

## Qing China - The Rise of the Manchus

The Ming Empire of the fifteenth century had created a vast maritime empire. The voyages of Zheng He had reached the coast of East Africa and clearly showed China's power across the Indian Ocean. However, for reasons not clearly stated, the Ming Dynasty terminated all future voyages, ordered the mighty fleet to be broken down into pieces and closed the doors to China under a period of isolationism.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a new dynasty would emerge that would expand the northern and western territories of China while continuing the nation to remain isolated. In 1644, the **Qing Dynasty** emerged and they would control China until 1912.

Ironically, the Qing were foreigners to China. They came from the northern region of Manchuria, a region beyond the Great Wall of China. To the mainland Chinese people they conquered violently, they became known as the **Manchus**.

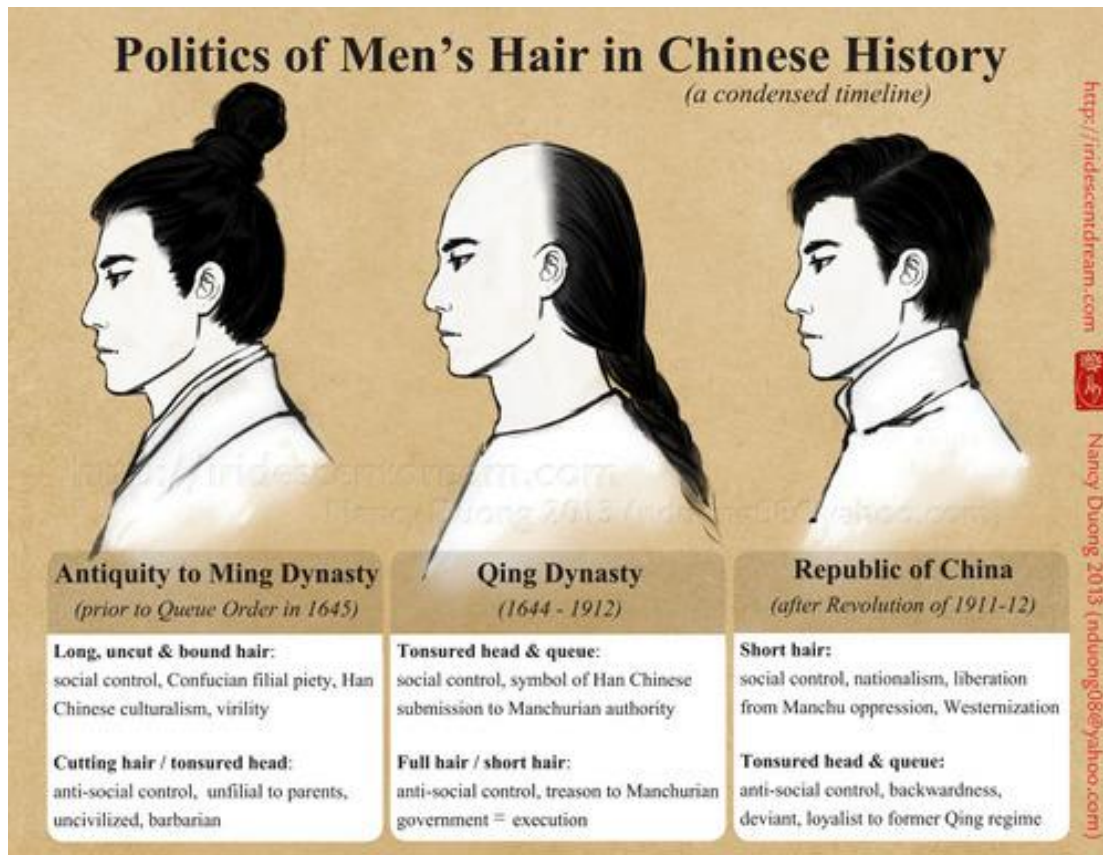


Spot Map 14-1  
Ways of the World, First Edition  
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The emergence and subsequent expansion of the Qing (Manchus) dynasty now brought a large number of non-Chinese people under their control.

The Qing seized power during the **General Crisis** of the seventeenth century, a time period that began during the **Little Ice Age** that had caused widespread famines and peasant rebellions. The subsequent change in the dynasty cycle was a violent period in Chinese history.

Rule under the Qing was harsh and they forced China to abide by their ethnic ways. Intermarriage between the Manchus and the Chinese was forbidden. They even mandated that the Chinese adopt the Manchu hairstyle.



Despite these strict regulations, the ruling elite of the Qing did master and adopt the Chinese language, Confucianist teachings and used Chinese bureaucratic techniques to rule their empire.

The Qing expanded China by taking control of Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet, a campaign that took 88 years from 1680-1760. The reason for this expansion was not economic, it was largely for security reasons to protect the empire. The first threat were the Zunghar Khanate (Sometimes called Dzungar) from western Mongolia who the Manchus feared would start another Mongol invasion.

The second threat faced by the Manchus was the eastern expansion of the Russian Empire. Fortunately a compromise was made with the Russians with the signing of the **Treaty of Nerchinsk** (1689) which created a boundary line between Russia and China. The Qing expansion had now unified China.

The Qing used more powerful military technology to gain control as they had greater resources. They even ruled Mongolia separately under the Court of Colonial Affairs.

The Ming government used local rulers to keep administration costs down, (Mongol aristocrats, Muslim officials, and Buddhist leaders) but many soon became corrupt. They even imitated Chinese officials by wearing peacock feathers, decorating their hats with gold buttons, or adopting the Manchu hairstyle that was resented by the majority of the Chinese population as they were forced to wear their hair in the same way.

## QING DYNASTY OFFICIAL (1644-1912)

<http://lilsuika.deviantart.com>

2 inch long tube used to hold the feather in place.

Hat was topped with red silk fringe

Feather symbolized rank of wearer:

Colored feather (peacock)  
 1 eye (1 feather)  
 2 eyes (2 feathers)  
 3 eyes (3 feathers)  
*this rank was only for a Manchu prince's son*

Blue feather (pheasant)

**Winter hat:**  
 made of felt, silk, wool, or cotton cloth.  
 Worn from the 8th to 3rd month of the year.

**Summer hat:**  
 made of rattan, bamboo, thin bamboo strips or wheat stalks wrapped in silk.  
 Usually white, but can be light green or yellow.

**Finial Jewel (surknob) symbolized rank:**

1st rank:	Transparent Ruby
2nd rank:	Opaque Coral
3rd rank:	Transparent Sapphire
4th rank:	Opaque Lapis Lazuli
5th rank:	Transparent Crystal
6th rank:	Opaque Jade
7th rank:	Plain gold
8th rank:	Worked gold with longevity character
9th rank:	Worked gold with 2 longevity characters

**FYI**

An official's wife would also take on her husbands' rank and wear a rank badge too.

**Mandarin Square/Rank Badge**

<p><b>Civil Officials (Bird motif)</b></p> <p>Birds had the ability to fly close to Heaven. Birds were associated with wisdom and literary talent.</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>1st rank:</td><td>Crane</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd rank:</td><td>Golden pheasant</td></tr> <tr><td>3rd rank:</td><td>Peacock</td></tr> <tr><td>4th rank:</td><td>Wild goose</td></tr> <tr><td>5th rank:</td><td>Silver pheasant</td></tr> <tr><td>6th rank:</td><td>Egret</td></tr> <tr><td>7th rank:</td><td>Mandarin duck</td></tr> <tr><td>8th rank:</td><td>Quail</td></tr> <tr><td>9th rank:</td><td>Paradise flycatcher</td></tr> </table>	1st rank:	Crane	2nd rank:	Golden pheasant	3rd rank:	Peacock	4th rank:	Wild goose	5th rank:	Silver pheasant	6th rank:	Egret	7th rank:	Mandarin duck	8th rank:	Quail	9th rank:	Paradise flycatcher	<p><b>Military Officials (Animal motif)</b></p> <p>Animals are powerful but earthbound. They are less knowledgeable than birds. Hence military officials were ranked lower than civil officials.</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>1st rank:</td><td>Lion/Quilin (Late Qing)</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd rank:</td><td>Lion</td></tr> <tr><td>3rd rank:</td><td>Tiger/Leopard (Late Qing)</td></tr> <tr><td>4th rank:</td><td>Leopard/Tiger (Late Qing)</td></tr> <tr><td>5th rank:</td><td>Bear</td></tr> <tr><td>6th rank:</td><td>Panther</td></tr> <tr><td>7th rank:</td><td>Panther/Rhinoceros (Late Qing)</td></tr> <tr><td>8th rank:</td><td>Rhinoceros</td></tr> <tr><td>9th rank:</td><td>Sea horse</td></tr> </table>	1st rank:	Lion/Quilin (Late Qing)	2nd rank:	Lion	3rd rank:	Tiger/Leopard (Late Qing)	4th rank:	Leopard/Tiger (Late Qing)	5th rank:	Bear	6th rank:	Panther	7th rank:	Panther/Rhinoceros (Late Qing)	8th rank:	Rhinoceros	9th rank:	Sea horse
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The bird or animal on the mandarin square would always be shown gazing up at a red sun. It is based on the proverb: 'keep your eye on the sun and rise high'.

The surcoat was made of plain blue silk and underneath was a highly decorated dragon robe. "The Emperor Qianlong (reigned 1736-1795) wanted to remind his officials that the reason for wearing the dragon robe was not for outward pomp and circumstance, but rather for the inner spiritual power that the symbolism of the robe represented."  
 [Coleman, 12]

Boots are always worn with official clothing. Boots were predominantly made of black satin.

**References:**

5000 Years of Chinese Costumes text by Zhou Xun and Gao Chunming (1987)  
 Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ch'ing Dynasty Costume Accessories/清代服飾展覽圖錄 published by Guo Li Gu Gong Bo Wu Yuan (1986)  
 Dragons and Silk from the Forbidden City by Teresa Coleman (1999)



The Qing did not attempt to assimilate the people of Mongolia and Tibet into Chinese society. In fact, people of nobility, Buddhist monks and those associated with monasteries were exempt from paying taxes and performing mandated services of labor to the empire. In addition, the Qing did not encourage emigration of regular Chinese people to these regions, a continued effort to allowing them to keep their own culture. However the Qing did encourage the people of Mongolia to serve in their army as they were seen as a superior soldier over the regular Chinese soldier.

The image below is of Machang, a leading Qing warrior involved in the western expansion of the empire.



What evidence is there in the picture that the Qing army adopted some of the Mongol techniques?

The Qing Empire and the expansion of the Russian Empire completely transformed Central Asia. What was once an area of economic dominance, due to the Silk Roads, became isolated and backwards compared to the rest of the world. Land-based trading was now replaced by maritime trade. In addition, Mongolian nobles eventually lost their lands to Chinese merchants and the harsh Qing rule resulted in the nomadic herders of the steppes no longer being allowed to herd their animals freely. Many nomads were forced to leave their rural areas and move to the urban regions where they were reduced to becoming beggars on the streets.

The major significances of the Qing Empire were that they created the nation's boundaries that are still similar in today's society. With the Qing granting freedoms to Mongolia and Tibet, these ancient traditions have been challenged in recent decades, demanding autonomy or freedom from Modern China (such as the Free Tibet movement).

**Short essay question:**

How did the expansion of Russia and China transform Central Asia?

Compare the pattern of Qing expansion to that of Russia. What were the similarities and differences in how the two empires interacted with conquered people?