognized the Hanjun Banner leaders as the de facto commanders of the Han officials in the court.

Yet, the Hanjun's court position was not fixed. In the New Year Court meeting, it was given the equivalent status as the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners; two months later, it was downgraded to a military branch. In a court ceremony held on 19 March, in which Hong Taiji specified the button of precious stone of the official cap for different ranks of officials, the Hanjun was placed fourth in the line. Again, the Manchu Eight Banners leaders were at the front, followed by Mongol Eight Banners leaders and the leader of the infantry corps (Ma: *beki cooha*). The Hanjun Banner leaders only came afterward, followed by the Six Ministries and the Mongol Office (Ma: *monggo jurgan*) officials. In this setting, the Hanjun was seen as a military institution like the infantry corps and was differentiated from the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners.[209] Given the proximity of the two court events, it appears that the Hanjun held an arbitrary position in the Qing court, wandering between an ethnic institution and a military branch.

The situation changed again a few months later when the term Han banner (Ma: *nikan gūsa*) emerged as a substitute for Heavy Army Banner (Ma: *ujen coohai gūsa*). The term first appeared in a court trial on July 1, 1636, in which Shi Tingzhu was referred to as the leader of the Chinese Banner (Ma: *nikan gūsa ejen*) while other Manchu Banner leaders were just called Banner leader (Ma: *gūsa ejen*).[210] Three months later, the term Han banner appeared again in an imperial letter issued by the court, which wrote:

[208] MWLD, 954.
[209] MWLD, 679.
[210] MWLD, 713.

> The two Yellow Banners, two Red Banners, two White Banners, Bordered Blue Banners, the infantry corps (Ma: *beki cooha*), and Heavy Army, a total of ten Manchu, Mongol, and *Nikan* banners besieged the Baodi county together.[211]

Both the Heavy Army and Han Banner appeared in the letter. In this context, the Heavy Army had an equivalent status as the forces of the Manchu banners and the infantry corps, whereas the Han banner juxtaposed the Manchu and Mongol banners according to ethnic categories. Heavy Army and Han Banner thus represented the Hanjun's military and ethnic dimensions respectively.

The emergence of the title Han Banner may be related to Hong Taiji's state-building project. On May 15, 1636, Hong Taiji proclaimed himself as the founding emperor of the Great Qing Dynasty.[212] As Hong Taiji strived to manifest himself as the emperor of the Manchu-Mongol-Han multi-ethnic Qing empire, the Hanjun, led by Shi Tingzhu, assumed an increasingly important role as the Han-representing institution in court ceremonies after mid-1636.

On October 8, 1636, all Qing nobles and officials were gathered at the court for the Empress and concubine canonizing ceremony. Lined up according to their status, one by one, they congratulated the canonized empress and concubines. Shi Tingzhu, as grand general (Ma: *amba janggin*), representing the *Nikan*, led the Han officials and submitted their congratulations letter, written in Chinese, to the empress, and then performed the highest ritual of kneeling three times and kowtowing nine times.[213] Two months later, on December

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[211] The original Manchu phrase is: "*manju, monggo, nikan, uheri juwan gūsa afafi.*" MWLD, 756. The content of the imperial letter was copied from a war report to the throne submitted eight days earlier. MWLD, 749. There is a mistake in the text, for only nine instead of ten banners were mentioned.
[212] QSL, 361/1
[213] MWLD, 733.

11, the nobles and high officials were again gathered at the court to celebrate the commencement of the *Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty: The Annals of Emperor Taizu, Empress Taihou* (*Taizu, Taihou Shilu*). The completion of the *Shilu* itself had a strong multi-ethnic implication, as it was written in Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese.[214] Again, Shi Tingzhu, as the regional commander (Ma: *amba janggin*), led all Han officials, both civilian and military, to submit their congratulations letter. Shi at the front, followed by the officials, they performed again the highest ritual of kneeling three times and kowtowing nine times.[215]

Two years later, during the 1638 New Year court greeting ceremony, the title "Han Banner" replaced "Heavy Army Banner" as the official name for the Hanjun. Shi Tingzhu and Ma Guangyuan, as leaders of the Han Banner, were positioned behind the Manchu Eight Banner leaders and followed by two Joseon princes. Notably, there was no mention of the Mongol Eight Banners in the ceremony. Furthermore, the role of Shi and Ma in relation to the Han officials also evolved. In earlier court ceremonies, they led the "Han officials of the Eight Banners" in performing court rituals, which indicated that the Han officials were still subordinate to the Manchu Eight Banners. However, in the 1638 New Year greeting, the record states:

> Ninth, the Han Banner leader Shi Tingzhu led his banner's officials to kowtow. Tenth, likewise, the Han Banner leader Ma Guangyuan led his banner's officials to kowtow. (Ma: *uyuci de nikan gūsai ejen sitingju ini gūsai ambasa be gaifi hengkilehe, juwanci de ineku nikan gūsai ejen ma guwang yuwan ini gūsai ambasa be gaifi hengkilehe*).[216]

[214] MWLD, 792.
[215] MWLD, 793.
[216] CD-23, 148-49.

This phrasing underscores the hierarchical relationship between Shi and Ma, as the Han Banner leaders, and the Han officials in the court. This suggests that while overall authority remained with the Manchu aristocracy, Shi and Ma had effectively assumed the role of direct leaders of the Han officials in court ceremonies—marking a shift in the chain of command. Although the jurisdiction over the Han officials nominally remained with the Manchu Eight Banner lords, it was now exercised in practice by the Hanjun leaders.

To sum up, although the Hanjun leaders had been representing the *Nikan* and Han officials in court ceremonies since 1632, the ceremonies after mid-1636 were different in the way that they were more ritualized and highlighted the ethnic categorization among the officials. This reflects that the Hanjun role as the Han-representing institution was becoming more important. Yet, the title Heavy Army could not convey the ethnic message behind it; this may be why Hong Taiji created the term Han Banner to highlight its ethnic distinction, so as to pronounce his legitimacy as the ruler of the multi-ethnic state.

The dual-titles setting, nevertheless, did not entirely solve the institutional dilemma. It only generated more structural confusion on daily administrative and political matters. This confusion is best illustrated in the *Mukden Records of the Ministry of Justice*, which contains trial records in 1638-39. In all trial records, the defendant(s) must be addressed with their affiliations, either by their banner or their office, such as the Six ministries or the Censorate. Since the Hanjun members were simultaneously registered under the Manchu banner and the Hanjun, their affiliations varied according to context.

In military trials, defendants were typically identified with their *ujen cooha* affiliation. For example, a March 4, 1639 trial concerning military misconduct listed the defendants' connections to their Hanjun banners. Shi Tingzhu and Ma Guangyuan were referred to as "Banner leaders," while Ma's regiment colonels were identified as "Regiment colonels of Ma

Guangyuan Banner." These affiliations emphasized their roles within the artillery corps, separate from the Manchu banners.[217]

In contrast, in trials involving administrative or financial misconduct, Hanjun members were identified by their civilian banner affiliations within the Eight Banners system. For instance, Wu Shoujin 吳守進, Cui Yingtai 崔應泰, and Ma Guanghui 馬光輝, charged with embezzlement and extortion in another March 4 trial, were associated with their respective Manchu banners (Plain Red, Bordered Yellow, and Bordered Yellow). These records omitted any mention of their Hanjun roles, underscoring their status as part of the broader Eight Banners system for administrative matters. Additionally, in military cases, soldiers from the Hanjun were differentiated from those of the Eight Banners. On 8 August 1639, 16 trials were made for misconduct in the siege of Songshan. The six tried Hanjun soldiers were either affiliated with the Ma Guangyuan Banner or Shi Tingzhu Banner, whereas other Manchu and Mongol defendants were affiliated with the Eight Banners.[218]

The line between the military and administrative difference, nevertheless, was not meticulously followed. Zhang Chengde 張承德, for example, was tried for using the artillery carts to transport grains while besieging Songshan. This should be a military matter, but Zhang was addressed as "Plain Yellow Banner regiment colonel."[219] On 15 September 1639, Liu Zhongjin 劉仲錦 was tried for soaking the gunpowder during the siege of Songshan. He was addressed as "Plain Blue Banner colonel."[220] More confusingly, in a trial on 30 July, an officer responsible for manufacturing cannonballs was accused of cutting corners and producing unusable cannonballs. The defendant was addressed as "Plain Yellow Banner

[217] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 91-2.
[218] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 134-36.
[219] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 113.
[220] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 161.

company captain.”[221] In other trials on the same day, however, all defendants were addressed as Hanjun officers. Wang Shixuan was addressed as “Regional commander (Ma: *amba janggin*) of Shi Tingzhu banner”; Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳 was addressed as “Lieutenant of Ma Guangyuan banner.”[222] The records show that the affiliation was arbitrary and unstandardized, causing confusion even among high-ranking officials in the Qing court.

[221] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 131.
[222] Shengjing xingbu yuandang, 131.

Table 3. Trial records from the *Mukden Records of the Ministry of Justice*.

Date of trial	Defendant	Affiliation	Nature of the trial	Page no.; case no.
Mar 4	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹貞	Ma Guangyuan Banner colonel (*jalan i janggin*)	Military	91; 200
Mar 4	Ma Rulong 馬如龍	Ma Guangyuan Banner Acting colonel	Military	91; 200
Mar 4	Ma Guangyuan 馬光遠	Banner leader	Military	91; 200
Mar 4	Zhang Dayou 張大猷	Lieutenant-generals	Military	91; 200
Mar 4	Shi Tingzhu 石廷柱	Banner leader	Military	91; 200
Mar 4	Wu Shoujin 吳守進	Plain Red Banner	Political	92; 201
Mar 4	Cui Yingtai 崔應泰	Bordered Yellow Banner	Political	93;201
Mar 4	Ma Guanghui 馬光輝	Bordered Yellow Banner	Political	93;201
Jun 19	Zhang Chengde 張承德	Plain Yellow Banner colonel	Military	113; 206
Aug 8	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹貞	Ma Guangyuan Banner	Military	135; 215
Aug 8	Tun Tai 屯泰	Ma Guangyuan Banner	Military	135; 215
Aug 8	Wang Keming 王克明	Ma Guangyuan Banner	Military	135; 215
Aug 8	Sun Ying 孫應	Ma Guangyuan Banner	Military	135; 215
Aug 8	Wei Qi 魏齊	Shi Tingzhu Banner	Military	135; 215
Aug 8	Wang Ge 王格	Shi Tingzhu Banner	Military	135; 215
Jul 30	Bayan 巴顏	Bordered White Banner	Military	130; 213
Jul 30	Ji Shichang 季世昌	Plain Yellow Banner Company Captain	Military	131; 213
Jul 30	Wang Shixuan 王世選	Shi Tingzhu Banner *amba janggin*	Military	131; 213
Jul 30	Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳	Ma Guangyuan Banner lieutenant-generals	Military	131; 213
Jul 30	Shi Tingzhu 石廷柱	Banner leader	Military	132; 213

Jul 30	Ma Guangyuan 馬光遠	Banner leader	Military	132; 213
Sep 15	Liu Zhongjin 劉松金	Plain Blue Banner Colonel	Military	161; 222
Sep 15	Guo Shanyu 郭善玉	*Funde bošokū* under Cui Mingxin company 本甲喇崔明新牛彔下分得撥什庫	Military	161; 222
Sep 15	Yu Kesun 余克孫	*Bošokū* under Cui Mingxin company 本甲喇崔明新牛彔下小撥什庫	Military	161; 222

Why did Hong Taiji retain both the "Heavy Army" and "Han Banner" monikers without clearly defining their roles and jurisdictions? Unfortunately, there is no existing reference regarding the institutional status of the Han Banner. No official document indicating when and why it was created, and what it was. Wang Ting argues that the juxtaposition of the two titles signifies the start of a transitional period of the Hanjun identity, in which the contemporaries considered the terms Han Banner and Heavy Army Banner interchangeable, depending on what dimension of Hanjun—ethnic or military—did the person want to emphasize.[223]

While I agree with Wang's view, I also see the juxtaposition of the titles "Heavy Army" and "Han Banner" as a reflection of Hong Taiji's dilemma. On the one hand, the emperor wanted to present himself as the ruler of his multi-ethnic state, in this sense, the Han Banner was the equivalent of the Han division in his army, juxtaposing the Manchu and Mongol forces. This is why the Han Banner often juxtaposed Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. On the other hand, Hong Taiji was not ready to give the Han elites an entirely ethnic institution. He was unable to resolve the competing interests between the Manchus and the *Nikan* and was doubtful of the loyalty of his Han troops. As a result, it was still preferable to keep the Hanjun as a military branch and register its Han soldiers under the Manchu Eight Banners.

The events described above illustrate the complex dynamics of ethnicity, politics, and institutional development in the pre-conquest Qing state. As Hong Taiji navigated the growing tension between Manchu and Han elites, his evolving ethnic rhetoric became a critical tool for maintaining control. The rhetoric, developed in response to the Han elites' demands for emancipation and greater privileges, systematically emphasized Manchu

[223] Wang, "Zhidu yu shenfen," 60-68.

contributions and valorized their loyalty while casting doubt on the commitment of Han officials. Through these rhetorical strategies, Hong Taiji successfully suppressed Han demands, redefined the parameters of the Hanjun negotiation, and reinforced his authority.

The institutional dilemma of the Hanjun mirrored this ethnic-political tension. Positioned as both a military branch and an ethnic institution, the Hanjun's dual identity created structural ambiguity within the Qing administrative and military systems. While the renaming of the Hanjun to the "Heavy Army" emphasized its role as the Qing artillery corps, the adoption of the term Han Banner highlighted its ethnic distinctiveness. This duality, however, resulted in administrative confusion and a lack of clarity regarding the Hanjun's jurisdiction and function. Hong Taiji's reluctance to fully align the Hanjun with either the Manchu Eight Banners or the Mongol Eight Banners reflected his cautious approach to managing ethnic tensions and maintaining political balance within the multiethnic Qing state.

The developments of the late 1630s reveal the precarious position of the Hanjun as both an opportunity and a challenge for Hong Taiji's state-building efforts. The institution served as a platform for Han elites to assert political influence, but it also exposed the fragility of Manchu-Han relations and the challenges of integrating subjugated ethnic groups into a centralized political and military framework. These tensions set the stage for further negotiations and reforms, highlighting the evolving role of the Hanjun as both an institution of ethnic cooperation and a flashpoint for conflict in the emerging Qing empire.

The Joseon Campaign and the Division of the Hanjun into Two Banners

The Later Jin underwent a huge transformation and development in the mid-1630s. In 1634, Hong Taiji defeated the Chahar 察哈爾 Mongols.[224] This military success incorporated the Southern Mongol 漠南蒙古 into the Manchu states and injected a large amount of

[224] QSL, 321/2-322/1.

Mongol population into the Khanate. To accommodate the newly joint Mongol population, Hong Taiji expanded the Mongol Two Banners into Mongol Eight Banners.[225] In the following year, Hong Taiji proclaimed himself to be the emperor of the Manchu-Mongol-Han multiethnic Qing Dynasty.[226] This marked the start of the dynasty and a substantial step of centralization.

All critical state-building processes of the Qing notwithstanding, the Hanjun underwent no institutional development, except that some *Nikan* might have been transferred from the Mongol Banners to the Hanjun Banners when creating the Mongol Eight Banners.[227] Not even the rising Manchu-*Nikan* conflict and the Hanjun title dilemma necessitated any reform, not until the next military campaign.

In late 1636, the entire Hanjun participated in the Joseon campaign –the first large-scale military operation the Hanjun participated in after its reform. Despite the campaign's success, the contribution of the Hanjun artillery corps was, at best, auxiliary. The sluggishness of the heavy artillery train substantially hampered the operation, forcing other forces to wait while besieging the Namhan 南漢 fortress where the Joseon king took refuge. The artillery corps inflicted substantial damage to the Namhan fortress but could not bring the defenders to submission. The Joseon king only surrendered after knowing that his family was taken hostage and there was no more hope of a relief army.

Even worse, the campaign exposed serious disciplinary issues among Hanjun soldiers. Its command structure also proved to be inadequate to support the expanded division, which now amounted to almost 10,000. Upon the recommendation of a Han advisor, the disappointed Hong Taiji rearranged the command structure of Hanjun and split it into two

[225] TC-9 I, 56-60. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 273.
[226] QSL, 361/1-2.
[227] TC-9 I, 60-1.QSL. 293/1. When the Mongol Eight Banners was established, a census was conducted, and all *Nikan* were extracted and registered "as regulation required."

banners. This was the first instance in which the military performance of the Hanjun directly led to its structural expansion.

The Joseon Campaign (1636–1637)

Since Nurhaci's time, the Jurchens had had constant interaction with their Joseon neighbors. As hostility between the Later Jin and Ming China intensified after 1619, however, the Later Jin-Joseon relationship worsened. Joseon's close tie to the Ming posed a considerable security threat to the Later Jin. It not only refused to establish formal and equal diplomatic relations with the Later Jin but undermined the latter's security and interests by accepting political and economic refugees from Liaodong and aiding the Ming's military operation in Manchuria. In particular, Joseon's harboring of Mao Wenlong 毛文龍, a Ming commander who built his base in the Later Jin-Joseon frontier, was considered a serious threat by the Later Jin. [228]

In early 1627, the year Hong Taiji succeeded the throne, the Khan launched the first invasion of Joseon. The Later-Jin force did not encounter much resistance and quickly drove into the Joseon heartland. The Joseon King, Injo 仁祖, took refuge with his family in the stronghold of Kanghwa Island 江華島. Nevertheless, the Later Jin campaign could not be sustained, as the pressure from the Mongol and Chinese fronts increased. Amin 阿敏, the commander of the invading force, eventually negotiated peace with Injo. The two states formed an "elder and younger brother" alliance and Joseon would send tribute three times a year. Formal trades were also established with the opening of markets.

[228] For a brief introduction of the Manchu-Joseon relationship and the two invasions, see Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 65-73. For detailed explanation, see Na Man-gap, *The Diary of 1636: The Second Manchu Invasion of Korea*, trans. George L. Kallander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), xi-lxxiv.

The 1630s saw rapid development of the Later Jin. The growing Later Jin influence in the region notwithstanding, the Joseon court was leaning progressively toward the Ming and refused to honor their term with the Manchus. Their relationship reached a nadir in 1636 when Joseon refused to acknowledge Hong Taiji as the emperor of the Qing. As the Chahar Mongols had been brought into submission in 1635, eliminating the threat from the East, Hong Taiji was given a free hand to launch his second invasion of Joseon.[229]

On December 15, 1636, Hong Taiji gave the order to mobilize an army for the invasion of Joseon. According to the imperial edict, each company should provide 32 men, 15 for the cavalry (Ma: *aliha cooha*), 10 for the infantry (Ma: *beki cooha*), 7 for the vanguard (Ma: *bayara*); in addition, the entire Heavy Army was enlisted. This suggests that the soldiers of the Hanjun were differentiated from ordinary forces. The edict also ordered the troops to prepare siege weapons such as scaling ladders, shields, and mining tools. Apparently, Hong Taiji anticipated siege warfare.[230]

Twelve days later (Dec 27, 1636), all forces assembled at Mukden. After a stately emperor-greeting ceremony, the Qing expedition force set off on the following day. The army was divided into left and right wings. The left wing, commanded by Prince Dorgon 多爾袞, took the northeastern route from Kudian 寬甸.[231] Hong Taiji himself commanded the right wing, which was further divided into several echelons. The scout unit of 300, disguised as merchants, went straight to Hanyang 漢陽; followed by the vanguard of 1000 led by Prince Dodo 多鐸. Behind this first wave was the main army led by Hong Taiji. On 4 January, Hong Taiji further sent a light force of 3000 from his echelon to support the vanguard. On the same

[229] For a brief introduction of the Manchu-Joseon relationship and the two invasions, see Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 65-73. For detailed explanation, see Na, 'Introduction,' xi-lxxiv.
[230] MWLD 796
[231] MWLD 799-800. NGSYD, 228-229.

day, a rear echelon, which was the artillery and siege train, was detached from Hong Taiji's main force. Led by Prince Dudu 杜度 and the Hanjun commanders, this rear echelon was also responsible for securing the coastal islands to prevent possible ambush.[232]

The Qing adopted a blitzkrieg strategy, bypassing the walled cities on their way to Hanyang without engaging the local defense. The scout unit reached Hanyang on January 9, 1637. They quickly defeated the small Joseon garrison and entered the city. The Joseon King, however, had already fled and took refuge in the Namhan fortress 40 *li* at the south. He would attempt to join his family at Kanghwa Island on the next morning but was frustrated by the heavy snow.[233] Meanwhile, the Qing scout unit pursued the king to Namhan and was reinforced by another 4000 on 11 January. They started besieging the fortress, which was defended by a garrison of more than 12,000.[234] As the Namhan fortress was built upon a mountain, the slope made it difficult for the Qing army to storm the city wall and extremely dangerous for the besiegers to launch a frontal assault with scaling ladders. Further, the fortress was ringed with muskets and cannons, threatening anyone who went near the city wall.[235] The artillery corps was needed more than ever; but it was far behind the main army.

Hong Taiji had anticipated the logistic hardship of the heavy artillery. A main concern for the land artillery train was the massive need for draught animals. To keep the siege train moving, the emperor specifically sanctioned the siege train to confiscate oxen from the Joseon peasants on their way while making it clear that all other properties of the peasants should be left untouched.[236] However, the Joseon peasants were long gone with their livestock when the rear echelon reached their settlements. The Qing could confiscate no

[232] MWLD 801.
[233] Na, 12.
[234] Na, 13. MWLD, 802.Another source said 14,000. Li Guangtao, *Ji Mingji Chaoxian zhi dingmao luhuo yu bingzi luhuo* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1972), 50.
[235] Li, *Ji Mingji Chaoxian zhi dingmao luhuo yu bingzi luhuo*, 81.
[236] MWLD, 801.

oxen. Meanwhile, their own draught animals could not sustain a long ride. By the 22nd day of their journey, they had already stopped for six days at different cities to let their animals recover.[237] Learning of the situation at Namhan, the impatient emperor decided to split the siege train. On January 21, an edict was sent to the rear ordering part of the troops to quickly bring the light guns and muskets to the frontline by horses without waiting for the heavy cannons drawn by oxen.[238]

This sped up the light contingent of the artillery train, which arrived at Namhan on January 29— five days after Hong Taiji's main force had arrived.[239] The heavy siege train, however, took another six days, arriving only on February 4.[240] It took Hong Taiji's main army a total of 28 days to reach Hanyang from Mukden; but 39 days for the heavy siege train to cover the same distance. And it was only because they were lucky enough that the Imjin River 臨津江 was frozen so they could drag the artillery across the ice using sleds.[241] The distance between Mukden and Namhan fort is roughly 578km (360 miles); the average speed of the heavy cannons was thus around 9 miles per day.[242] By the time of the arrival of the heavy artillery, the first echelon had already maintained a blockade of 24 days, repulsing multiple Joseon relief forces.

Despite the arrival of the heavy artillery, Hong Taiji did not press a frontal assault immediately. Instead, the emperor decided to capture the fortress of Kanghwa Island, which he deemed an easier target. Since the families of the Joseon King and the high officials were

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[237] MWLD. 804.
[238] MWLD, 801.
[239] MWLD, 804. QSL, 70.
[240] NGSYD, 229.
[241] QSL, 419/2.
[242] The pace of the Qing siege train was similar to its European counterpart. According to Simon Pepper and Nicholas Adams's case study of the siege of Siena, a half-cannon could march nine miles a day. But one should be caution that the figure drawn in this study is only a rough calculation as I only used the linear distance between the two places on Google map. Simon Pepper and Nicholas Adams, *Firearms and Fortifications: Military Architecture and Siege Warfare in Sixteenth-Century Siena* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 165.

residing at Kanghwa Island, the Qing could use them as hostages to force the king to capitulate.[243] The invasion of Kanghwa Island took place on 16 February, when the water surrounding the island had just defrosted. The Qing flotilla, made up of 80 small vessels, first defeated the Joseon surface force of 30 vessels with red barbarian cannons and generalissimo cannons and then landed its troops on the island. The garrison, numbered only a few hundred, and mostly musketeers and archers, was quickly overwhelmed after a brief fight. The island was in chaos, everyone was trying to find a way to escape; while some decided to die for their king. Kim Sangyong, the former right state councilor, blew himself up on a chest of gunpowder.[244] The island fortress surrendered that night, and the royal family fell to the hands of the Qing.

While the Qing navy was preparing for the invasion of Kanghwa Island, the besiegers outside Namhan fortress were preparing for an assault. The artillery corps deployed their heavy cannons at the high ground outside the fortress and exchanged fire with the defenders. According to a Joseon source, their own heavenly cannon (Kr. *chŏnjap'o*) hit the Qing artillery position and killed a commander and a few soldiers, forcing the besiegers to retreat from the position. However, this small success hardly deterred the besiegers. On February 18, the Qing launched their first large-scale assault on the Namhan fortress. They deployed their heavy artillery and bombarded the city all day long, inflicting horrible damage, as an eyewitness wrote:

> All day today, the enemy assembled another large cannon. They positioned it toward the royal residence and fired volley after volley. From what I could see, the cannonballs were as large as rice bowls. They fell onto a house where

[243] NGSYD, 233.
[244] Na, *The Diary of 1636,* 119

> the officer in charge of the village granary *sach'ang* resided. There was a tower in the house and a cave below the tower. The cannonball penetrated three layers of his house and struck deep into the ground, more than a foot.[245]

The bombardment continued for the next two days. Yet, the severe damage to the city wall notwithstanding, the defenders managed to maintain the structure of their fortification, as the same record wrote:

> The eastern part of the fortress was hit badly by cannon fire, and the battlements of the fortress were destroyed. Four or five hundred empty bushel baskets used for grain were carried there, filled with earth, and used to reinforce the fortress. Then they were filled with water to freeze and turn into ice. Even if the fortress was hit by cannonballs, the ice-filled baskets would not allow them to penetrate the earth, and they would not cause much damage.[246]

That said, seeing no hope of a relief force, the morale of the Joseon garrison ebbed as days passed. On 20 February, some soldiers marched up to the royal palace demanding the king end the forlorn resistance.[247] Later that day, the hostages captured from Kanghwa were presented to the Joseon negotiating officials at the Qing camp, verifying the rumors of the fall of the Island. This was the last straw. King Injo decided to surrender himself. It took a few more days for the Qing and the Joseon court to decide on the ritual of the capitulation. Finally, on 24 February, Injo emerged from Namhan Fortress and submitted to Hong Taiji,

[245] Na, *The Diary of 1636*, 70.
[246] Na, *The Diary of 1636*, 71-72
[247] Na, *The Diary of 1636*, 72.

performing the ritual of thrice kneeling and nine prostrations, and handing over his seal issued by the Ming.[248] Joseon officially became a tributary state of the Qing Empire.

The Siege of Kado Island

Two days after Injo's surrender, the Qing force started to retreat with the wealth and people they seized on their way. Eventually, it took a total of 73 days for the whole army to reach Mukden. On their way back, despite Hong Taiji's repeated admonitions, the Qing troops continued to pillage and plunder.[249] For some troops, however, they had a final assignment before going home. On 26 February, Hong Taiji ordered Prince Xoto 碩託, together with Kong Youde, Geng Zhongming, and Shang Kexi 尚可喜, to invade the Kado Island 皮島.[250] Kado is located at the coastal frontier between Joseon and Manchuria. In the 1620s, Mao Wenlong turned it into a Ming military base and harassed the eastern border of the Later Jin. After Mao's execution in 1629, Kado Island remained in the hands of the Ming. As Joseon had been brought into submission, Hong Taiji decided to neutralize this threat once and for all.[251]

This expedition force consisted of the Hanjun, the forces of the Three Han Princes—Kong, Geng, and Shang—along with a contingent of Manchu soldiers. They were supported by 50 Joseon vessels and 16 red-barbarian cannons.[252] Kado Island was a stronghold with a garrison of around 16,000.[253] Surrounded by water and armed with a massive number of firearms, the Island's defensive fire could seize every approaching ship. Consequently, Xoto

[248] Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616–1911* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 41.
[249] QSL, the rear echelon only reached Mukden on 9 May 1637.
[250] CD-23, 94
[251] Liu Jianxin et al., "Yi liu san qi nian Ming Qing Pidao zhi zhan," *Lishi dang'an* 1982, no. 3 (1982): 84–89.
[252] CD-23, 94
[253] "Shengjing manwen qingjun zhanbao," 27.

made little progress. On 11 March, Hong Taiji further dispatched Banner leaders Asan, Yecen, and Shi Tingzhu to join Xoto and ordered them to devise an invasion plan. The reinforcement, however, did not bring much progress. On 2 April, Hong Taiji further sent Ajiga and a thousand troops to join the expedition force, which Ajiga would assume command of.

The invasion plan was finalized on April 29. According to the plan, the Qing force would be split into two divisions, one for a feint attack from the front and another for a surprise attack from the rear. The feint-attack division, made up of the Eight Banners cavalry, the Hanjun, the forces of the three Han princes, and the Joseon force, would launch a feint attack from the front with vessels. After they had drawn the attention of the defenders, the assault force would cross the sea and land on the northwestern side of the island. The assault force was divided into three echelons. The vanguards (Ma: *bayara*), headed by the infantry (Ma: *beki cooha*) banner leader, would lead the way, followed by the infantry. At the rear, Asan and Yecen would support with vessels. To strengthen the element of surprise, the operation would be launched in the evening (19:00-21:00) under the cover of the night, which would reduce the accuracy of the defensive fire. [254]

On the next day, Ajiga sent his last letter of summon to the defenders at Kado. Receiving no reply, the Qing forces launched their attack on the evening of May 2 as planned. The vanguard landed on the northwestern side of Kado as planned and established a perimeter while waiting for reinforcement. After the arrival of the infantry, they advanced and captured the Ming fort. On the other side of the island, the feint-attack division also approached the island and landed its troops. The Ming was overrun from both sides; its commander was captured and executed after refusing to surrender. The rest of the garrison,

[254] Liu et al., "Yi liu san qi nian Ming Qing Pidao zhi zhan," 84–89.

together with the armaments and firearms, were all captured.[255] In the invasion, the Qing lost a total of 260 men. [256] The victory of Kado Island embellished the Joseon campaign with a grand victory.

Hanjun Division of Two Banners

The Aftermath of the Joseon Campaign

The performance of the Hanjun and its artillery corps in the Joseon campaign was mixed. They contributed to the swift success of the Joseon campaign but were far from indispensable. Due to the logistics difficulties, Hanjun and the heavy artillery train arrived belatedly at the Joseon theatre. By the time they arrived, the vanguard had already laid siege to Namhan fortress for 24 days (January 11–February 4). During this period, the besiegers needed to maintain their blockade while fighting off multiple Joseon relief forces. Some battles proved to be quite tough. For example, the experienced commander Yangguri 楊古利 was shot dead by a musketeer when fighting the relief force from Jeolla 全羅道 and Chungcheong Provinces 忠清道.[257] Nonetheless, the very existence of the heavy artillery train served as a means of psychological intimidation. In a letter of summoning to the Joseon defenders in Anju 安州 city, for example, Hong Taiji wrote: "Do not expect me to retreat. As I have come, I will not return before this is finished. My troops at the rear are coming with the red-shirt cannons, generalissimo cannons, firearms, war carts, and field trains. Can you not see them?"[258] Later, a Qing letter to Injo also wrote that: "The two generals Kong and

[255] QSL, 480/1- 481/2
[256] Liu et al., "Yi liu san qi nian Ming Qing Pidao zhi zhan," 84–89.
[257] NGSYD, 228.
[258] MWLD, 802.

Keng command seventy thousand troops of the Ming dynasty. They brought with them twenty-eight long-distance red barbarian cannons, and they will assault Kanghwa Island."[259]

In the end, the Hanjun only participated in three major operations during the campaign -- the siege of Kanghwa Island, the Namhan fortress, and the Kado Island; and the heavy artillery corps was only deployed in the first two. During the siege of Kanghwa Island, the Qing heavy artillery effectively destroyed the Joseon navy, clearing the waterway for the Qing force to land on the island. In the siege of Namhan fortress, the heavy cannons inflicted considerable damage to the fortification and killed many within the city.[260] The outstanding firepower of the red barbarian cannons was also recognized by the Joseon sources, as King Injo allegedly commented:

> In the past, the barbarian army (the Qing) did not know about artillery. Now, they are equipped with cavalry, infantry, archers, and artillery; this makes them invincible. China also had cannons, but we never heard that their cannons could break city walls; this is the first time we have witnessed something like this.[261]

Nevertheless, the king did not surrender in the face of the heavy cannons. The defenders maintained their heavily battered fortification with provisional measures. The Qing forces never managed to reach the city wall by force despite multiple attempts. The success of the Qing, ultimately, should be attributed to Hong Taiji's strategy of blitzkrieg and prolonged blockade. The Qing, cleverly and boldly, left all the Joseon cities untouched and drove quickly into Hanyang. After Injo took refuge in Namhan fortress, they blockaded it but

[259] Na, *The Diary of 1636,* 46.
[260] Na, *The Diary of 1636,* 70-72.
[261] Interesting enough, many Joseon commentators believed that the Manchus learned to use heavy cannons through Kong Youde and Geng Zhongming. Sok Chiyon, *Namhanhaewirok,* 19.

refrained from assaulting it until the very end of the siege. The besiegers' main duty was to cut the communication between the fortress and the rest of the Joseon army. Without central coordination, the Joseon relief forces from different localities could not join the main force and were forced to face the Qing army one by one in field battles, in which the Qing heavy cavalry always had an advantage. After defeating multiple Joseon relief forces, Hong Taiji decided to split his army and take Kanghwa Island first. The invasion went smoothly, mainly thanks to the island's inadequate defense. Having the royal family hostage, the Qing was in a better position to negotiate with the Joseon King; a few days later, Injo surrendered. Hence, while the artillery corps played an important role, its contribution alone was not sufficient for the Qing's swift victory.

Hanjun's Disciplinary Issues

Whereas Hanjun's contribution to the Joseon campaign is disputable, its disciplinary issue is evident. Reportedly, some Hanjun refused to fight in battle and instead resorted to looting during their march. This directly led to its structural development a few months later. However, it must be noted that disciplinary problems plagued the entire Manchu army; the Manchus and Mongols were just as disobedient as the Han soldiers. Nevertheless, Hong Taiji seized the opportunity to strengthen his control of Hanjun and use it as an excuse to restructure Hanjun.

As Hong Taiji strived to turn the Qing from a tribal confederation to a state, disciplining his expanding army was a crucial step. In Nurhaci's time, obtaining resources and manpower was the major goal of war; as a result, plunder and pillage were not strictly forbidden. In fact, they were an important motivation for the Jurchen soldiers. However, this

old practice was no longer compatible with the emperor's new imperial vision.[262] The reasons are threefold. First, pillage and plunder provoke resentment among the ordinary people and undermine the authority and popularity of the emperor, thus hindering the establishment of the Qing's rule, directly or indirectly, on the newly conquered land. Second, it requires a disciplined force to achieve complex tactical maneuvers, whereas undisciplined troops often jeopardize the military operation and other soldiers' lives. During the Joseon campaign, many Qing soldiers fell because they or their brothers-in-arms left their posts for looting. In some other cases, some soldiers and commanders refused to advance in the face of enemy fire, leading to the death of their comrades at the front. Lastly, in the Qing political culture, it is important that the soldiers turn in their booty and let the state redistribute them fairly among the banners and companies after taxing them.

Unfortunately, Hong Taiji's imperial dream was not shared by many of his subordinates, and he lacked the means and authority to enforce discipline among his troops. Throughout the campaign, the emperor repeatedly reminded and admonished his commanders and soldiers not to loot and plunder.[263] After the expedition force embarked, Hong Taiji sent two letters to the rear echelon; at the end of both letters, he specifically instructed Dudu not to take anything from the Joseon peasants except for draught oxen, adding that they would have plenty of wealth to loot at the Joseon capital.[264] These letters belie the weak authority of the emperor over his commander.

However, looting and plunder did not cease in the Qing camp, and Hong Taiji decided to make a group of Hanjun soldiers an example. Two days after King Injo surrendered, the emperor issued an edict addressing all his Manchu, Mongol, and Han soldiers. The edict

[262] Liu, *Manzu cong buluo dao guojia de fazhan*, 268-272; 347-356; Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 251-256.
[263] MWLD, 798.
[264] MWLD, 801, 803.

informs that the Hanjun unit under Tong San 佟三 was arrested for taking surrendered Joseon people as captives and would be put on trial. At the end of the edict, the emperor reminded all the troops not to capture surrendered Joseon subjects; otherwise, the offenders would be executed, and their direct superior would be punished, too.[265] Regrettably, the problem persisted. When the Qing army retreated, the emperor even needed to send an edict to the Joseon local officials at Uiji 義州 ordering them to hide the peasants from his soldiers. In the letter, the emperor bluntly wrote: "Although my troops were admonished, I worry that some of them would disobey my orders and capture your peasants and claim them as their captives."[266] This vividly illustrates the limits of the throne's authority and reflects the horrifying war crimes committed by the Qing army in Joseon.

Despite multiple setbacks, Hong Taiji persisted in rectifying the discipline issue of his army. When everything was finally settled and all units returned, the emperor decided to hold everyone accountable for their disobedience. On August 7, he brought his discontent to the surface, issuing an edict that stated: "In the Joseon campaign, our forces showed no discipline; they forgot about their country in the face of wealth."[267] Ten days later, a large-scale military trial was held in the court. The court censors listed the crimes of the guilty commanders and soldiers, starting from Prince Daixan, and announced their sentences.

In the tribunal, a total of seven Hanjun officers were convicted. Shi Tingzhu, the Banner leader, was accused of ten crimes, including the collusion of looting with his subordinates, covering their crimes, and disobeying military orders, leading to the death of troops. The court suggested dismissing Shi from his position. Hanjun officers Wu Shoujin

[265] CD-23, 99.
[266] QSL 440/2
[267] QSL 463/2

and the aforementioned Tong San were also convicted of conniving looting of their subordinates. Wu Shoujin was fined, and Tong San was sentenced to death.[268]

The other four convicted Hanjun officers —Jin Yuhe, Gao Hongzhong, Jin Li, and Da Erhan 達爾漢—were all founding members of the Hanjun. They commanded four ships in the invasion of Kado Island. However, when they approached the island, they refused to advance, claiming that they got lost on their way. Their timid actions led to the casualties of their comrades at the front. Further, Da Erhan connived with his subordinates about looting, and Jin Yuhe mismanaged the artillery carts on their way. All four were sentenced to death. At the end of the court trial, Hong Taiji commuted all the death sentences, but removed them from their positions and confiscated their properties. [269]

Seemingly, the court trial was not directed specifically against Hanjun members; it was a bigger scheme to rectify the discipline issue of the Qing army. Nonetheless, Hong Taiji seized this chance to streamline the Hanjun and induce awe among his Han subjects. On September 3, the emperor issued a lengthy edict addressing the Han officials, expressing his disappointment with all of them.

In the edict, Hong Taiji contends that, whereas a lot of Manchu officials fought with him gallantly for decades, most Han officials only defected to the Manchu state for personal interests or simply because they were captured in battle. Very few Han officials had fought hard for the Qing like the Manchus. Even worse, some Han officials committed treason and spied for the Ming. This was why many Han subjects became bondservants. Nonetheless, according to the emperor, he was benevolent enough to extract the Han bondservants from their oppressing Manchu lords and put them into one banner. Disappointingly, these Han

[268] QSL 472/1, 476/1-4762.
[269] QSL 467/2-477/1

officials did not bother to repay his grace. In the Joseon campaign, while the Manchu soldiers were fighting daringly at the front, the Han troops did not offer any support but stood aside as if strangers. Of all the Han officials, only Zhang Chengde really contributed to the battle by capturing two enemy ships. In the last section of the edict, the emperor accused the Han officials of hypocrisy. In the court, they advised the emperor to be a benevolent ruler, not to massacre, and not to loot. On the battlefield, however, these hypocrites were the first to loot and pillage. In the ending remark, the emperor grumbled bluntly and harshly,

> I see through your hypocrisy and unfaithfulness. Even though falcons and hounds are not intelligent, they serve well if you have raised them long enough. But you (Han officials), consuming salary but contributing nothing, are not even as valuable as the falcons and hounds.[270]

The emperor's disappointment was expressed without concealment, but his line of argument was by no means original. It had all the elements found in the 1634 ethnic rhetorics. It claims that the *Nikan* got their social-political privileges because of the Khan's grace; it recounts the incidents of *Nikan* spying for the Ming, and it compares the military contributions of the Manchus versus the *Nikan*. Nevertheless, the tone of the emperor's rhetoric intensified. For example, he accused the *Nikan* stood by when their Manchu counterparts were in danger and added that the *Nikan* often spoke about benevolence and loyalty, but their action showed the opposite. At the end of the paragraph, he compared the *Nikan* with hunting animals. This shows that the Manchu vs. *Nikan* rhetoric intensified over time as their competing interests grew more pronounced. The Hanjun needed another reform to rectify the issues.

[270] QSL 486/1-487/1.

On the following day, Bao Chengxian 鮑承先, a Han court adviser, submitted a memorial to the throne, asking for a reform of Hanjun. Unlike most Han officials, Bao, an early turncoat from the Ming, was hardly an ardent supporter of the Hanjun artillery program. In 1633, after Kong and Geng defected to the Later Jin, Bao submitted a memorial to the throne, in which he wrote:

> I recently heard that new cannons are being cast. Your Highness has been forging cannons in the past years; together with the captured red-barbarian cannons, there should be enough heavy cannons; why do we need to cast more? It is a waste of manpower and money. Not to mention, the heavy cannons are too cumbersome for transport. Further, the situation has changed. Two years ago, the cannons were so effective in destroying the outlying forts of Dalinghe, mainly because they were not prepared. If we besiege a Ming walled city with red-barbarian cannons again, the defenders would have been prepared with countermeasures. It will not be as easy as the last time.[271]

Understandably, Bao's new memorial to the throne would not sit well with the Hanjun either. In the memorial, Bao attributed the disciplinary issues of the Hanjun to its unstandardized company organization. Unlike the Manchu companies, which had a standardized size of three hundred men, the size of Hanjun companies varied greatly, ranging from three hundred to eight hundred men. Furthermore, some Hanjun companies lacked proper company captains and were instead commanded by *bošokū* 撥什庫—a low-ranking official. As a result, the Hanjun lacked a proper chain of command to enforce law and order. The situation was exacerbated by Shi Tingzhu's unjust leadership of the Hanjun, as he allowed his direct subordinates to plunder without fairly distributing the spoils among all Han

[271] TCCZ, 58-9.

soldiers. This not only shattered the morale of the Han division but also undermined its efficacy as the artillery corps.

In his memorial, Bao proposed standardizing the size of Hanjun companies to 300 men. Additionally, since the Hanjun had grown to nearly 10,000 strong, he suggested splitting it into two camps to facilitate the management of troops and armaments. Most interestingly, Bao recommended that the emperor appoint a Manchu supervisor to oversee the Hanjun, enforce military laws, and combat corruption—an action that would effectively undermine the ethnic distinctiveness of the Hanjun.[272]

It took Hong Taiji thirteen days to decide on the fate of the Hanjun. On September 17, an edict was finally issued. Hanjun was split into two banners. Shi Tingzhu was appointed as the Banner leader of the left-wing banner, and Ma Guanyuan, who was not charged with any misconduct during the Joseon campaign, was appointed the Banner leader of the right-wing banner. Han adults would be organized into companies like the Manchus. Contrary to Bao's proposition, however, Hong Taiji refused to put a Manchu supervisor in Hanjun, thus maintaining its ethnic distinctiveness. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Bao's suggestion was to split Hanjun into two camps (probably the Manchu term *ing*), which is strictly a military unit. But despite all his disappointment, the emperor split Hanjun into the left-wing and right-wing banners. The Mongols had also been organized into the left-wing and right-wing banners in 1634 before they were turned into the Mongol Eight Banners.[273] In other words, Hong Taiji was strengthening the institutional status of Hanjun and might be preparing for an ethnic Han division of the Eight Banners in the future.

[272] *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian,* vol 1, 51
[273] QSL, 240/1; TC-8, 135-6; NGSYD, 79-80.

The whole development suggests that Hong Taiji was presented with an option to de-ethnicize Hanjun by assigning a Manchu supervisor. However, not only did he discard this option, he strengthened Hanjun's autonomy and hierarchical status by expanding it into two banners. We can only speculate on Hong Taiji's intention. One explanation is that Hanjun remained a crucial political tool for the emperor. It would break the balance of power in the Manchu court if Hanjun was placed under the supervision of any Manchu nobleman. Whereas, as long as the Hanjun was placed in the hands of the Han officials, whose political influence was far weaker than the Manchus, Hong Taiji could retain his control of this valuable and expanding military force. Furthermore, Hanjun members were still officially registered under the Manchu Eight Banners and remained the subjects of their Banner lords. Expanding Hanjun and enhancing its autonomy, hence, means undermining the authority and political influence of the Banner lords while strengthening the emperor's central power.

Seen from this angle, Hong Taiji was exploiting ethnicity as a political tool to maintain a precarious yet delicate balance of power on many fronts. On the one hand, he deliberately harnessed Hanjun's ethnic distinction to widen his political advantage against the other Manchu nobles. On the other hand, by maintaining a Manchu-first position, he suppressed the political momentum of Hanjun officials. Some scholars maintain that the Qing powerhouse cleverly manipulated ethnicity as their ruling tool as if the exploitation of ethnicity was its guiding principle.[274] However, the case of the Hanjun suggests otherwise: rather than adhering to a rigid ethnic policy, Hong Taiji assessed his political options pragmatically. and he chose to offer more power and autonomy to the Han elites instead of the Manchu aristocracy.

[274] Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 35-6.

Conclusion

The Joseon Campaign and the subsequent division of the Hanjun into two banners exemplify Hong Taiji's evolving strategies to balance military effectiveness, ethnic identity, and political power within the emerging Qing state. This period marked a critical juncture for the Hanjun, as its performance in the Joseon Campaign exposed both its potential and its limitations. Despite logistical difficulties and a limited role in the campaign's ultimate success, the Hanjun artillery corps demonstrated the value of advanced siege weaponry, intimidating opponents and enabling Qing forces to achieve strategic victories. However, its disciplinary issues and uneven command structure highlighted the need for reform, culminating in the decision to split the Hanjun into two banners.

From the perspective of the Hanjun officers and Han elites, their position as ethnic soldiers allowed them to hold a unique yet precarious place within the Qing state. While they were indispensable due to their expertise in artillery technology—a resource Hong Taiji could not afford to lose—their failure to consistently demonstrate loyalty and strategic military value limited their ability to move closer to the state apparatus. The disciplinary issues and underwhelming performance in campaigns such as the Joseon invasion did little to bolster their standing. Despite their significant contributions to siege warfare and the development of advanced artillery, their mixed military record gave the Manchu elites room to question their reliability and resist further integration into the state's core. Nevertheless, the Hanjun officers retained agency in their negotiations, leveraging their expertise to maintain relevance and secure reforms such as structural expansion, even as doubts about their loyalty lingered.

Hong Taiji's decisions during this time reveal a leader bound by the constraints of realpolitik. While the Hanjun's shortcomings in the Joseon Campaign offered an ideal opportunity to address its structural flaws, Hong Taiji stopped short of imposing sweeping reforms that could upset the delicate balance of power in his court. He avoided placing the

Hanjun under the supervision of a Manchu commander, likely recognizing that such a move would alienate the Han elites whose support was vital to his state-building efforts. Similarly, he resisted elevating the Hanjun to the status of an ethnic institution equivalent to the Manchu or Mongol Eight Banners. Instead, he maintained its dual identity as both a military force—the Heavy Army, and an ethnic-political representation—the Han Banner, preserving its symbolic role in his vision of a multiethnic Qing empire.

By splitting the Hanjun into two banners and expanding its organizational structure, Hong Taiji achieved a delicate balance. This reform curbed the authority of individual Han commanders while maintaining the Hanjun's distinctiveness within the Eight Banners system. It allowed him to harness the Hanjun's growing importance as a political tool, particularly in managing the aspirations of the Han elites, without threatening the dominance of the Manchu aristocracy. This pragmatic approach reflects Hong Taiji's broader strategy of using ethnicity as both a unifying and divisive force, leveraging the Hanjun to centralize authority while ensuring stability across ethnic lines.

Ultimately, Hong Taiji's handling of the Hanjun showcases his ability to navigate the complexities of multiethnic governance. His compromises highlight a ruler who prioritized political stability over rigid ideology, adapting to shifting circumstances to maintain control. For the Hanjun officers and Han elites, their trajectory as ethnic soldiers encapsulated both opportunity and constraint. Their indispensability as artillery specialists allowed them to remain in negotiation with the Manchu elites, preserving their influence in a tenuous but enduring relationship. However, they also failed to fully integrate into the state apparatus due to questions of loyalty and inconsistent military value. As Manchu-*Nikan* tensions escalated, the loyalty and military performance of the Han military elites came under increasingly stern scrutiny.

4. "The Body is with the Qing, but the Heart is with the Ming": Artillery and Ethnic Loyalty

The escalating scrutiny of Han elites and Hanjun officers following the Joseon Campaign reveals the growing importance of ethnic rhetoric in Qing governance under Hong Taiji. While earlier reforms—such as dividing the Hanjun into two banners—had highlighted the emperor's approach to balancing ethnic interests with political control, the period after 1637 saw a marked shift in both the tone and the purpose of his rhetoric. As Manchu–*Nikan* tensions deepened, Hong Taiji increasingly employed ethnic narratives not only to suppress Han elites' demands but also to demand proof of their loyalty and military value. These new ethnic rhetorics increasingly cast doubt on the allegiance of Han officials, portraying them as both indispensable and inherently unreliable participants in the emerging Qing state.

This chapter traces the emergence and development of the ethnic rhetoric surrounding the phrase "the body is with the Qing, but the heart is with the Ming." Originating from Hong Taiji's accusation against the Hanjun official Zhu Shichang—who was charged with treason for proposing a ban on selling *Nikan* women bondservants into prostitution—the phrase soon gained currency in court debates and appeared in various forms. Sometimes it was framed in the first person and in other instances it was more descriptive. Regardless of these linguistic nuances, it consistently hinged on symbolic dichotomies: heart vs. body, Qing vs. Ming. By openly questioning whether a person's outward submission ("the body") might conceal an inner allegiance ("the heart") to the Ming, this rhetoric marked a major discursive rupture in how Hong Taiji and his court conceptualized Nikan loyalty.

Prior to this development, Hong Taiji's criticisms of Han elites typically focused on perceived timidity, selfishness, or failures in military performance—without explicitly accusing them of "harboring hearts for the Ming." Once introduced, however, the body–heart

dichotomy recast shared ethnic background with the Ming as a direct basis for suspicion, forging a powerful link between ethnicity and treason. By adopting this new language, Hong Taiji broadened his rhetorical arsenal, allowing even routine failures or policy disagreements to be interpreted as signs of deeper ethnic betrayal.

Worsening the situation, the Hanjun's military performance soon became entwined with their perceived ethnic loyalty. At Songshan, the Hanjun artillery corps' logistical and tactical shortfalls were construed not merely as operational failings but as evidence of disloyalty. These accusations invoked the newly forged rhetoric of divided allegiance, embedding "body is present, yet whose heart remains with the Ming" in the political discourse of the Qing court. By linking battlefield setbacks to questions of loyalty, Hong Taiji harnessed military performance as a means of political control. The siege of Songshan became a flashpoint where ethnic rhetoric and military realities converged, prompting the emperor to further divide the Hanjun into four banners. While this reform curtailed the power of individual Han commanders, it also advanced the Hanjun's institutionalization within the Eight Banners system.

Together, the interconnected events covered in this chapter demonstrate how artillery technology and ethnic politics shaped the evolution of both the Hanjun and broader Qing ethnic policy. Hong Taiji's reliance on Han artillery expertise placed the Hanjun at the forefront of Qing military innovation, yet the Hanjun's ethnic background and political ambitions subjected it to ever-intensifying scrutiny. The cumulative effect of these developments—rooted in evolving ethnic rhetoric and the precarious position of Han officers as "ethnic soldiers"—exemplifies the larger challenges of multiethnic governance in the early Qing period.

The *Nikan* Bondservants Examination Issue

On 28 February 1638, Zhang Cunren 張存仁 and Zu Kefa 祖可法, two prominent Han advisors of the Court of Censors 都察院承政, submitted a memorial to Hong Taiji, urging the emperor to address the plight of *Nikan* bondservants. In their memorial, they lamented that many talented individuals were unable to serve the state because of their servile status. The most recent public examination had explicitly prohibited participation by bondservants of Manchu, Mongol, and *Nikan* origin, leaving many literate and capable individuals trapped in servitude without the opportunity to rise through merit. To redress this situation, they proposed allowing bondservants to sit for future examinations, with the added provision that elected candidates be emancipated. As compensation for the loss of these bondservants, they suggested providing their owners with replacements, similar to policies enacted during earlier public exams. The advisors even proposed instituting a quota system, whereby ten candidates would be selected from civilian households and another ten from bondservants for each examination cycle.[275] Their petition, however, was met with a sharp rebuke from Hong Taiji, whose response reflected the increasingly pointed ethnic rhetoric he had honed over the preceding years.

In his characteristic style, Hong Taiji's reply began by emphasizing the grace and benevolence he had already extended to the Nikan. He argued that many Nikan had become bondservants due to their resistance to Manchu rule during earlier conflicts. Yet, despite this defiance, he claimed to have shown magnanimity by emancipating many Han bondservants and granting them civilian status. Furthermore, he highlighted the establishment of multiple public examinations, through which literate bondservants could already achieve freedom if their talents merited it. While conceding that some literate bondservants might remain in

[275] Fang Yujin, "Qing Chongde san nian Hanwen dang'an xuanbian," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 2(1982): 20. QSL, 526/1-2.

servitude, Hong Taiji countered that these individuals were rewards for the valor of Manchu soldiers who had risked or sacrificed their lives in battle. The bravery of the Manchu soldiers, he asserted, stood in stark contrast to what he described as the timidity and cowardice of the Nikan. To drive this point home, he recounted the behavior of the Nikan during the Battle of Kado Island, where Manchu troops had fought courageously while the Nikan allegedly held back, behaving more like spectators than comrades in arms.[276] The emperor's edict reflected recurring elements in his evolving ethnic rhetoric. As in previous cases, he presented the *Nikan*'s privileges—such as opportunities for emancipation—as extraordinary acts of imperial grace. He also invoked a comparative narrative, contrasting the perceived bravery and loyalty of Manchu soldiers with the supposed cowardice and ingratitude of the *Nikan*.

Hong Taiji framed the Han advisors' proposal as an affront to justice and fairness. He argued that forcibly taking bondservants from Manchu soldiers without providing adequate replacements was deeply unjust, as was the alternative of enslaving innocent civilians to compensate the original owners. In his conclusion, he accused Zhang and Zu of prioritizing the welfare of the *Nikan* over that of the Manchu soldiers who had earned their rewards through bloodshed, as well as the innocent civilians who would potentially be harmed by such policies. The harsh reprimand left the two Han advisors with no choice but to bow and apologize, effectively ending the debate.[277]

While the bondservant examination issue was not directly related to the Hanjun, it was deeply intertwined with the broader ethnic tensions that shaped the Hanjun's institutional development. Zhang and Zu submitted their memorial on behalf of the Court of Censors, focusing on emancipating literati rather than conscripting soldiers. Yet Hong Taiji's

[276] QSL, 527/1-2.
[277] QSL, 527/1-2.

rhetorical response resembled his earlier edicts addressing the Hanjun affairs, such as the 1634 corvée incident and the 1637 Hanjun Joseon trial. Moreover, the emperor referenced the Hanjun's lackluster performance during the Joseon Campaign as an example of the *Nikan*'s inadequate contributions, linking the examination issue to the broader Manchu-*Nikan* conflict. This incident underscores how the question of bondservant emancipation remained central to the political struggles between the Manchu ruling elites and Han elites, with the debate growing more intense as the Qing state expanded.

At its core, the examination issue illustrates the intersection of military, political, and ethnic concerns in early Qing governance. For Han elites like Zhang and Zu, advocating for the emancipation of *Nikan* bondservants was not merely a humanitarian gesture. It was a strategic move to bolster the political and social mobility of their ethnic group within the Qing state, for the elected candidate could become a court official, thus expanding the Nikan political influence.

Yet their efforts clashed with the Manchu leadership's need to reward loyal Manchu soldiers and maintain the ethnic hierarchical order that underpinned their power. Hong Taiji's rejection of the memorial and his invocation of ethnic narratives served not only to suppress the demands of Han officials but also to reinforce the existing power dynamics that privileged the Manchu aristocracy. By framing the debate around loyalty and military merit, the emperor transformed what might have been a bureaucratic issue into a pointed political statement about ethnicity and allegiance.

This incident, when viewed alongside subsequent events such as Zhu Shichang's trial and the failed siege of Songshan, reveals the mounting tension surrounding the Hanjun and its role within the Qing state. The bondservant examination issue was an early flashpoint in a series of controversies that would ultimately culminate in the accusation of divided loyalty—

"the body is with the Qing, but the heart is with the Ming"—that came to dominate the rhetoric surrounding the Hanjun. These interconnected episodes highlight how military failures, logistical challenges, and ethnic suspicions were leveraged to question the reliability of Han officials and soldiers, shaping the trajectory of the Hanjun's development and its precarious place within Hong Taiji's multiethnic empire.

Zhu Shichang's Trial

By early 1638, despite the worsening tensions between the Manchu and *Nikan*, Hong Taiji's rhetoric toward the Han elites and Hanjun officers had largely been confined to criticisms of their timidity and selfishness. While the emperor occasionally recalled instances of spying and resistance among the *Nikan*, no direct accusations of treason had been made. This changed significantly with the trial of Zhu Shichang on August 25, 1638, which marked a turning point in how Hong Taiji's ethnic rhetoric was deployed. Zhu's case was not merely an isolated incident but a reflection of deepening suspicions toward the Han elites, whose ethnic ties to the Ming adversaries complicated their position in the Qing court.

Zhu Shichang, an early Han defector to the Later Jin in 1621, was one of the earliest regiment commanders of the Han Army.[278] As the general commander of Mukden's defense, Zhu oversaw the construction of key fortifications in Mukden, Liaoyang 遼陽, and Haizhou 海州. His younger brother, Zhu Shiyin, introduced advanced methods of cannon casting and supervised the production of the first red-shirt cannon. Zhu Shiyin also coined the term Heavy Army (*ujen cooha*) to describe the Hanjun's role as the artillery corps.[279] Together, the Zhu brothers exemplified the Han elites' military and political contributions to the pre-conquest Qing, earning significant influence within the court.

[278] BQTZ, 4323.
[279] BQTZ, 4323.

In late 1637, Zhu Shichang submitted a memorial to Hong Taiji, calling for a ban on the sale of captured Han women to music households (Ch: *lehu* 樂戶) as prostitutes. While the memorial initially went unnoticed, it resurfaced nearly a year later under drastically different political circumstances. On August 25, 1638, Hong Taiji commissioned two Han censorate officials to investigate Zhu. In a scathing edict, the emperor dismissed Zhu's proposal as a threat to "ethnic harmony." Hong Taiji argued that while he had already prohibited prostitution, he had no authority to prevent Manchu soldiers from selling their bondservants, whom he regarded as hard-earned spoils of war. He framed Zhu's memorial as privileging Han interests over Manchu sacrifices, warning that such actions could lead to dangerous factionalism:

> Manchu officials sheltering Manchus, Mongol officials sheltering Mongols, and Han officials sheltering *Nikan*, how to foster (ethnic) harmony? (Ch: 滿洲官庇護滿洲。蒙古官庇護蒙古漢官庇護漢人 Ma: *manju i amban manju be dalire,, monggo amban monggo be dalire,, nikan i amban nikan be dalire oci*; *ai de uhe hūwaliyambi*).[280]

Hong Taiji went further, accusing Zhu of treason and describing him as one whose "body is present, yet whose heart remains with the Ming" (Ch: 身雖在此。心之所嚮。猶在明也; Ma: *beye ubade bi, mujilen nikan i baru seme gūnimbi*), marking the first recorded use of this phrase in Qing history. [281]

This accusation resonated deeply within the Qing court, signaling a new phase in the emperor's ethnic rhetoric. Two weeks later, on September 9, Hong Taiji gave a motivational speech to his officials, invoking the story of Jiang Ziya 姜子牙, the legendary advisor to King Wen of Zhou 周文王. Shi Tingzhu responded negatively, saying: "Jiang Ziya

[280] CD-23, 444-45.
[281] CD-23, 444-45.

had the right to issue a death sentence, do we? Even when we want to punish low-ranking officials, such as the company captain or below, we need to kneel before the six ministry officials by their side. Does that not insult us?"

Shi's action was absolutely confounding, for such a speech would get him nothing but trouble, or even a death sentence. Understandably, his remarks provoked outrage among the Eight Banners leaders, who accused Shi of being "physically in one country, yet his heart still in another" (Ma: *beye musei gurunde bisire gojime,, gūnin kemuni encu gurun de bi seme*).[282] The Manchu wording here differs from Hong Taiji's earlier edict—which was framed in the first person—whereas this phrasing is more descriptive. However, the core dichotomies of Ming vs. Qing and body vs. heart remained intact, underscoring the persistent anxiety over loyalty in the Qing state. Yet, in a surprising move, Hong Taiji exonerated Shi, suggesting that the emperor was selective in applying such accusations, using them as a tool to manage tensions rather than as a blanket condemnation.

Zhu Shichang, however, was not as lucky as Shi. On the next day, Shi and Ma, as the Hanjun Banner leaders, were commissioned to try Zhu's case together with other Han officials. After a brief interrogation, the Han officials came to the conclusion that Zhu was not only guilty of "While the body is in the Great Qing, the heart still yearns for the Ming" (Ch: 身在本朝。其心猶在明國; Ma: *sini beye daicing gurun de bisire gojime,, mujilen nikan de bifi*)," but also that he served as a spy for the Ming (Ch: 護庇漢人。與姦細無異; Ma: *nikan gurun de dame iletu jiyansilame gisurehe seme*).[283] They agreed that not only Zhu Shichang but also his brother and a series of acquaintances should be put to death and have their properties confiscated. In the end, Hong Taiji pardoned most of their death sentences but exiled the Zhu brothers.[284]

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[282] CD-23, 500
[283] CD-23, 502-03, QSL, 562/2-563/1.
[284] CD-23, 503. QSL, 562/2-563/1.

Zhu's case was a watershed in the Hanjun negotiation. From then on, Hong Taiji spelled out his mistrust towards his Han subjects for their shared ethnic background with their Ming adversaries. This new rhetoric interestingly employs the dichotomies of body and heart and Qing and Ming, figuratively describing their loyalty issue. This change in ethnic rhetoric reflects the changes in the ethnic-political situation of the Qing court. For one, it was a reaction to the growing hostility against the Ming. As the Chahar Mongols and Joseon were brought to submission, Hong Taiji secured his fronts at the East and West; he could now concentrate his attention on the Ming in the Liaoxi corridor. As the Ming were using a chain of walled cities and fortifications to defend the area, the Han artillery corps played a critical role. Yet, the shared ethnic background of the Han soldiers and their Ming adversaries troubled many Manchu elites.

Second, it reflects Hong Taiji's effort to balance the interests of the various ethnic groups in his empire. In Zhu's trial, the emperor bluntly and genuinely stated, "Is it not nice that Manchu, Mongol, and *Nikan* make peace with each other?" (Ch: 今滿洲蒙古漢人。彼此和好。豈不為善乎; Ma: *manju, monggo, nikan uhei hūwaliyafi banjici tereci geli sain bio*).[285] Furthermore, Hong Taiji not only reprimanded Zhu Shichang in the court meeting on August 25, but he also issued multiple edicts to several parties, addressing the need for ethnic harmony. For example, he ordered all princes and nobles to take good care of the newly admitted Han, Mongol, and subjects of other ethnic groups. If there were new joiners who were too poor to obtain a wife or soldiers who did not have a horse, their respective Banner lord should supply a wife or a horse to them, respectively. If their Banner lord had difficulty providing them, they should appeal to the emperor, and he would grant them extra

[285] CD-23, 445; QSL, 555/1.

resources.[286] Apparently, the emperor was attempting to redress the ethnic tension within his realm, and Zhu was caught in the turmoil.

The 1634 corvée case, the public examination case, and Zhu Shichang's case all involved the same sensitive issue–the removal of *Nikan* bondservants from Manchu households. Zhu Shichang suggested banning the trade of Han women; the public examination case recommended extracting Han subjects from Manchu households; in the 1634 corvée incident, the Manchu officials reported to Hong Taiji that the real cause of the protest was because the Han officials sold some of the Han women but had not received payment. It is understandable why Hong Taiji got so nervous about the issue. The bondservant was an integral component of the Qing social hierarchy. It was also an important kind of property in the Manchu society and a common form of reward for soldiers and officials. The conscription of Han bondservants from Manchu households to Hanjun might have already created discontent among the Manchus, especially when the emperor could not repay the Manchu bondservant owners with another bondservant. On the other hand, however, the Han officials were pushing further to limit the trade of Han bondservants. Hong Taiji might have seen this as a threat to the already fragile Macnhu-*Nikan* relationship. That was why he needed to build up this language to suppress the negotiating power of the Han officials.

All in all, beginning in 1634, Hong Taiji cultivated a growing rhetoric specifically targeting the *Nikan* and Hanjun, leveraging ethnic dimensions of loyalty, privilege, and contribution to strengthen his control over the emerging Qing state. Initially, this rhetoric framed the disparity in privileges as justified by the superior military contributions and bravery of the Manchu compared to the alleged shortcomings of the *Nikan*. Over time, however, these comparisons intensified, evolving into explicit accusations of treason that cast

[286] QSL, 556/1-557/1.

doubt on the loyalty of Han officials, given their shared ethnic background with the Ming. These accusations were not merely reactions to isolated incidents but reflected a broader strategy to consolidate authority and manage the delicate balance of power within his multiethnic empire. The 1638 bondservant examination issue and Zhu Shichang's trial illustrate how this rhetoric sharpened into a tool for suppressing Han elites' negotiating power while maintaining their strategic utility, especially in artillery warfare.

From the perspective of the Han elites and Hanjun officers, this rhetoric underscored both their value and their vulnerability as ethnic soldiers. Their expertise in artillery and siege warfare made them indispensable to Hong Taiji's military ambitions, allowing them to negotiate for privileges and institutional recognition. However, their ethnic distinctiveness also placed them in a precarious position. While they sought greater integration into the state apparatus, their efforts were often undermined by accusations of disloyalty and a lack of consistent military value. The growing ethnic rhetoric not only constrained their upward mobility but also amplified the scrutiny of their actions, setting a precedent for the ethnic accusations that would dominate the aftermath of the Songshan siege.

The Siege of Songshan (1639)

In the war-torn Liaoxi corridor of the 1630s, the siege of Songshan may seem like an insignificant episode. To the Hanjun, however, it marked a pivotal moment both militarily and politically. This was the first time the Han artillery corps, by strategic design, played a central role in besieging a walled city. They experimented with Hong Taiji's new siege tactics: clearing the battlements with heavy artillery in a single day to enable a timely infantry assault. The artillery corps also implemented a more sophisticated tactical configuration.

Despite these innovations, the siege ultimately failed, and the failure ignited a political storm. The mistakes made by Hanjun commanders during the siege were reframed as acts of treason, attributed to their shared ethnic background with the Ming adversaries on the

opposite side of the wall. Following the trial, Hong Taiji ordered the further division of the Hanjun into four Banners to dilute the power of its leaders. This was a troubling sign. The trial revealed the Manchu court's deep-seated apprehension about the loyalty of the Han artillery corps. Ethnicity is now as much a friend as a foe for the Han military elites.

New Artillery Siege Tactics

Since the siege of Dalinghe, the main duty of the artillery corps had been capturing the detached forts and other forms of fortification. On most occasions, the defenders in the forts simply surrendered when the battlements of the forts were destroyed. Sometimes, the magazine in the fort was ignited and exploded, saving the Hanjun much hard work. [287] If the defenders refused to come out, the Hanjun would blow the gate up with mining explosives. [288] However, for the larger walled cities and fortification, the Qing mostly still adopted the conventional tactics of prolonged blockade or scaling, although sometimes artillery corps also assisted by bombarding the battlements and gate towers.[289] There was also no sign that the Qing had attempted any artillery-infantry coordinated attack in siege warfare. The artillery corps still played a minimal role when besieging large walled cities. This was about to change, however, as Hong Taiji had a new siege tactic in mind. He sought to use the artillery corps to destroy the crenellations of city walls, creating breaches for the vanguard to storm the city and capture it without a prolonged blockade.

In March 1639, Hong Taiji launched an attack on Songshan and several other Ming strongholds in Liaoxi, aiming at containing the Ming forces so as to lighten the pressure of the Qing expedition force raiding China proper. Songshan was located south of Jinzhou city. It had an earth wall reinforced with bricks, measuring 1.76 km in length and 3.2 meters

[287] CD-23, 658-9.
[288] CD-23, 658-9.
[289] "Shengjing manwen qingjun zhanbao," 40.

thick—very similar to the fortifications of Dalinghe.[290] Shi and Ma, as well as the Three Princes, were all called into the task force. According to the list of awardees for the siege of Songshan, at least 4588 Han troops were called into the campaign–1592 from Shi's banner, 1647 from Ma's banner, 508 from Kong's force, 428 from Geng's, and 413 from Shang's. The actual size of the Han force should be larger, as an inventory note sent by Shang prior to the campaign lists that he brought 530 officers and soldiers to the campaign.[291]

Hong Taiji's forces arrived on March 24, camping south of Songshan. Two days later, the Han artillery corps, led by Shi, Ma, and the Three Princes, captured the three main detached forts at the south, southwest, and southeast of Songshan, along with several smaller fortifications. According to a Ming report, the Qing started bombarding at around three in the morning and seized the forts by around three in the afternoon.[292] On the following day (March 27), the Qing constructed 37 artillery positions in the suburb south of Songshan.

On March 28, Hong Taiji brought with him Shi, Ma, and the three Princes and hiked up a ridge. Glancing at the Ming walled city, the emperor revealed his siege plan:

> Kong will bombard the south gate at the center, Geng will target the left side, and Shang target the right side, all using *divine-might general* cannons (Ch: *shenwai jiangjun pao* 神威將軍礮). Ma's Banner will assist Geng at the right flank, directing nine red-shirt cannons against the gate, two at the southeast corner and one at the wall section in between. Shi's Banner will assist Shang at the left flank, directing eight red-shirt cannons against the gate, two at the southwest corner and one at the wall section in between. Further, Ma and Shi will deploy two cannons from each of their Banners to capture the detached

[290] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*, vol1, 13; Liu and Sun, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, vol. 3, 1-2.
[291] *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian*, book 1, 60.
[292] Fang Yujin, "Mingjun shouwei Songshan deng chengbao de liujian zhanbao," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 2 (1981): 3.

> fort in the southwest. The cannons should be brought back to the Songshan front right after the detached fort is captured.
>
> The operation will take place on the following day. The cannons should be dragged to positions at two to four in the morning and start bombarding at around four.[293]

This was the first recorded siege in which the Han artillery corps played a leading role. It was also the first attempt at a large-scale artillery-infantry combined arms operation in the Qing army.

In the early morning of March 29, the Han artillery corps went into positions and started the bombardment as planned. A total of 30 heavy cannons were deployed, which matches the number of cannons Zhu Shichang mentioned in his memorial submitted in 1633.[294] Ma's Banner 14 cannons, Shi's Banner 13 cannons, and each of the Three Princes' forces one cannon. Two types of cannons—red-shirt Cannons and *divine-might general* Cannons—were referenced in Hong Taiji's speech. Given that red-shirt cannons varied in size and caliber, their exact specifications remain uncertain. As for the *divine-might general* cannon, four extant models exist today, although they were cast later in 1643. These muzzle-loading cannons weigh between 3,600 and 4,000 *jin* (2,148–2,387 kg), with lengths ranging from 264 to 305 cm and calibers from 13.5 to 14.5 cm.[295] These specifications roughly align with those recorded in the 19th-century Qing military manual *Huangchao Liqi Tushi*, which describes the divine-might general cannon as weighing 3,800 *jin* (2,387 kg) and using cannonballs of ten *jin* (~13.2 lb).[296]

The Hanjun artillery corps appeared to have built a more sophisticated chain of command. Each cannon was operated by one gunner and one reloader/ firing assistant. The

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[293] QSL, 598/2
[294] TCCZ, 66.
[295] Huang, "Hong Yi dapao yu Huang Taiji de baqi Hanjun," 98.
[296] Yunlu, and Fulong'an, *Huangchao liqi tushi*, vol16, 8.

gunners and reloader/ firing assistant were further divided into three classes. Shi's banner had eight first-class gunner (Ma: *sitingju gūsai poo sindaha uju jergi*), 4 second-class (Ma: *sitingju gūsai jai jergi poo sindaha*), and 1 third-class (Ma: *sitingju gūsai ilaci jergi poo sindaha*); Ma's banner had nine first-class (Ma: *ma guwang yuwan i gūsai uju jergi poo sindaha*), three second-class (Ma: *ma guwang yuwan i gūsai jai jergi poo sindaha*), and two third-class (Ma: *ma guwang yuwan i gūsai ilaci jergi poo sindaha*). Each of Kong, Geng, and Shang's forces also had one first-class gunner. Each gunner was accompanied by a reloader or assistant of the same rank (Ma: *okto cirgehe/ okto sindaha*). The difference between the classes is not clear, but their reward differed considerably, suggesting their technical difference may be substantial. [297] In any case, this is the first record of such tactical configuration for the artillery corps, making up a force of 4581 strong.

Behind the artillery corps of 30 heavy cannons was a massive siege train. A total of 1081 troops, all from the Three Princes' forces, served as gunpowder transporters. In other words, every cannon was approximately supported by 36 transporters. The Hanjun also had a huge force of sappers. A total of 53 Hanjun sappers, divided into three classes, and 251 earth-transporting troops were awarded; Kong's force also provided 24 sappers and 11 earth-transporting troops. In addition, another 2623 Hanjun troops, 1273 from Shi's Banner and 1350 from Ma's, were awarded for their service. In total, 3232 Hanjun soldiers were awarded, in addition to 1349 from Kong, Geng, and Shang's forces.

[297] NGSYD, 422-3. MWNGSYD, The 4th year of Chongde (The 4th to 5th month), 50-3.

Table 4. Awarded Hanjun soldiers in the siege of Songshan.[298]

	Shi's Banner	Ma's Banner	Kong's Force	Geng's Force	Shang's Force	Subtotal	Reward (taels of silver)
First-class Gunner	8	9				17	50
First-class Reloader	8	9				17	10
Second-class Gunner	4	3				7	30
Second-class Reloader	4	3				7	7
Third-class Gunner	1	2				3	20
Third-class Reloaded	1	2				3	5
Gunner			1	1	1	3	50
Reloader			1	1	1	3	10
Prestige-class sapper		1				1	10
First-class sapper	1	9	31			41	5
Second-class sapper	25	17	17			59	3
Earth-transporting troop	260	242	11	100	103	716	2
Other troops	1273	1350				2623	1
Gunpowder Transporter			447	326	308	1081	1
Subtotal	1585	1647	508	428	413	4581	

On the first day of operation, the Hanjun artillery corps appeared seasoned, and the bombardment was massive. The defenders reported that they had collected more than six hundred cannonballs in the city, all weighing more than ten *gin* (~5.9 kg/ 13 pounds).[299] The defenders attempted a sally but were repelled. By three in the afternoon, the battlements of the south wall had all been wiped out. Hong Taiji ordered the vanguard to assault with scaling ladders. However, the noble Daišan 代善 begged to disagree, claiming that the sun would be going down soon. Despite the objection of Kong and some other commanders, Hong Taiji took Daišan's advice and postponed the assault.

At around nine the next morning, the Qing launched their assault. However, they met with stern resistance. The defenders used muskets, bombs, and other cold weapons to

[298] NGSYD, 422-3. MWNGSYD, The 4th year of Chongde (The 4th to 5th month), 50-3.
[299] Fang Yujin, "Ming jun shouwei Songshan deng chengbao de liujian zhanbao," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 2 (1981): 5.

repel the scaling besiegers. The Qing source claims that the defenders also used wood and soil to fortify the battered part of the wall, making it even harder to assault; but this is not corroborated by the Ming reports.[300] In any case, the Qing failed to take the city. By the time Hong Taiji halted the operation, he had already lost twenty vanguards. The Ming also burned ten scaling ladders and captured another five, together with other kinds of weapons.[301]

After the foiled assault, Hong Taiji convened a meeting with the commanders. All agreed that Songshan could be taken. Unfortunately, ammunition was running low. On the following day, Hong Taiji dispatched some messengers back to Mukden, asking the stationing commanders to send another 10,000 cannonballs and 15,000 catties of gunpowder. In the meantime, the Han artillery corps continued to bombard the city.[302] While waiting for the ammunition, the Hanjun and the forces of the three Princes attempted to mine Songshan despite Shi's staunch objection. Shi claimed that he knew the area and that there was underground water that made mining impossible. However, he backed down and agreed with the plan after being reprimanded by Hong Taiji.

The long-awaited ammunition finally arrived on April 17. However, the renewed bombardment on Songshan seemed to make little progress, as no infantry assault was sent to follow. The mining operation also came to a halt after 300 Ming reinforcements entered the city, bolstering its defense. As the expedition force was coming back to Mukden from northern China, the frustrated emperor decided to end this month-long foiled siege on 29 April.

Why did the Qing fail at Songshan? The account of *Qing Shilu* implies that it was a mistake not to launch the infantry assault right after the bombardment. Had Hong Taiji disregarded Daišan's suggestion, the Qing might have taken the city that night. It is

[300] QSL 599/1
[301] Fang, "Ming jun shouwei Songshan deng chengbao de liujian zhanbao," 5.
[302] QSL 599/1-599/2; Fang, "Ming jun shouwei Songshan deng chengbao de liujian zhanbao," 5.

interesting that *Qing Shilu* recorded that Kong and several commanders disagreed with Daišan. Kong and Geng might be the only two commanders in the Qing army who had experience in besieging a large city with heavy artillery. Before defecting in 1633, they besieged the city of Laizhou 萊州, Shandong, for more than half a year with a massive siege train. Their heavy cannons caused devastating damage to the fortification and inflicted huge casualties; even the commander of Laizhou was shot dead by a cannonball. Yet, Laizhou persisted until reinforcement came half a year later. The main problem for Kong and Geng's force is that they never committed their assault force right after the extensive bombardments. So, the defenders could always repair the fortification shortly afterward.[303] This was exactly what happened in Songshan, and maybe Kong was objecting based on his failed experience. But this would only be a theory. Even after the ammunition arrived and the artillery corps resumed their bombardment, Songshan could still hold until the Qing retreated. Hence, there may be other factors that limited the sieging effectiveness of the Qing forces.

On the other hand, the failure exposed the artillery corps' logistic problem. Although supported by 1081 gunpowder transporters, which made up almost one-fourth of the Hanjun and Three Princes' forces, the artillery corps ran out of ammunition after four days of bombardment. According to an inventory note sent by Shang before setting off to Songhsan, his force brought along one red-barbarian cannon, 500 large cannonballs, and 3000 *gin* (~1790 kg) of gunpowder.[304] Assuming this is a standard cannon-ammunition ratio, with 30 heavy cannons, the artillery corps should have brought 15,000 cannon balls and 90,000 *gin* (~53700 kg) of powder. Nevertheless, they asked for another 10,000 rounds four days after the operation. Either the artillery corps consumed ammunition too fast, or they lacked the logistic capacity to support a large-scale operation. Either way, this hindered the

[303] Chung Yan Hon Michael, "Xishi huopao dui Mingmo chengfang zhan de yingxiang," *New Asia Journal* 39 (2022): 123–72.
[304] MQSL, vol 3, book1, 60.

whole operation. Had they had enough ammunition and could resume bombardment after the foiled assault, the Qing might have held its momentum and captured the city.

The deeper issue behind the failure at Songshan was the Qing army's lack of experience in artillery-based siege warfare. This was their first attempt at conducting a large-scale siege with heavy artillery, and while Hong Taiji's strategy was sound in theory, it failed in execution due to crucial miscalculations. The Qing forces did not commit their vanguard immediately after the bombardment, allowing the defenders to regroup and repair the fortifications. Additionally, they severely underestimated their ammunition needs, running out of supplies within just four days. These logistical and tactical oversights ultimately cost Hong Taiji Songshan. From a purely military perspective, this failure was the result of inadequate siege experience and logistical mismanagement. However, for Hong Taiji, the defeat was not merely a military issue but also a political one. The failure at Songshan would soon ignite a political crisis for the Hanjun commanders, exposing the ethnic tensions within the Qing military hierarchy and leading to renewed scrutiny of the role of Han elites in the army.

The Songshan Trial

Back at Mukden, Hong Taiji was buried by work. As the expedition forces came back triumphantly with all the captives and wealth, the emperor had so many people to reward and as many people to punish. He also needed to attend a lot of ceremonies and banquets. Finally, on July 4, he had the time to deal with the Hanjun. The emperor gathered all the Han officials and Hanjun commanders at the court and ordered his officials to enumerate the crimes of Shi and Ma.

According to the indictment, the two commanders committed three crimes. First, in the siege of Songshan, they claimed that the ammunition had run out after the first round of bombardment. Troops were dispatched to Mukden and came back with more, but the

commanders soon reported that the resupply ran out again. It was later found out, however, that some ammunitions were taken back from Songshan to Mukden; in other words, the commanders lied about the stock of ammunition. Second, the quality of the cannonballs was unsatisfactory. Some cannonballs simply shattered right after coming out from the barrels. This was because the iron was bad, and the cannonball was not forged evenly. Third, the roads built by the Hanjun were hastily done, and the shoddy road impeded the transport of heavy cannons.

Hong Taiji saw these as an issue of ethnic loyalty. He accused the commanders of not wanting to hurt their fellow Han people in Songshan, so they lied about the ammunition, deliberately built bad roads, and manufactured bad cannonballs. The two commanders were even described as having "body being here, but their hearts not forgetting the Ming." (Ch: 身雖在此。心不忘明也; Ma: *suwe beye ubade, mujilen ming gurun de bifi onggorakū gūnin kai*)[305] The emperor then moved on to compare the deeds of the Manchu and Han soldiers. He recalled that, in the Battle of Kado Island, the Hanjun refused to fight when the Manchus were confronting the enemies. In the 1629 Raid of northern China, Ashan and Yechen captured Yongping with only 24 troops. They were paved with gunpowder when they reached the top of the city, but they did not flinch. No Han soldier had ever fought that hard. In the ending remarks, Hong Taiji wanted the Hanjun commanders to think of his grace, claiming that his love and care for them exceeded his for the Manchus.[306]

Harsh as Hong Tiaji's words were, the choice of words, phrasing, and examples in the edict was by no means new. They all appeared in earlier edicts and were built on growing political influence, and striving for a precarious balance of interest between the Manchu and *Nikan*. However, the accusations against the Hanjun commanders in the Songshan trial

[305] QSL, 623/2. QSL: MA, CD4, Sixth Month Fouth Day.
[306] QSL 623/1-624/1.

reflected broader tensions within the Qing court. While earlier conflicts revolved around issues like the emancipation of Han bondservants, the Songshan trial was the first time military performance was directly tied to ethnic loyalty. Hong Taiji's rhetoric drew on a growing narrative that juxtaposed the bravery and sacrifices of Manchu soldiers against the perceived timidity and disloyalty of their Han counterparts.

This shift in rhetoric mirrored the changing political landscape of the Qing state. As the Ming remained the primary adversary, the shared ethnic background of the Hanjun and their Ming counterparts became a source of suspicion. Simultaneously, Hong Taiji sought to balance the interests of various ethnic groups within his empire, emphasizing harmony while suppressing Han political influence to maintain Manchu dominance.

Dividing the Hanjun into Four Banners

Six days after Hong Taiji's edict, the Minister of Justice pronounced the verdict on the Hanjun commanders, including Shi, Ma, and other Han officials. Shi was sentenced to the confiscation of one-third of his properties, and Ma was sentenced to death, allowing for payment in lieu of execution. Hong Taiji then stepped in, as usual, exonerated Shi and Ma and commuted the sentences of other Han officials. On the same day, the emperor divided the Hanjun from two to four banners. Shi became the leader of the Plaine and Bordered White Banners, Ma the leader of Plaine and Bordered Yellow Banners, Wang Shixuan the leader of the Plaine and Bordered Red Banners, and Bayan 巴顏 the leader of the Plaine and Bordered Blue Banners.

This division, while framed as punishment, was in practice a crucial milestone in the institutional development of the Hanjun. It not only expanded the Hanjun but equipped it with the standard banner command structure, marking another critical step of bannerization. After the reform, each Hanjun banner had its own Banner leader, garrison lieutenant, and regiment colonel, imitating the hierarchy of the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners.

Most of the appointees to the new Hanjun leadership were long-standing members of the Later Jin. Of the 27 appointed Hanjun officials, most, if not all, of the appointees joined the Later Jin before the 1631 siege of Dalinghe, and at least 13 (48%) of them joined in Nurhaci's reign, between 1619 and 1622.[307] In other words, the appointees were either "transfrontiermen" or "old Han officials." In addition, most of the defectors were originally officers in the Ming army, and none were bondservants in Manchu households before their appointment.

One of the newly appointed Banner leaders, Bayan, was the son of the decorated imperial son-in-law Li Yongfang.[308] The Li clan was one of the most prominent Han-background lineages in the Qing, commanding six Hanjun companies. The appointment further incorporated the Li clan into the Hanjun institution. Wang Shixuan, on the other hand, defected to the Later Jin in 1630 on his own. Given his loyalty, he was appointed as a regional commander after the 1631 siege of Dalinghe.[309] He had been serving as the leader of the Hanjun beside Shi and Ma since the mid-1630s. He was the regional commander under Shi's Banner before promoting to the position of Banner leader.[310]

[307] The years Zhang Liangbi 張良弼 and Yang Mingyuan 楊名遠 joined the Later Jin are unclear.
[308] BQTZ, 4346.
[309] BQTZ, 4301.
[310] QSL, 625/2.

Table 5. Appointed Hanjun officers and their year of joining the Later Jin.

Banner	Name	Banner Position	Year of joining the Later Jin
Two Yellow Banners	Ma Guangyuan 馬光遠	Banner leader (固山額真)	1629
Two Yellow Banners	Ma Guanghui 馬光輝	Garrison lieutenant (梅勒章京)	1629
Two Yellow Banners	Zhang Dayou 張大猷	Garrison lieutenant	1621
Two Yellow Banners	Dai Du 戴都	Regiment colonel (甲喇章京)	Before 1628
Two Yellow Banners	Cui Yingtai 崔應泰	Regiment colonel	Before 1631
Two Yellow Banners	Yang Singyuan 楊聲遠	Regiment colonel	1629
Two Yellow Banners	Zhang Chengde 張成德	Regiment colonel	Before 1631
Two White Banners	Shi Tingzhu 石廷柱	Banner leader	1622
Two White Banners	Da Erhan 達爾漢	Garrison lieutenant	1622; Shi's nephew
Two White Banners	Jin Weicheng 金維城	Garrison lieutenant	Before 1631
Two White Banners	Jin Yuhe 金玉和	Regiment colonel	1631; Jin Weicheng's son
Two White Banners	Tong Guoyin 佟國蔭	Regiment colonel	Before 1621
Two White Banners	Tong Dai 佟代	Regiment colonel	Unkown
Two Red Banners	Wang Shixuan 王世選	Banner leader	1630
Two Red Banners	Wu Shoujin 吳守進	Garrison lieutenant	1616

Two Red Banners	Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳	Garrison lieutenant	1630
Two Red Banners	Jin Li 金礪	Regiment colonel	Nurhaci's time
Two Red Banners	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹貞	Regiment colonel	1621
Two Red Banners	Wang Guoguang 王國光	Regiment colonel	1619
Two Red Banners	Zang Guozuo 臧國祚	Regiment colonel	1621
Two Blue Banners	Bayan 巴顏	Banner leader	1621; Li Yongfang's son
Two Blue Banners	Li Guohan 李國翰	Garrison lieutenant	1621
Two Blue Banners	Tong Tulai 佟圖賴	Garrison lieutenant	1619
Two Blue Banners	Zhang Liangbi 張良弼	Regiment colonel	Unkown
Two Blue Banners	Cao Guangbi 曹光弼	Regiment colonel	Before 1628
Two Blue Banners	Liu Zhongjin 劉仲錦	Regiment colonel	1621; Li Yongfang's subordinate
Two Blue Banners	Li Ming 李明	Regiment colonel	1618

A significant number of appointees already held leadership roles within the Hanjun. Eleven (40.7%) were Hanjun company captains at the time of their appointment, and by 1642, 21 (77.8%) would assume such roles. Additionally, at least ten appointees—Cui Yingtai, Zhang Chengde, Shi Tingzhu, Da Erhan, Jin Yuhe, Lang Shaozhen 郎紹禎, Li Guohan 李國翰, Tong Tulai, Li Ming 李明, Jin Li, Cao Guangbi 曹光弼—were already members of the Hanjun back in 1631. Ma Guangyuan, Dai Du, Jin Weicheng, Tong Dai, Wu Shoujin, and Wang Shixuan had also been incorporated into the Hanjun before 1639.[311] In other words, at least 17 (63%) of the appointees had previously served as Hanjun officers of various ranks, indicating a strong continuity of personnel arrangement within the institution.

Beyond military roles, over half of the appointees (14, or 51.9%) had served as Han officials in the six ministries of the Manchu court, further demonstrating their dual administrative and military roles.[312] However, this administrative expertise came with some controversy: at least four appointees were later dismissed from office due to misconduct either in civilian governance or military operations.[313] Given that more than half of the appointees served as Han officials in the Manchu court, it is clear that the Han officials were being integrated into the Hanjun structure. Their appointments symbolized the growing role of the Hanjun as not only a military force but also an ethnic-political institution representing Han interests within the Manchu state.

[311] QSL, 471/2,
[312] Jin Li served in the Ministry of War in 1631, but was not appointed in 1638.
[313] The four were Ma Guanghui, Cui Yingtai, Wu Shoujin, and Jin Yuhe. QSL, 386/1, 595/2-596/1.

Table 6. Appointed Hanjun officers as company captains and court officials.

Name	Hanjun Rank as of 1632	Hanjun Rank as of 1637 Joseon Campaign	Company Captain	Company Created Year	Court Office in the Six Ministry
Ma Guangyuan		Banner leader			
Ma Guanghui			BY, 3rd Regiment, 4th Company	1642	Ministry of Revenue
Zhang Dayou			BY, 1st R, 1st C	1634	Ministry of Justice (Dismissed)
Dai Du					
Cui Yingtai	Brigade Commanders		BY, 4th R, 7th C	1634	Ministry of Revenue (Dismissed)
Yang Singyuan					
Zhang Chengde	Captains Ma: *beiguwan*		PY, 2nd R, 3rd C	1630	
Shi Tingzhu	Regional vice commander				
Da Erhan	Unranked; Son of Shi Guozhu				
Jin Weicheng		Regiment colonel	PY, 1st R, 4th C	1642	Deputy Ministry of War
Jin Yuhe	Regional vice commander		PY, 1st R, 8th C	1642	
Tong Guoyin			PB, 2nd R, 1st C	1634	Ministry of Works
Tong Dai		Company Captain	PB, 3rd R, 3rd C	1635	Ministry of Personnel

Wang Shixuan		*amba janggin* under Shi Tingzhu Banner	PR, 2nd R, 3rd C	1634	
Wu Shoujin		Unclear	PR,1st R, 3rd C	1635	Ministry of Revenue (Dismissed)
Meng Qiaofang			BR, 2nd R, 2nd C	1642	Ministry of Justice
Jin Li	Regional vice commander		BR, 5th R, 5th C	1642	Ministry of War
Lang Shaozhen	Brigade Commanders		BR, 4th R, 2nd C	1642	Ministry of War
Wang Guoguang			BR, 4th R, 2nd C	1635	
Zang Guozuo			PR, 4th R, 3rd C	1634	Ministry of Works
Bayan			PB, 1st R,, 4th C	1634	Ministry of Rites
Li Guohan	Regional vice commander		BB, 1st R, 2nd C	1642	Ministry of Justice
Tong Tulai	Brigade Commanders		BY, 1st R, 7th C		Ministry of War
Zhang Liangbi					
Cao Guangbi			BB, 5th R, 3rd C	1642	
Liu Zhongjin			PB, 1st R, 1st C	1634	
Li Ming	Unranked Officer		PB, 1st R, 5th C		

Interestingly, relatively few of the appointees had prior experience in artillery warfare. Only seven (25.9%) were recorded as having directed artillery corps or fired cannons in battle. This suggests that expertise in artillery was not a primary criterion for promotion at this stage. However, this changed rapidly as the appointees were trained in artillery operations following their appointments. By the time of the 1642 Battle of Songjin, at least 17 appointees (63%) were recorded as directing artillery corps, reflecting their evolving roles as specialists in siege warfare. This transition underscores a key characteristic of the Hanjun: its officers were not necessarily selected for their pre-existing technical expertise but were trained into artillery leaders after their appointments. Seemingly, Hong Taiji prioritized loyalty and strategic utility over specialized gunnery skills at the time of appointment.

Table 7. Artillery experience of appointed Hanjun officers.

Name	Cannon (before 1639)	Cannon (1640-2)
Ma Guangyuan	1637 Joseon	
Ma Guanghui		
Zhang Dayou		1640-42 Jinzhou
Dai Du		1642 Tashan, 1642 Xingshan
Cui Yingtai	1631 Dalinghe	1642 Tashan
Yang Singyuan		
Zhang Chengde	1631 Dalinghe; 1637 Joseon; 1637Ka Island	1642 Xingshan
Shi Tingzhu	1637 Joseon	1640-42 Jinzhou
Da Erhan		
Jin Weicheng		1642 Tashan
Jin Yuhe		1640-42 Jinzhou, 1642 Tashan
Tong Guoyin		1640-42 Jinzhou, 1642 Tashan, 1642 Xingshan
Tong Dai		1642 Tashan, 1642 Xingshan
Wang Shixuan		
Wu Shoujin		1640-42 Jinzhou; 1642 Xingshan
Meng Qiaofang		
Jin Li		
Lang Shaozhen		1642 Tashan 1642 Xingshan
Wang Guoguang		
Zang Guozuo		
Bayan		1640-42 Jinzhou
Li Guohan	1638 Qiangziling 牆子嶺; Qingdu 慶都; Jinanfu 濟南府; Huolùu 獲鹿	1640-42 Jinzhou, 1642 Tashan
Tong Tulai		
Zhang Liangbi		1640-42 Jinzhou
Cao Guangbi	1631 Dalinghe	1642 Tashan, 1642 Xingshan
Liu Zhongjin		1642 Tashan
Li Ming	1631 Dalinghe	

Furthermore, the Hanjun reform designated the Banner pattern of the four newly established Hanjun Banners, marking another critical step of bannerization. Since its establishment, the Hanjun had been using the green (Ch: *yuanqing* 元青; Ma: *niowanggiyan*) banner. This remained unchanged after the Hanjun was split into two banners in 1637. However, after dividing the Hanjun into four banners, Hong Taiji ordered them to change their banners. Ma's Two Yellow Banners carried a green flag with a yellow border; Shi's Two White Banners carried a green flag with a white border' Wang's Two Red Banners carried a green flag with a red border, and Bayan's Two White Banners carried a green flag as the one Hanjun used to carry.[314] Given that the bordered colors follow the colors of the existing Manchu Eight Banners, this indicates that the Hanjun was further imitating the institutional structure of the Eight Banners. This paved the way for the eventual establishment of the Eight Banners.

Nevertheless, at this point, the Hanjun soldiers were still officially registered under their respective Manchu Eight Banners. As Du Jiaji's study shows, in the 1639 reform, Hanjun soldiers were assigned to their respective Hanjun banners according to their own Manchu banner affiliation.[315] For example, Ma Guangyuan had been transferred to Manchu Yellow Banner, which was owned by Hong Taiji, in 1635.[316] Subsequently, in 1639, he became the leader of the Two Yellow Banners. Ma's brother, Ma Guanghui, who belonged to the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner, was appointed the garrison lieutenant of the Two Yellow Banners.[317] Wu Shoujin, who belonged to the Manchu Plain Red Banner, was appointed the garrison lieutenant of the Two Red Banners.[318]

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[314] QSL 626/2.
[315] Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*,34-9.
[316] *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian,* 42.
[317] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang: Qing Taizong Chongde san nian zhi Chongde si nian* (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1985), 93.
[318] *Shengjing xingbu yuandang*, 118.

According to Du, the Banner assignment of the Hanjun indicates that the Hanjun soldiers were still registered under the Manchu Eight Banners and were legally the subject of their respective banner lords. Similarly, the Hanjun companies were also officially registered under the Manchu Eight Banners. For example, in mid-1639, when Dodo, the banner lord of the Plain White Banner, was found guilty, two of his Han companies, together with ten Manchu and four Mongol companies, were transferred to the Bordered White Banner as a punishment.[319] Looking from this perspective, Hong Taiji's change to the Hanjun Banner design reinforced the authority of the Eight Banner lords, countering the emperor's centralization agenda. Du thus calls for caution in considering the Hanjun as part of Hong Taiji's centralization project, since the Banner lords still held the ultimate authority over its *Nikan* subject.[320]

However, as explained in the previous chapter, the Hanjun's affiliation was confusingly fluid in the late 1630s, as shown in the *Mukden Records of the Ministry of Justice*. They were sometimes affiliated with their Hanjun Banners, sometimes with their Manchu Banners, and sometimes with their court office position. A similar situation also applied to the Hanjun companies. While sometimes the Hanjun companies were affiliated with their Manchu Banners, sometimes they were considered companies of Ma or Shi's banners. For example, in a court trial held on January 27, 1639, a Hanjun defendant, K'o Neng, was addressed as "the *cotton-armor Soldier* of Wang Guwe Ming's company under Ma Guangyuan's banner" (Ma: *ma guwang yowan i gūsai wang guwe ming nirui olbo i k'o neng*). Another defendant, Jinsan, was addressed as "the *cotton-armor* soldier of Lio Jen Ming company under Shi Tingzhu's banner" (Ma: *sitingju gūsai lio jen ming nirui olbo i jinsan*). While, in the same court trial, other defendants were addressed according to their

[319] QSL, 621/2-622/1.
[320] Du, "Qingdai baqi lingshu wenti kaocha," 83-92.

companies under their respective Manchu Banner.[321] The ambiguity of Hanjun soldiers' and companies' affiliation demonstrates that the Hanjun continued to encroach on the authority of the Manchu Banner lords. By dividing the Hanjun into four banners, Hong Taiji further diffused the powers of the Manchu Banner lords over the Hanjun.

Conclusion

The structural development of the Hanjun after the siege of Songshan exemplifies the interplay between artillery technology and ethnic politics in the Hanjun negotiation. The siege itself marked a pivotal moment in Qing military innovation, as the Hanjun artillery corps took on a leading role in an ambitious artillery-infantry operation aimed at expediting the capture of walled cities. However, logistical mismanagement and tactical inadequacy exposed the Qing army's inexperience in executing complex sieges, ultimately leading to failure. While these shortcomings were military in nature, Hong Taiji framed them as evidence of ethnic disloyalty, tying the commanders' tactical errors to accusations of treason.

The Songshan trial was the culmination of a series of connected incidents that intensified scrutiny of the Han elites. Earlier events, such as the examination issue and Zhu Shichang's trial, revolved around Han officials' efforts to emancipate bondservants and address broader inequities, which Hong Taiji perceived as challenges to Manchu authority. Through these episodes, the emperor sharpened his ethnic rhetoric, introducing the dichotomy of "the body is with the Qing, but the heart is with the Ming" to question Han officials' loyalty. By connecting military failures at Songshan to this narrative, he used the siege's outcome to suppress Han ambitions while simultaneously advancing the institutionalization of the Hanjun.

[321] CD2-3, 713.

The subsequent division of the Hanjun into four banners, framed as punishment, further reinforced this dual strategy. While it curtailed the power of individual Hanjun commanders and mitigated the risk of treason by fostering internal competition, it also pushed forward the bannerization process, integrating the Hanjun more firmly into the Eight Banners system. From the perspective of the Hanjun officers, their artillery expertise allowed them to negotiate structural reforms and maintain relevance, but their mixed military record limited their political leverage. The trial and reforms highlighted the precarious position of the Han elites as ethnic soldiers—valued for their contributions yet subjected to persistent doubts about their loyalty.

The interplay of military innovation, logistical realities, and ethnic tension during this period underscores the complexity of Qing state-building. Hong Taiji's reliance on the Hanjun, despite his mistrust, reveals the limits of ethnic rhetoric as a political tool and the enduring importance of military utility in shaping institutional reforms. For the Han elites, the need to prove their loyalty and deliver military success became a central condition for their integration into the Qing state—a challenge that would continue to define their trajectory in the years to come.

5. The Battle of Songjin and Becoming Hanjun Eight Banner

The Battle of Songshan-Jinzhou (1640–1642) marked a decisive turning point in the Ming-Qing War. This conflict not only allowed the Qing to decisively break through the Ming defense line at Jinzhou but also resulted in the annihilation of a Ming army of over 130,000. For the Ming, already grappling with widespread rebellion across its territories, the defeat was catastrophic; it effectively ended their ability to challenge the Qing beyond the Shanhai Pass. However, for the Hanjun, this battle held an additional layer of significance, as it was a landmark in their military and institutional development. Previously, in the sieges of Tashan and Xingshan, the Hanjun artillery corps had achieved its first major successes, demonstrating the capacity to breach fortified city walls within days and enable infantry assaults without scaling ladders. This achievement had signified the maturation of the artillery corps into a formidable force within the Qing army, capable of playing a decisive role in siege warfare.

But the victories at Tashan and Xingshan also marked a crucial moment of the Eight Banners' institutional transformation. Delighted by the Hanjun artillery corps' success, Hong Taiji formally expanded the Hanjun from four to eight banners just two months later. This elevation marked the Hanjun's establishment as an ethnic branch of the Eight Banners system, standing alongside the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. The creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners symbolized the culmination of over a decade of experimentation, negotiation, and reform, during which the Qing integrated Han forces into their state structure. This development also reflected Hong Taiji's dual approach of rewarding military merit while institutionalizing ethnic control, further consolidating the Qing's multiethnic state-building strategy.

The transformation of the Hanjun into a full-fledged ethnic branch underscores the interplay between military success and political negotiation in Qing state-building. The

artillery corps' ability to deliver timely and effective results in siege warfare lent them a critical edge in negotiating structural reforms and securing their place in the Qing military hierarchy. At the same time, the expansion of the Hanjun Eight Banners formalized the Qing's reliance on Han forces while reinforcing their subordinate role within the larger framework of the Eight Banners system. This institutional milestone not only strengthened the Qing's military capacity but also signaled a broader shift in the Qing's approach to governance and integration, which balanced ethnic control with the pragmatic utilization of Han military expertise.

The Battle of Songshan-Jinzhou (1640–1642)

After the failure of Songshan, Hong Taiji revised his strategy and decided to take the Songshan-Jinzhou defense complex with a prolonged blockade. This was the second blockade operation after the 1631 Dalinghe siege. The Qing chose Yizhou 義州 as their base of operation. Located 90 *li* north of Jinzhou, the Qing force could reach the Ming stronghold from Yizhou in one-day time.[322] On May 8, 1640, Hong Taiji ordered an expedition force to set out for Yizhou and set up an agricultural base (Ch: *tuntian* 屯田). The expedition force was divided into two wings: the right wing, commanded by Jirgalang 濟爾哈朗, and the left wing, commanded by Dodo. They were also tasked to destroy all Ming agricultural land in the Liaoxi corridor.[323]

On July 1, Hong Taiji arrived at Yizhou with reinforcement, preparing for a mass campaign aiming at destroying the Ming's autumn harvest. The operation started a week later. Hong Taiji first ordered the Hanjun to bombard and capture the outlying forts north of Jinzhou. These outlying forts were important communication lines of the Ming, for they sent

[322] Chen,"Lun Ming-Qing Songjin zhi zhan yu Hong Chengchou yuan liao wenti (shang)," 11.
[323] QSL, 677/2.

smoke signals when sighting enemy activities.[324] Taking the forts thus cut the Ming communication line between the city and the outlying area and left the defenders blind. Hong Taiji then ordered the Qing troops to raid and destroy all the Ming harvests in the area while the Hanjun distracted the defenders by bombarding Jinzhou.[325] Seeing the objective completed, Hong Taiji retreated back to Mukden, leaving Dodo overseeing Yizhou. The garrison at Yuzhou would rotate every three months.[326]

In the following spring, Hong Taiji tightened the Qing blockade. He ordered Jirgalang to set up eight camps surrounding Jinzhou, each camp protected by trenches, cutting its communication with Songshan and Xingshan in the south.[327] On the other side, the Ming general Hong Chengchou 洪承疇 was devising a strategy to relieve Jinzhou. In the fourth month of 1641, Hong reached Songshan and assumed command at the frontline. In the subsequent months, the Ming defeated the Qing several times in skirmishes. Seemingly, the Ming was getting the upper hand.

[324] Fang Yujin, "Chongzhen shisannian Liaodong zhanshou Ming dangxuan (xia)," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 2 (1985): 4.
[325] QSL, 688/1-689/1.
[326] QSL, 689/2, 702/1, 714/1, 732/2, 750/1,
[327] QSL 737/2.

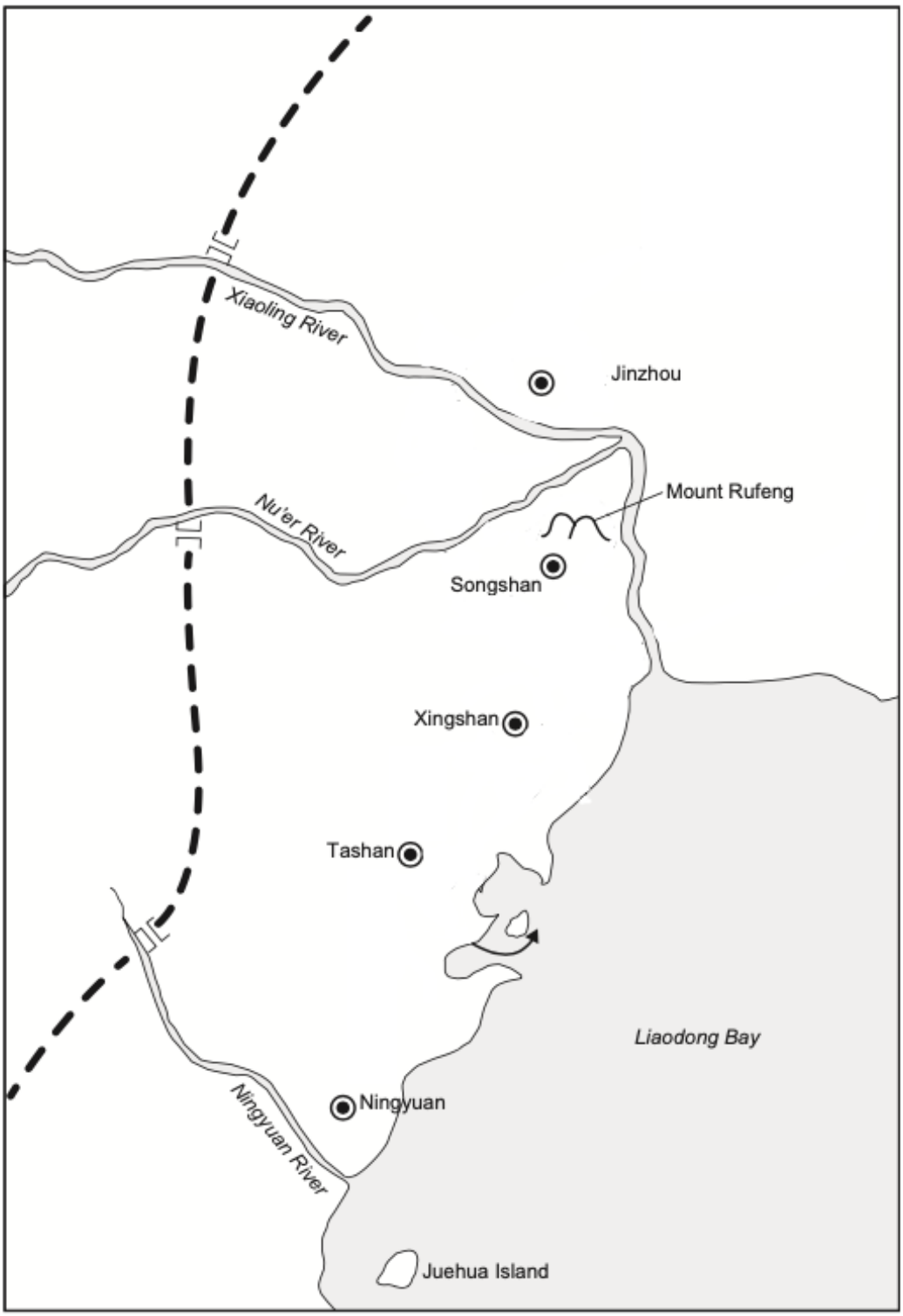

Figure 10. The Ming defense in Liaoxi.[328]

[328] Map adapted from Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty, 1618–44*, 168.

In the eighth month of 1641, aware of the fact that Hong was reinforcing Songshan with an army of 130,000, Hong Taiji, despite days of incessant nosebleeds, hurried to the Qing garrison outside Jinzhou. The emperor arrived south of Songshan on September 23.[329] After inspecting the situation, Hong Taiji noticed that the Ming placed heavy troops between Jinzhou and Songshan. So he decided to place his camp between Songshan and Xingshan, cutting off the Ming grand army's communication line with the rear.[330] On the following day, the Qing fortuitously captured twelve stacks of Ming supplies. Lacking food, the morale of the Ming forces vanished. Hong Chengchou decided to break the blockade and retreat with his army by night. One of the Ming commanders, however, got cold feet and escaped before the agreed time. The remaining forces, demoralized, followed and retreated in a disorderly fashion. On their way south, they fell into a Qing ambush. Only 30,000 made it back to Ningyuan. Another 10,000, including Hong Chengchou, took refuge in Songshan.[331]

The Ming garrison at Songshan nonetheless held out for another half a year until the second month of 1642, when food and supplies ran out. Seeing no sign of a relief force, a Ming deputy commander, Xia Chengde 夏成德, defected and served as a fifth column. Taken by surprise, Songshan finally fell to the Qing hands on March 18.[332] On April 8, Jinzhou, having been sealed off for more than a year and seeing no hope of a relief force, also capitulated.[333] The famous Ming general Zu Dashou 祖大壽, who fought against the Qing in the Liaoxi corridor for almost two decades, finally joined the Qing. By then, half of the Jinzhou defense line had been broken.

Throughout the two-year siege, the Hanjun artillery corps played an active role. In 1640, it helped capture at least eight detached forts, cutting the communication line between

[329] QSL, 711/1-711/2.
[330] QSL, 722/2.
[331] Chen, "Lun Ming-Qing Songjin zhi zhan yu Hong Chengchou yuan liao wenti (shang)," 72-4.
[332] QSL, 798/2-799/2.
[333] QSL, 800/1.

Jinzhou and its outskirts and facilitating the blockade.[334] The artillery corps was by then very experienced; for example, according to a Ming war report, when their barrels overheated, the Qing gunners swiftly cooled them with water and then reloaded cartridges wrapped in clothes.[335] In the seventh month of the same year, the Hanjun bombarded Songshan, maintaining pressure on the defenders and preventing them from launching a surprise attack.[336] In 1641, after the Ming grand army was defeated, some of the Ming troops took refuge in the three detached forts south of Gaoqiao 高橋南三臺, the Han artillery corps captured the forts with heavy artillery and killed more than a hundred defenders.[337] The Hanjun also fought a pitched battle against Ming troops during the 1641 decisive battle at Songshan.[338] Nevertheless, the artillery corps was not sufficient to capture Songshan and Jinzhou on its own. Like the 1631 Dalinghe siege, Hong Taiji's prolonged blockade strategy won the Qing victory, for it forced the Ming to fight the Qing in field battle, which the latter always had an advantage over.

Belated Hanjun Success: The Sieges of Tashan and Xingshan

Despite the fact that the Hanjun artillery corps played a subsidiary role in Songshan and Jinzhou, Hong Taiji had not given up his vision of artillery siege. After capturing Jinzhou and Songshan, on April 24, the emperor recalled half of his commanders and troops, mostly Manchus, back to Mukden. The remaining forces, including the four Hanjun banners, were to besiege the strongholds of Tashan and Xingshan in the south. In a royal decree, Hong Taiji specifically ordered the Three Princes and another defected Han commander, Shen Zhixiang

[334] BQTZ, 4242,4254, 4376.
[335] Fang, "Chongzhen shisannian Liaodong zhanshou Ming dangxuan (xia)," 4.
[336] Fang Yujin, "Chongzhen shisannian Liaodong zhan shouming dangxuan (xu yi)," *Lishi dang'an*, no. 3 (1986): 8–10.
[337] BQTZ, 3748, 5023, 4270, 4349, 4271, 4995.
[338] BQTZ, 4239.

沈志祥, to work in shifts continuously bombarding Tashan until its submission.[339] In the end, almost all Han commanders of the artillery corps participated in the siege.

Tashan was located approximately 38.3 km (60 *li*) south of Jinzhou. It had a wall measuring 1.8 km in length.[340] The siege operation began in early May, with the Hanjun artillery corps first clearing the detached forts surrounding Tashan.[341] On May 6, the artillery corps deployed its cannons to the west of Tashan and started bombardment. At noon the next day, a section of the wall, around sixty meters long, crumbled under continuous heavy fire. The Qing infantry immediately poured through the breach and captured the stronghold. Since the forces in the city had not opened the gate and surrendered earlier, the besiegers massacred all seven thousand defenders.[342]

After capturing Tashan, the artillery corps set out for Xingshan, a city with a wall of 1.4 km long.[343] On the morning of May 19, after the defenders rejected their summons to capitulate, the Qing army transferred their cannons to the north of the city and captured the detached forts. On the following day, the besiegers set up an artillery position at the captured forts and started bombarding the city. A wall section of around eighty meters long, unable to withstand the concentrated fire, collapsed. Fearing the fate of Tashan, the defenders promptly surrendered.[344]

In two weeks' time, the Qing had captured two Ming walled cities. By then, the Ming lost half of its defense complex in the Liaoxi corridor. It must be noted that both Tashan and Xingshan were heavily armed with cannons and firearms. At Tashan, the Qing confiscated one red-shirt Cannon, two *fagang* 發貢 cannons—a type of lighter muzzle-loading cannon

[339] QSL, 808/1-808/2. MQSL, 82/2.
[340] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*,vol1, 13; Liu and Sun, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, vol. 3, 2.
[341] BQTZ, 3727, 3748, 4240, 4242, 4271, 4376, 4389.
[342] NGSYD, 467.
[343] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*,vol1, 13; Liu and Sun, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, vol. 3, 2.
[344] NGSYD, 473. BQTZ, 3727, 3748, 4240, 4242, 4271, 4299, 4358, 4376, 4389, 4992, 4995.

weighing 180–400 kg and using cannonballs of approximately 5 *lb*, possibly copied from European *falcão* guns—409 general cannons of various sizes, 37 breech-loading Frankish cannons, and numerous firearms.[345] At Xingshan, they captured two red-shirt cannon, six generalissimo cannon, 122 second class general cannon, 182 *xingying pao* 行營炮, 65 Frankish cannons, and more than 400 firearms.[346] The sheer volume of the Ming artillery train was staggering. However, since they had only a limited number of red-shirt cannons and most of their artillery consisted of small-caliber weapons, the Ming's firepower was no match for the Qing's red-shirt cannons in both range and effectiveness. As a result, the Qing were able to position their artillery close to the city walls and bombard them at close range, effectively breaching the defenses in a matter of days.

Hong Taiji, understandably, was thrilled about the success. On May 26, he issued a series of imperial rescripts to his vassals in Mongolia, Manchuria, and Korea, proclaiming his huge success against the Ming. At the end of all the rescripts, he highlighted that his troops drove into the city without the use of scaling ladders, which was his tactical vision for a very long time:

> Using the red-shirt cannons, we broke the city wall of Tashan. My soldiers drove into the city without the use of scaling ladders and massacred all the defenders within. At Xingshan, we also bombarded it [the city] with artillery and destroyed its wall. Afraid of being massacred, the officials in the city came out and surrendered.[347]

[345] "Chongde qi nian zoushi dang," in *Qingdai dang'an shiliao congbian*, vol. 11, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 7-8. For more information of fagang, see Zheng, *Ming-Qing huoqi shi congkao*, 50–93.
[346] "Chongde qi nian zoushi dang," 8-9.
[347] NGSYD, 474-77.

The fact that Hong Taiji took time to describe the artillery corps' action and specify that his soldiers stormed the city without sailing ladders in the sieges of Tashan and Xingshan, shows that he believed this was a manifestation of the Qing's military might.

For sure, the emperor had every right to be proud of his artillery corps. Twelve years earlier, in 1631, the Qing had spent eight months capturing Dalinghe. By 1642, they needed only a few days to seize a walled city of similar size. Compared to the earlier campaigns, Qing siege tactics were more mature and effective. At Tashan, the Hanjun gunners started firing at night and effectively destroyed the wall by the following noon, providing plenty of daylight for the infantry assault. More importantly, the artillery corps no longer aimed at eliminating the battlements. Instead, their objective was to take down a section of the city wall to allow for an infantry assault without scaling ladders. Three days after the success of Tashan, Hong Taiji issued a royal decree that spelled out the newly devised tactic:

> If the city can be breached, bombard it with the red-shirt cannons. If the defenders surrender right after you aim at them, do not shoot. When you aim your guns, do not aim at the battlement; you should hit the middle of the wall. You should only order an infantry assault after the wall is ruined; if the wall is only slightly damaged, do not rashly launch an infantry assault.[348]

This decree could be seen as a proclamation of the new tactic. Albeit only in brief and vague terms, the decree codified the new tactical knowledge. It served as a medium to transfer the knowledge to other commanders. Furthermore, the sieges of Tashan and Xingshan were also the Three Princes' first successful artillery sieges, happening almost ten years after they had acquired their gunnery knowledge from the Portuguese gunners. Thanks to the experience and knowledge garnered in the sieges of 1636 to 1642, they finally developed an effective artillery siege tactic.

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[348] NGSYD, 468-69.

Apart from the tactical breakthrough, the Hanjun artillery corps also expanded substantially in size. At Tashan and Xingshan, there were at least 24 and 23 Hanjun officers and bannermen who served as gunners or artillery officers, respectively, and this only includes those who were recorded; the real number of artillerists should be even higher. In comparison, only 12 Hanjun artillery officers and gunners could be identified in the 1631 siege of Dalinghe. This shows a substantial growth in the artillery corps, possibly the result of the artillery training program.[349] Furthermore, a lot of Hanjun banner officers became artillery officers in the two sieges. Of the 28 Hanjun banner officers as of 1641, at least 19 (67.9%) of them directed the artillery corps or fired cannons in Jinzhou, Tashan, or Xingshan. Many of these Hanjun officers saw their first action with artillery, further proving the success of the Hanjun artillery training program.[350]

[349] Ma Guangyuan was replaced by Jin Li in 1641 and Hezhi Jili was appointed as deputy Hanjun Garrison lieutenant (Ch: 管梅勒章京事). QSL, 792/2.

[350] Liu Zhiyuan, Jin Li, and Hezhi Jili were appointed as Hanjun officers after 1639. Liu very possibly replaced Ma Guangyuan. Jin Li may have replaced Wang Shixuan as they both belonged to Two Red Banners; and Hezhi Jili may have replaced Daerhan as they both belonged to the Two White Banners and Daerhan was no longer mentioned in later records. But all of these speculations lack record corroboration, so I still put Wang Shixuan and Daerhan, both of whom did not serve as artillerists, in the list. QSL, 652/2, 792/2.

Table 8. List of Hanjun officers who served as artillerists in the Battle of Songshan-Jinzhou.[351]

Banner	Name	Banner Position	Jinzhou	Tashan	Xingshan
Two Yellow Banners	Liu Zhiyuan 劉之源	Banner leader	Y	Y	Y
Two Yellow Banners	Ma Guanghui 馬光輝	Garrison lieutenant			Unspecified
Two Yellow Banners	Zhang Dayou 張大猷	Garrison lieutenant	Y	Unspecified	
Two Yellow Banners	Dai Du 戴都	Regiment colonel	Unspecified	Y	Y
Two Yellow Banners	Cui Yingtai 崔應泰	Regiment colonel		Y	
Two Yellow Banners	Yang Singyuan 楊聲遠	Regiment colonel			
Two Yellow Banners	Zhang Chengde 張承德	Regiment colonel			Y
Two White Banners	Shi Tingzhu 石廷柱	Banner leader	Y		
Two White Banners	Da'erhan 達爾漢	Garrison lieutenant			
Two White Banners	Jin Weicheng 金維城	Garrison lieutenant	Unspecified	Y	Unspecified
Two White Banners	Jin Yuhe 金玉和	Regiment colonel	Y	Y	
Two White Banners	Tong Guoyin 佟國蔭	Regiment colonel	Y	Y	Y
Two White Banners	Tong Dai 佟代	Regiment colonel		Y	Y
Two Red Banners	Wang Shixuan 王世選	Banner leader			
Two Red Banners	Wu Shoujin 吳守進	Garrison lieutenant	Y		Y
Two Red Banners	Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳	Garrison lieutenant			
Two Red Banners	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹貞	Regiment colonel		Y	Y
Two Red Banners	Wang Guoguang 王國光	Regiment colonel			
Two Red Banners	Zang Guozuo 臧國祚	Regiment colonel			

[351] “Unspecified” indicates that the officer participated in military action, but it is unclear if he served as an artillerist.

Two Blue Banners	Bayan 巴顏	Banner leader	Y		
Two Blue Banners	Li Guohan 李國翰	Garrison lieutenant	Y	Y	
Two Blue Banners	Tong Tulai 佟圖賴	Garrison lieutenant	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Two Blue Banners	Zhang Liangbi 張良弼	Regiment colonel	Y		
Two Blue Banners	Cao Guangbi 曹光弼	Regiment colonel		Y	Y
Two Blue Banners	Liu Zhongjin 劉仲錦	Regiment colonel		Y	Unspecified
Two Blue Banners	Li Mingshi 李明時	Regiment colonel			
Unclear	Jin Li 金礪	Banner leader	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Two White Banner	Hezhi jili 何智機理	Deputy Garrison lieutenant	Unspecified	Y	Y

Becoming Hanjun Eight Banners

On July 7, 1642, two months after the capture of Tashan and Xingshan, Hong Taiji finally expanded the Hanjun from four to eight banners, marking the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners. The Hanjun finally attained the institutional status commensurate to the Manchu Eight Banners and the Mongol Eight Banners. Given the time proximity between the successes at Tashan and Xingshan and the expansion of Hanjun, it is very probable that the two had a causal relationship. A month later, Hong Taiji ordered that every Hanjun company should be assigned a company captain, further buttressing the Hanjun's status as an independent ethnic branch of the Eight Banners.[352]

The structural development of the Hanjun also saw another wave of mass expansion and appointment of Hanjun Banner officers. An important feature of the appointment is that *Nikan* of all backgrounds, including the "transfrontiersmen," "old Han officials," and "new Han officials," were appointed as Hanjun officers. The Hanjun finally encompassed all kinds of *Nikan* and became the de facto *Nikan*-representing institution in the Qing court. As Crossley points out, only by then was a comprehensive Hanjun identity, which united all Liaodong and northern Zhili populations and reintegrated those of bondservant status, firmly established.[353] All the *Nikan* who had joined the Qing before 1644 would later be categorized as "following the Dragon into Shanhai Pass" (Ch: *conglong ruguan* 從龍入關), enjoying exclusive privileges compared to those who joined afterward.[354]

The establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners saw the closure of many structural issues regarding the Hanjun. First, it clarified the legal status of the Hanjun. With the mass creation of Hanjun companies in 1642, the Hanjun bannermen were separated from the Manchu Eight Banners and officially registered under the independent Hanjun Eight Banners.

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[352] QSL, 840/2.
[353] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 104.
[354] Liu Xiaomeng, *Qingdai baqi zidi* (Liaoning: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2008), 70.

This ended the institutional allegiance confusion that had haunted the Hanjun in the preceding years. On the other hand, the Hanjun Bannermen were legally differentiated from the Han civilian population.

Second, the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners saw an integration of the Han officials into the Hanjun system. Although the Hanjun commanders had been serving as the leaders of the Han court officials since the early 1630s, the Han official and Hanjun systems were separated. In 1639, only half of the Han court officials serving in the Six Ministries and the Censorate were appointed as Hanjun Officers, and some of the Han officials were not even registered under the Hanjun. In 1642, 73% of the Han officials were appointed as Hanjun. The appointment signifies that the Hanjun incorporated the Han officials into its institution.

Lastly, the structural development stabilized the longstanding ethnic versus military institutional positioning crisis of the Hanjun. As one of the three ethnic branches of the Eight Banners, the Hanjun represented the *Nikan* in the Banner system and at the Qing court. It declared as well as manifested the Manchu-Mongol-Han ethnic trinity setting of the emerging Qing empire. Nevertheless, the Manchu title of the Hanjun remained to be *ujen cooha*, which highlights its military instead of its ethnic distinction. This signifies the Hanjun's peculiar status as the "ethnic soldiers"–its members needed to be both *Nikan* and soldiers serving the Qing army. The rest of the *Nikan* were excluded from the Hanjun and were recognized as civilians.

Hanjun as a Pan-*Nikan* Institution

In total, 64 Hanjun banner officers were appointed.[355] Zu Zeren was appointed the Banner leader of Plain Yellow Banner, Liu Zhiyuan the Banner leader of Bordered Yellow

[355] "Shengjing lihulibing sibuwen," 80-81.

Banner, Wu Shoujin the Banner leader of Plain Red Banner, Jin Li the Banner leader of Bordered Red Banner, (Tong) Tu Lai 圖賴 the Banner leader of Plain White Banner, Shi Tingzhu the Banner leader of Bordered White Banner, Bayan the Banner leader of Plain Blue Banner, Li Guohan the Banner leader of Bordered Blue Banner.[356] The appointees came from different backgrounds, varying in how and when they joined the Later Jin/ Qing. This signifies that the Hanjun fully integrated the *Nikan* of different backgrounds into one ethnic-political interest group.

Nevertheless, the "transfrontiersmen" and the "old Han officials" retained the leading positions of the Hanjun Eight Banners. In 1639, when Hanjun was divided into four banners, all the appointed officers were "transfrontiersmen" or "old Han officials" who defected before 1631.[357] Of these 26 appointees, 23 retained their office after 1642. Of the 41 newly appointed Hanjun officers in 1642, at least nine capitulated at the 1631 siege of Dalinghe with Zu Dashou;[358] three defected in 1636, and three just capitulated at the battle of Songjin; the rest all defected prior to 1631. In other words, only 15 (23.4%) Hanjun officers were "new Han officials."

The leadership of the Hanjun Eight Banners was also dominated by early defectors. Of the Eight Hanjun Banner leaders, only Zu Zerun 祖澤潤 defected in the 1631 siege of Dalinghe; the rest all joined the Later Jin before 1630. Similarly, of the 14 appointed garrison lieutenants, nine (64.3%) were "old Han officials," and five (35.7%) defected from Dalinghe in 1631. On the other hand, all three appointees who had just capitulated in the Battle of Songjin were only appointed as reserves (Ch: *houbu* 候補).

[356] QSL, 831/1.
[357] Excepted for three unknowns: Tong Dai 佟代, Yang Mingyuan 楊名遠, and Zhang Liangbi 張良弼. But they were likely to be early defectors.
[358] The exact year of capitulation of Zu Yingyuan 祖應元, a member of Zu's family troops, is unclear.

Table 9. Time of capitulation and previous office positions of the 1642 Hanjun officers.

Banner	Name	Time of capitulation	Previous Hanjun Officer Position
Plain Yellow Banner	Zu Zeren 祖澤潤	1631	
Plain Yellow Banner	Zu Kefa 祖可法	1631	
Plain Yellow Banner	Zhang Dayou 張大猷	1621	Two Yellow Banners Garrison lieutenant
Plain Yellow Banner	Dai Du 戴都	Before 1626	Two Yellow Banners Regiment colonel
Plain Yellow Banner	Zhang Chengde 張成德	Before 1631	Two Yellow Banners Regiment colonel
Plain Yellow Banner	Li Xianzhen 李獻箴	Early in the pre-conquest era	
Plain Yellow Banner	Xiong Ren 熊仁	Before 1631	
Plain Yellow Banner	Zu Yingyuan 祖應元		
Bordered Yellow Banner	Liu Zhiyuan 劉之源	*baoyi* in the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner	
Bordered Yellow Banner	Ma Guanghui 馬光輝	1630	Two Yellow Banners Garrison lieutenant
Bordered Yellow Banner	Zu Zehong 祖澤洪	1631	
Bordered Yellow Banner	Yang Minggao 楊明高		Two Yellow Banners Regiment colonel
Bordered Yellow Banner	Deng Changchun 鄧長春	1631	
Bordered Yellow Banner	Hu Yousheng 胡有升	1636	
Bordered Yellow Banner	Lu Tingzuo 盧廷祚	1622	
Bordered Yellow Banner	Zhang Simeng 張思孟	Before 1639	
Plain Red Banner	Wu Shoujin 吳守進	1616	Two Red Banners Garrison lieutenant
Plain Red Banner	Wang Guoguang 王國光	1619	Two Red Banners Regiment colonel
Plain Red Banner	Guo Chaozhong 郭朝忠	1642	
Plain Red Banner	Wu Shijun 吳世俊	1619	

Plain Red Banner	Men Shiwen 門世文	1636	
Plain Red Banner	Feng Wenyun 馮文運		
Plain Red Banner	Jiang Yikui 姜一魁	Before 1635	
Plain Red Banner	Sun Desheng 孫德盛		
Bordered Red Banner	Jin Li 金礪	Before 1626	Two Red Banners Banner Leader
Bordered Red Banner	Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳	1619	Two Red Banners Garrison lieutenant
Bordered Red Banner	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹貞	1621	Two Red Banners Regiment colonel
Bordered Red Banner	Ke Ruji 柯汝極	Before 1626	
Bordered Red Banner	Zhang Shaozhen 張紹貞	1636	
Bordered Red Banner	Bai Qice 白啟策		
Bordered Red Banner	Ke Yongsheng 柯永盛	Before 1626	
Bordered Red Banner	Wu Rujie 吳汝玠	1642	
Plain White Banner	Tu Lai 圖賴	1619	Two Blue Banners Garrison lieutenant
Plain White Banner	Pei Guozhen 裴國珍	1631	
Plain White Banner	Tong Dai 佟代		Two White Banners Regiment colonel
Plain White Banner	Tong Guoyin 佟國蔭	Before 1621	Two White Banners Regiment colonel
Plain White Banner	Hu Hongxian 胡弘先	1631	
Plain White Banner	Chen Daxin 陳大新		
Plain White Banner	Tong Yangxian 佟養先		
Plain White Banner	Liu Yueke 劉曰可	before 1639	
Bordered White Banner	Shi Tingzhu 石廷柱	1622	Two White Banners Banner Leader
Bordered White Banner	He Zhijili 何智機理	1622	Two Red Banners Temporarily Appointed Garrison lieutenant

Bordered White Banner	Jin Weicheng 金維城	before 1631	Two White Banners Garrison lieutenant
Bordered White Banner	Zhang Liangbi 張良弼		Two Blue Banners Regiment colonel
Bordered White Banner	Jin Yuhe 金玉和	before 1631	Two White Banners Regiment colonel
Bordered White Banner	Sun Yougong 孫有功	1622	
Bordered White Banner	Xu Dagui 徐大貴	Before 1640	
Bordered White Banner	Zu Bangwu 祖邦武	1631	
Plain Blue Banner	Bayan 巴顏	1618	Two Blue Banners Banner Leader
Plain Blue Banner	Zu Zeyuan 祖澤遠	1631	
Plain Blue Banner	Liu Zhongjin 劉仲金	Before 1639	Two Blue Banners Regiment colonel
Plain Blue Banner	Li Ming 李明	1618	Two Blue Banners Regiment colonel
Plain Blue Banner	Lu Dengke 盧登科	before 1632	
Plain Blue Banner	Cui Mingxin 崔明信	Before 1634	
Plain Blue Banner	Gao Gongji 高拱極	before 1631	
Plain Blue Banner	Zu Zepei 祖澤沛	1642	
Bordered Blue Banner	Li Guohan 李國翰	1621	Two Blue Banners Garrison lieutenant
Bordered Blue Banner	Zhang Cunren 張存仁	1631	
Bordered Blue Banner	Cao Guangbi 曹光弼	before 1631	Two Blue Banners Regiment colonel
Bordered Blue Banner	Zhu Wance 朱萬策	1621	
Bordered Blue Banner	Yang Wenkui 楊文魁	before 1630	
Bordered Blue Banner	Ren Mingshi 任名世	Before 1631	
Bordered Blue Banner	Lu Youliang 路有良	Before 1641	
Bordered Blue Banner	Ma Rulong 馬如龍	before 1631	

The appointment of the eight Hanjun Banner leaders also reflects the power distribution among influential *Nikan* clans. Shi Tingzhu, Bayan, Zu Zeren, (Tong) Tulai, and Li Guohan all represented their respective lineages. Shi Tingzhu represented the Shi lineage he led; Bayan represented the influential Li Yongfang lineage; Zu Zeren represented the Zu Dashou lineage. Tong Tulai was the adopted son of Tong Yangzheng 佟養正, who was the brother of Tong Yangxing, representing the Tong merchant lineage.[359] Li Guohan represented the Li merchant lineage, which was brought to the Later Jin by his father Li Jixue 李繼學 in 1621.[360] These clans would continue to be the most influential clans in the Hanjun.

For the rest of the three Banner leaders, Jin Li was a Ming martial exam *jinshi* (Ch: 武進士) and a Ming Regional vice commander stationed in Liaodong. He was one of the earliest defectors to the Later Jin.[361] Wu Shoujin was also one of the earliest defectors, joining Nurhaci as early as 1616.[362] They represented the old *Nikan* early defectors. Liu Zhiyuan was the only exceptional case. Liu's record was very obscure. We only know that he was registered as a *baoyi* (Ch: 包衣 Ma: booi) in the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. [363] *Baoyi* companies were made up of bondservants in the Manchu Eight Banners; given that Liu was registered in Hong Taiji's Bordered Yellow Banner, he was a direct subject of the emperor. In 1636, Liu was promoted to *qigu* third regiment colonel (Ch: *qigu sandeng jiala zhangjing* 旗鼓三等甲喇章京).[364] *Qigu* was the company leader of *baoyi* companies, meaning that he became a company leader.[365] On November 24, 1639, he was appointed the

[359] BQTZ, 3727.
[360] BQTZ, 4375.
[361] BQTZ, 4322.
[362] NGDK, 185056-002.
[363] FHA, B032-030
[364] MWLD, 683.
[365] Li Xiaoxue, "Qingchu Shengjing shang san qi baoyi zuoling de bian she ji suoshuren deng shenfen goucheng," *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 2023, no. 3, 124-134.

Banner leader of the Two Yellow Banners, probably replacing Ma Guangyuan.[366] Liu was the only case of a *Nikan* bondservant appointed as a Banner leader of the Hanjun.

The re-defection of the Ming general Zu Dashou played a crucial role in the Hanjun appointment decision. In 1631, Zu Dashou capitulated at Dalinghe with many of his family members and subordinates. However, Zu soon defected back to the Ming, leaving behind those who followed him to the Later Jin. As a result, these Zu subordinates, known as Zu's family troops (Ch: *Zu jiajiang* 祖家將), were never truly trusted by the Manchu elites. None of the Zu's family troops, for example, were appointed as officers of the 1639 Hanjun banners. Instead, many of them were appointed as court officers in the Six Ministries and Censorate.[367] After the battle of Songjin, Zu Dashou defected to the Qing again. As the Ming's influence in Liaoxi diminished, Hong Taiji probably had the confidence that Zu Dashou would stay at his camp this time. So, he decided to appoint ten Zu's family troops who defected in 1631; and three who defected in 1642, as Hanjun Banner officers in 1642.[368] Furthermore, Zu Dashou's eldest son, Zu Zerun, was appointed as one of the Eight Banners leaders.

The appointment of Hanjun Banner officers also signifies the confluence of the Han official system and the Hanjun system. Since Tong Yangxing's time, the Hanjun leader also served as the leader of the Han officials. Hong Taiji stated clearly in 1631 that "All affairs concerning Han civilians and military personnel are entrusted to you (Tong) for overall management. All officials shall heed your commands."[369] After Hong Taiji proclaimed himself as the emperor of the multi-ethnic Qing empire, as court ritual formalized and

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[366] QSL, 652/2.
[367] These Zu's family troops include Zu Zeren, Zu Kefa, Zu Zehong 祖澤洪, Deng Changchun 鄧長春, Pei Guozhen, and Zhang Cunren. They were all court officers by 1638 but were only appointed as Hanjun Officers in 1642.
[368] Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 316-17; Watanuki, "Zailun Zu Dashou yu 'Zujiajiang,'" 39.
[369] QSL, 109/2; TC-5 I, 19-20.

became more important, the Hanjun commanders played a more prominent role as the leader of the Han officials.

In 1639 when the Hanjun was divided into four banners, a considerable portion of the Han officials serving in the six Ministries were appointed as Hanjun Banner Officials. Of the 27 appointees, 13 (48%) were appointed as officials of the Six Ministries in 1638. Nevertheless, The Han official system was still not fully incorporated into the Hanjun officers system. In particular, many of Zu's family troops who had defected in 1631 were appointed as Han officials in the Six Ministries and the Censorate, but they were not appointed as Hanjun Banner Officers because the Manchu court did not fully trust them. This changed after the Battle of Songjin. Of the thirty High-ranking Han officials of the ranks of Right and Left vice commissioners 左右參政, Managerial officer 理事官, Deputy managerial officer 副理事官, 22 (73%) were appointed as Hanjun Banner Officers – five Banner leaders, nine garrison lieutenants, seven regiment colonels, and one reserve;[370] among them, six were Zu's family troops.[371] The personnel assignment signifies full incorporation of the Hanjun and the Han courtofficials system by 1642.

[370] QSL, 239/1. Of remaining eight Han Officials, one of them, Cui Yingtai, died in the siege of Tashan due to bore premature; two were Zu family troops; two, 馬國柱 and 雷興 were literati who passed the 1635 public exams;鮑承先 and 臧國祚 were early defectors; and one of them, 高俊, could not be found in other sources.
[371] The six officials were Zu Zehong, Deng Changchun, Zu Zerun, Pei Guozhen, Zu Kefa, Zhang Cunren.

Table 10. Appointment of Han court officials and Hanjun Banner officers.

Court Office	Office Position	Name	Banner Rank as of 1642	Banner Rank as of 1638
Ministry of Personnel	Left Vice Commissioner 左參政	Zu Zehong 祖澤洪	Garrison lieutenant	
Ministry of Personnel	Right Vice Commissioner 右參政	Bao Chengxian 鮑承先		
Ministry of Personnel	Deputy Managerial Officer 副理事官	Tun Tai 屯泰	Reserve	Regiment colonel
Ministry of Personnel	Deputy Managerial Officer	Lu Dengke 盧登科	Regiment colonel	
Ministry of Revenue	Left Vice Commissioner	Wu Shoujin 吳守進	Banner leader	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Revenue	Right Vice Commissioner	Deng Changchun 鄧長春	Regiment colonel	
Ministry of Revenue	Managerial Officer 理事官	Cui Yingtai 崔應泰	KIA in Tashan	Regiment colonel
Ministry of Revenue	Managerial Officer	Ma Guanghui 馬光輝	Garrison lieutenant	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Rites	Left Vice Commissioner	Bayan 巴顏	Banner leader	Banner leader
Ministry of Rites	Right Vice Commissioner	Chen Bangxuan 陳邦選		
Ministry of Rites	Managerial Officer	Guo Ruyi 郭汝極	Regiment colonel	
Ministry of Rites	Deputy Managerial Officer	Gao Xiuyi 高修極	Regiment colonel	
Ministry of Rites	Deputy Managerial Officer	Gao Jun 高俊		
Ministry of War	Left Vice Commissioner	Zu Zerun 祖澤潤	Banner leader	
Ministry of War	Right Vice Commissioner	Tong Tulai 佟圖賴	Banner leader	Garrison lieutenant

Ministry of War	Managerial Officer	Lang Shaozhen 郎紹禎	Garrison lieutenant	Regiment colonel
Ministry of War	Deputy Managerial Officer	Jin Weicheng 金維城	Garrison lieutenant	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Justice	Left Vice Commissioner	Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳	Garrison lieutenant	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Justice	Right Vice Commissioner	Li Yun 李雲		
Ministry of Justice	Managerial Officer	Zhang Dayou 張大猷	Garrison lieutenant	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Justice	Managerial Officer	Li Guohan 李國翰	Banner leader	Garrison lieutenant
Ministry of Works	Left Vice Commissioner	Pei Guozhen 裴國珍	Garrison lieutenant	
Ministry of Works	Right Vice Commissioner	Yang Wenkui 楊文魁	Regiment colonel	
Ministry of Works	Managerial Officer	Zang Guozuo 臧國祚		Regiment colonel
Ministry of Works	Deputy Managerial Officer	Tong Guoyin 佟國蔭	Regiment colonel	Regiment colonel
Ministry of Works	Deputy Managerial Officer	Ren Mingshi 任名世	Regiment colonel	
Censorate	Right Vice Commissioner	Zu Kefa 祖可法	Garrison lieutenant	
Censorate	Right Vice Commissioner	Zhang Cunren 張存仁	Garrison lieutenant	
Censorate	Managerial Officer	Ma Guozhu 馬國柱		
Censorate	Managerial Officer	Lei Xing 雷興		

Formalization and Mass Creation of Hanjun Companies

A month after the appointment of the Hanjun officers, Hong Taiji ordered that every Hanjun company should be assigned a company captain, further signifying the Hanjun's ascension as an independent Eight Banner branch separated from the Manchu Eight Banners.[372] According to BQTZ, 101 Hanjun companies were created in 1642, which made up 62.3% of the 161 companies created in the pre-conquest Qing.[373] Although, as Teng Shaoxian points out, some of the 101 companies already existed before 1642, but they were reorganized in 1642, hence recorded as newly created companies.[374] The fact remains that a majority of the Hanjun companies were created together with the Hanjun Eight Banners in 1642.

Most of the Hanjun banner officers were appointed Hanjun company captains. Of the 64 appointees, at least 55 (86%) of them were company captains.[375] Of these 55 companies, thirteen were created before 1636; two were created before 1637-1640. 38 (59%) companies were created in 1642; although some of the companies should have been created earlier.[376] The mass creation and standardization of Hanjun companies signifies that the Hanjun finally had a formal banner-regiment-company structure commensurate to the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners. It also shows that there was a strong hierarchy within the Hanjun, for 86% of the Hanjun officers were also company captains. This indicates that the Hanjun banner population by then was under the direct jurisdiction of the Hanjun officers and was carved out from the rest of the Manchu population. Although, a considerable Han population was registered as Han civilians separated from the Hanjun.[377]

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[372] QSL, 840/2.
[373] Zhang and Guo counted 162 Hanjun companies by 1642. However, the list they provided only contains 161 companies, which is the same as my own count. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian guojia falü zhidushi*, 316.
[374] Teng, "Qingchu Hanjun ji qi niulu tan yuan," 69.
[375] Shi Tingzhu did not have his own company, but his two sons were appointed as company captains.
[376] Teng, "Qingchu Hanjun ji qi niulu tan yuan," 69.
[377] For example, part of the population capitulated in the battle of Songjin were sent to Gaizhou 蓋州 as civilians. QSL 838/1.

Table 11. 1642 Hanjun officers as company captains.

Banner	**Name**	**Company Captain** (R: regiment; C: company)	**Company Year of Creation**
Plain Yellow	Zu Zeren		
Plain Yellow	Zu Kefa	Plain Yellow 2nd R 4th C	1642
Plain Yellow	Zhang Dayou	Bordered Yellow 1st R 1st C	1634
Plain Yellow	Dai Du	Plain Yellow 4th R 2nd C	1642
Plain Yellow	Zhang Chengde	Plain Yellow 2nd R 3rd C	1630
Plain Yellow	Li Xianzhen	Plain Yellow 5th R 1st C	1642
Plain Yellow	Xiong Ren	Plain Yellow 1st R 3rd C	1642
Plain Yellow	Zu Yingyuan	Plain Yellow 3rd R 3rd C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Liu Zhiyuan		
Bordered Yellow	Ma Guanghui	Bordered Yellow 3rd R 4th C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Zu Zehong	Bordered Yellow 1st R 6th C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Yang Minggao	Bordered Yellow 3rd R 7th C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Deng Changchun	Bordered Yellow 5th R 4th C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Hu Yousheng	Bordered White 5th R 6th C	1642
Bordered Yellow	Lu Tingzuo	Bordered Yellow 4th R 5th C	1634
Bordered Yellow	Zhang Simeng	Bordered Yellow 2nd R 8th C	1639
Plain Red	Wu Shoujin	Plain Red 1st R 3rd C	1635
Plain Red	Wang Guoguang	Plain Red 2nd R 6th C	1635
Plain Red	Guo Chaozhong	Plain Red 5th R 2nd C	Unclear
Plain Red	Wu Shijun	Plain Red 5th R 4th C	1642
Plain Red	Men Shiwen		
Plain Red	Feng Wenyun	Plain Red 2nd R 2nd C	1642
Plain Red	Jiang Yikui	Plain Red 3rd R 2nd C	1635
Plain Red	Sun Desheng	Plain Red 1st R 4th C	1642
Bordered Red	Jin Li	Bordered Red 5th R 5th C	1642
Bordered Red	Meng Qiaofang	Bordered Red 2nd R 2nd C	1642
Bordered Red	Lang Shaozhen	Bordered Red 4th R 2nd C	1642
Bordered Red	Ke Rují	Bordered Red 2nd R 5th C	1642
Bordered Red	Zhang Shaozhen		
Bordered Red	Bai Qice	Bordered Red 4th R 3rd C	1642
Bordered Red	Ke Yongsheng	Bordered Red 2nd R 6th C	1642
Bordered Red	Wu Rujie	Bordered Red 4th R 5th C	1642
Plain White	Tu Lai	Bordered Yellow 1st R 7th C	Unclear
Plain White	Pei Guozhen		
Plain White	Tong Dai	Plain Blue 3rd R 3rd C	1635

Plain White	Tong Guoyin	Plain Blue 2nd R 1st C	1634
Plain White	Hu Hongxian	Plain White 3rd R 5th C	1642
Plain White	Chen Daxin		
Plain White	Tong Yangxian	Plain Blue 5th R 1st C	1642
Plain White	Liu Yueke		
Bordered White	Shi Tingzhu	Both his sons had a company	
Bordered White	He Zhijili	Plain White 3rd R 3rd C	1642
Bordered White	Jin Weicheng	Plain Yellow 1st R 4th C	1642
Bordered White	Zhang Liangbi		
Bordered White	Jin Yuhe	Plain Yellow 1st R 8th C	1642
Bordered White	Sun Yougong	Plain White 3rd R 4th C	1634
Bordered White	Xu Dagui	Plain White 4th R 2nd C	1637
Bordered White	Zu Bangwu	Plain White 2nd R 1st C	1642
Plain Blue	Bayan	Plain Blue 1st R 4th C	1634
Plain Blue	Zu Zeyuan	Bordered White 1st R 3rd C	1642
Plain Blue	Liu Zhongjin	Plain Blue 1st R 1st C	1634
Plain Blue	Li Ming	Plain Blue 1st R 5th C	1634
Plain Blue	Lu Dengke	Bordered White 1st R 4th C	1642
Plain Blue	Cui Mingxin	Bordered White 4th R 2nd C	1642
Plain Blue	Gao Gongji	Bordered White 4th R 4th C	1635
Plain Blue	Zu Zepei	Bordered White 5th R 3rd C	1642
Bordered Blue	Li Guohan	Bordered Blue 1st R 2nd C	1642
Bordered Blue	Zhang Cunren	Bordered Blue 3rd R 4th C	1642
Bordered Blue	Cao Guangbi	Bordered Blue 5th R 3rd C	1642
Bordered Blue	Zhu Wance	Bordered Blue 5th R 4th C	1642
Bordered Blue	Yang Wenkui	Bordered Blue 4th R 4th C	1642
Bordered Blue	Ren Mingshi	Bordered Blue 5th R 2nd C	1642
Bordered Blue	Lu Youliang	Bordered Blue 4th R 3rd C	1642
Bordered Blue	Ma Rulong	Plain Yellow 2nd R 5th C	1642

The mass creation of the Hanjun companies also signifies a huge expansion of the Hanjun Eight Banners. Assuming each company comprised 200 men, with 161 companies, the Hanjun reached 32200 strong by 1642.[378] When the Hanjun was created in 1631, it only had around 3300 troops; its size thus almost increased ten-fold. The Hanjun would quickly become the largest ethnic branch in the Eight Banners, outnumbering its Manchu counterparts until the 1750s.[379] This greatly altered the ethnic composition of the Eight Banners system and injected a large amount of manpower into the Qing army.

The major reason for the sudden surge of Hanjun companies was due to the mass surrender of the Ming army during the Battle of Songshan-Jinzhou. In the siege of Songshan, 1863 Ming soldiers and their families surrendered, 4580 from Jinzhou following Zu Dashou, and 6838 from Xingshan.[380] After the battle, Hong Taiji assigned most of the surrendered soldiers to the Hanjun, leaving around 2000 men, women, and children as civilians.[381] On the other hand, as mentioned above, the re-surrender of Zu Dashou prompted Hong Taiji to use the Zu family troops. After the 1631 Siege of Dalinghe, 11682 Zu's troops surrendered to the Later Jin.[382] Due to the Qing court's mistrust of Zu, the massive population from Dalinghe was not registered into any companies but was registered as civilians under population settlements managed by Han officials.[383] After the Battle of Songjin, this Han population was finally incorporated into the Hanjun Eight Banners. This signifies a full incorporation of the new and old *Nikan* into the institution.

Furthermore, the forces of the Three Princes and Shen Zhixiang were also incorporated into the Hanjun system. Instead of being dispersed and spread among the

[378] The Qing scholar Wei Yuan 魏源 argues that the Hanjun only had 24050 soldiers in 1642. Nevertheless, this number is still extraordinary. Wei Yuan, *Shengwu ji,* vol 11, 1.
[379] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor,* 10.
[380] QSL, 799/1, 806/2, 821/2-822/1.
[381] QSL, 838/1.
[382] QSL, 143/2.
[383] QSL, 145/2.

Hanjun Eight Banners, however, the forces of the princes were only attached to the Hanjun army (Ch: *yitong xingzhou* 一同行走). They were still separately registered under Kong, Geng, Shang, and Shen until the end of the Revolts of the Three Feudatories.[384] Nevertheless, in terms of the military setting, this still signifies the full creation of a Han ethnic branch of the Eight Banners system.

Artillery Technology and the Careers of the Hanjun Bannermen

The appointment of Hanjun Eight Banner officers invites a key question: did artillery expertise improve the career prospects of Hanjun individuals? As discussed in Chapter Two, during the early 1630s, artillery specialists—particularly gunsmiths—benefited from significant promotions because of their unique skill sets. Their supervisors, who managed artillery projects, also advanced rapidly. However, with the ethnicization of artillery technology and the institutionalization of the Hanjun, the political advantages once tied to artillery expertise appear to have shifted. Rather than individual artillery specialists leveraging their skills for personal advancement, the Hanjun as an institution absorbed much of the political capital previously associated with artillery knowledge. As a result, *Nikan* individuals proficient in gunnery and artillery could no longer rely solely on their technical expertise to achieve rapid promotions. However, the institutionalization of the Hanjun created new political opportunities for *Nikan* overall, as the Hanjun expanded positions specifically designated for them. This section first examines the early career trajectories of gunnery specialists and artillerists before analyzing broader patterns of artillery-related career advancement among appointed Hanjun Banner officers.

Two notable examples are the gunsmiths Wang Tianxiang and Jin Shixiang 金世祥. Wang, captured from Yongping in 1629 and made a bondservant, rose to the position of

[384] QSL, 851/1. Xie Jingfang, "'Sanwang,' Xushungong suobu 'liqi' kaobian," *Beifan luncong*, no. 6 (1996): 44–48.

company commander in 1631 after casting the first heavy cannon for the Later Jin. [385] Two years later, he was promoted to the rank of captain (Ma: *beiguwan*). [386] Despite these early advancements, his career stalled afterward. Although he was appointed as a "gunsmith officer" (Ch: *zhupao niulu zhangjing* 鑄礮牛彔章京) in 1642, when Hong Taiji established an artillery foundry in Jinzhou, no further promotions followed. [387] Jin Shixiang had a more tortuous career. Promoted to captain in 1633, he was caught in the rising ethnic rhetoric during the 1639 trial of Songshan, in which he was accused of manufacturing inferior ammunition.[388] He narrowly escaped the death penalty thanks to his earlier contributions.[389] Still, he too was appointed as a "gunsmith officer" in 1642 and eventually reached the rank of second-class regiment colonel (Ch: *erdeng qingche duwei* 二等輕車都尉, Ma: *adaha hafan*)—a modest improvement, but not a dramatic leap in status.[390]

Another key figure is Ding Qiming, a captive from the 1629 raid in northern China. Ding oversaw the first artillery project and was specifically rewarded for recruiting a team of skilled gunsmiths capable of producing red-shirt cannons.[391] Elevated to company captain in 1644, he served as an artillery officer in the Jiangnan campaign the following year, taking part in at least five artillery sieges.[392] Examining the trajectories of Wang, Jin, and Ding, it is evident that artillery expertise initially provided an avenue for advancement. Nevertheless, these bannermen remained in mid- to lower-ranking Hanjun positions and never ascended to top command levels.

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[385] TC-5 I, 83.
[386] TC-7, 29.
[387] QSL, 847/1.
[388] TC-7, 29.
[389] QSL, 626/1. In QSL, his name was Ji Shichang 季世昌 instead of Jin Shixiang 金世祥. Huang Yi-long believes that they are the same person given their similar history and that they both belonged to Ma Guangyuan's Yellow Banner. Huang, "Hongyi dapao yu Huang Taiji de baqi Hanjun," 79.
[390] QSL, 847/1; BQTZ, 2474.
[391] TC-5 I, 83
[392] BQTZ, 5010.

A similar pattern emerges among the early Hanjun artillerists. During the 1631 siege of Dalinghe, at least twelve *Nikan* served as artillerists, seven of whom can be identified by name in other sources. Although these identified individuals generally enjoyed promising prospects—two of them, Tong Yangxing and Zhu Shiyin, rose to the rank of Banner leader—most did not achieve higher-level command.[393] Moreover, many other gunners remained anonymous, suggesting that many never received substantial promotions. When the Hanjun was formed in 1631, there were 24 *Nikan* gunners. Yet only 12 are recorded by name in the Dalinghe siege, and it is unclear if these correspond to the original 24.[394] In the Songshan siege, 30 gunners and 30 reloaders are mentioned, but only one, Cui Yingtai, can be identified from other sources. Thus, although early Hanjun gunners likely received material rewards, their technical skills did not translate into consistently high-ranking positions.[395]

[393] BQTZ, 4348; 4324.
[394] TC-5 I, 82-3.
[395] NGSYD, 422-3. MWNGSYD, The 4th year of Chongde (The 4th to 5th month), 50-3.

Table 12. Career prospects of Hanjun who served as gunners in the 1631 siege of Dalinghe.

Person	Highest Rank/ Position	Hanjun/ Office Title	Year of promotion	Source
Tong Yangxing	2nd-class regional commander	Regional commander	1631	TC-5 I, 10/ BQTZ, 4348
Zhu Shiyin 祝世廕	2nd-class regiment colonel/ Hanjun Banner leader	Banner leader of the Hanjun Bordered Red	1655	BQTZ, 4323.
He Zhijili 何智機理	3rd-class regiment colonel	Garrison lieutenant of the Hanjun Bordered White Banner	1644	BQTZ, 4995/“Shengjing lihulibing sibuwen,” 80-81
Zhang Chengde 張成德	1st-class regiment colonel	Regiment colonel of the Hanjun Plain Yellow Banners	1643	BQTZ, 4992/ ibid
Dong Tingyuan 董廷元	Captain/ *beiguwan*)		1621 (Died in 1637)	BQTZ, 5245
Li Ming 李明/李名	Unknown	Regiment colonel of the Hanjun Two Blue Banners	1639	QSL, 626/1
Cui Yingtai 崔應泰	Company captain	Regiment colonel of the Hanjun Two Yellow Banners	1639	BQTZ, 5238/ QSL, 626/1
Liu Guangbi 劉光弼	1st-class regiment colonel	Provincial military commander of Jiangxi 江西提督	1652 & 1649	BQTZ, 4389/ QSL 375/1.

On the other hand, artillery expertise was not a prerequisite for becoming a Hanjun Banner leader. Among the Eight Banners leaders, only five had documented experience in artillery-based sieges. Shi Tingzhu and Li Guihan were unquestionably seasoned artillery commanders, while Liu Zhuyuan, Wu Shoujin, and Bayan also served as artillery officers during the Battle of Songjin.[396] Tu Lai may have directed artillery units, as he reportedly helped capture Tashan and Xingshan, but the sources do not explicitly mention his use of artillery. In contrast, Jin Li—one of the Hanjun's founding members—apparently had no artillery experience before 1643. Although he participated in the 1637 siege of Ka Island from aboard a fleet, there is no record of him firing cannons. Zu Zeren, the stepson of Zu Dashou, had no known artillery background prior to 1643.[397] Similar patterns can be observed on other Hanjun Banner officers. Of the 64 new appointees, only 27 (42%) participated in the battle of Songjin (excluding the three who fought for the Ming side), and 24 (37.5%) were recorded to serve in the artillery corps. The number is not significant. Similarly, when the Hanjun was expanded to four banners in 1639, of the 27 newly Hanjun Banner officers, only seven (25.9%) had served as artillerists.

However, the Qing had a tendency to train Hanjun officers into artillery officers. As mentioned earlier, of the 27 appointed Hanjun officers as of 1641, 22 (81.5%) fought in the battle of Songjin, and at least 20 (74%) of them fought with artillery. The pattern repeated again two years later: in the 1643 sieges of Zhonghou Suo 中後所 and Qiantun Wei 前屯衛, of the 64 appointed Hanjun officers, 42 (66%) of them participated, and at least 32 (50%) of them served as artillery officers. Combining all of their military experience throughout the years, by 1643, at least 41(64%) of the Hanjun officers had experience in artillery siege.

[396] BQTZ, 3748-49; 4257-59; 4299-50; 4346; 4376-77.
[397] QSL, 476/2.

Table 13. Artillery experience of 1642 Hanjun Banner officers.

Name	1640-42 Jinzhou	1642 Tashan	1642 Xingshan	1643 Zhonghoushuo	1643 Qiantunwei	Served as artillerists by 1644
Zu Zeren				Y	Y	Y
Zu Kefa				Y	Y	Y
Zhang Dayou	Y	Unspecified		Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Dai Du	Unspecified	Y	Y	Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Zhang Chengde			Y	Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Li Xianzhen					Y	Y
Xiong Ren						N
Zu Yingyuan				Y	Y	Y
Liu Zhiyuan	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Ma Guanghui			Unspecified	Y	Y	Y
Zu Zehong						N
Yang Minggao	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Deng Changchun				Y	Y	Y
Hu Yousheng				Y	Y	Y
Lu Tingzuo				Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Zhang Simeng						N
Wu Shoujin	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
Wang Guoguang				Y	Y	Y
Guo Chaozhong						N
Wu Shijun	Y	Y	Y	Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Men Shiwen						N
Feng Wenyun						N
Jiang Yikui						N
Sun Desheng				Y	Y	Y
Jin Li				Y	Y	Y
Meng Qiaofang				Y	Y	Y
Lang Shaozhen		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ke Rují						N
Zhang Shaozhen						N
Bai Qice						N
Ke Yongsheng	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Wu Rujie				Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Tu Lai	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Pei Guozhen						N

Tong Dai		Y	Y	Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Tong Guoyin	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hu Hongxian				Y	Y	Y
Chen Daxin						N
Tong Yangxian						N
Liu Yueke		Unspecified	Unspecified	Y	Y	Y
Shi Tingzhu						Y
He Zhijili	Unspecified	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jin Weicheng	Unspecified	Y	Unspecified	Y	Y	Y
Zhang Liangbi	Y					Y
Jin Yuhe	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Sun Yougong	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
Xu Dagui	Unspecified	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zu Bangwu				Y	Y	Y
Bayan	Y			Y	Y	Y
Zu Zeyuan						N
Liu Zhongjin		Y	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Y
Li Ming						Y (Dalinghe 1631)
Lu Dengke						N
Cui Mingxin						N
Gao Gongji	Y	Unspecified	Unspecified			Y
Zu Zepei						N
Li Guohan	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Zhang Cunren				Y	Y	Y
Cao Guangbi		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zhu Wance				Y	Y	Y
Yang Wenkui						N
Ren Mingshi						N
Lu Youliang				Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Ma Rulong	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

The statistical overview of Hanjun gunners indicates that by the late 1630s, artillery knowledge and gunnery skills no longer provided individual *Nikan* with the significant political advantages they had enjoyed a decade earlier. Following the "artillery ethnicization project," the Hanjun, as an ethnic-military institution, absorbed much of the political and social capital once afforded to individual *Nikan* artillerists. Although some Han gunners were emancipated from Manchu households and incorporated into the Hanjun, many unskilled *Nikan* men also joined their ranks, diminishing the special status once associated with artillery expertise. At the same time, officer appointments within the Hanjun were increasingly determined by a recruit's background rather than his technical artillery skills. What Hong Taiji valued most was the timing and manner of a person's entry into Later Jin service—earlier arrivals and voluntary defections inspired greater trust and commanded higher esteem than those who were captured or surrendered. This approach established loyalty and proven commitment as key criteria for promotion.

To sustain this system and ensure the effectiveness of these new officers, the Hanjun maintained a robust artillery training program. Through rigorous training, newly appointed Hanjun officers—regardless of their initial skill level—were molded into competent artillery commanders, thereby reinforcing the institution's military strength and ensuring a reliable source of leadership within the evolving Qing state. In this way, the Hanjun institution emerged as a cohesive and reliable artillery corps—one shaped by shifting criteria for advancement, the strategic absorption of skilled and unskilled *Nikan* recruits, and the careful cultivation of loyalty through training—ultimately strengthening its role within the Qing state's broader ethnic and political framework.

The establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners in 1642 saw the conclusion of many items of negotiation between the Manchu ruling elites and the Han military elites. The Han elites got their own Han institution and expanded their political influence. Many of them

were appointed as officers with high military ranks. To the general *Nikan* population, a considerable part of them were emancipated and carved out from the Manchu households, put under the jurisdiction of the Hanjun company captains. In return, the Han military elites delivered what they promised to the emperor. The Hanjun artillery corps was capable of capturing walled cities in a matter of days; more importantly, it could effectively breach the city wall and allow the Qing army to storm a city without scaling ladders. As Hanjun expanded, the artillery corps also expanded; by 1643, there was a large pool of artillery officers. Although Hong Taiji did not have the luxury to witness, the Hanjun artillery corps fought loyally and effectively in the subsequent conquest of China, paving the foundation of the Qing empire.

But inadvertently, the Hanjun negotiation also brought a substantial influence on the formation of the Qing empire. First and foremost, it declared the Manchu-Mongol-Han ethnic trinity setting of the Eight Banners system. It also carved out a large part of *Nikan* from the Manchu population, fostering the multiethnic setting of the emerging Qing state. Second, in terms of military, it brought a profound military reform to the Qing army, turning it from a nomadic cavalry-based army into an early-modern gunpowder army. This was one of the keys to the eventual success of the Qing in the seventeenth-century dynastic transition. As Tonio Andrade argues, the Qing would maintain its military supremacy in East and Central Asia until the nineteenth century.[398]

Conclusion

The development of the Hanjun artillery corps and their transformation into a fully-fledged Eight Banners institution was the culmination of a twelve-year-long project that intertwined military innovation, ethnic politics, and state-building. From the initial challenges

[398] Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*, 5.

faced during the siege of Dalinghe in 1631 to the successful campaigns at Tashan and Xingshan in 1642, the Hanjun and the Qing army gradually refined their artillery tactics and institutional framework. These efforts not only enhanced the Qing's military capabilities but also marked a pivotal moment in the integration of Han elites into the state apparatus, solidifying their role as ethnic soldiers. The creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners served both as a reward for their loyalty and a mechanism to limit their political autonomy, reflecting the delicate balance of trust and control that defined their role in the Qing state.

This elevation to bannermen status signified more than just a military or political reform; it was a profound shift in the Hanjun's identity and position within the Qing empire. As ethnic soldiers, they were finally granted the title of "bannermen," a distinction that placed them alongside their Manchu and Mongol counterparts. This newfound status separated them from the general *Nikan* population, elevating their social and political standing and granting them privileges that reinforced their loyalty to the dynasty. By institutionalizing the Hanjun within the banner system, the Qing not only consolidated its multiethnic hierarchy but also solidified the Hanjun's role as a cornerstone of its military and administrative apparatus—a legacy that would persist until the fall of the dynasty in 1911.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners marked a significant shift in the relationship between Han elites and the Qing ruling apparatus. The Han military leaders were brought very close to the central mechanisms of power, with many of them serving as high court officials and prominent Hanjun officers. The elevation of the Hanjun within the Eight Banners system symbolized their assimilation into the Qing's bureaucratic and military hierarchy, aligning their personal ambitions with the state's expansionist goals. This proximity to power not only facilitated the Qing's conquest of Ming territories but also laid the groundwork for the institutionalized multiethnic governance that would characterize the Qing dynasty.

All in all, the twelve-year-long evolution of the Hanjun—from marginalized auxiliaries to pivotal players in the Qing military—underscores the transformative potential of ethnic soldiers in state-building. Their artillery corps not only realized Hong Taiji's vision of an effective siege force but also helped define the Qing's multi-ethnic setting and its strategies for integrating diverse populations. By embedding Han military elites into the Eight Banners structure and granting them the special status of bannermen, the Qing achieved both military dominance and political consolidation, setting the stage for the dynasty's enduring success.

6. Hanjun and the Military Conquest of China

The Hanjun began as a focused military project in 1631 and quickly proved its effectiveness. Within just twelve years, the Qing, supported by the Hanjun artillery corps, captured Jinzhou, the most critical Ming stronghold in the Liaoxi corridor. By that time, the Ming's once formidable advantage in artillery technology had completely vanished. Following the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners, the corps continued to grow in size and organizational sophistication, fostering more efficient artillery production. By 1643, these improvements enabled the Qing to seize Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei with remarkable speed, forcing the Ming to abandon Ningyuan the following year. Reduced to holding only Shanhai Pass, the Ming watched as the by-then-late Hong Taiji's strategic goal was effectively realized.

Unexpectedly, that same year brought an even more dramatic shift: the Ming fell to Li Zicheng 李自成, and the Qing captured Beijing, thus beginning their long conquest of China—a campaign that would last another four decades. Throughout this prolonged conflict, the Hanjun artillery corps played a pivotal role. A decade of reforms, expansions, and battlefield experience had produced a large, well-trained force equipped with a substantial artillery train and seasoned gunners. Given that China proper's defense relied heavily on fortified walled cities, the Hanjun's artillery proficiency allowed the Qing to dismantle these defensive networks swiftly, freeing soldiers, time, and resources for other fronts. The Hanjun's artillery strength was particularly evident during the 1645 Jiangnan campaign and the 1649–1650 suppression of the Jiang Xiang 姜瓖 Revolt in Shanxi. This chapter will recount the Hanjun's key contributions to the early Qing conquest of China, illustrating how their artillery corps, shaped by strategic reforms and wartime adaptability, emerged as one of the most formidable in the early modern world.

The sieges of Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei (1643)

Two months after the Hanjun Eight Banners was established, on August 25, 1643, Hong Taiji handpicked a group of Hanjun officers to set up an artillery foundry in Jinzhou. The supervisors of the project were Ma Guanghui and Meng Qiaofang. Their team included one Hanjun officer from each banner, namely Yang Minggao 楊明高, Tong Guoyin 佟國蔭, Jin Yuhe, Sun Desheng 孫德盛, Yang Wenkui, Ke Yongsheng 柯永盛, Gao Gongji 高拱極 and Li Mao 李茂. Additionally, two company captains who specialized in artillery manufacturing, Jin Shichang and Wang Tianxiang, were also enlisted.[399] Wang was one of the earliest cannon smiths in the Later Jin and helped cast the Khanate's first red-shirt cannon. Jin Shichang later on improved the casting technology, allowing it to be cast without a wax model (Ch: *lawang* 蠟輞). Both of them were promoted to the rank of captain in 1633 for their contributions to artillery technology.[400] The establishment of the production team signifies the institutionalization of artillery production by the Hanjun. On December 20, 1643, the Qing court further assigned two Banner leaders, Liu Zhiyuan and Wu Shoujin, and two garrison lieutenant, Jin Weicheng and Liu Guangbi, to supervise the artillery project at Jinzhou. The production team yielded extraordinary results. Hong Taiji ordered 30 red-shirt cannons, but in the end, 35 were cast. In addition, 14,000 cannon balls were produced.[401] This prepared the artillery corps for the next operation.

It is not known why Hong Taiji decided to set up the new foundry at the newly acquired Jinzhou. One possibility is that the Qing may have wanted to inherit the Ming artillery foundries and other infrastructure in Jinzhou, for it was the most important Ming stronghold beyond Shanhai Pass. Second, Jinzhou was the Qing bridgehead in the Liaoxi

[399] QSL 846/2.
[400] QSL 186/1.
[401] BQTZ, 4196.

corridor. After the battle of Songjin, the Ming still held a chain of five walled cities beyond the Shanhai Pass–Ningyuan, Zhongyou Suo 中右所, Zhonghou Suo, Qiantun Wei, Zhongqian Su–中前所– from the north to the south. Ningyuan, guarded by Wu Sangui 吳三桂, was the major stronghold and the closest to the Qing. On March 1, 1643, the newly defected Zu Dashou recommended capturing Zhonghou Suo first, where Wu Sangui's family lived. Then, the Qing should capture Qiantun Wei and Zhongqian Suo, cutting Ningyuan's communication line. Isolated, Ningyuan would surrender in no time.[402] Deploying the Hanjun at Jinzhou, which is closest to the Ming-Qing frontline, gave the Qing a strategic initiative and minimized logistics difficulties for future operations.

On Oct 23, 1643, Hong Taiji commanded Prince Jirgalang and Ajige to lead an expedition force, including the massive artillery train, against the rest of the Ming walled cities. Following Zu Dashou's recommendation, the force first besieged Zhonghou Suo, which was fortified with a 1.8 km-long wall standing 9.6 meters high and further protected by a 6.4-meter-wide moat[403] The Qing army arrived on November 4 and launched the attack on the following evening. The Qing army filled the ditch surrounding the city and started bombarding the city with red-shirt cannons. On the next day, the city wall was battered so badly that the defense of the city disintegrated. The besiegers captured the city with scaling ladders and slaughtered the 4,500 defenders.[404]

On November 9, the Qing force departed from Zhonghou Suo and arrived at Qiantun Wei. Qiantun Wei had formidable defenses. First built in 1382, its walls measured nearly 3 km in length and stood 11.2 meters tall. The fortifications underwent rounds of brick reinforcement during the 15th century. In front of the wall lay a moat 6.4 meters wide.[405]

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[402] QSL 878/2.
[403] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*,vol1, 15; Liu and Sun, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, vol. 3, 3.
[404] QSL: SZ, 37/1.
[405] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi*,vol1, 15; Liu and Sun, *Jinzhou fuzhi*, vol. 3, 3.

More importantly, Qiantun Wei was armed with at least two red-shirt cannons, four *fagang* cannons and 246 generalissimo cannons.[406]

After inspecting the area, the Qing commanders ordered the establishment of a camp and the transport of scaling ladders, shields, and red-shirt cannons to the city wall. According to the Ming witness, the Qing brought 64 red-shirt cannons, which were evenly split across Eight Banners.[407] At nine in the evening, the besiegers started bombarding the city. By noon of the next day, several parts of the city wall had already crumbled. However, the ruined wall still presented a barrier to the besiegers. Subsequently, the besiegers stormed the city with scaling ladders, capturing it with no time. Again, they massacred the four thousand defenders. In this brief siege, the Qing suffered only 137 casualties—99 of whom were Hanjun—an exceptionally low casualty rate for a siege.[408] The fall of Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei devastated the Ming morale. The defenders of Zhongqian Suo, hearing the fall of Qiantun Wei, fled the city on November 20.[409] Within less than a month, the Qing captured three of the five remaining Ming walled cities.

By comparing the sieges of Songshan (1639) and Qiantun Wei (1643), we can see how the Qing artillery corps learned from experience and revised their siege tactics. In both sieges, the main tactical idea was the same: to breach the wall with cannons and allow for an infantry assault. The problem was the timing. In the siege of Songshan, the Qing only started bombarding at around three in the morning; as a result, the wall was only destroyed by three of the following day, leaving little time for a daylight assault. In the siege of Qiantun Wei, however, the Qing started firing as early as nine on the previous night, allowing the infantry

[406] "Shengjing Manwen Qingjun zhanbao," 30–31.
[407] *Zhongguo Mingchao dang'an zonghui*, (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2001), vol 45, 14-15.
[408] "Shengjing Manwen Qingjun zhanbao," 30–32.
[409] QSL, 38/1.

to launch an assault at noon the following day.[410] Opening bombardment a few hours earlier may seem like a minor detail, but it turned out to be the key to success.

Banner Distribution of Hanjun Gunners and Hong Taiji's Centralization

Beyond their military contributions, the distribution of Hanjun gunners across the Eight Banners reveals patterns that align closely with Hong Taiji's broader centralization project. As discussed in earlier chapters, despite Hong Taiji proclaiming himself emperor of the Qing Dynasty in 1636, Qing subjects were still legally tied to their respective Banner lords rather than the emperor himself. At that time, Hong Taiji directly controlled only the Two Yellow Banners, while his son Hooge commanded the Plain Blue Banner. Together, these three banners gave Hong Taiji numerical superiority over his political rivals among the Manchu elite. One of these rivals was Dorgon, a powerful regent who, along with his brother Dodo, controlled the Two White Banners, which comprised 65 companies and posed a potential challenge to Hong Taiji's authority.

During the 1640s, the majority of Hanjun gunners were notably concentrated in banners controlled by either Hong Taiji or the Dorgon faction, reflecting the political dynamics of the period. In the 1643 sieges of Tashan and Xingshan, for example, Dodo's Plain White Banner fielded the largest contingent of Hanjun gunners. Nevertheless, when the forces from Hong Taiji's Two Yellow Banners and the Plain Blue Banner were combined, his faction retained overall dominance, commanding eleven gunners (45.8%) at Tashan and eight gunners (33.3%) at Xingshan. This was only slightly more than the seven gunners (29.1%) and eight gunners (33.3%) under the Two White Banners at Tashan and Xingshan respectively. The banner distribution of gunners may have been influenced by the banner affiliations of early Hanjun commanders. Ma Guanyuan and Shi Tingzhu, the two Hanjun commanders in the 1630s, were affiliated with the Bordered Yellow and Plain White Banners

[410] "Shengjing Manwen Qingjun zhanbao," 32.

respectively. It is plausible that these commanders prioritized the training and deployment of gunners from their own banners, further entrenching existing power structures and shaping the allocation of military resources.

This balance shifted dramatically following the establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners. By the time of the 1643 sieges of Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei, Hong Taiji's banners had consolidated control over most of the Hanjun gunners. During the siege of Qiantun Wei, the Two Yellow Banners and the Plain Blue Banner together commanded 27 (46.6%) of the 58 Hanjun artillerists, with Hooge's Plain Blue Banner alone contributing 11 (19%). Similarly, in the siege of Zhonghou Suo, Hong Taiji's faction controlled 30 (59.8%) of the 59 Hanjun artillerists, accounting for the majority of the artillery corps. In contrast, the Two White Banners saw their portion of gunners drop significantly, commanding only 14 (~24%) in both sieges, while Daišan's Two Red Banners controlled 9 (~15%).

Table 14. Banner distribution of Hanjun artillerists (1642–43).

	1642 Tashan	**1642 Xingshan**	**1643 Qiantun Wei**	**1643 Zhonghou Suo**
Plain Yellow Banner (Hong Taiji)	4 (16.7%)	3 (13%)	10 (17.2%)	10 (17%)
Bordered Yellow Banner (Hong Taiji)	3 (12.5%)	2 (8.7%)	8 (13.8%)	8 (13.6%)
Plain Blue Banner (Hong Taiji/ Hooge)	4 (16.7%)	3 (13%)	11 (19%)	12 (20.3%)
Bordered Blue Banner (Jirgalang)	2 (8.3%)	2 (8.7%)	6 (10.3%)	6 (10.2%)
Plain White Banner (Dorgon/Dodo)	6 (25.0%)	7 (30.4%)	9 (15.5%)	9 (15.3%)
Bordered White Banner (Dorgon)	1 (4.2%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (8.6%)	5 (8.5%)
Plain Red Banner (Daišan)	1 (4.2%)	2 (8.7%)	4 (6.9%)	4 (7.8%)
Bordered Red Banner ((Daišan/ Luoluohun)	3 (12.5%)	3 (13%)	5 (8.6%)	5 (8.5%)
Total	24	23	58	59

The redistribution of Hanjun artillerists appears to have been a deliberate political maneuver by Hong Taiji to consolidate his power by recruiting and realigning military talent. Watanuki Tetsurō's study reveals that, in 1642, the majority of the Zu Dashou family troops were assigned to banners under Hong Taiji's control. Of the 37 companies commanded by the Zu family troops, 17 (45.9%) were incorporated into the Two Yellow Banners and the Plain Blue Banner. By contrast, the Bordered White Banner and Plain White Banner together accounted for only ten companies (27%).[411] Furthermore, Tetsurō's research indicates that personnel directly linked to the Zu lineage—those bearing the surname Zu—were predominantly incorporated into Hong Taiji's faction. This redistribution strategy appears to have been a calculated effort by Hong Taiji to harness the longstanding influence of the Zu family in the Liaodong region, a political force he aimed to integrate into his power base.

The parallels between the banner distribution of Zu family troops and the Hanjun artillerists, as seen in the sieges of Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei, suggest that Hong Taiji might have similarly transferred Hanjun gunners to his banners. By doing so, he not only secured strategically valuable assets but also strengthened his political dominance within the Eight Banners system, ensuring both the military and political stability necessary for the Qing's continued expansion and consolidation.

Hanjun as a Seasoned Artillery Corps

Apart from significant artillery siege tactical development, the Hanjun also saw substantial expansion in its artillery corps. In the 1631 siege of Dalinghe, there were only 12 artillery officers; in the siege of Tashan and Xingshan, there were at least 24 and 23 Hanjun officers and bannermen who served as gunners or artillery officers, respectively. This number surged to 59 and 58 at the siege of Zhonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei, meaning that the number

[411] Watanuki, "Zailun Zu Dashou yu 'Zujiajiang,'" 38-40.

increased almost fivefold in 12 years. The increase may be related to the production of heavy cannons in Jinzhou, for the program almost doubled the number of heavy cannons to more than 70. Of the 59 Hanjun bannermen who served in the artillery corps at Zhonghou Suo, 30 of them were appointed as Hanjun Banner officers in the previous year. Of these 30 officers, 15 of them had their first trial in the artillery corps. Looking at the data, it appears that the Hanjun deliberately turned its officers into artillery officers and gunners. This further demonstrates the interlocking relationship between the Hanjun and the artillery corps.

Table 15. Number of Hanjun artillerists over time.

	1631 Dalinghe	1642 Tashan	1642 Xingshan	1643 Zhonghou Suo	1643 Qiantun Wei
Number of artillerists	12	24	23	59	58

More importantly, this number only takes into account the Banner officers who had been recorded in historical documents; the actual number of Hanjun gunners should be much higher, for a lot of them should be unranked or low-ranking Hanjun Bannermen with no record. As mentioned above, in the 1639 siege of Songshan, a total of 60 gunners participated in the siege; only one of them, Cui Yingtai, had a biographical account in BQTZ, as he was later appointed as a Hanjun Banner officer.[412] Similarly, the number of heavy artilleries also increased. In 1635, there were only around 30 heavy cannons. After capturing Jinzhou, Hong Taiji ordered the Hanjun Eight Banners to set up an artillery foundry in the city. In the following year, at least 35 heavy cannons were forged.[413] Take into account that the Qing also captured a number of cannons from the Ming in the early 1640s, the size of the siege train should exceed 70 heavy cannons.

Furthermore, the Hanjun artillery corps not only advanced quantitatively but also qualitatively. Repeated sieges had trained a group of seasoned gunners and artillery officers.

[412] MWNGSYD, The 4th year of Chongde (The 4th to 5th month), 50-3; BQTZ, 5238.
[413] BQTZ, 4196.

At least 81 Hanjun had served as artillery officer or gunner before 1644. The Hanjun Bordered Blue Banner leader, Li Guohan, for example, had served as an artillerist in nine sieges. Liu Zhi Yuan, the Banner leader of the Hanjun Bordered Yellow Banner, Hezhi Jili 何智機里, and Yi Yonggui 宜永貴, had served six times as an artillerist before 1644. Of the 81 Hanjun gunners, 64 (79%) had participated in at least two artillery sieges, while 25 (30.9%) had experience in three or more. The Hanjun seasoned artillery corps provided a great strategic advantage to the Qing during its conquest of China proper.

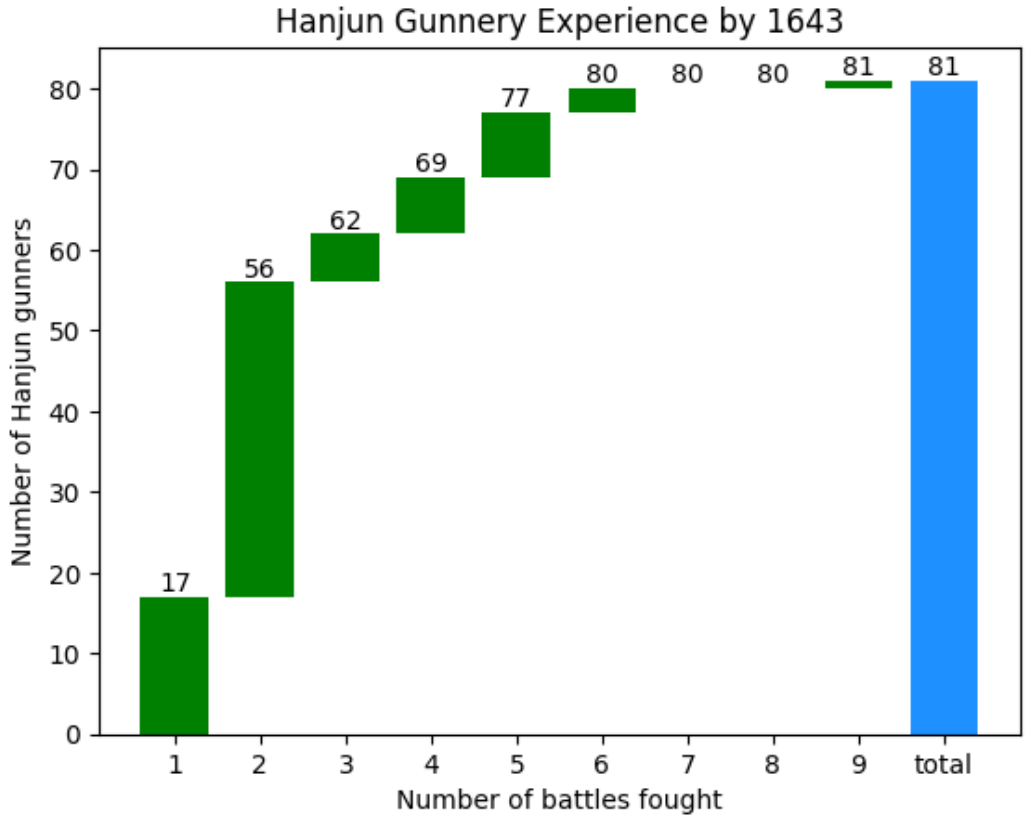

Figure 11. The Hanjun gunnery experience by 1643.

On the other hand, the chain of command of the artillery corps was incorporated into the Banner army hierarchy. By 1639, during the siege of Songshan, the command structure of the Hanjun artillery corps had become notably more mature. At this point, a standardized operational procedure emerged: each cannon was operated by a gunner supported by a reloader or assistant. Likely around this time, a distinct position—the “regiment colonel in

charge of red-shirt cannon" (Ch: *guan hongyipao jiala zhangjing* 管紅衣炮甲喇章京)—was introduced, indicating that the regiment may have served as the basic artillery unit.[414] From 1642 onward, records increasingly mention Hanjun banner officers directing "regiment red-shirt cannon" or "banner red-shirt cannon," further reflecting this organizational evolution.[415]

By 1645, the chain of command appeared even more sophisticated, fitting neatly into the established Banner-Regiment hierarchy of the Eight Banners. Evidence for this can be found in the testimonies of Hanjun artillerists during a military trial held on January 9, 1646, concerning the siege of Taiyuan in the preceding year. According to the descriptions, under each banner, artillery pieces were assigned at the regiment level to dedicated artillery squads. Within such a squad, a regiment colonel was appointed as the supervisor of the red-shirt cannons" (Ma: *hūng i be kadalara jalan i janggin*), while another regiment colonel served as the "officer firing the red-shirt cannon" (Ma: *hūng i sindara de janggin*). The supervising regiment colonel might oversee multiple squads, not remaining continuously with the artillery, whereas the gunner regiment colonel commanded the actual firing team. This team included lower-ranked foot soldiers who performed tasks essential to establishing and running the artillery position: one held a rattan shield, others filled gabions, cleaned the barrels with cannon mops, transported water buckets, and carried out various support duties.[416] While regiment leaders typically did not fire the cannons themselves, they possessed the necessary knowledge. For instance, during the 1643 siege of Zonghou Suo and Qiantun Wei, a Hanjun officer, Zhao Dajie 趙大捷, earned a promotion for personally firing the cannon after his assigned gunner was killed in action. [417]

[414] "Shengjing manwen qingjun zhanbao," 71.
[415] BQTZ, 4357; 4389.
[416] NGSYD, The eleventh month of the second year of the Shunzhi reign, 137-139. See also Zhang, *Qing ruguanqian bubing yanjiu*, 251-52
[417] BQPD-FHA, B032-030

Above the regimental level stood the banner level. Banner leaders and garrison lieutenant commanded (Ma: *jorxime*) the entire artillery corps within their banners. Some cannons appear to have been designated at the banner level (Ma: *gūsai hūng i poo*).[418] Due to limited sources, the precise relationship between these banner-level firing squads and those at the regiment level remains uncertain. It is not known whether these arrangements were parallel structures or whether the regiment-level squads were subordinate to the banner-level groups. Nonetheless, it is clear that banner leaders exercised direct command over regiment-level firing squads and personally assigned their personnel. As an example, the Plain Red Banner leader Wu Shojin testified that he not only appointed the officer who fired the cannon but also the foot soldier charged with holding the rattan shield. During the siege, he also dispatched an orderly three times to the regiment-level firing squad, ensuring effective communication and oversight.[419] All these show that the Hanjun artillery corps already had a very sophisticated command structure. This seasoned artillery corps would become an important force in the Qing conquest of China.

The Hanjun Artillery Corps and the Early Qing Conquest of China

On September 21, 1643, after a laborious day, Hong Taiji returned to his palace. At around nine in the evening, the fifty-two-year-old emperor was found dead, sitting straight, without any known illness. The founding emperor of the Qing finally rested after seventeen years of rule.[420] It is a shame Hong Taiji could not witness what his new dynasty would achieve. April 22, 1644, as the peasant rebels led by Li Zicheng approached Beijing, Emperor Chongzhen ordered Wu Sangui to give up Ningyuan and come back to defend the capital. In one night, the Ming vacated all its strongholds beyond Shanhai Pass. Hong Taiji's dream was

[418] NGSYD, The eleventh month of the second year of the Shunzhi reign, 137-139.
[419] NGSYD, The eleventh month of the second year of the Shunzhi reign, 137-139.
[420] QSL, 911/1.

finally realized.[421] Before Wu could reach Beijing to save the Ming emperor, Li Zicheng's rebel force took the capital. Chongzhen hanged himself on Meishan 煤山 on April 23, ending the Ming Dynasty, though remnants of the court continued to resist as the Southern Ming until 1662. On May 20, Wu Sangui, as the commander of Shanhai Pass, sent a letter to the Qing, asking for assistance to sweep away Li's Da Shun regime, now conquering Beijing. A week later, Wu opened the gate of Shanhai Pass and welcomed the Qing army in.[422]

On June 6, 1644, the Qing became the ruler of Beijing, inaugurating another 40 years of the conquest of China proper. Since the defense of China proper was constituted by chains of walled cities, the artillery corps allowed the Qing to disintegrate the defense system in a short period of time, freeing up large amounts of troops, time, and resources for other fronts. In November, the Qing quickly subdued Taiyuan 太原, the strategically important junction in Shanxi, with heavy artillery. In the siege, in which at least 23 Hanjun Bannermen served as artillerists, the Qing deployed all its heavy cannons at the northwest corner of the city and breached a section of wall of more than 30 meters, allowing the Qing infantry to storm the city.[423]

In the following Spring, at the siege of Tongguan 潼關 —the important pass that guarded Xi'an, the artillery corps captured the city in just two days, and the entire siege was concluded in 19 days.[424] Moreover, the Hanjun artillery corps and siege train were by then large and experienced enough to be split into divisions and deploy simultaneously on various fronts. This allowed the Qing to fight a multifrontal war against various hostile regimes, including the Southern Ming and Da Shun. The Hanjun played a particularly crucial role in

[421] QSL: SZ, 52/1; *Tongshi ben Chongzhen changbian*, vol. 2, 122
[422] QSL: SZ, 58/2.
[423] QSL: SZ, 101/1. Jueluo Shilin, *Shanxi Tongzhi*, vol. 50, 19.
[424] QSL: SZ, 124/2-125/1.

the 1645 and Jiangnan campaigns and the 1649-1650 suppression of the Jiang Xiang Revolt in Shanxi.

The Jiangnan Campaign (1645)

As Li Zhicheng's Da Shun forces withdrew to Hubei, the Qing Regent Dorgon shifted his focus to the prosperous Jiangnan region, where the Southern Ming regime was based. In the third month of 1645, he ordered his brother Dodo to lead an expeditionary force southward. After securing Henan, this force passed through Sizhou and reached the outskirts of Yangzhou 揚州 on May 12, promptly initiating a siege. The artillery train—likely composed of 13-pounder demi-culverins—arrived on May 19 and was immediately deployed.[425] At least 35 Hanjun bannermen served as artillerists. The defenders appear to have fired back since at least two Qing gunners were shot dead, suggesting an artillery duel.[426] Nonetheless, the Qing soon breached Yangzhou's city wall, which was 4.8 meters thick and 9.6 meters tall, and the city fell the next day.[427] Under the cover of their water forces, the Qing then crossed the Yangzi River and advanced to Nanjing. On June 8, the Southern Ming capital surrendered, and one week later, the Prince of Fu 福王 was captured, effectively ending the short-lived Southern Ming court at Nanjing.[428]

Having taken the first Southern Ming capital and defeated its main forces, the Qing army split up to besiege other walled cities in the region. At least six more cities—Jiaxing 嘉興, Kunshan 昆山, Changshu 常熟, Jiangyin 江陰, Jinhua 金華, and Wugangzhai 武崗寨—were taken with artillery support. These artillery units were probably smaller than those deployed at Yangzhou, as fewer Hanjun artillerists were recorded in these subsequent sieges.

[425] BQTZ, 3619. *QSL*, 147/2; Ying Tingji, *Qing linxie*, juan xia, in *Taiwan wenxian shiliao congkan – diliuji*, ed. Kong Zhaoming (Taiwan: Taiwan datong shuju, 1987), 24-26.
[426] *BQTZ*, 4992, 5243.
[427] *BQTZ*, 3619; Yin Huiyi, *Yangzhou Fu zhi*, vol 5, 2.
[428] *BQTZ*, 3620.

Most of these sieges concluded swiftly, with one notable exception: Jiangyin. A revolt erupted there on July 23, when local forces attacked the Qing magistrate and killed several Qing soldiers. After about a month of skirmishes in the surrounding suburbs, the Qing began their formal siege around August 30. However, lacking sufficient artillery support, their attempts to storm the city—whose wall was 6.87 meters high, 2 meters wide at the top, and 2.66 meters wide at the base—were repeatedly repelled.[429] To break the deadlock, a Qing reinforcement led by Prince Bolo 博洛 arrived at Jiangyin on September 6, bringing an artillery train. It was claimed that over a hundred cannons had been dispatched from nearby Songjiang, though the figure may be exaggerated.[430] Additional cannons from Nanjing and Zhenjiang were also sent to support the siege.[431] These pieces were likely culverins since they fired 17-pound (13-jin) cannonballs.[432] Even with these cannons, the Qing could not take the city easily; the defenders held their ground despite an intense ten-day bombardment.

Given Jiangyin's stubborn resistance, the Qing transported another 24 heavier cannons from Jinling 金陵 (today's Nanjing), which arrived on October 9.[433] According to one local source, these larger guns fired 26-pound (20 *jin*) cannonballs, and each required a separate vessel for transport.[434] With this formidable siege train in place—allegedly around two hundred cannons in total—the Qing concentrated their artillery on the city's northeastern

[429] It is unclear when the Qing started besieging the city. Multiple sources claim that the Qing started surrounding the city on 21 August. But Jiangyin's defending commander only got into the city on 29 August. So the siege probably commenced on 30 or 31 August when the Qing started storming the city. Han Tan, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, in *Mingmo Jiangyin shoucheng jishi*, ed. Xu Huagen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 19, 21; Zhao Ximing, *Jiang shang gu zhong lu*, in *Mingmo Jiangyin shoucheng jishi*, ed. Xu Huagen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 45-47; Ji Chengyu, *Chengjiang shoucheng jishi*, in *Mingmo Jiangyin shoucheng jishi*, ed. Xu Huagen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 81; Chen Yan'en and Li Zhaoluo, eds., *Jiangyin xian zhi* (Taipei, Chengwen chubanshe, 1983), 220.

[430] Han, *Jiangyin chengshouji*, 26. Again, the source does not explicitly claim that these cannons came by way of the river. Yet, given the dense coverage of waterways in the area, and that later the Qing used vessels to transport the heavy cannons to Jiangyin, the other cannons should also have been sent by waterway to Jiangyin.

[431] Han, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, 29.

[432] Han, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, 25.

[433] Han, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, 32-33.

[434] Han, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, 32. Another chronicle claims that the cannonballs were only 17 pounds (13 *jin*). Shen Tao, *Jiangshang yiwen*, in *Mingmo Jiangyin shoucheng jishi*, ed. Xu Huagen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 75.

corner. At noon the following day, they finally breached Jiangyin's walls and captured the city, followed by a massacre. [435]

The success at Jiangyin exemplified the Qing's timely and flexible artillery support system. Initially, they dispatched artillery from Songjiang, arriving about ten days after the siege began. As the situation became more dire, they reinforced their firepower by sending 24 heavier cannons from their regional headquarters at Nanjing. This system of escalating artillery deployment enabled the Qing to maintain superior firepower in various sieges. This high mobility and monstrous firepower enabled the Qing to conclude its Jiangnan campaign smoothly.[436]

The Jiang Xiang Revolt in Shanxi (1648–1649)

Despite its military might, the Qing's control over China proper remained fragile and contested. On January 15, 1649, following the death of Dodo and Dorgon's illness, Jiang Xiang, the General of Datong 大同 who had previously surrendered to the Qing, launched a rebellion in Datong and pledged allegiance to the Southern Ming. [437] As Qing defenses in Shanxi crumbled, eleven additional cities in the region successively revolted and joined Jiang's cause. Taken by surprise, the Qing forces, led by Ajige, quickly surrounded Datong and called for reinforcements from the artillery corps. However, the artillery corps failed to bring a swift victory. Datong was fortified with a 7.5 km-long wall standing more than 16 meters tall. Constructed from tamped earth, reinforced with stones, and later covered with bricks, its base was 18 meters thick, narrowing to 12 meters at the top. In addition, all city

[435] Han, *Jiangyin chengshou ji*, 33-35.
[436] For detailed analysis of the siege of Jiangyin, see Chung Yan Hon Michael, "The Introduction of European-Style Artillery and the Reform of Siege Tactics in 17th Century China—A Case Study of the Tragedy of Jiangyin (1645)," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 9, no. 1 (2020): 1–37.
[437] QSL, 332/1- 332/2.

gates were further fortified by barbicans[438] Such a formidable defensive structure withstood all forms of bombardment.

By the spring of 1649, the situation for the Qing in Shanxi appeared dire. Almost the entire province had joined the rebellion, leaving the Qing in a strategic dilemma. Lifting the siege of Datong would allow Jiang Xiang to escape and potentially command a unified anti-Qing movement across Shanxi. Conversely, maintaining the siege meant the Qing could not spare troops to counter the spreading rebellion in the province. Forced to act, Dorgon redirected forces from other theaters to Shanxi. On August 7, 1649, he personally led an army to besiege Datong. The tide finally began to turn as months of encirclement depleted the city's supplies. On October 4, 1649, a desperate lieutenant of Jiang revolted, killed Jiang and his brothers, and surrendered to the Qing with Jiang's severed head. The siege of Datong, which had lasted nearly eight months, finally ended. To make Datong a frightening example, Dorgon ordered the massacre of the entire city's population, sparing only the 600 troops and families of the defecting lieutenant.[439]

Despite their central role in many Qing victories, the Hanjun artillery corps was less effective in the prolonged siege of Datong. One explanation is that Datong's city walls were exceptionally tall and thick, prompting Dorgon to order the walls leveled by five *chi* (approximately 1.6 meters) after the city's fall.[440] However, the artillery corps proved instrumental in capturing other fortified cities in the region. In total, they facilitated the capture of six walled cities: Hunyuan 渾源, Zuo Wei 左衛, Datong, Shuozhou 朔州, Fenzhou 汾州, Taigu 太谷.

The artillery's effectiveness in capturing these cities was exemplified by the siege of Fenzhou. On October 17, 1649, Qing artillery began bombarding the north wall around

[438] Wu Fuhong and Wen Guang, *Datong fuzhi* (1782), vol 12, 1-2.
[439] QSL, 365/2.
[440] QSL, 365/2.

eleven in the evening. By around seven the next morning, the artillery had breached the wall, allowing Qing forces to storm and seize the city. The defenders fled through the south and west gates but were intercepted and defeated by Qing troops. Remarkably, the Qing suffered no casualties, and the entire operation lasted just one day. This not only demonstrated the strategic importance of the artillery corps but also highlighted how its efficiency saved troops and resources for the Qing. Furthermore, the fall of major strongholds often prompted smaller cities to surrender without resistance. For example, Lan County 嵐縣 and Yongning Prefecture 永寧州 capitulated quickly after the fall of Fenzhou, significantly easing the Qing reconquest of Shanxi.[441]

During the suppression of the Jiang Xiang Revolt, at least 38 Hanjun artillerists participated in one or more sieges. Most operations involved an artillery corps of around two dozen gunners, except for the siege of Datong, which required a larger force. Notably, at least 14 Hanjun artillerists participated in more than five sieges, demonstrating the Qing's ability to concentrate significant artillery resources in a single theater. This extensive deployment demonstrates the crucial role of the Hanjun artillery corps in the Qing's military strategy and their decisive contribution to the suppression of the Jiang Xiang Revolt.

The 1645 Jiangnan Campaign and the 1649 Jiang Xiang Revolt underscore the Qing's strategic reliance on artillery as a critical component of their military dominance during the early stages of their conquest. In the Jiangnan Campaign, the Qing's ability to deploy and escalate artillery support enabled them to secure swift victories at Yangzhou and other regional strongholds, culminating in the capture of Nanjing and the effective collapse of the Southern Ming regime. Even in the face of staunch resistance, as at Jiangyin, the Qing demonstrated remarkable adaptability, leveraging their regional artillery resources and logistical capabilities to overcome formidable defenses.

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[441] *Ming-Qing shiliao. Bing bian,* vol.3, book 8, 731.

Similarly, during the Jiang Xiang Revolt, the Qing's deployment of artillery allowed them to suppress a widespread rebellion across Shanxi despite initial setbacks and logistical challenges. While the prolonged siege of Datong revealed the limits of artillery against heavily fortified cities, the corps was instrumental in capturing other walled strongholds quickly and efficiently. This not only facilitated the reconquest of the region but also underscored the Qing's ability to concentrate artillery forces in critical theaters of war.

The effectiveness of the Qing artillery corps in the mid-17th century challenges the long-held belief that early modern Chinese city walls were too thick to be breached by European-style heavy cannons.[442] Chinese city walls varied greatly; those as thick as those of Datong or Beijing could certainly withstand bombardment. However, as demonstrated in the above cases, most cities had walls measuring around 3 to 5 meters thick. Although constructed from tamped earth and reinforced with bricks, these walls could still be breached if besiegers concentrated their firepower. Hence, early modern China might not be challenged by the European colonizers, its city defense system was certainly challenged by the European-style heavy cannons.

However, it must be noted that the mobility and effectiveness of the Qing artillery corps were significantly constrained by the topography of the regions in which they operated. In river-rich Jiangnan, artillery proved pivotal, allowing for rapid and decisive sieges. Conversely, in the mountainous Southeast, the corps faced substantial challenges, especially since the Southern Ming navy controlled the sea route, preventing the Qing from transporting its heavy cannons from the north to the south by sea. The prolonged seven-month siege of Canton, led by Shang Kexi, serves as a striking example of these challenges. The impassability of the terrain and the absence of transportable heavy artillery forced the Qing to

[442] Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 143-45.

forge cannons locally in Guangdong, underscoring how geography shaped the mobility and effectiveness of the artillery corps.[443]

Conclusion

Conquest was an integral part of the Qing state-building process, with military might serving as the foundation of the empire. From its origins as the Later Jin in the early 17th century, the Qing's ability to expand and consolidate power depended heavily on military campaigns that subdued rival polities and incorporated diverse populations into its multiethnic structure. The Qing's success in integrating advanced artillery technology into their military strategy exemplifies how their conquests were underpinned by both tactical innovation and strategic adaptability. Through systematic incorporation of the Han military elites and the development of specialized units like the Hanjun artillery corps, the Qing established a military framework capable of sustaining their expansive ambitions.

While Hong Taiji may not have envisioned the full conquest of China or the vast expansion of Qing territories, his strategic development of the Hanjun artillery corps proved instrumental in achieving these goals. From its inception in 1631, the Hanjun artillery project evolved into a seasoned and highly effective military unit, capable of delivering decisive victories in key campaigns such as the 1645 Jiangnan Campaign and the 1649 Jiang Xiang Revolt in Shanxi.

The Hanjun artillery corps not only neutralized the Ming's once-dominant artillery advantage but also became a cornerstone of Qing military strategy, providing the firepower necessary to dismantle walled defenses and conquer strategic cities. Yet, in many ways, this transformation of the Hanjun artillery into an essential tool of conquest was the result of

[443] For more discussion about artillery logistics and topography, see Chung Yan Hon Michael, "River Transport and the Effectiveness of the Qing Artillery Corps during the Ming-Qing Transition," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 12, no. 1 (2023): 40–62.

contingent circumstances rather than a carefully premeditated plan—an inadvertent but pivotal element in the Qing's rise to imperial dominance.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners stood at the crossroads of the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, embodying both military innovation and social integration. Just two years after their formation, the Qing conquered Beijing, a pivotal achievement in their rise to power. Over the next 40 years, the Qing waged campaigns across China and beyond, ultimately subjugating multiple regimes in a vast and diverse region. The Hanjun artillery corps played a decisive role in these efforts. As discussed in the last chapter, the defensive structure of China proper relied heavily on interconnected chains of walled cities. The artillery corps enabled the Qing to dismantle these defenses swiftly, freeing substantial manpower, time, and resources for other strategic fronts. Without the Hanjun artillery corps, the Qing would have struggled to establish rapid control over these critical areas. Beyond siege warfare, the Hanjun participated in campaigns across China, providing vital manpower for the Qing to sustain its prolonged 40-year war of unification.

During this period, the Hanjun occupied a unique position within the Qing state security map. Having proven their loyalty, they became the most trusted group of *Nikan* in the eyes of the Manchu ruling elite. Unlike earlier years, after 1644, most new Han defectors were no longer admitted into the Hanjun but were instead incorporated into the newly established Green Standard Army (*lu ying* 綠營; Ma: *niowanggiyan turun*). Unlike the Hanjun, these soldiers were neither granted special privileges nor hereditary status.[444] Furthermore, the Hanjun remained the sole artillery corps within the Qing military structure, as neither the Manchu nor Mongol Eight Banners nor the Green Standard Army maintained their own artillery units. This exclusivity persisted until 1691, when the Kangxi Emperor

[444] Zheng Tianting, "Qingdai de baqi bing he lüying bing," in *Qingshi tanwei* (Beijing, Shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), 492.

established artillery corps within the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners, marking a shift in Qing military organization.[445]

Yet the Hanjun were more than soldiers—they were ethnic soldiers whose role extended beyond the battlefield. As a distinct component of the Eight Banners system, the Hanjun embodied the Qing's strategy of ethnicizing military organization. By incorporating Han Chinese soldiers into a cohesive banner system under the Qing's command, the dynasty could leverage their cultural and linguistic familiarity to govern the vast Han population effectively. The Hanjun officers, proficient in the Chinese language and culture while remaining loyal to the Qing, became the ideal intermediaries in governance. During the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns, nearly half of the provincial governors were Hanjun members.[446] The Qing commentator Fuge 福格 even remarked, "From the fourth year of Shunzhi to the thirteenth year of Yongzheng, over 92 years, seven out of ten Eight Banner officials appointed as governors were Hanjun."[447] In addition to governorships, Hanjun officers held numerous other posts, embedding themselves within the administrative machinery of the Qing state.

This dual role as military and administrative elites offered Han soldiers unique opportunities for social mobility. For the Han elites who joined the Hanjun, this represented a strategic path to privilege and power. As Bannermen, they enjoyed distinct legal protections, including exemption from torture during interrogation, separate jails, and automatic commutation of certain punishments.[448] Bannermen received state stipends, dominated central bureaucratic positions, and were guaranteed half the senior roles in key institutions such as the Six Boards, the Grand Secretariat, and the Censorate. Bannermen also benefited

[445] Du Jiaji, *Qingdai baqi guanzhi yu xingzheng*, 75. Wang Tao, "Qing huoqi ying chu kao," *Junshi lishi yanjiu*, no. 3 (2007), 125–34.
[446] Liu Shih-Hsun, "Qingdai de qiren dufu," *Guoli Zhengzhi daxue lishi xuebao*, no. 46 (2016): 29.
[447] Fuge, *Tingyu congtan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 57.
[448] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor*, 37.

from a much easier civil examination system, along with alternative pathways to officialdom through translation and military promotion exams.[449] But most importantly, the status of Bannerman was hereditary, ensuring that these privileges extended to their descendants.

Within the Hanjun, hierarchies of privilege also emerged. Early members who joined the Qing before 1644—known as "those who followed the Dragon into the Pass"—enjoyed elevated status. Some of these clans were designated as "Honorary Old Hanjun" (Ch*: Hanjun xunjiu* 漢軍勳舊) by the Yongzheng Emperor, with eight recognized as the "Eight Great Clans of the Hanjun."[450] These early Hanjun were considered closer to the Manchus. Notably, during the Hanjun expulsion initiated by the Qianlong Emperor in the 18th century, these "old Hanjun" were exempted from expulsion, highlighting their enduring influence and status.[451]

The success of the Hanjun Eight Banners reflects a broader theme of the Qing formation: the flexibility and inclusivity of its governance. Neither Hong Taiji nor the Han elites likely envisioned the Hanjun evolving into such a central ethnic-political institution. Their initial collaboration was driven by immediate strategic needs: Hong Taiji sought a loyal Han artillery corps, while Han elites aimed to secure privileges and social advancement. Yet the Qing's willingness to negotiate and adapt allowed the Hanjun to flourish. This process of negotiation was neither linear nor simple. The emancipation of Han bondservants from Manchu households fueled Manchu-Han tensions, while the ongoing conflict with the Ming created suspicion of Han soldiers due to their ethnic ties to Qing adversaries. Nevertheless, Hong Taiji's confidence, adaptability, and openness to reform enabled him to navigate these challenges while pursuing his strategic goals.

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[449] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor*, 97-99.
[450] "Shizong Xian Huangdi Shangyu Baqi," vol 33, 12.
[451] Liu, *Qingdai baqi zidi*, 59.

Flexibility and inclusivity were not merely personal traits of Hong Taiji but defining characteristics of the Qing's broader approach to governance. The Hanjun continued to serve as a platform for negotiation and adaptation long after Hong Taiji's death. Some Hanjun Bannermen aspired to join the Manchu Eight Banners to elevate their status, as seen with the Tong and Shi lineages.[452] Others, like Admiral Shi Lang, negotiated for their families to be admitted into the Hanjun Eight Banners.[453] Within the Hanjun, certain elites emphasized their "Mukden background" to claim ancestral ties to the pre-conquest period, distinguishing themselves from other members. [454] These cases underscore that the Hanjun was not a static institution but a dynamic one, continually shaped by evolving negotiations between the Manchu ruling elites and other elite groups.

Beyond Qing China, the concept of "ethnic soldiers" provides a valuable lens for examining the Qing alongside other multi-ethnic empires in early modern Eurasia. Scholars have demonstrated that ethnic soldiers played pivotal roles in multi-ethnic empires across time and space, from the Roman Empire to modern-day America.[455] Research on Qing frontiers further emphasizes the early modern and colonial characteristics of the Qing Empire, suggesting that its frontier governance strategies were comparable to those of contemporaneous empires, particularly Russia and the Ottoman Empire.[456] Furthermore,

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[452] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 111-14; Sun, *Qingdai baqi hanjun yanjiu*, 100-14; Du, *Baqi yu qingchao zhengzhi lungao*, 94-95.
[453] Lu, "The Art of Being an Imperial Broker," 30, 139.
[454] Watanuki, "Cong 'guifu hanren' zhuandao 'Hanjun qiren'" 81-92.
[455] For the case of Roman army, see Carol Van Driel-Murray, "Ethnic Soldiers: The Experience of the Lower Rhine Tribes," in *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität: Germania inferior am Beginn und am Ende der römischen Herrschaft. Beiträge des deutsch-niederländischen Kolloquiums in der Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen (27. bis 30.06. 2001)* [Continuity and discontinuity: Germania inferior at the beginning and end of Roman rule. Contributions of the German-Dutch colloquium in the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen] edited by Thomas Grünewald and Sandra Seibel, 200-217, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012). For the case of the US and other modern militaries, see N. F. Dreisziger, *Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Habsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers*, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990).
[456] Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography of Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004); Dai Yingcong, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

Porter offers a detailed comparison between the Qing Banner system and the service elite systems of Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan. [457] The concept of "ethnic soldiers" also serves as a critical point of comparison for these multi-ethnic empires. [458]

The Russian Empire, lacking sufficient military resources to subdue its frontier adversaries, adopted an "inclusive" strategy by incorporating ethnic elites into the nobility—a practice inherited from the Mongol tradition.[459] For example, upon the conquest of the Kazan Khanate in 1552, the Russian state incorporated the ethnic elites, such as Tatar mirzas, into the Muscovite military-administrative system through land grants and service obligations. Similar to the Hanjun case, ethnic differences were institutionalized—through the comprehensive law code *Ulozhenie* (1649)—to ensure their continued service to the state while maintaining their distinct legal status.[460]

The Ottoman Empire also had a long tradition of employing ethnic soldiers, epitomized by the Janissaries. Porter draws parallels between the Janissaries and the Eight Banners, focusing on their structural similarities and their roles within their respective empires.[461] Both the Hanjun and the Janissaries share a distinct origin: they were initially composed of enslaved individuals from other ethnic groups. Over time, both groups ascended in political influence as their respective institutions became more formalized and integral to

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[457] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor*, 147-73.
[458] It must be noted that interpretations of the term vary across studies. Wayne Lee, for example, defines ethnic soldiers as "soldiers or warriors recruited for the skills they possessed as part of their lifestyle and their regional or cultural form of warfare."[458] In this framework, ethnic soldiers were valued for who they already were rather than for what they could become through training. Despite this distinction from Cynthia Enloe's theory, the concept remains highly relevant to the Hanjun, who were recruited and integrated into the Qing military structure due to their unique artillery expertise and strategic importance. Wayne E. Lee, "Projecting Power in the Early Modern World: The Spanish Model?" in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E. Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 10.
[459] David R. Jones, "Muscovite-Nomad Relations on the Steppe Frontier before 1800 and the Development of Russia's 'Inclusive' Imperialism," in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E. Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 130–31.
[460] Matthew Romaniello, "Ethnicity as social rank: Governance, law, and empire in Muscovite Russia," *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 4 (2006): 447-469.
[461] Porter, *Slaves of the Emperor*, 162-65.

state governance. This trajectory underscores the complex interplay between military necessity, ethnic integration, and institutional development in the two multi-ethnic empires.

Despite similarities in the use of ethnic soldiers across these empires, their differences offer more profound insights. Compared to Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the Qing appears to have been the most enduring in institutionalizing its ethnic soldiers. The Russian Empire's diverse ethnic policy was gradually replaced by a more centralized and Russo-centric approach in the late seventeenth century, while the Ottoman Janissary system ultimately failed to endure.[462] In contrast, the Qing institutionalized the Hanjun within just twelve years, integrating Han soldiers into the state apparatus in a process that culminated in the creation of the Hanjun Eight Banners. Moreover, the Hanjun remained a central institution until the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911.

These differences reflect broader structural contrasts among these empires. In the Russian Empire, ethnic soldiers were often drawn from frontier populations, geographically distant from the political core. The Manchus, however, recruited the *Nikan* who lived in close proximity to their power base and, in some cases, served as bondservants within Manchu households. Although the *Nikan* were socially and economically marginalized, their geographic closeness likely facilitated negotiations between Manchu and Han elites, enabling the rapid institutionalization of the Hanjun. Furthermore, the creation of the Hanjun coincided with the broader Manchu state-building efforts of the 1630s, which likely accelerated their development and integration.

For the Ottoman Empire, as Virginia Aksan points out, the redistribution and devolution of agrarian revenues to provincial powers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries weakened the state's capacity to organize warfare. This decentralization ultimately led to the decline of the Janissaries and an increasing reliance on local strongmen and their

[462] Romaniello, "Ethnicity as social rank: Governance, law, and empire in Muscovite Russia," 461.

forces, giving rise to new forms of ethnic soldiers that replaced the Janissaries.[463] In contrast, despite internal and external threats and multiple political reforms in the nineteenth century, the Eight Banners remained central to the Qing Empire's military and governance structures. The Bannermen, in turn, served the Manchu court loyally until the very end of the dynasty.

In conclusion, the comparison of ethnic soldiers across these early modern empires not only highlights their shared strategies for managing diversity but also reveals deeper structural differences in their approaches to state-building and frontier governance. The Qing's ability to institutionalize its ethnic soldiers, exemplified by the rapid establishment of the Hanjun Eight Banners, underscores its unique capacity for integrating military and administrative elites into a cohesive state apparatus. By examining the Hanjun within a comparative framework, this study sheds light on the broader mechanisms of empire, illustrating how the Qing's adaptability and inclusivity allowed it to navigate the challenges of governing a vast, multi-ethnic polity. The enduring significance of the Hanjun demonstrates how military innovation and ethnic integration were pivotal not only to the Qing's imperial resilience but also to the evolving dynamics of early modern Eurasian empires.

[463] Virginia H. Aksan, "Ottoman Ethnographies of Warfare, 1500–1800," in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E. Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 141–66.

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