

**Pacifying the Barbarians:
The Structure and Evolution of Ming China's
Northwestern Frontier**

Inaugural-Dissertation
zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde
der
Philosophischen Fakultät
der
Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität
zu Bonn

vorgelegt von
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aus
Jiangsu, China

Bonn 2026

Gedruckt mit der Genehmigung der Philosophischen Fakultät der
Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

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Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 15. 07. 2026

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ralph Kauz MAE. During my four years of study and research in Bonn, he provided invaluable guidance and insightful suggestions for my dissertation, as well as constant support in both my academic and personal life. He also organized numerous lectures, workshops, and conferences, which gave me the opportunity to engage with scholars from around the world.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Lewis Doney. During my more than three years of study in Tibetan Studies, his guidance introduced me to the multifaceted world of Tibetology and fostered my deep interest in Tibetan culture.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ishayahu Landa, whose courses on the history of the Mongol Empire greatly broadened my academic horizons and deepened my understanding of Eurasian history. I am also grateful to Dr. Tobias Jones for his meticulous proofreading and language polishing during the final stages of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I wish to thank all the other teachers and friends who have supported me over the past four years. You have been the source of my happiness during my time in Bonn. Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my girlfriend and my parents. My studies would not have been possible without your unwavering love and support.

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Notes on Dates and Transliterations

This dissertation uses the Gregorian calendar, and all Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Islamic calendars are uniformly converted to it.

This dissertation transliterates Chinese in Pinyin, with traditional Chinese characters (Ch. *fanti zi* 繁体字) given at their first appearance. The translation of Ming official titles follow the *Chinese-English Dictionary of Ming Government Official Titles* 明代職官中英辭典, while the translation of Buddhist terms adhere to *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*.

Mongolian transliteration follows Poppe's system, with Oirat transliterated as Mongolian. Old Uyghur follows the *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, Tibetan follows the Wylie system, Sanskrit follows the IAST system, Tangut follows the Nishida Tatsuo system, Arabic and Persian transliterations follow the IJMES standard, Jurchen follows the “Nüzhen yiyu yanjiu 女真譯語研究”, and Manchu follows the Möllendorff system.

Due to the fact that most personal names mentioned in this dissertation are only recorded in the Chinese form, the reconstructions of original names in their languages and the Chinese characters will be given at first mention, with reconstructions used thereafter. If it is difficult to provide a reconstruction, only the Chinese form of the name will be provided.

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Abbreviations

Ar.	Arabic
<i>BZK I</i>	Zhang Yu 張雨, <i>Bianzheng kao</i> 邊政考, in <i>Mingdai menggu hanji shiliao huibian</i> 明代蒙古漢籍史料彙編, ed. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, vol. 7 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2011).
<i>BZK II</i> ,	Zhang Yu 張雨, <i>Bianzheng kao</i> 邊政考 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1522-1566).
Ch.	Chinese
<i>CZCB</i>	<i>Chongzhen changbian</i> 崇禎長編 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 17th century).
<i>CZSL</i>	<i>Chongzhen shilu</i> 崇禎實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 17th century).
<i>DMHD</i>	Shen Shixing 申時行 et al., eds., <i>Daming huidian</i> 大明會典, in <i>Xuxiu siku quanshu</i> 續修四庫全書, <i>shi bu</i> 史部, vol. 789-792 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999).
<i>DMYTZ</i>	<i>Daming yitong zhi</i> 大明一統志 (Taipei: Tailian guofeng chubanshe, 1977).
<i>GCGK</i>	Hu Zhenhua 胡振華 and Huang Runhua 黃潤華, trans., <i>Mingdai wenxian "Gaochang guanke"</i> 明代文獻《高昌館課》 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1981).
<i>GCGZZ</i>	Hu Zhenhua 胡振華 and Huang Runhua 黃潤華, eds., <i>Gaochang zazi</i> 高昌館雜字 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984).
<i>GSZKJL</i>	<i>Gansu zhen kaojian lue</i> 甘肅鎮考見略 (Nanjing: Nanjing Library, 1639).
<i>GSZZSTL</i>	<i>Gansu zhen zhanshou tulue</i> 甘肅鎮戰守圖略 (Taipei: Taipei National Palace Museum, 1544-1566).
<i>HDQSZP</i>	<i>Huang dong qishi zongpu</i> 遼東祁氏宗譜 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1942).
<i>HMJLSC</i>	Zhang Lu 張鹵, ed., <i>Huangming jialong shu chao</i> 皇明嘉隆疏抄, in <i>Xuxiu siku quanshu</i> 續修四庫全書, <i>shi bu</i> 史部, vol. 467 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999).
<i>HYYY I</i>	<i>Huayi yiyu</i> 華夷譯語 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ming period (1368-1644)).
<i>HYYY II</i>	<i>Huayi yiyu</i> 華夷譯語 (Taipei: Guiting chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1979).
J.	Jurchen
<i>KXGCFZ</i>	<i>Kangxi gongchang fu zhi</i> 康熙鞏昌府志, in <i>Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: gansu fuxian zhi ji</i> 中國地方志集成：甘肅府縣志輯, vol. 2 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008).
<i>KXLZZ</i>	<i>Kangxi lanzhou zhi</i> 康熙蘭州志, in <i>Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: gansu fuxian zhi ji</i> 中國地方志集成：甘肅府縣志輯, vol. 1 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008).

<i>KXYSZZ</i>	<i>Kangxi yansui zhen zhi</i> 康熙延綏鎮志, in <i>Siku quanshu cunmu congshu</i> 四庫全書存目叢書, <i>shi bu</i> 史部, vol. 227 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996).
<i>MTFZ</i>	<i>Wanli lintao fu zhi</i> 臨洮府志 (Tōkyō: National Archives of Japan, 1604)
Mo.	Mongolian
Ma.	Manchu
<i>MDHM</i>	Chen Gaohua 陳高華, ed., <i>Mingdai hami tulufan ziliao huibian</i> 明代哈密吐魯番資料彙編 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2017).
<i>MIXIZSL</i>	<i>Ming xizong shilu</i> 明熹宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MMZSL</i>	<i>Ming muzong shilu</i> 明穆宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MRZSL</i>	<i>Ming renzong shilu</i> 明仁宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MS</i>	Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉, <i>Ming shi</i> 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013).
<i>MSIZSL</i>	<i>Ming shizong shilu</i> 明世宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MSZSL</i>	<i>Ming shenzong shilu</i> 明神宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MTZOSL</i>	<i>Ming taizong shilu</i> 明太宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MTZSL</i>	<i>Ming taizu shilu</i> 明太祖實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MWZSL</i>	<i>Ming wuzong shilu</i> 明武宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MXIZSL</i>	<i>Ming xiaozong shilu</i> 明孝宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MXUZSL</i>	<i>Ming xuanzong shilu</i> 明宣宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MXZOSL</i>	<i>Ming xizong shilu</i> 明熹宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MXZSL</i>	<i>Ming xianzong shilu</i> 明憲宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>MYZSL</i>	<i>Ming yingzong shilu</i> 明英宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962).
<i>NBSZ</i>	<i>Kangxi nianbo suo zhi</i> 康熙碾伯所志, in <i>Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: gansu fuxian zhi ji</i> 中國地方志集成: 青海府縣志輯, vol. 5 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008).
OU.	Old Uyghur
P.	Persian
<i>QBJL</i>	Liang Fen 梁份, <i>Qinbian jilue</i> 秦邊紀略, annotated by Zhao Shengshi 趙盛世 et al. (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1987).
<i>QLXNFXZ</i>	<i>Qianlong xining fu xin zhi</i> 乾隆西寧府新志 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1988).
S.	Sanskrit
<i>SYZZL</i>	Yan Congjian 嚴從簡, <i>Shuyu zhoushi lu</i> 殊域周咨錄, annotated by Yu Sili 余思黎 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).
<i>SZHYZ</i>	Li Yingkui 李應魁, <i>Suzhen huayi zhi</i> 肅鎮華夷志, annotated by Gao Qi'an 高啟安, Tai Huili 邵惠莉 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2006).
<i>SZZ</i>	<i>Wanli suzhen huayi zhi</i> [Suzhen zhi] 萬曆肅鎮華夷志[肅鎮志], in <i>Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: gansu fuxian zhi ji</i> 中國地方志集成: 甘肅府縣志輯, vol. 48 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008).

Ti.	Tibetan
TIR	Dughlát Muhammad Haidar, <i>The Tarikh-i-rashidi: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia; an English Version</i> , trans. N. Elias (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1895).
WLGZZ	<i>Wanli gan zhen zhi</i> 萬曆甘鎮志, in <i>Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: gansu fuxian zhi ji</i> 中國地方志集成: 甘肅府縣志輯, vol. 2 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008).
WLWGL	Qu Jiusi 瞿九思, <i>Wanli wugong lu</i> 萬曆武功錄, in <i>Mingdai menggu hanji shiliao huibian</i> 明代蒙古漢籍史料彙編, ed. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, vol. 4 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2011).
WLYSZZ	Zheng Rubi 鄭汝璧, <i>Yansui zhen zhi</i> 延綏鎮志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011).
XNWZ	<i>Xining weizhi</i> 西寧衛志 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1993).
XTGSXTZ	<i>Xuantong gansu quansheng xin Tongzhi</i> 宣統甘肅全省新通志 (Xi'an: Shaanxi Normal University Library, 1903).
XXLSSP	Li Hongyi 李鴻儀 and Li Peiye 李培業, eds., <i>Xixia lishi shipu</i> 西夏李氏世譜 (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 1998).
XZZ	<i>Xizhen zhi</i> 西鎮志, in <i>Siku quanshu cunmu congshu</i> 四庫全書存目叢書, <i>shi bu</i> 史部, vol. 212 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996).
YS	<i>Yuan shi</i> 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013).
YY	<i>Yiyu</i> 譯語 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming period (1368-1644)).
YYTZ	<i>Yuan yitong zhi</i> 元一統志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ming China (1368-1644), which inherited the legacy of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and acted as the predecessor of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), was one of the most extensive and powerful empires in Eurasia during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, consisting of various ethnic groups and actively engaging in the political, military, and economic competitions across Inner Asia. The term “Inner Asia” in this dissertation refers to the region surrounding the Hexi Corridor (Ch. *hexi zoulang* 河西走廊), which extended north to the Mongolian steppe, south to Qinghai, west to the Turpan Region, and east to the Hetao Plain (Ch. *hetao pingyuan* 河套平原).

Situated at the empire’s northwestern extremity, the Hexi Corridor was geographically embedded in Inner Asia,¹ consistently saw the arrival of various Inner Asian forces: tributary missions from the Western Regions (Ch. *xiyu* 西域),² horse-tea trading caravans and Buddhist missionaries from Tibet, along with tribal groups of Mongols, Oirats and the Moghul Khanate who were motivated by the pursuit of slaves, pastureland and religious purposes related to Islam and Buddhism. To secure its northwestern frontier, establish stable relations with neighboring regimes and assert regional hegemony in Inner Asia, the Ming successively established the so-called “buffer system” (Ch. *fanli tixi* 藩籬體系) and the “*fuyi* system” (Ch. *fuyi tixi* 撫夷體系, “pacification system”) as an institutional framework for communicating with, managing, and countering Inner Asian forces. This dissertation aims to reveal the structure and evolution of these complex frontier control and management systems established by the Ming, along with contemporary Inner Asian power networks, and to demonstrate how the mutual interaction—marked by conflict, accommodation and exchange—between these two systems contributed to broader transformations in Inner Asian history. Furthermore, it examines the emergence of Ming-appointed *fuyi* officials (Ch. *fuyi guan* 撫夷官, “pacification officials”) as the core

¹ Owen Lattimore suggests that the Hexi Corridor, along with Ningxia, Yijinaï region and the Shule River Basin, was the “sub-oases” connected China and Central Asia. See Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940), 163-169. Maeda Masana has analyzed the geography and historical development of the Hexi Corridor, see Maeda Masana 前田正名, *Hexi lishi dilixue yanjiu* 河西歷史地理學研究, translated by Chen Junmou 陳俊謀 (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1993).

² “Western Regions” is translated from the Chinese term “*Xiyu* 西域”. During the Ming period, it generally referred to all the regions west of “Jiayu Pass” (Ch. *Jiayu guan* 嘉峪關, today’s Jiayuguan City 嘉峪關市). In this dissertation, it is used to denote the area from Jiayu Pass to Moghulistan.

mediators between the Ming and Inner Asia and as well as the profound and enduring influence of their roles down to the Qing period.

1.1 Research aims

Regarding the interaction patterns between the Ming and Inner Asia, scholars have already proposed a variety of paradigms, the most prominent of which is the so-called “tributary system”. A preliminary framework of this paradigm was proposed by John K. Fairbank in the mid-twentieth century. He suggested that the graded and concentric hierarchy of China’s foreign relations included other peoples and countries that we may group in three main zones: the Sinic Zone, the Inner Asian Zone and the Outer Zone.³ Ideally, all countries should have paid tribute to the emperor of the “central country”, but in fact, many countries were independent. Therefore, Fairbank suggested that the main aim of China’s foreign policies was to put the ideology of the tributary system into practice.⁴ Following up this framework, Wang Gungwu traced the origin of the tributary system and pointed out its two main principles: the principle of superiority, which emphasizes the national superiority of the Chinese; and the principle of equality, which means that all foreigners were equal in the eye of the Chinese.⁵ After them, many scholars have expanded the theoretical framework of the tributary system from various perspectives, including in terms of rites, politics, and trade.⁶

However, a problem remains: discussions conducted within the framework of the tributary system tend to rely almost exclusively on a Sinocentric perspective,⁷ lacking a frontier-oriented viewpoint. In other words, these studies ignore the complex relationship among various non-Han ethnic groups beyond the tributary system. For example, Hamashita Takeshi has proposed the well-known concentric-circle model of the tributary system. In this model, different groups

³ The Sinic Zone included countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam; the Inner Asian Zone comprised regions such as Mongolia, Tibet, and Central Asia; and the Outer Zone included powers such as Russia, Portugal, and England. John King Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1-13.

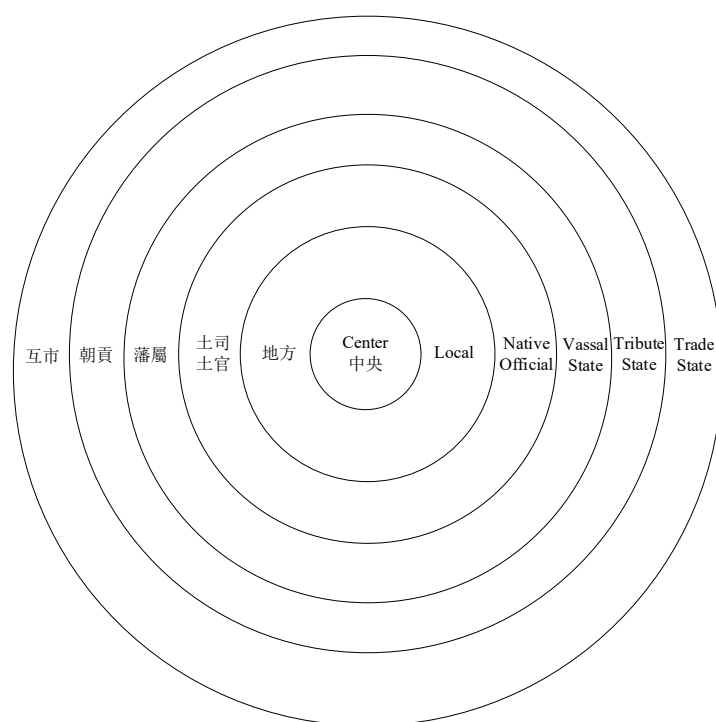
⁴ Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” 1-19.

⁵ Wang Gungwu, “Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background essay,” in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 34-62.

⁶ See Chen Zhigang 陳志剛, “Guanyu feng gong tixi yanjiu de ji ge lilun wenti 關於封貢體系研究的幾個理論問題,” *Qinghua daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 清華大學學報（哲學社會科學版）, no. 25 (2010): 59-69, 155-156; Li Wen 李文, “The Origin of the Character gòng 貢,” in *Tribute System and Rulership in Late Imperial China*, ed. Ralph Kauz and Morris Rossabi (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2022), 19-41.

⁷ For the latest reflections on this issue, see Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene, *The Nomadic Leviathan: A Critique of the Sinocentric Paradigm* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

and regimes are arranged from the center outward according to their spatial proximity and degree of diplomatic intimacy to the Ming, categorized as “native officials” (or native chieftains, Ch. *tuguan* 土官 or *tusi* 土司),⁸ vassal states, tribute states, and trade states (see Figure 1.1).⁹ This theoretical framework suffers from two major problems. First, the relationships among native officials, vassal states, tribute states, and trade states actually constituted complex networks that cannot be reflected within such a Sinocentric model. Secondly, in spatial terms, the activity region of native officials, vassal states, tribute states, and trade states largely overlapped with one another and cannot be simply being arranged in a neat outward sequence from the center. Overall, Hamashita Takeshi’s concentric-circle model is primarily grounded in the historical realities of the East Asian maritime world and fails to take into account the distinctive historical processes of the Inner Asian frontier.



⁸ “Native official system” was a unique strategy utilized by the Ming and the Qing to cooperate with local ethnic elites, endow them with Chinese surnames, hereditary succession rights, and military titles, and rely them on managing frontier affairs. See Leo K. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58; Jan Karlach, “Between Officialdom and nativeness: Mutually Appropriating the State and the Nuosu-Yi native Chieftain Clans in Southwest China,” *Journal of Chinese History* 10, no. 1 (2026): 131-132.

⁹ Hamashita Takeshi 濱下武志, *Jindai zhongguo de guoji qiji: chaogong maoyi tixi yu jindai yazhou jingji quan* 近代中國的國際契機——朝貢貿易體系與近代亞洲經濟圈 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999), 37. The paper and figure have also already been translated into English, however, in a simplified version, see Hamashita Takeshi, *China, East Asia and the Global Economy: Regional and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Linda Grove and Mark Selden (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 17.

Figure 1.1. The Concentric-Circle Model of the “Tributary System” (after Hamashita Takeshi).

Owen Lattimore was the first to emphasize the importance of the incorporation of the Inner Asian perspective; in this he was followed by Thomas J. Barfield and Wang Mingke.¹⁰ In recent years, influenced by Lattimore’s studies, the so-called “New Qing History” movement challenged the traditional framework of the tributary system, emphasizing the Inner Asian angles of view and analytical perspectives. The “New Qing History” argued in fact that the diplomatic policy of Qing empire was neither Sinocentrism (Hancentrism) nor merely reliant on “tribute” but included a series of diplomatic strategies such as political marriage, religious patronage, commerce, diplomacy and war. Therefore, it claimed that the Qing was both an Inner Asian and a Chinese Empire.¹¹ In this analytical narrative, Ming China has been regarded as a distinctly “Han” empire, or “the culmination of a Han-centered strategic polity”, which isolated itself from the steppe environment and relied on the Great Wall for defense, as Peter C. Perdue argued.¹²

In contrast to the emphasis of the “New Qing History” on the “Han” character of the Ming, scholarship emerging from Mongol Yuan studies places greater emphasis on the Ming’s “Inner Asian-ness”. This perspective builds on the pioneering work of Thomas Allsen, who innovatively demonstrated the extensive exchanges across Eurasia during the Mongol Empire period.¹³ Inspired by him, many scholars continuously situated the Ming within the broader context of Eurasian history following the collapse of the Mongol Empire, highlighting the Ming’s inheritance of Yuan legacies in territorial, political and military terms, as well as in regard to intellectual and cultural traditions, emphasizing the Ming’s active engagement in

¹⁰ See Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940); Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, 221 BC to AD 1757* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992); Wang Mingke 王明珂, *Youmu zhe de jueze: miandui handiguo de beiya youmu buzhu 游牧者的抉擇：面對漢帝國的北亞遊牧部族*, Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008.

¹¹ Ruth W. Dunnell and James A. Millward, “Introduction,” in *New Qing Imperial History*, ed. James A. Millward et al. (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 3.

¹² Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 74. Cf. Wang Jinping, “The Great Ming and East Asia: The World Order of a Han Centric Chinese Empire, 1368-1644,” in *Empire in Asia: A New Global History*, vol. 1, ed. Brian Farrell (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 43-76.

¹³ Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Inner Asian affairs.¹⁴ Among those scholars, David Robinson has been the most prolific. Robinson emphasizes that the early Ming rulers portrayed their dynasty as the sole legitimate successor to Qubilai (Ch. Hubilie 忽必烈, 1215-1294) Khan and his descendants and strategically mobilized Mongol legacy to participate in the post-Činggisid Eurasian power struggles, making alliances with or fighting against various Inner Asian forces, seeking to establish its status as the “lord of lords”.¹⁵

However, Robinson and other scholars have focused primarily on the early Ming period, paying relatively little attention to later developments. The reason behind this is that the Ming court tended to conduct a restrictive foreign policy after the so-called “Tumu Crisis” (Ch. *tumu zhi bian* 土木之變, 1449), which resulted in much fewer records of communication between the Ming and Inner Asia in official records in the late Ming period.¹⁶ This trend was already stressed by Henry Serruys, who pointed out that only a few Ming embassies visited Mongolia after 1450.¹⁷ Morris Rossabi also underlined that Ming China’s relation with Central Asia diminished in the Late Ming.¹⁸

It is true that the Ming court reduced communication with foreign countries. However, in the meantime, frontier officials’ interaction with Inner Asia in fact gradually increased. In recent years, a growing number of scholars have shifted their focus from the center to the frontier, paying attention to the Ming’s local interactions with various Inner Asian forces. For example, through his study of Ming–Tibetan relations, Hu Xiaobai points out that the Ming was

¹⁴ Edward L. Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 81-99; Hidehiro Okada, “China as a Successor State to the Mongol Empire,” in *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 264-267; John W. Dardess, “Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power, and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming,” in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 111-134; David M. Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).

¹⁵ David M. Robinson, *In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire: Ming China and Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); David M. Robinson, *Ming China and its Allies: Imperial Rule in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Cf. Christopher Edward Eirkson, “Ideas of Empire in Early Ming China: The Legacy of the Mongol Empire in Chinese Imperial Visions, 1368-1500” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2018); Eiren L. Shea, “The Mongol Cultural Legacy in East and Central Asia: The Early Ming and Timurid Courts,” *Ming Studies*, no. 78 (2018): 32-56; Johannes Lotze, “Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2016).

¹⁶ For a detailed introduction of the Tumu Crisis, see Philip de Heer, *The Care-Taker Emperor: Aspects of the Imperial Institution in Fifteenth-Century China as Reflected in the Political History of the Reign of Chu Chi’i-yü* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 16-41.

¹⁷ Henry Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, II. The Tribute System and Diplomatic Missions* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1967), 541.

¹⁸ Morris Rossabi, “The Ming and Inner Asia,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 246.

able to adopt various methods to interact with and govern frontier regions.¹⁹ Kung Ling-Wei demonstrates through his research on Zhangjiakou 張家口 that the Ming established a sophisticated network of spies and intelligence in Inner Asia to gather information on the Mongols and Jurchens and to divide them, thereby attempting to preserve its influence in the region during the late Ming.²⁰ These studies also suggest that, although the connection between the Ming court in the center and the Inner Asian world were weakening, interactions between the Ming frontier and Inner Asia continued to deepen. Following this line of research, this dissertation focuses on the Ming's northwestern frontier and examines how the Ming went beyond the Mongol legacy to create its own frontier governance system—the *fuyi* system.

The Ming inherited its northwestern frontier from the Yuan. During the Yuan period, various princes were enfeoffed in the northwest, exercising considerable military and political authority, collectively known as the “northwestern vassals” (Ch. *xibei zhufan* 西北諸藩). In the early Ming period, the Yuan forces centered on the northwestern vassals surrendered to the Ming and later were incorporated as the “northwestern buffer zone” (Ch. *xibei fanli* 西北藩籬).²¹ Utilizing this buffer system, the Ming counterbalanced the Mongols, the Oirats and other forces, establishing its hegemony in Inner Asia.²²

Beginning in 1473, the Moghul Khanate launched invasions into the northwestern frontier, prompting the forces of the buffer zone, such as the Hami Guard, to migrate into Ming territory. In response, the Ming appointed *fuyi* officials to reorganize the buffer system and resist the Moghul Khanate, marking the origin of the *fuyi* system.²³ From 1512, the Qinghai Mongols, or the Ibarai group, invaded Qinghai and further undermined the Ming buffer zone. As a countermeasure, the Ming attempted to incorporate these hostile forces into the buffer zone through repeated negotiations mediated by *fuyi* officials.²⁴ Subsequently, the Mongols of the Right Wing moved westward, seizing the entire Ming northwestern frontier, and established

¹⁹ Hu Xiaobai, “Unruly Mountains: Competing Visions for China’s Inner Asian Highland, 1368-1600” (PhD diss., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2020).

²⁰ Kung Ling-Wei 孔令偉, “Jihui zhi men: shiwu zhi shiqi shiji Zhangjiakou bao jichu jianshe yiji han meng man zixun liutong 集會之門：十五至十七世紀張家口堡基礎建設以及漢蒙滿資訊流通,” *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 41, no. 4 (2024): 89-138.

²¹ For a detailed explanation on “buffer zone (Ch. *fanli* 藩籬),” see Section 1.4.2.

²² See Chapter 2.

²³ See Chapter 3-4.

²⁴ See Chapter 5.

the Longqing Peace Treaty (Ch. *longqing heyi* 隆慶和議) with the Ming in 1571. Thereafter, *fuyi* officials became actively engaged in Ming–Mongol interactions, overseeing mutual trade and mediating routine conflicts, marking the further development of the *fuyi* system.²⁵

Even during the Qing period, *fuyi* officials continued to be employed to manage frontier people, demonstrating the enduring influence of the *fuyi* system.²⁶ This underscores that the Ming was not an antithesis to the Qing’s multiethnic frontier governance, but rather profoundly shaped Qing policies in frontier administration. This dissertation aims to systematically examine these historical processes to illustrate the Ming’s frequent, diverse and complex interactions with the Inner Asian forces, as well as its active participation in Eurasian political and military competitions.

1.2 Historiography

Unlike modern countries, Ming China did not have a clear boundary with Inner Asia. Moreover, contrary to the ideal Chinese dictum of a “distinction between China and barbarians” (Ch. *huayi zhi bian* 華夷之辨), the “barbarian” and Chinese lived intermingled on the frontier. There were various people scattered along the Ming’s vast northwestern frontier: native officials serving in the Ming army, groups with close political and economic ties to the Chinese dynasty, and regimes which were allegedly subject to the Ming and bestowed with Chinese official titles. These groups, especially the latter two, were referred to as the “buffer zone” (Ch. *fanli* 藩籬) of the empire by the Ming court, while their relations with the Ming was always described as “loose rein” (Ch. *jimi* 羈縻).²⁷ While there is extensive scholarship on these regimes and ethnic groups of the buffer zone, which will be addressed in the relevant chapters of this dissertation, the focus here is a historiographical review of the research on the mediators between the Ming and these groups of the buffer zone—the *fuyi* officials, the main topic of my study.

²⁵ See Chapter 6-8.

²⁶ See Section 6.4.

²⁷ Following the “loose rein” principle, the Han rulers endeavored to establish a China-centered hierarchical world order. See Q. Edward Wang, “History, Space, and Ethnicity: The Chinese Worldview,” *Journal of World History* 10, no. 2 (1999): 296.

Ming China widely appointed *fuyi* officials on its frontier to regulate relations with non-Han ethnic groups. These *fuyi* officials were prominently of non-Han origin, possessed multilingual abilities, and maintained personal networks within non-Han groups. Leveraging these characteristics, they were capable of mediating between the Ming and non-Han groups, facilitating the implementation of the Ming's frontier policies.²⁸

Here, I follow Eric Schluessel in using the term “mediator” rather than “intermediary”, “interpreter” or “translator” to describe the status of the *fuyi* officials, in order to emphasize that they were not merely language translators but rather functioning as translators between the frontier and Inner Asian customs and demands and the ideology and dynastic interests of the Ming, seeking to mediate a balance of interests between the frontier and the court.²⁹

In addition to the *fuyi* officials in the frontier regions, the Ming court also established a number of foreign affairs institutions at the central level, such as the Messenger's Office (Ch. *xingren si* 行人司), responsible for missions abroad; the Translators' Institute (Ch. *siyi guan* 四夷館), in charge of translating foreign documents; and the Interpreters' Institute (Ch. *huitong guan* 會同館), the Court of State Ceremonial (Ch. *honglu si* 鴻臚寺), and the Great Foreign Language Interpreter (Ch. *da tongshi* 大通事), responsible for receiving foreign envoys.³⁰ Although many of the personnel in these offices were also of non-Han ethnic backgrounds and skilled in communicating with foreign delegations, their activities were primarily confined to the capital. Therefore, they were largely unable to gain firsthand understanding of or access to the diverse realities of the Inner Asian world.³¹

Regarding the research of the *fuyi* officials, it is still in its early stages. Henry Serruys was the first to identify the existence of *fuyi* officials within the administrative system of Ming–Mongol mutual trade in his 1975 study of Ming–Mongol relations, noting that their duties primarily involved managing Mongol affairs.³² Following him, Luo Yong and Chen

²⁸ Concerning their unique characteristics, a more detailed summary will be presented in the conclusion.

²⁹ Eric Schluessel, *Land of Strangers: The Civilizing Project in Qing Central Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 81–82. For research on the Inner Asian intermediaries, see Denis Sinor “Interpreters in Medieval Inner Asia” and “Diplomatic Practices in Medieval Inner Asia,” in Denis Sinor, *Studies in Medieval Inner Asia* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 1997).

³⁰ Ralph Kauz, *Politik und Handel zwischen Ming und Timuriden* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005), 35–45.

³¹ For a prosopographical study of early Ming language mediators, see Lotze, “Translation of Empire,” 266–270.

³² Serruys, Henry, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, III. Trade Relations: The Horse Fairs (1400–1600)* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1975), 244–245.

Yongxiang pointed out that the Ming recruited a large number of *fuyi* officials to its frontier and conducted case studies. Focusing on the specific situation on the southwestern frontier, Luo Yong proposed that “‘*fuyi*’ represented non-military activities employed by the Central Plains dynasties (Ch. *zhongyuan wangchao* 中原王朝) to manage ethnic relations”.³³ Chen Yongxiang analyzed the case of Wang Mumin 王牧民, a *fuyi* official serving at the northeastern frontier, arguing that “the primary duties of *fuyi* officials involved handling interactions with groups such as the Mongols, including communication, translation and negotiation, management and distribution of “rewards (or subsidy, in Serruys’s terminology; Ch. *fushang* 撫賞), as well as peace and alliance negotiations.”³⁴

Recent years also witnessed the publication of two illustrations, “*fushang yiren*” (Ch. 撫賞夷人, ‘rewarding the barbarians’, Figure 1.2) and “*hu’er kuansai*” (Ch. 胡兒款塞, ‘barbarians coming to pay tribute’, Figure 1.3), compiled in the newly discovered *Record of General Qi’s Military Achievements* (Ch. *Qi jiangjun gongrong tu* 祁將軍功榮圖). This set of images was commissioned by the Ming military Qi 祁 family of Yu County 蔚縣, Hebei, who hired local folk painters to produce illustrations celebrating their family’s achievements.³⁵ In the illustration “*fushang yiren*”, Qi Xun 祁勛 (fl. 1543-1553), the Xuanfu Assistant Regional Commander (Ch. Xuanfu *canjiang* 宣府參將), is seated in a courtyard, while other civil and military officials stand on either side of him, waiting for the Mongols to arrive and receive the imperial rewards.³⁶ In “*hu’er kuansai*”, Qi Xun is depicted watching Mongols perform songs and dances. At the same time, along the frontier wall, the Mongols can be seen arriving with goods to conduct trade.³⁷ These illustrations vividly depict the pacification activities.

³³ Luo Yong 羅勇, “Mingdai fuyi huodong ji qi dui sanxuan liuwei diqu de yingxiang 明代撫夷活動及其對三宣六慰地區的影響,” *Qinghai minzu daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 青海民族大學學報(社會科學版), no. 2 (2015): 127-133; *Jinglüe dianxi: Mingdai yongchang diqu junzheng shezhi de bianqian* 經略滇西：明代永昌地區軍政設置的變遷 (Beijing: shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2019), 173-175.

³⁴ Chen Yongxiang 陳永祥, “Mingmo beibian de fuyiguan: yi wang mumin shiji wei zhongxin, 明末北邊的撫夷官——以王牧民事蹟為中心,” *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, no. 41 (2021): 147-162.

³⁵ Xu Cheng 徐成, “Yi fu zhenxi de mingdai wujiang huanji tu: qi jiangjun gongrong tuji xiangguan wenti chutan 一幅珍稀的明代武將宦跡圖——《祁將軍功榮圖記》相關問題初探,” *Xingxiang shixue* 形象史學, no. 4 (2023): 277.

³⁶ Xu, “Yi fu zhenxi de mingdai wujiang huanji tu,” 263-265.

³⁷ Xu, “Yi fu zhenxi de mingdai wujiang huanji tu,” 266.



Figure 1.2. “Fushang yiren,” in *Qi jiangjun gongrong tu*. Accessed February 3, 2026, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6193729>. Ming period (1368-1644).



Figure 1.3. “Hu’er kuansai,” in *Qi jiangjun gongrong tu*. Accessed February 3, 2026, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6193729>. Ming period (1368-1644).

Despite the existence of these studies, comprehensive studies on *fuyi* officials have yet to emerge, and research on the *fuyi* system in the northwest remains absent. This dissertation

attempts to provide a systematic study of the *fuyi* officials on the northwestern frontier, focusing primarily on the Hexi Corridor, from the early fourteenth century to the seventeenth century. A table of their biographies is presented in Appendix I.

1.3 Methodology and sources

This dissertation is based on close reading of sources in multiple languages and prosopographical analyses of *fuyi* officials' biographies. The study mainly utilizes Chinese sources, which are the amplest sources regarding to the topic, but also putting a special emphasize on the Islamicate (mainly Persian and Chaghatay),³⁸ Mongolian, Tibetan and Old Uyghur sources, paying special attention to their differing narratives with regards to the Chinese sources.

It is also worth mentioning that although a large amount of *fuyi* officials originated from Inner Asian groups, the records of their activities can only be found in Chinese sources, mainly due to the scarcity of historical materials in various Inner Asian languages at the time. This dissertation, nevertheless, seeks to reconstruct the names, titles, and backgrounds of the *fuyi* officials to their corresponding Inner Asian linguistic and sociocultural contexts, situating them within the broader perspective of the Inner Asian world rather than examining them solely within a Chinese framework. In this way, this dissertation aims to reveal the multiple identities and social networks that these officials possessed in Inner Asia.

1.3.1 Chinese sources

This dissertation primarily examines four types of Chinese sources.³⁹ Firstly, there is a body of chronological literature, including both state-compiled works, such as *Ming shilu* (明實錄, “The Veritable Records of the Ming”) and *Bianzhen kao* (邊政考, “Comprehensive Record of the Frontiers”), as well as privately compiled works, such as *Wanli wugong lu* (萬曆武功錄,

³⁸ Here, following Ishayahu Landa, I adopt the term “Islamicate sources” to emphasize that these materials were produced in realms dominated by Islamic populations and rulers, and to highlight the religious dimension of their narratives. See Ishayahu Landa, *Marriage and Power in Mongol Eurasia: A History of the Chinggisid Sons-in Law* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2023), 12.

³⁹ For a systematical introduction of the Chinese sources during the Ming period, see Wolfgang Franke, *Annotated Sources of Ming History: Including Southern Ming and Works on Neighbouring Lands, 1368–1661*, revised and enlarged by Liew-Herres Foon Ming (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2011).

“Record of Military Achievements during the Wanli Reign”), which provides a detailed, chronological account of the political, military and economic activities of both the Ming and the frontier non-Han ethnic groups. They can help us establish the sequence of events.⁴⁰

Secondly, this dissertation examines multiple local geographic, historical and genealogical records, such as local gazetteers, atlases, inscriptions from governmental institutions, religious establishments and individual graves, and genealogies of local families. Local records often contain abundant information, including geographical data, information on the official bureaucracy, biographical data and so on. In some of them we can often find poems and memorials that are also an important source of historical information. Several gazetteers even have individual chapters relevant to the military and economic interactions between the Ming and various Inner Asian forces. These records can help us to observe Ming–Inner Asia relations from a local and frontier perspective.

Thirdly, this dissertation incorporates various memorials and official correspondences. They record a wealth of interactions in the frontier regions, as well as intelligence information brought by scouts, envoys, interpreters and subjects. These records are key materials for analyzing and understanding the structure of the frontier, the power networks in Inner Asia and the activities of *fuyi* officials. They are also the crucial sources to understand the process of decision-making. For example, one of the precious sources of memorials is the previously unused *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao* (近代名臣邊疆題要, “Selected Frontier Memorials by Distinguished Officials in the Modern Era”) preserved in the Fu Ssu-nien Library.⁴¹ Based on my judgment, it is in fact a collection of Ming Ministry of War archives containing a large number of valuable military memorials, particularly from the Jiajing reign (1507-1567), which cannot be found elsewhere. Nevertheless, both the memorials and official correspondences need to be interpreted carefully, since those reports were often not faithful records of actual frontier

⁴⁰ These sources all have their own problems, thus requiring carefully interpreted. For example, the memorials recorded in *Ming shilu* were subjected to editing and abridgment, resulting in the loss of a great deal of information. see Kawagoe Yasuhiro 川越泰博, *Mindai ikoku jōhō no kenkyū* 明代異国情報の研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1999). Moreover, the accounts in the *Wanli wugong lu* are filled with contradictions and errors and therefore must be used only after cross-checking with other sources. See Meng Fanyun 孟凡雲, “*Wanli wugong lu*” *yanjiu: yi menggu renwu zhuanji wei zhongxin* 《萬曆武功錄》研究——以蒙古人物傳記為中心 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2008). Nonetheless, these materials remain the most fundamental sources for reconstructing a preliminary framework of historical events.

⁴¹ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao* 近代名臣邊疆題要 (Taipei: Fu Ssu-nien Library, Ming period (1368-1644)).

conditions but were selectively reported and manipulated to serve as instruments in political struggles within the central government.⁴²

Finally, this dissertation also incorporates various pieces of poetry. Poetry always records feelings of officials that are inconvenient to express directly in the memorials, as well as invaluable information about social life and historical events, such as banquets, performances and wars.

1.3.2 Islamicate sources

The Islamic sources used in this dissertation can be divided into three categories.⁴³ Firstly, these are the travel accounts compiled by various embassies from the Western Regions to the Chinese court. These accounts record the economic and social conditions of the Ming at the time and the ecology, politics, and commercial activities of Inner Asia, as well as the specific measures adopted by the Ming in its frontier governance.

Secondly, there are also historical works. The primary source employed in this dissertation is the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, “The History of Rashīd”, written by Muḥammad Ḥaidar (c. 1499/1500-1551) in Persian, a Moghul-Dughlāt prince. He once served Sa‘īd Khan (1487-1533), the founder of the Yarkand Khanate, and completed the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* in 1546/1547. This work provides a detailed account of the political, military and religious activities of the Moghul Khanate and Yarkand Khanate.⁴⁴

Finally, there are hagiographies. Although these texts often contain inaccuracies in content and chronology, hagiographical literatures offer detailed information on the spread of Islam—particularly the Naqshbandī order—in the Western Regions at the time.⁴⁵

⁴² For example, with regard to the cause of the crisis of Xining in 1588, the fractions of Senior Grand Secretary (Ch. *neige shoufu* 內閣首輔) Shen Shixing 申時行 and Second Grand Secretary (Ch. *neige cifu* 內閣次輔) Xu Guo 許國 presented opposing narratives, aiming to dismiss officials affiliated with the opposing faction. See Lu Xingyu 陸星宇, “Fu wei shi er zhan bu xiu: menggu xixing yu ming wanly qianzhong de beijiāng zhili 撫為事而戰不休：蒙古西行與明萬曆前中期的北疆治理” (Master’s thesis, Guangzhou: Sun Yat-sen University, 2022), 71-77.

⁴³ Qu Qiang comprehensively collected the Islamic sources in Arabic, Persian and Chaghatay with regard to Xinjiang during the Ming period. Although these sources have little direct connection with the topic of this dissertation, they are very important for understanding the political, institutional and religious situations of the Moghul Khanate and the Yarkand Khanate. See Qu Qiang 曲強, “14-17 shiji xiyu difang zhengzhi shi yanjiu 14~17 世紀西域地方政治史研究” (PhD dissertation, Beijing: Renmin University of China, 2024), 23-55.

⁴⁴ *TIR*, 1-27.

⁴⁵ For the historical development of the Sufi doctrine of sainthood, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le sceau des saints prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d’Ibn ‘Arabī* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).

1.3.3 Mongolian, Tibetan and Uyghur sources

The Mongolian sources employed in the dissertation consist primarily of historical works, among which the most important are the *Erdeni-yin Tobči*, a chronicle of the Mongols completed in 1662,⁴⁶ *Erdeni Tunumal Neretü Sudur*, a biography of Altan Khan finished in 1607,⁴⁷ and *Dörbön Oyiradiyin Tüüke*, a history of the Four Oirats in Clear Script compiled around 1760.⁴⁸ These texts provide detailed accounts of Mongol activities during the Ming period and their interactions with the Ming and various Inner Asian forces and thus significantly complement the narratives provided by Chinese and Islamic sources.⁴⁹

With regard to the Tibetan sources, this dissertation mainly draws on historical works and biographies of various eminent monks, such as the biography of the Third Dalai Lama (1543-1588), compiled by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1652.⁵⁰ These sources convey Tibetan perspectives on the Inner Asian world order and record important events in Ming–Tibet and Mongol–Tibet interactions.⁵¹

Old Uyghur sources for this period have survived in limited numbers only. Fortunately, Uyghur inscriptions have been preserved at sites such as the Ten Thousand Buddha Caves (Ch. *wan fo dong* 萬佛洞) in the vicinity of Suzhou 肅州 (modern Jiuquan 酒泉), which provide evidence of Uyghur activities in the region.⁵²

⁴⁶ This dissertation uses this book's original text along with the English and Chinese translations. See Sayang Sečen 薩岡徹辰, *Menggu yuanliu: menghan duizhao* 蒙古源流: 蒙漢對照, ed. Ulayan 烏蘭 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2014), 188; Sayang Sečen, *The Precious Summary: A History of the Mongols from Činggis Khan to the Qing Dynasty*, trans. Johan Elverskog (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023).

⁴⁷ This dissertation uses this book's original text along with the English and Chinese translations. See Jürungy-a 珠榮噶, ed., *Aletan han zhuan: menghan duizhao* 阿勒坦汗傳: 蒙漢對照 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2014), 54, 127; Johan Elverskog, trans., *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra: Altan Khan and the Mongols in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 108.

⁴⁸ This dissertation uses this book's Mongolian, Russian and Chinese translations. See Danbi 丹碧 and Ge Lijie 格·李杰, eds., *Menghan duizhao tuote wenzi weilate menggu lishi wenxian yibian* 蒙漢對照托忒文字衛拉特蒙古歷史文獻譯編 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2008); V. P. Sanchirov, ed., *Pismennye pamiatniki po istorii oiratov XVII–XVIII vekov: Sbornik* (Elista: KIGI RAN, 2016), 26.

⁴⁹ For a detailed introduction on the Mongolian sources during the eighth to seventeenth centuries, see Bira Šagdaryn, *Mongolskaya Istorografiya (XIII–XVII vv.)* (Moskva: Nauka, 1978).

⁵⁰ This dissertation uses both the original text and Chinese translation of this source. See Wushi dalai lama awang luosang jiacuo 五世達賴喇嘛阿旺洛桑嘉措 et al., *Yishi–sishi dalai lama zhuan* 一世—四世達賴喇嘛傳, trans. Chen Qingying 陳慶英 and Ma Lianlong 馬連龍 (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2005); Rgyal dbang lnga pa chen po sogs, *Rgyal dbang sku pheng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam/ sku phreng dang po nas bzhi pa 'i par gyi rnam thar* (Pe cin: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrung khang, 2010), 568.

⁵¹ Li Shuai 李帥 has collected a large number of documents and artifacts related to religious exchanges between the Ming, Tibet, and Mongolia. See Li Shuai 李帥, *Yi wen zhibian: wenwu kaogu shikan xia mingchao dui xizang de jinglüe* 以文治邊: 文物考古視瞰下明朝對西藏的經略 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2021).

⁵² Yisilaawen'er Yusufu 伊斯拉斐爾·玉素甫 and Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽, "Wenshu shan wanfo dong huihu wen tiji 文殊山萬佛洞回鶻文題記," in *Yuyan beihou de lishi: xiyu gudian yuyanxue gaofeng luntan wenji* 語言背後的歷史——西域古

Finally, there are many Mongolian, Tibetan, Persian, Old Uyghur memorials preserved in the Ming archives, containing rich details concerning their interactions with the Chinese side.⁵³

1.4 Terminology

Since the names of various Inner Asian forces mentioned in this study are not consistent across sources in different languages or in modern scholarship, this section first introduces the terms adopted in this dissertation. In addition, several main terms are relevant to the core argument of this dissertation and thus are worth examination. These are “*fu* 撫”, “*fanli* 藩籬” and “*zu* 族”. They served more as ideological terms in Ming period official documents, and therefore their meanings do not fully correspond to their literal interpretations.

1.4.1 Names of Inner Asian forces

This dissertation involves a wide range of Inner Asian polities and tribes. In this subsection, I introduce the names of these groups adopted in this dissertation.

Firstly, I use “Moghul Khanate” to refer to the polity controlled by the Moghuls across the northern and southern Tianshan Mountains, rather than the frequently used alternative terms Moghulistan or Eastern Čayatai Khanate.

Secondly, I use Old Uyghur “*Sarig Uyghur*” to denote the “Yellow Uyghurs” prior to the sixteenth century, instead of the Chinese *Sali Weiwu’er* 撒里畏兀兒, Mongolian *Šira Uyiγur* or the Persian *Sārīgh Ūyghur*. Part of this group gradually migrated into the Ming realm around the sixteenth century. In Chinese sources, they are referred to as *Shilaguo* 師刺國, which is a transliteration of their Mongolian name *Šira Uyiγur*. Therefore, this dissertation consistently uses *Šira Uyiγur* to refer to this group.

Thirdly, the *Oirats* are treated as a group distinct from the *Mongols*. In Chinese sources, which constitute the most abundant sources on their activities, they are often referred to simply as *Wala* 瓦剌, a transliteration of “*Oirat*”. Therefore, this dissertation use “*Oirat*” to refer this

典語言學高峰論壇論文集, ed. Xinjiang tulufan xue yanjiu yuan 新疆吐魯番學研究院 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 94-106.

⁵³ For example, *Huayi yiyu* 華夷譯語, a multilingual dictionary which will be discussed in detail in the following section, contains a large amount of memorials and edicts in these language.

group. However, when the specific name of an Oirat tribe can be identified, this dissertation prefers to use the tribal name.

Fourthly, the term “Mongol” in this study refers specifically to the Eastern Mongols, as distinguished from the Oirats. Occasionally, I use Inner Mongolia to indicate the modern geographic region of the same name. The term “the Qinghai Mongols” is used to describe the group led by Ibarai, who occupied Qinghai and were hostile to the Eastern Mongols.

Finally, “Xifan” is a transliteration of the Chinese term Xifan 西番. In Ming sources, it primarily refers to Tibetan tribes, though in a few cases it may be applied to the Moghul Khanate or other polities of the Western Regions.

1.4.2 The term “*fu* 撫”

The term “*fu* 撫” literally means “to pacify”. It was also an important diplomatic and political concept of the Ming period. *Huayi yiyu* 華夷譯語, a well-known Ming multilingual dictionary, lists the corresponding terms of “*fu*” in various languages (see Table 1.1), mainly meaning “having been made peaceful” or “to suffice”. These translations align with the Ming’s self-perception as occupying a superior position within an all-encompassing world order.

In actual practice, however, “*fu*” functioned more as a political concept detached from its original meaning. Virtually all actions taken by the Ming toward various non-Han groups were described using the term “*fu*”. For example, when the Mongols who had participated in the peace negotiation with the Ming violated the terms, the Ming used the term “*fudu* 撫堵” to mean intercepting them.⁵⁴ In another instance, envoys dispatched from Hami were “*fudiao* 撫調”, which means “to be handed over” here, to *fuyi* officials for interrogation.⁵⁵ In these cases, “*fu*” functioned primarily as a rhetorical and ideological marker rather than as an indication that the Ming court conferred any tangible benefits upon these groups.

⁵⁴ Zhu Zhengse 朱正色, *Mingchao xianchen zhu zhengse* 明朝賢臣朱正色, ed. Wang Zhaorong 王兆榮 et al. (Hongkong: Zhongguo zhishi jingji chubanshituan, 2007), 424.

⁵⁵ Cui Jingrong 崔景榮, “Chushu gao 出書稿,” vol. 2, *Lishi dang'an* 歷史檔案, no. 3 (2010): 10.

Similarly, the *fuyi* officials discussed in the dissertation were not merely responsible for “pacifying the barbarians”. Their actual duties encompassed the full range of interactions with so-called “barbarians”, including communication, negotiation, and military engagement.

Table 1.1. *Corresponding Terms of “Fu” in Huayi yiyu*

Language	Chinese	Translation from Chinese
Mongolian	<i>anfu</i> 安撫	<i>amurliyuluyad</i> [having been made peaceful]
Old Uyghur	<i>fu'an</i> 撫安	<i>enčlendürmiš</i> [having been made peaceful]
Tibetan	<i>fuhua</i> 撫化	<i>skyong bran</i> [take care of sb. and provide sth.]
Jurchen	<i>fu'an</i> 撫安/ <i>fuxü</i> 撫恤	<i>i di bumə</i> (Ma. <i>ismbi</i>) [to suffice]
Burmese	<i>fu'an</i> 撫安	<i>fu ṇan</i> (transliteration)
Tai Dialect (<i>baiyi guan</i> 百夷館)	<i>fu</i> 撫	<i>phuu</i> (transliteration)
Tai Dialect (<i>babai guan</i> 八百館)	<i>fu</i> 撫/ <i>zhaofu</i> 招撫	<i>ryək-hrā</i> [to request]
Persian/Sanskrit/Korean/Tai Dialect (<i>xianluo guan</i> 暹羅館) /Ryukyuan/Japanese/Annam/Malay	not found	not found

Sources: Oyunguw-a 烏雲高娃, *Ming siyi guan dada guan “huayi yiyu” dada “laiwen” yanjiu* 明四夷館韃靼館《華夷譯語》韃靼“來文”研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2014), 90; *GCGZZ*, 54; *HYYY I*, 118a-119b; Dao'erji 道爾吉 and Hexige 和希格, “Nüzhen yiyu yanjiu 女真譯語研究,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue zhuanke) zenkan* 內蒙古大學學報（哲學社會科學專刊）增刊, no. 43 (1983): 145, 312; Jerry Norman, *A concise Manchu-English lexicon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 150; Nishida Tatsuo 西田龍雄, *Menmankan Yakugo no Kenkyū: Biruma Gengogaku Josetsu* 緬甸館譯語の研究: ビルマ言語學序説 (Kyōto: Shōkōdō, 1972); Izumi Hisanosuke 泉井久之助, “Yaohankan Zaji narabi ni Raibun no Kaidoku 八百館雜字ならびに來文の解讀,” *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Kiyō* 京都大學文學部研究紀要, no. 2 (1953): 43, 65; Sarasina Shin'ichi 更科慎一, “Berurin-bon “Hyakuikan Raibun” ni Mieru Hyakuigo no Shiryō ni Tsuite ベルリン本『百夷館來文』に見える百夷語の資料について,” *Ibunka Kenkyū*

異文化研究, no. 16 (2022): 33; *HYYY II*; Tsuji Naoshiro 辻直四郎, “*Seitenkan yakusho chōsa hōkoku (Jobun)* 西天館訳書調査報告 (序言),” *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋学報 31, no. 2 (2018): 181-187; He Ni 何妮, “Yi zhong ben ‘xianluo guan yiyu’ zhengli yanjiu 乙种本《暹罗馆译语》整理研究” (master’s thesis, Tianjin: Nankai University, 2017).

1.4.3 The term “*fanli* 藩籬”

The term “*fanli* 藩籬” originally means “fence”, and in this dissertation it is translated as “buffer zone”. The groups of the buffer zone in the frontier served to protect the Ming from invasions by external forces, much like a fence that safeguards cattle and sheep from being devoured by wolves and tigers from outside.

The term “*fanli*” appears in the Chinese–Mongolian, Chinese–Uyghur and Chinese–Jurchen sections of *Huayi yiyu* (see Table 1.2). The Mongolian translation of it is *sūbe gerisge*. *Sūbe* should be another form of *šibe*, meaning “barrier”, as when the word was introduced into Persian, it could be written as both *sūbe* and *sībe*, as well as other forms.⁵⁶ It is also notable that there is a word *šūbe’e* in *Yuanchao mishi* (元朝秘史, “the Secret History of the Mongols”),⁵⁷ which is also translated as “*fanli*”, describing a barrier made of broken branches.⁵⁸ *Gerisge* means “barrier” or “to screen, to shelter”.⁵⁹ Together, *sūbe gerisge* can have the meaning of the physical entity “barrier” or it can be understood from a functional perspective as “something which can provide protection.” The Uyghur translation of “*fanli*” is *apıg*, meaning “to be fenced”. which corresponds closely to the original sense of “*fanli*”. The Jurchen translation *dʒə-tʃə-fa-da-an*, corresponding to the Manchu *jecen i fajiran*, means

⁵⁶ Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, Band I, *Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), 349-351; Mano Eiji 間野英二, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū* パーブル・ナーマの研究, vol. 4, *Baburu to sono jidai* パーブルとその時代 (Kyōto: Shōkōdō, 2001), 270.

⁵⁷ For the introduction on and English translations of the book, see Igor de Rachewiltz, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Christopher P. Atwood, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols* (London: Penguin Classics, 2023). For the reconstruction of the Mongolian text, see Irinčin 亦鄰真, *Yuanchao mishi (weiwu ti menggu wen)* 元朝秘史 (畏兀體蒙古文) (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 1987).

⁵⁸ Kuribayashi Hitoshi 栗林均, ed., “*Genshō Hishi*” *Mongoru-go Kanji Onyaku Bōyaku Kango Taishō Goi* 『元朝秘史』モンゴル語 漢字音訳・傍訳漢語対照語彙 (Sendai: Center for Northeast Asian Studies, 2009), 436; Ulayān 烏蘭, ed., *Yuanchao mishi: jiaokan ben* 元朝秘史: 校勘本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 47.

⁵⁹ Francis Woodman Cleaves, “The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12, no. 1/2 (1949): 106; Kuribayashi, “*Genshō Hishi*” *Mongoru-go*, 175; Ulayān, *Yuanchao mishi: jiaokan ben*, 106.

“frontier wall”.⁶⁰ These renderings highlight the function of “*fanli*” as a “frontier wall” which assumed the responsibility of guarding and protecting China.

This understanding reflects historical reality. For the Ming, frontier groups functioning as buffer zone effectively served as “human walls”. When these groups were attacked and scattered under external pressure, the Ming court could only construct real frontier walls to replace them.⁶¹

Table 1.2. *Corresponding Terms of “Fanli” in Huayi yiyu*

Language	Translation of “ <i>fanli</i> ”
Mongolian	<i>sübe gerisge</i> [barrier]
Old Uyghur	<i>apıg</i> [to be fenced]
Jurchen	<i>dʒə-tʃə-fa-da-an</i> (Ma. <i>jecen i fajiran</i>) [frontier wall]

Sources: Jia Jingyan 賈敬顏 and Zhu Feng 朱風, comp., *Menggu yiyu nvzhen yiyu huibian* 蒙古譯語 女真譯語 彙編 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1990), 92; Mattai Haltod et al., eds, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 471, 741. GCGZZ, 34; Dao'erji and Hexige, “Nüzhen yiyu yanjiu,” 274; Norman, *A concise Manchu-English lexicon*, 81, 157; Martin Hartmann, *Chinesisch-Turkestan: Geschichte, Verwaltung, Geistesleben und Wirtschaft* (Halle a. S.: Gebauer-Schwetschke Druckerei und Verlag, 1908), 56.

1.4.4 The term “*zu* 族”

The term “*zu* 族” in Ming sources clearly differs from the traditional meaning of a “descent group”⁶² or the modern concept of “ethnicity”, but encompassing a variety of referents, including ethnic, religious and political groups. For example, Chinese sources record that Hami was home to three “*zu*”: the Muslims (Ch. Huihui 回回), the Kara Koy (Ch. Hala Hui 哈刺灰), and the Uyghurs (Ch. Weiwu'er 畏兀兒). Among these, the latter two are ethnic

⁶⁰ Dao'erji 道爾吉 and Hexige 和希格, “Nüzhen yiyu yanjiu 女真譯語研究,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue zhuankan) zenkan* 內蒙古大學學報 (哲學社會科學專刊) 增刊, no. 43 (1983): 274; Jerry Norman, *A concise Manchu-English lexicon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 81, 157.

⁶¹ For research on the frontier wall, see John W. Dardess, *More Than the Great Wall: The Northern Frontier and Ming National Security, 1368–1644* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

⁶² Christopher P. Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth,” in *Miscellanea Asiatica: Festschrift in Honour of Françoise Aubin*, ed. Denise Aigle et al. (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2010), 595-596.

designations, while the former refers to a religious community.⁶³ In Hami, most members of the Muslim “zu” were actually ethnically Kara Koy or Uyghur, and their number was smaller than the other two groups. This indicates that the classification of “zu” in Ming records was not rigid, and overlaps between groups were possible, reflecting pre-modern Chinese approaches to categorizing human communities. Similarly, in the Tibetan regions, numerous small tribes were also referred to as “zu”. However, they were political units led by tribal chiefs or religious leaders rather than distinct ethnicities, which would be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Accordingly, in this dissertation, the translation of “zu” depends on context and is rendered as ethnic, religious, or political group.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation examines the structure and evolution of the Ming northwestern frontier in chronological order. After the introduction, subsequent chapters successively scrutinize the impact of major events on the northwestern border: the Ming conquest of the northwest in 1368, the Moghul Khanate’s invasion of Hami in 1473, the Ibarai group’s seizure of Qinghai in 1512, and the Ming–Mongol peace agreement of 1571, thus revealing the formation and evolution of the Ming frontier management system—*fuyi* system.

Chapter 2 first introduces the natural and political geography of Yuan’s northwestern frontier and then discusses the conquest of the northwestern regions by the Ming after its establishment in 1368. On this basis, it analyzes how the Ming established the “Qinghai buffer zone” centered on the Xining Guard and the “Xiyu buffer zone” centered on the Suzhou Guard, as well as their structures. During this period, *fuyi* officials had already been employed in the Qinghai region and were responsible for managing non-Han populations, but their role was not yet prominent. Governance over the Ming northwestern frontier still relied primarily on the buffer system.

Chapter 3 examines the invasion of the Moghul Khanate in 1473. Motivated by political, economic, and religious considerations, it launched several campaigns to seize Hami and

⁶³ Martin Hartmann, *Chinesisch-Turkestan: Geschichte, Verwaltung, Geistesleben und Wirtschaft* (Halle a. S.: Gebauer-Schwetschke Druckerei und Verlag, 1908), 37, 100.

thereby destroyed the Xiyu buffer zone. In response, the Ming successively supported the Xining native official Li Wen and the Hami Uyghur Commissioner in resistance efforts, but both failed. Thereafter, the Ming began recruiting large numbers of *fuyi* officials in Ganzhou and Suzhou to manage relations with groups of the buffer zone such as Hami, Handong and Čikin, Inner Asian forces including the Oirat, Mekrin and Suldus, as well as the Moghul Khanate; to organize the joint “Han–Barbarian” military forces; and to administer frontier groups that had submitted to the Ming, thereby establishing the *fuyi* system. Although the *fuyi* system also failed to recover Hami, it helped the Ming restore a relatively peaceful situation on the northwestern frontier.

Chapter 4 discusses the composition of the Hami ruling elite and its tribute and escort activities after Hami’s annexation by the Moghul Khanate in 1529. It further explains how, with assistance from the original Hami Guard officials remaining in Hami and the Hami officials who had submitted to the Ming and migrated to Suzhou, the Ming rebuilt the Western Regions tributary system and established an intelligence network in the Western Regions.

Chapter 5, based on the examination of the origins of the Qinghai Mongols, describes how, after the Ibarai group occupied Qinghai in 1512, the Ming successively dispatched *fuyi* officials to contact its leaders, Ibarai and Burqai, in an attempt to reestablish them as a northwestern buffer zone.

Chapter 6 analyzes the conclusion of Longqing Peace Treaty in 1571 after the occupation of the northwestern frontier by the Mongols of the Right Wing and *fuyi* officials’ duties to manage mutual trade and handle everyday conflicts. It also examines the Ming’s effort to reestablish peaceful relations with these Mongols after a series of conflicts known as the crises of Xining, Taohe, and Babai. Finally, it demonstrates that, under the impact of the Qalq-a Mongols and the Qošut Mongols, the Ming relied on a declining yet still viable buffer system to counter these challenges, and how the Qing Empire inherited the *fuyi* system.

Chapters 7 and 8 are case studies that examine, respectively, the careers of Mani Bulat, an Uyghur *fuyi* official, and the leaders of the “Ningxia Submitted Army”,⁶⁴ as Mongolian and

⁶⁴ The “Ningxia Submitted Army” refers to a Ming military force stationed in Ningxia that was composed of the Mongols, Oirats, Tibetans and Chinese captives who had submitted to the Ming authority.

Chinese *fuyi* officials. On this basis, these chapters fully demonstrate the origins, personal capabilities, and Inner Asian interpersonal networks of *fuyi* officials, highlighting the crucial role of the *fuyi* system in frontier governance after the Longqing Peace Treaty.

The conclusion systematically summarizes the characteristics of the *fuyi* officials, the evolution of the northwestern frontier structure, and the patterns of interaction between the Ming and the Inner Asian world.

Chapter 2: Reorganization of Yuan Legacy

Many scholars have recently stressed that when the Ming rose, forced the Yuan remnants to flee to the Mongolian steppes and occupied China, this emerging regime inherited the legacy of the Yuan in terms of territory, diplomacy, political systems, military institutions, etc. Likewise, the early Ming also inherited the structure of the northwestern frontier directly from the Yuan period, during which it already served as an important base for managing Inner Asian affairs.

The northwestern frontier of the Yuan period consisted of two separate administrative districts: the Branch Secretariat of Gansu (Ch. *gansu xing zhongshu sheng* 甘肅行中書省) and the Mdo smad Pacification Commission (Ch. *tuosi ma xuanwei si* 脫思麻宣慰司, also known as *tubo dengchu xuanwei si du yuanshuai fu* 吐蕃等處宣慰司都元帥府).⁶⁵ In addition, “various princes” (Ch. *zhu wang* 諸王) who held significant military and political authority in the region, also resided in this frontier zone. The various princes discussed here include imperial princes, imperial sons-in-law, and others who were granted the title of “princes” (Ch. *wang* 王). Following the transition from the Yuan to the Ming, a considerable number of the administrative officials and princes had neither been eliminated nor withdrawn to the steppe; instead, they submitted to the Ming and were then incorporated into its “frontier garrison system”, or buffer system,⁶⁶ functioning as the buffer zone between the Ming and Inner Asia.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ In modern understanding, the Tibetan term *mod smad* largely overlaps in territorial scope with the Amdo, the northeastern part of Tibet. See Eveline Yang, “Tracing the *Chol kha gsum*: Reexamining a Sa skya-Yuan Period Administrative Geography,” *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 37 (2016): 553. However, in traditional Tibetan geographical perceptions, the scope of these two regions were not identical, see Huang Weizhong 黃維忠 and Wang Weiqiang 王維強, “Zangwen mdo gams he mdo khams kao 藏文 mdo gams 和 mdo khams 考,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 1 (2004): 91. Moreover, as a geographical concept, the area denoted by *mod smad* varied across different periods and sources, see Shi Shuo 石碩, “Zangzu san da chuantong dili quyu Xingcheng guocheng tantao 藏族三大傳統地理區域形成過程探討,” *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學, no. 3 (2014): 55-57. In this dissertation, the term *mod smad* is used as an administrative unit, denoting the region ruled by the Mdo smad Pacification Commission during the Yuan period. See Figure 2.2 and Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集, vol. 7, *yuan ming shiqi* 元・明時期 (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1996), 36-37. For the discrepancy between the geographical and administrative perception of *mod smad*, see Yang, “Tracing the *Chol kha gsum*,” 551-568; Shi, “Zangzu san da chuantong dili quyu,” 55-57.

⁶⁶ Although scholars like Kim Hodong adopt the terminology “frontier garrison system”, this dissertation uses “buffer system” for two reasons. Firstly, not all of those submitted groups were established as a guard or a battalion. Some Tibetan tribes, for example, were simply denoted by “zu 族”, or tribes. Secondly, I use the term “buffer system” to emphasize the function of those groups as the buffer zone. In other words, the main purpose of their establishment by the Ming was to divide China and “frontier barbarians” and manage frontier affairs for the Ming benefits. Kim Hodong, “The Early History of the Moghul Nomads: The Legacy of the Chaghatai Khanate,” in *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 313.

⁶⁷ Although Paul Pelliot, Louis Hambis, Sugiyama Masaaki 杉山正明, Akasaka Tsuneaki 赤坂恒明, Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬, Zhang Daiyu 張岱玉, Zhou Song 周松, and Qiu Yihao 邱軼皓 had already made great achievement in many aspects of this topic, a comprehensive and thorough study still remains a desideratum.

This buffer system took shape during the Hongwu 洪武 (1368-1398), Jianwen 建文(1399-1402) and Yongle 永樂 (1403-1424) reigns, and remained stable until the invasion of Hami by the Moghul Khanate in 1471, reflecting the Ming's inheritance of the Yuan legacy.

This chapter begins by outlining the geographical layout of the northwestern frontier, followed by an explanation of the administrative divisions and the distribution of various princes during the Yuan period. It then examines how the Ming integrated Yuan princes and administrative officials into its buffer system, centering on Xining and Suzhou, during its conquest of the northwest. The chapter also traces the history of the evolution of the buffer system until the invasion by the Moghul Khanate.

2.1 Geographical layout

2.1.1 Gansu and its surroundings

The northwestern frontier of the Ming was centered around Gansu 甘肅 and was divided into six regions, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, with the Hexi Corridor located at the core. The Hexi Corridor was fully under Ming control, bound by the Qilian Mountains 祁連山 to the south and the Heli Mountains 合黎山 and Longshou Mountains 龍首山 to the north. Numerous rivers originating from the Qilian Mountains flowed northeastward through the Hexi Corridor, providing water sources and sustaining oases.⁶⁸ During the Ming period, the most important city in the Hexi Corridor was Ganzhou 甘州, which served as the seat of the Gansu Grand Coordinator (Ch. *xunfu* 巡撫) and Regional Commander (Ch. *zongbing* 總兵). To the west of Ganzhou lay Suzhou, the northwesternmost city of the Ming, where an Assistant Commander (Ch. *canjiang* 參將) was stationed.⁶⁹

Further westward, beyond the Jiayu Pass 嘉峪關, lay the Western Regions. In the Shule River (疏勒河, also known as the Bulongji River 卜隆吉河) Basin near the Ming territories, various tribes under the Shazhou Guard 沙州衛 and Čikin Mongol Guard 赤斤蒙古衛 led semi-nomadic lifestyles, with Shazhou, Guazhou 瓜州 and Kuyu 苦峪 serving as crucial

⁶⁸ Maeda, *Hexi lishi dilixue yanjiu*, 1-11.

⁶⁹ For the civil and military official system in the Hexi Corridor, see Zhang Lei 張磊, *Mingdai weisuo yu hexi diqu shehui bianqian yanjiu* 明代衛所與河西地區社會變遷研究 (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2021), 43-86.

strongholds. From the Shule River Basin, one could travel northwest, across the vast desert and reach Hami.⁷⁰

To the northeast of the Hexi Corridor was the Shanhou 山後 region, bordered by the Helan Mountains 賀蘭山 to the east, adjacent to Ningxia. Most of the Shanhou region consisted of deserts, while oases around Yijinai 亦集乃⁷¹ north of Zhenyi 鎮夷 and Yuhai Lake 魚海 north of Zhenfan 鎮番 provided conditions for nomadic life. Functioning as a critical transport hub connecting the Western Regions to Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian steppe to China proper, Shanhou became a zone of sustained activity for Inner Asian nomads, who engaged in pastoral migration, trade, and raids.⁷²

To the east of the Shanhou region lay Ningxia 寧夏 and the Hetao Plain.⁷³ Ningxia, especially the Helan Mountains to its west, was the first station for the eastern nomads to expand westward and further southward. Starting from Ningxia, they could transverse the Shanhou region to arrive at the Shule River Basin and Hami, or march southward to the Mod smad (Ch. Tuosima 脫思麻) region.⁷⁴

The Mdo smad region was located to the southeast of the Hexi Corridor. It was divided into northern and southern parts by the Yellow River, governed by the Xining Guard 西寧衛 of Gansu and the Hezhou Guard of Guyuan 固原 respectively. From the Mdo smad region, one could proceed westward to Central Tibet or southeastward to Songpan 松潘 in Sichuan.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Hayakawa Takashi 早川尚志, “Mindai higashi torukisutan no kōekiro to sono hensen 明代東トルキスタンの交易路とその変遷,” *Rāfidān* ラーフィダーン, no. 36 (2015): 83-110.

⁷¹ The Chinese Yijinai is transliterated from the Tangut *ɣzir*nhīafi (following the phonetic reconstruction of Nishida Tatsuo), which means “black water,” derived from the Chinese name for the Heihe River 黑河. The Mongols have two names for Yijinai: one is Ejen-e, transliterated from *ɣzir*nhīafi, and the other is Qar-a Qota, meaning “black city”. In Mongolian, *qar-a* not only means “black” but also conveys the meanings of “primary” and “powerful”, reflecting the strategic significance of Yijinai in the Mongols’ perception. See Mu Shihua 木仕華, “Xixia heishui mingyi kao 西夏黑水名義考,” *Liaojin lishi yu kaogu* 遼金歷史與考古, no. 7 (2017): 192-204.

⁷² See Lu Xingyu 陸星宇, “Yuan-Ming Transition and the Formation of Shanhou 山後,” *Central Asiatic Journal*, forthcoming.

⁷³ For detailed research on the Hetao Plain, particularly its situation during the Ming period, see Ryan Mostern, *The Yellow River: A Natural and Unnatural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 30-32, 184-203.

⁷⁴ See Lu, “Yuan-Ming Transition”; Yan Tianling 閔天靈, “Ming qing ji minguo shiqi Qilian shan chuanshan jiaotong Luxian kao 明清及民國時期祁連山穿山交通路線考,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 33, no. 2 (2023): 146-158.

⁷⁵ For the transportation routes in Tibet, see Satō Hisashi 佐藤長, *Kodai Chibetto-shi Kenkyū* 古代チベット史研究 (Kyōto: Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai, 1958-1959).



Figure 2.1. Gansu and Its Surroundings.

Finally, to the southwest of the Hexi Corridor is the area of Sarıg Uyğur (Ch. Sali Weiwu'er 撒里畏兀兒, Mo. Šira Uyiğur, P. Sārīgh Ūyghur).⁷⁶ To the southeast, it connects with the Mdo smad region through valley corridors. To the north, it is linked to Suzhou along the course of the Taolai River 讨来河, while routes crossing the Altun Mountains to the northwest provide access to the Shule River Basin.⁷⁷ To the southwest, as discussed in the following subsection, it connected with Čerčen (Ch. Chelichang 扯力昌, today's Qiemo County 且末縣) and Khotan (today's Hetian 和田).

⁷⁶ Sarıg Uyğur literally means “Yellow Uyghur”. According to the most recent research by Bai Yudong, the Sarıg people originated in the region around Karasahr, and then migrated to southeastern Xinjiang during the tenth and eleventh centuries. See Bai Yudong 白玉冬, “Huangtou huihe yuanliu kao 黃頭回紇源流考,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no.4 (2021): 1-9. However, the emergence of Sarıg Uyğur as a powerful political entity took place primarily during the Yuan period, which will be discussed in Section 2.3.1.

⁷⁷ See Yan Tianling 閻天靈, “Ming qing ji minguo shiqi Qilian shan chuanshan jiaotong Luxian kao 明清及民國時期祁連山穿山交通路線考,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 33, no. 2 (2023): 152-156..

2.1.2 Western Regions

As claimed in the introduction, the “Western Regions” referred to in this dissertation refers to the vast area west of the Jiayu Pass (Ch. Jiayu Pass 嘉峪關) to Čališ (Ch. Chalishi 察力失 or 叉力失).

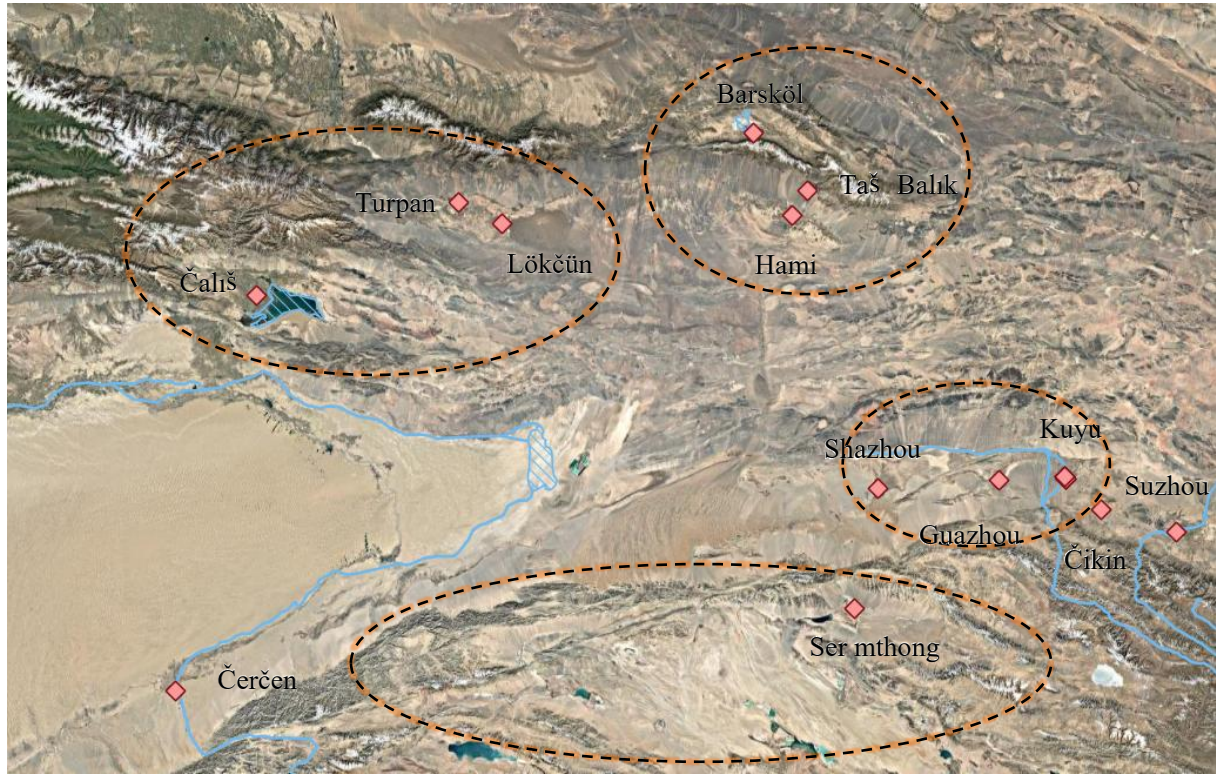


Figure 2.2. The Western Regions.

To the west of the previous mentioned Sarıg Uyğur area laid Čerčen. Further west leading to Khotan and traveling northeast along the Čerčen River 扯力昌河 (or Luo Che'erchan 洛扯兒禪) reached Lop Nur 羅布泊. From Lop Nur, turning northwest along the Tarim River 塔里木河 leads to the Čališ region. Čališ, Turpan (Ch. Tulufan 土魯番), Lökčün (Ch. Liucheng 柳城) and other surrounding areas are collectively referred to as Uyghuristan.⁷⁸ These regions are situated on the oases south of the Tianshan Mountains 天山. One could travel

⁷⁸ “Introduction” in *TIR*, 99-100.

westward along the northern rim of the Tarim Basin via other oases to reach Central Asia, or head north through passes to access the grasslands north of the Tianshan Mountains.⁷⁹

East of Uyghuristan is the Hami region. Scattered through this area are numerous small towns centered around Hami.⁸⁰ In the mountains north of Hami lies a lake named Barsköl (Ch. Ba'ersike 巴兒思渴). This area was often occupied by nomadic Oirat tribes. The tensions and collaborations between Hami's sedentary agricultural communities, Muslim merchants, and the nomadic peoples in the north frequently exerted a profound influence on the geopolitical landscape of Inner Asia.⁸¹

2.2 Political geography of the Yuan northwestern frontier

The northwestern frontier of the Yuan realm consisted of two administrative districts: the Branch Secretariat of Gansu, which was primarily responsible for transporting troops and supplies to Lingbei 嶺北 and the Western Regions, as well as defending against eastern invasions by the forces of Ariq Böke (Ch. Alibuge 阿里不哥, d.1266), the Ögedeids, and the Čayadaids; the Mdo smad Pacification Commission, which not only governed Mdo smad region but also oversaw the administration of the entire Tibet.

In both of these regions, the most powerful figures which controlled the military were the various princes enfeoffed by the Yuan (see Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4).⁸² Due to the convenient transportation links, the princes in the Mdo smad region sometimes also participated in the offensive or defensive campaigns in the Western Regions.

⁷⁹ See Matsuda Hisao 松田壽男, *Kodai Tensen no rekishi-chirigaku-teki kenkyū: Zōho-ban* 古代天山の歴史地理學的研究: 増補版 (Tōkyō: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1970), 1-24.

⁸⁰ Discussion of those towns will be conducted in the corresponding part of this dissertation. For two comprehensive research of them, see Saguchi Tōru 佐口透, *Xinjiang musuln yanjiu* 新疆穆斯林研究, trans. Zhang Ying 章瑩 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2011), 152-160; Zheng Yongli 鄭詠立, "Hami zhengquan yanjiu (shisi shiji zhongye ~ shiqi shiji zhongye) 哈密政權研究 (十四世紀中葉~十七世紀中葉)" (master's thesis, Taipei: National Chengchi University, 1993), 92.

⁸¹ In Chinese sources, those nomadic groups were recorded to graze in "Hami Northern Mountains" (Ch. Hami Beishan 哈密北山). The "Hami Northern Mountains" not only referred to the eastern part of the Tianshan Mountains, as suggested by many scholars, but also included the Mazong Mountains 馬鬃山 west of Yijina. See Lu, "Yuan-Ming Transition."

⁸² Li Zhi'an 李治安, *Yuandai xingsheng zhidu* 元代行省制度 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 467.

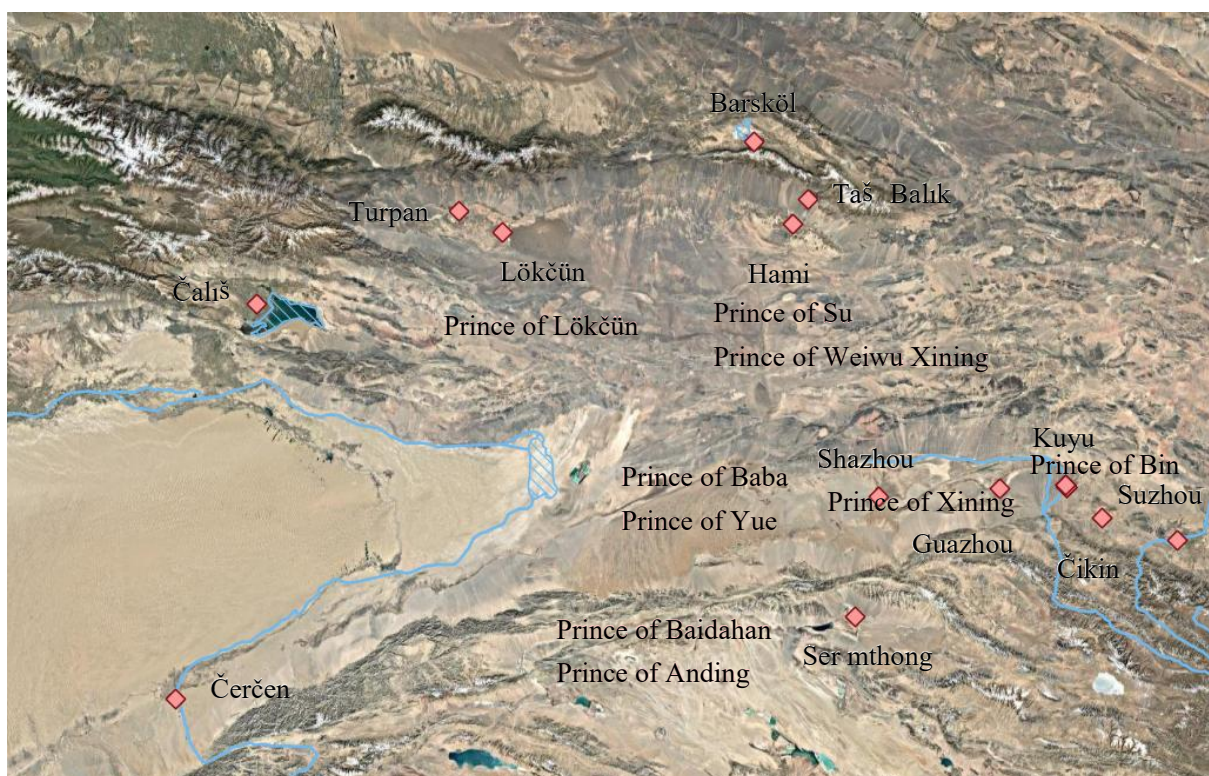


Figure 2.3. The Distribution of the various princes in Gansu and Mdo smad (1).



Figure 2.4. The Distribution of the Various Princes in Gansu and Mdo smad (2).

2.2.1 Gansu

The Branch Secretariat of Gansu largely coincided with the territory of the former Xi Xia (1038-1227).⁸³ Proximate to the Mongolian steppe, the Western Regions, and Tibet, it was characterized by complex linguistic and cultural landscapes, with diverse ethnic and religious groups (Chinese, Mongols, Uyghurs, Tibetans, Muslims, Tanguts, and Hexi people)⁸⁴ coexisting and interweaving their lives.⁸⁵

The Branch Secretariat of Gansu administered seven Circuits (Ch. *lu* 路): Ganzhou, Yongchang 永昌, Suzhou, Shazhou, Yijinai, Ningxia fu 寧夏府, and Wulhai 兀刺海;⁸⁶ along with two subprefectures (Ch. *zhou* 州): Shandan 山丹 and Xining 西寧.⁸⁷ The Branch Secretariat of Gansu was governed by two Managers of Governmental Affairs (Ch. *pingzhang zhengshi* 平章政事), who held financial authority and controlled the allocation of

⁸³ Due to the significant fluctuations in the administrative division of Gansu during the Yuan period, this dissertation focuses solely on the political geography of the late Yuan period, specifically just before the Ming forces advanced into the northwestern frontier. For a detailed discussion of the evolution of administrative divisions in Gansu during the Yuan era, refer to Zhang Xiaofei 張曉非, “Yuandai hexi ditu xingzheng jianzhi de bianqian 元代河西地區行政建置的變遷,” *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 36, no. 3 (2021): 70-77.

⁸⁴ Regarding the origins and ethnicities of populations migrating into the former territory of Xi Xia during the Yuan era, see Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬, *Yuandai xibei lishi yu minzu yanjiu* 元代西北歷史與民族研究 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1999), 205–212. The exact nature of the “Hexi people 河西人” remains unclear. Generally, the term “Hexi people” refers to the descendants of the Xi Xia, see Deng Wentao 鄧文韜, “Yuandai tangwu ren yanjiu 元代唐兀人研究” (PhD diss., Ningxia University, 2017), 11. In this dissertation, “Hexi people” refers to a certain group of people whose language was recorded in *Yiyu* 譯語 collected in the National Library of China, which includes a section titled *Hexi Yiyu* 河西譯語. This text records a “Hexi Kingdom 河西國,” phonetically transcribed as “tangwude 倘吾的,” which Nie Hongyin reconstructs as *Tang’ud*. Superficially, this appears to refer to the Tangut people, yet the language recorded in the *Hexi Yiyu* differs significantly from the Tangut language. See YY, 66b; Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音, “Hexi yu: 14 shiji yizhong weizhi de yuyan 河西語: 14 世紀一種未知的語言,” *Yuyan yanjiu* 語言研究 40, no. 3 (2020): 110. Regarding the location of this “Hexi Kingdom,” Herbert Franke proposed Zhuanglang as a possible site, while Nie Hongyin suggested Kaicheng Town in Ningxia. See Herbert Franke, “Marginalien zu einigen tangutischen Feldennamen,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 154, no. 1 (2004): 168; Nie Hongyin, “Zailun ‘hexi yiyu’ 再論《河西譯語》,” *Wenxian* 文獻, no. 5 (2019): 146. Nie Hongyin argued that the glossary was compiled during the Yuan period, but this is likely incorrect, as it contains an entry “Great Ming Kingdom 大明國,” transliterated as “woladu 我喇都, oradu”), which may derive from Turkic *ordu* or Mongolian *ordo* (meaning “palace” or “court”). This entry would not have been used during the Yuan period. Nie, “Zailun ‘hexi yiyu,’” 145; YY, 66b; Nie Hongyin, *Hexi yu*, 110. To date, the Hexi language recorded in the *Hexi yiyu* remains largely undeciphered, with only a limited number of vocabulary items understood, see Nie, “Zailun ‘hexi yiyu,’” 152–153.

⁸⁵ YYTZ, j.6, 549; Chen Dezhi 陳得芝 et al, eds., *Yuandai zoui jilu* 元代奏議輯錄 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1998), 137.

⁸⁶ “Wulhai” is a transliteration from Tangut, with Nishida Tatsuo reconstructing it as *? *rar*nhiaf (Nishida Tatsuo did not provide a reconstruction for the initial syllable), while Nie Hongyin’s reconstruction is *oranya, meaning “black mountain.” Wulhai’s Mongolian correspondence “Uraqai” is likewise derived from the Tangut. See Shi Jianjun 石堅軍, “Heishan weifu junshi yu wula hai diwang bianxi 黑山威福軍司與兀刺海地望辨析,” *Songshi yanjiu luncong* 宋史研究論叢, no. 21 (2017): 438-441; Wang Shejiao 王社教 and Shi Jianjun 石堅軍, “Yuandai tatali tuntian yu liangcang xin kao 元代塔塔里屯田與糧倉新考,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 27, no. 2 (2017): 92; Nishida Tatsuo 西田龍雄, *Seika go no kenkyū* 西夏語の研究 (Tōkyō: Zayuhō Kankōkai, 1964), 436, 203, 195.

⁸⁷ YS, j. 60, 1449-1451; Meng Xiangke 孟祥科, “Yuandai gansu xingsheng jianzhi yange ji qi zhanlue diwei de zhuanbian 元代甘肅行省建置沿革及其戰略地位的轉變” (master’s thesis, Inner Mongolia University, 2014), 3. This administrative division reflects the situation after 1295, see Li Zhi’an, *Yuandai xingsheng zhidu*, 452; Li Zhi’an 李治安 and Xue Lei 薛磊, *Zhongguo xingzheng quhua tongshi: yuandai juan* 中國行政區劃通史·元代卷 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2009), 183-188.

resources, including taxes and grain supplies.⁸⁸ They possessed certain capacities to command and mobilize military forces yet remained subject to the management of the various princes.⁸⁹ Particularly in the late Yuan period, the real control over military and administrative authority laid with the “northwestern vassals”, another appellation for the various princes in the region.

In the late Yuan period, the most powerful force in Gansu was a certain branch of Čayadaid descendants who had defected to the Yuan. In 1269, the Čayadaid Khan Baraq (Ch. Bala 八剌, r. 1266-1271), the Jochid Khan Möngke Temür (Ch. Mangge Tiemu'er 忙哥帖木兒, 1245-1283), and Ögedeid Khan Qaidu (Ch. Haidu 海都, 1235/6-1303) held a *quriltai*—a political and military council of the Mongol chiefs and khans to formulate military plans or elect the Great Khan—in Central Asia, where they agreed to jointly oppose Qubilai Khan and the Ilkhan Abaqa, triggering a prolonged war among them.⁹⁰ During this conflict, Čübei (Ch. Chubo 出伯) and his brother Qaban (Ch. Heban 合班), grandsons of Baidar (Ch. Baidali 拜答里), the sixth son of Čayatai (see Figure 2.5 for the family lineage), due to their failure to secure the Čayadaid Khanate and disagreements with Qaidu, defected to Qubilai Khan around 1279.⁹¹

Thereafter, the descendants of Baidar guarded the northwestern frontier of the Yuan and were granted various titles such as Prince of Bin 邠王, Prince of Xining 西寧王, Prince of Weiwu Xining 威武西寧王, Prince of Ningsu 寧肅王, Prince of Su 肅王 and Prince of Lökčün 柳城王. Based on territories stretching from Suzhou westward to Lökčün (see Figure 2.3), they established a Čayadaid Ulus (hereafter Hexi Čayadaid Ulus) subordinate to the “Great State (Ch. *yeke wulusun* 也客兀魯孫, Mo. *yeke ulus*, i.e.d. the Yuan),” with the Prince of Bin

⁸⁸ Meng, *Yuandai gansu xingsheng*, 21; Hu, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 224-225.

⁸⁹ For a classification discussion on the military forces controlled by the imperial court in Gansu province, see Li Zhi'an, *Yuandai xingsheng zhidu*, 470-477.

⁹⁰ Christopher P. Atwood, “The Empire of the Great Khan: The Yuan Ulus, 1260–1368,” in *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*, ed. Michal Biran and Kim Hodong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 127-128; Hu Xiaopeng, “Yuandai hexi zhuwang yu gansu xingsheng guanxi shulun 元代河西諸王與甘肅行省關係述論,” *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肅社會科學, no. 3 (1992): 71-72; Yang Fuxue 楊富學 and Zhang Haijuan 張海娟, *Cong menggu binwang dao yugu zu da toumu* 從蒙古邠王到裕固族大頭目 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua cubanshe, 2016), 13-37. For the prolonged conflicts between the Yuan and the Inner Asian forces, see Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝, *Chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu* 察合台汗國史研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), 83-417.

⁹¹ Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 147; Hu Xiaopeng, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 224-225; The Compendium of Chronicles lists the names of Čübei's fourteen sons, see Rashīd al-Dīn Faḡlullāh, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, trans. and annotated by W. M. Thackston (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1998), 366.

lineage “Čagaday orunin olurup (sitting on the precious throne of Čayatai)”⁹² and bestowed with the golden seal of Čayatai.⁹³ The naming of “Bin 𠤎” was related to the fact that during Ögedei’s reign, the Hexi Čayadaid lineage had incorporated Binzhou (邠州, where 邠 and 𠤎 are variant characters) as their appanage.⁹⁴

Among the princely titles, those belonging to Čübei’s descendants included: Prince of Bin, a first-rank prince, based in Suzhou to Čikin, as well as Binzhou and Jingzhou 涇州; Prince of Xining, a second-rank prince, based in Shazhou 沙州 to Kuyu 苦峪; Prince of Weiwu Xining, a third-rank prince, based firstly in Shazhou and then to Hami;⁹⁵ Prince of Ningsu, a second-rank prince, based on the Yijinai Circuit.⁹⁶

⁹² *Chongxiu wenshu si bei* 重修文殊寺碑, an Uyghur stele recording the reconstruction of Wenshu Temple 文殊寺 in Suzhou, records that the Čübei-lineage princes “Čagaday ournin olurup” (sitting on the precious throne of Čayatai). According to the stele, Prince Nandashi 喃答失 (OU. Nomdaš) who ascended the Čayadaid throne, reconstructed the Wenshu Temple to pray for protection for himself and “ini eli uluši (his brothers, state, and people)” from disasters and hardships. This clearly indicates that the Hexi Čayadaid family was an independent Ulus. See Geng Shimin 耿世民 and Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽, “Yuan huihu wen ‘chongxiu wenshu si bei’ chu shi 元回鶻文《重修文殊寺碑》初釋,” *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報, no. 2 (1986): 258, 261. *Huayi yiyu* 華夷譯語 includes a letter called *Namen fuma shu* (納門駙馬書, the Letter of Namun the Imperial Son-in-Law, written in 1388), which mentions Namun the Imperial Son-in-Law and Engke Tura the Brave submitting a memorial to the Hongwu Emperor, suggesting that he urged Kunāšīrīn, the King of Hami, to reopen trade routes. Hu Xiaopeng mistakenly interpreted the term “Great State” (也客兀魯孫, Mo. *yeke ulus*) in this letter as referring to the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus. While the Chinese text of the letter is indeed difficult to comprehend, the Mongolian translation clarifies that “Great State” here refers to the Ming, not the Hexi Ulus. See Hu Xiaopeng, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 66–67; Oyunguw-a 烏雲高娃, *Ming siyi guan dada guan ‘huayi yiyu’ dada ‘laiwen’ yanjiu* 明四夷館韃靼館《華夷譯語》韃靼“來文”研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2014), 126, 166; Kim Hodong, “‘Hwa-i yōgō’ ūi ‘napmun puma sō’ e taehan chaegyōksik; 14segi huban mogul han’guksa haemyeong ūi il jaryo 『華夷譯語』의 「納門駙馬書」에 대한 再解釋; 14世紀後半 高麗汗國史 解明의 一資料,” *Al-t’ai Hakpo* 알타이학보, no. 1 (1989): 15–34; Kim, “The Early History of the Moghul Nomads,” 291–299. The terms “Great State 大國” or “Great Dynasty 大朝” were used during the Yuan era to refer to the Great Mongol State (*yeke ulus*), see Xiao Qiqing 蕭啟慶, “Shuo ‘da chao’ yuanchao jianhao qian menggu de hanwen guohao 說“大朝”: 元朝建號前蒙古的漢文國號,” in *Nei beiguo er wai zhongguo: menguan shi yanjiu* 內北國而外中國: 蒙元史研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 62–78; Cai Meibiao 蔡美彪, “Mingdai menggu yu dayuan guohao 明代蒙古與大元國號,” in *Liao jin yuan shi kaosuo* 遼金元史考索 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 458–462.

⁹³ This fact was revealed in a new discovered Old Uyghur document call “Praise to Čübäi”. See Zhen Yinan 鄭怡楠 and Hai Xia 海霞, “Xinjian gugong bowuyuan cang huihu wen ‘chubo dawang zan’ kaobian 新見故宮博物院藏回鶻文《出伯大王贊》考辨,” *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, no. 3 (2025): 124.

⁹⁴ Matsuda Koichi 松田孝一, “Yuanchao de fenfeng zhidu: guanyu bin wang (bin wang) chubo yu binzhou de guanxi 元朝的分封制度——關於邠王（𠤎王）出伯與邠州的關係,” in *Zhongguo duowenzi shidai de lishi wenxian yanjiu* 中國多文字時代的歷史文獻研究, ed. Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音 and Sun Bojun 孫伯君 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 303–308; Chen Jianjun 陳建軍, “Yuandai zhuanglang lu jianzhi kao: cong gansu de liangge zhuanglang de diming tanqi 元代莊浪路建置考——從甘肅的兩個莊浪地名談起,” *Zhongguo difang zhi* 中國地方誌, no. 2 (2024): 88.

⁹⁵ Sugiyama Masaaki 杉山正明, *Mongoru Teikoku to Dai Gen Urusu* モンゴル帝国と大元ウルス (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2004), 305–308.

⁹⁶ See Akasaka Tsuneaki 赤坂恒明, “Baidaru eikei jōhō to Karahoto Kanbun monjo バイダル裔系譜情報とカラホト漢文文書,” *Seinan Ajia Kenkyū* 西南アジア研究, no. 66 (2007): 58–60; Zhang Xiaofeng 張笑峰, “Heishui cheng wenshu zhong de ningsu wang 黑水城文書中的寧肅王,” *Tushuguan lilun yu Shijian* 圖書館理論與實踐, no. 7 (2014): 94–97.

Qaban's descendants owned the title of Prince of Su, first-rank, based in Hami to Barsköl.⁹⁷ This title was later succeeded by the Prince of Weiwu Xining lineage.⁹⁸ Tuq Temür, Qaban and Čübei's younger brother, submitted to the Yuan at an unknown time. His grandson Irinjinbal (Ch. Yilingzhiba 亦令只巴) was granted the title Prince of Lökčün (second rank) in 1330.⁹⁹

The Hexi Čayadaid Ulus was not always hostile to the Čayadaid Khanate and even established marital relations with certain tribes of the khanate.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the Tuq Temür lineage had closer ties to the Čayadaid Khanate. They ruled over the Lökčün region while maintaining allegiance to both the Yuan and the Čayadaid Khanate from around 1330 to the end of the Yuan.¹⁰¹

In addition to the Baidar family, several other Čayadaid descendants submitted to the Yuan and were settled in the Hexi region, adjacent to or within the territories controlled by the Baidar family. Among them, the most prominent were the descendants of Būri (Ch. Buli 不里), a grandson of Čayatai. Aǰigi (Ch. Azhiji 阿只吉, the third son of Būri) supported Qubilai Khan in the succession struggle against Ariq Böke and was granted the title Prince of Weiyuan (威遠王, third-rank).¹⁰² After Qubilai's accession in 1264, he was stationed in Beš Balık (Ch. Bieshibali 別失八里) and held a higher position than Čübei initially. However, he was dismissed in 1285 due to military defeats.¹⁰³ His fiefdoms included Shandan Prefecture 山丹州 and Taiyuan Circuit 太原路, and possibly areas near the later Ming-era Weiyuan Garrison 威遠衛. He once successfully petitioned for the return of the appanages in Binzhou 邠州 and

⁹⁷ Sugiyama Masaaki, *Mongoru Teikoku*, 305-308.

⁹⁸ For the genealogy and succession of Čübei family's princely titles, see Akasaka Tsuneaki, "On the genealogy of the Baidar family in Tawārīx-i guzīda-i Nuṣrat nāma," *International Journal of Eurasian Studies*, no. 12 (2015): 227-241.

⁹⁹ For the genealogy of the Prince of Lökčün, see Akasaka Tsuneaki, "Baidaru eikei jōhō," 60-64.

¹⁰⁰ Akasaka Tsuneaki 赤坂恒明, "Hoshira no seikō to Baidaru e Chaghatai-ke ホシラの西行とバイダル裔チャガタイ家," *Tōyōshi Kenkyū* 東洋史研究 64, no. 4 (2009): 615,640; Qu Qiang 曲強, "De cang liu fen tulufan menggu wen xingzheng wenshu zai yanjiu 德藏六份吐魯番蒙古文行政文書再研究," *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1 (2025): 30.

¹⁰¹ Akasaka Tsuneaki, "Hoshira no seikō," 631-633.

¹⁰² Zhang Daiyu 張岱玉, "Yuanshi zhuwang biao" *buzheng ji bufen zhuwang yanjiu* 《元史・諸王表》補證及部分諸王研究 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2019), 379-380. For the genealogy of the Prince of Weiyuan, see Akasaka Tsuneaki, "On the genealogy of descendants of Ajiyi, Čayatai's great-grandson," in *Qingzhu qiao ji xiansheng 75 huadan jinian wenji* 慶祝喬吉先生 75 華誕紀念文集, ed. Quan Rong 全榮 et al. (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2022), 153-167. The "Weiyuan" in his title was identified by Louis Hambis as Weiyuan in Yunnan while Zhang Daiyu posits that it more likely refers to the Weiyuan Guard of the Ming period. See Louis Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVIII du Yuan Che* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 118; Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 382.

¹⁰³ Zhan, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 380-381.

Jingzhou 涇州—originally belonging to the Čayadaid family—from the descendants of the Ögödeid prince Köden (Ch. Kuoduan 闊端).¹⁰⁴ Yet, after his fall from power, these territories' ownership was then transferred to the Čübei lineage (Prince of Bin).¹⁰⁵ Some of his descendants remained within Yuan territories, while others migrated to Central Asia.¹⁰⁶ Temür Buqa (Ch. Tiemu'er Buhua 帖木兒不花, a relative of Ajigi, was granted the title Prince of Suyuan (肅遠王, fifth-rank) in 1291.¹⁰⁷

*Baba (Ch. Baba 八八, P. Bābā),¹⁰⁸ the grandson of Büri, surrendered to the Yuan between 1283 and 1287. He was granted a sixth-rank princely title without a designated appanage name.¹⁰⁹ Töre (Ch. Tula 禿剌, P. Tūlā), Bābā's nephew, was enfeoffed as the Prince of Yue (越王, first-rank) in 1307 for his merits.¹¹⁰ Both of them was settled in the region controlled by the Baidar family.

Additionally, the lineage of *Baidaqan (Ch. Baidahan 拜答寒, P. Bāidaqān) also held significance in the area. *Baidaqan, a fourth-generation descendant of Čayatai, was enfeoffed as a fourth-rank prince without a designated appanage in 1270.¹¹¹ His son, Toyon 脫歡, was promoted to the Prince of Anding (安定王, third-rank) in 1313. Their activities were primarily concentrated in the Shule River Basin, the Yijina Circuit, and Sarıg Uyğur.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Yang Fan 楊帆, "Yuandai xibei zhu 'ershisi cheng' shiyi: cong gongchang ershisi cheng tanqi 元代西北諸“二十四城”釋疑——從鞏昌二十四城談起," *Xibei shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報(社會科學版) 57, no.6 (2020): 77.

¹⁰⁵ Matsuda, "Yuanchao de fenfeng zhidu," 303-308.

¹⁰⁶ Akasaka, "On the genealogy of descendants of Ajigi," 163.

¹⁰⁷ According to the analysis of Li Zhi'an and Yan Tianling, it could be inferred that Temür Buqa was a relative of Ajigi. Based on the *Yuan shi*, they argued that Temür Buqa was Ajigi's younger brother. This, however, is clearly not correct. The *Yuan shi*'s record about the Temür Buqa lineage was in disorder. *Yuan shi* records Nom Tas Taysi (Ch. Nandashi 南答失) as a son of Temür Buqa, but he was actually a family member of the lineage of the Prince of Bin. Nevertheless, according to the *Compendium of Chronicles*, Temür Buqa is a nephew rather than a brother of Ajigi. Further work remains to be done before the relation between Ajigi and Temür Buqa can be confirmed. See Li Zhi'an 李治安, *Yuandai fenfeng zhidu yanjiu* 元代分封制度研究 (Tianjing: Tianjing guji chubanshe, 1992), 117; Yan Tianling 閻天靈, "Xidao zhuwang hedan, azhiji, xiaoxue shiji kaobian 西道諸王合丹、阿只吉、小薛事蹟考辨," *Zhongnan minzu daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 中南民族大學學報(人文社會科學版), no. 2 (2020): 58; Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVII du Yuan Che*, 62-63; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 362. Louis Hambis identifies the Prince of Suyuan as the Prince of Zhenxi Wujing Temür Buqa. However, this is not likely, since the Prince of Zhenxi Wujing was a fourth-rank prince, whereas the Prince of Suyuan held the fifth rank. See Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVIII du Yuan Che*, 154.

¹⁰⁸ Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVII du Yuan Che*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ Sugiyama, *Mongoru Teikoku to Dai Gen Urusu*, 302-304. Hu, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 51-54; Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 347-348, 463.

¹¹⁰ Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 81-84.

¹¹¹ Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVIII du Yuan Che*, 151.

¹¹² Sugiyama, *Mongoru Teikoku to Dai Gen Urusu*, 305-308. Hu, *Yuandai xibei*, 54-57; Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 440-442; Chen Ruiqing 陳瑞青, "Heishui cheng yuandai wenxian zhong de 'anding wang' ji qi budui 黑水城元代文獻中的“安定王”及其部隊," *Nanjing shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 南京師大學報(社會科學版), no.5 (2012): 110-115.

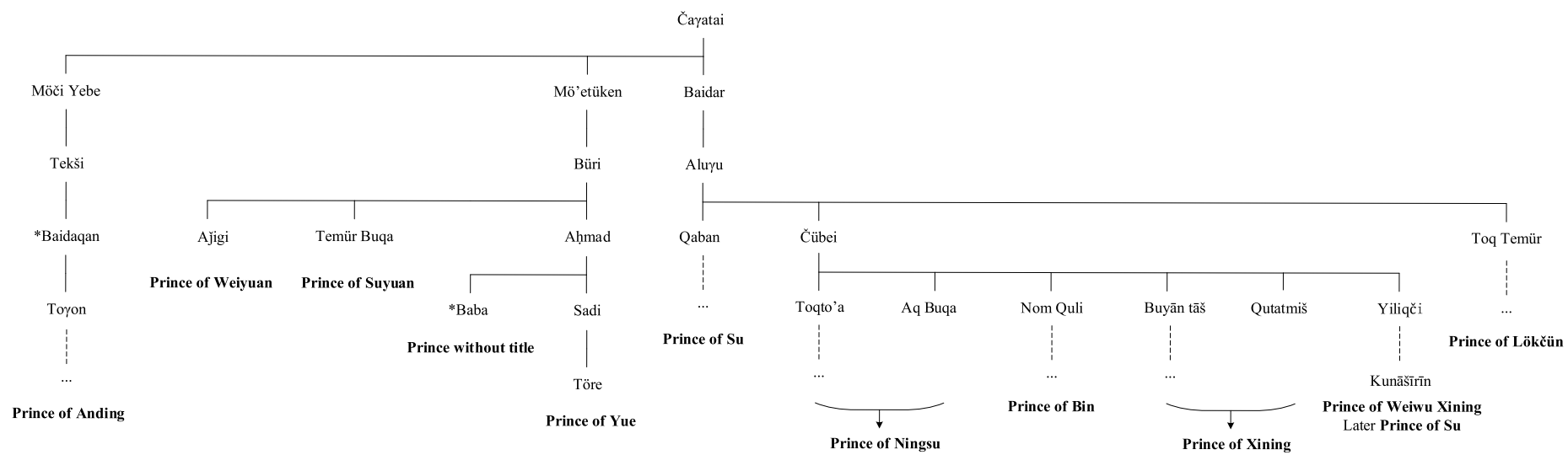


Figure 2.5. Genealogy of the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus.

Apart from the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus, two other princely lineages in Gansu once held significant power but had declined by the late Yuan period. First was Köden's clan. This clan successively held the titles Prince of Yongchang 永昌王, Prince of Fenyang (汾陽王, third-rank), and Prince of Jing (荊王, first-rank).¹¹³ In 1229, after Ögedei (Ch. Wokuotai 窩闊台) ascended the Mongol throne, he granted the former Xi Xia territories centered on Xiliang 西涼 to his second son, Köden, who subsequently established his own Ulus centered on Yongchang, wielding considerable influence across present-day Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai.¹¹⁴ After the death of Ögedei's son Güyük Khan in 1248, the khanship was seized by the Toluid lineage. Although Köden's lineage maintained a strong friendship with the Toluid rulers and staunchly supported Qubilai Khan's accession, their appanage was gradually reduced to only the core area of their original appanages.¹¹⁵ The Köden clan constructed the city of Yongchang 永昌 (modern Yongchang Fort 永昌堡 in Wuwei 武威) and used it as their royal city.¹¹⁶ They also established a summer palace located in modern Huangcheng County 皇城縣.¹¹⁷ The last prince of the Köden line, *Tök Tömür (Ch. Tuotuo Mu'er 脫脫木兒),¹¹⁸ died before 1343, marking the extinction of the Köden princely house.¹¹⁹

Secondly, there was the lineage of Ayači (Ch. Aiyachi 愛牙赤). Ayači, the sixth son of Qubilai Khan, was enfeoffed in the Wulhai Circuit before 1284. The activities and historical details of his descendants remain, however, unclear.¹²⁰

Apart from the imperial princes aforementioned, the Qonggirad son-in-law (Mo. *güregen*) family also held significant power in Gansu. Alči (Ch. Alechi 阿勒赤) Noyan, brother of Börte

¹¹³ Köden's grandson *Yisü Buqa 也速不花 was granted the third-rank prince, but he was not given the title of appanage, see Li Zhi'an, *Yuandai fenfeng zhidu yanjiu*, 242, 259. Köden's grandson *Beg Temür 別帖木兒 was once granted the title of Prince of Fenyang 汾陽王, see Hu, "Yuandai hexi zhuwang," 18; Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang*, 378-379.

¹¹⁴ Hu, "Yuandai hexi zhuwang," 3. For the Military Groups Controlled by the princes of the Köden Clan, see Li, *Yuandai xingsheng zhidu*, 469.

¹¹⁵ Hu, "Yuandai hexi zhuwang," 9.

¹¹⁶ Jia Congjiang 賈叢江, "Yuandai weiwu'er qianju yongchang shi ji 元代畏兀兒遷居永昌事輯," *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no.4 (2002): 16-19.

¹¹⁷ Li Yongmei 李永梅, "Yongchang xiancheng kuoduan suojian zhi shiliao kaozheng 永昌縣城闊端所建之史料考證," *Xibu xuekan* 西部學刊 no. 114 (2020): 117-119.

¹¹⁸ Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVIII du Yuan Che*, 28-29. Tömür is a dialect pronunciation of *temür*, see Volker Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente: Eine Lexikalische Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino Oy, 2006), 395.

¹¹⁹ Hu, "Yuandai hexi zhuwang," 20.

¹²⁰ Hu, "Yuandai hexi zhuwang," 87; Louis Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVII du Yuan Che* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1945), 119-120; Rashid al-Dīn, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 417.

Üjin (Ch. Bo'ertie Wuzhen 孛兒帖兀真, Činggis Khan's principal wife), was the first known imperial son-in-law of the Qonggirad tribe. He participated in thirty-two campaigns during the reigns of Činggis Khan and Ögedei Khan, achieving illustrious military merits. As a result, he was enfeoffed as the Prince of Hexi 河西王 and posthumously honored as the Prince of Jining 濟寧王 in 1295. His male descendants consistently married females from the Golden Clan (Mo. altan uruy), thereby inheriting the status of imperial son-in-law. The lineage of Čikü (Ch. Chiku 赤窟) Güregen, son of Alči Noyan, held Xining Prefecture 西寧州 as their appanage. They successively inherited three princely titles: Prince of Ningpu (寧濮郡王, sixth-rank), Prince of Puyang (濮陽王, sixth-rank) and Prince of Qi (岐王, first-rank).¹²¹ During the late Yuan period, The Prince of Qi resided at the Songduo Ancient Fortress 松多古城堡 in present-day Huzhu County 互助縣.¹²²

In addition, the lineage of the Prince of Gaochang 高昌王 also wielded considerable influence. The Kočo Uyghur Kingdom,¹²³ which had ruled the southern region of present-day Xinjiang since the ninth century, was a vassal state of the Western Liao (西遼, 1124-1218).¹²⁴ In 1209, the Idok Kut (Ch. *yiduhu* 亦都護) of Kočo betrayed the Western Liao and submitted to the Mongols.¹²⁵ Činggis Khan honored him as his “fifth son”,¹²⁶ and the lineage henceforth held the status of imperial son-in-law.¹²⁷ Throughout the conflicts between the Yuan and the western Činggisid princes (e.g., the Ögedeids and Čayadaids), the Idok Kut clan consistently supported the Yuan court. In 1286, Idok Kut Kočgar Tegin (Ch. Huochiha'er Dejin 火赤哈兒的斤) died in battle with Ögedeid forces. His son, Nigürin Tegin (Ch. Niulin Dejin 紐林的斤),¹²⁸ and the remaining forces subsequently migrated eastward to Yongchang in the autumn. This move served dual purposes: to regroup for a potential westward campaign to reclaim their

¹²¹ Landa, *Marriage and Power in Mongol Eurasia*, 33-36, 73-75; Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuwang biao*, 211-215, 452-458; Christopher P. Atwood, “Chikü Küregen and the Origins of the Xiningzhou Qonggirads,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, no. 21 (2014): 7-26.

¹²² Hu Xiaopeng, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 128-129

¹²³ Kočo is an Uyghur transliteration of Gaochang 高昌, see Paul Pelliot, “Kao-Tch'ang, Qčoo, Houo-Tcheou et Qarâ-Khodja,” *Journal Asiatique* 10, no. 19 (1912), 579-613.

¹²⁴ Abe Takeo 安部健夫, *Xi huihu guo shi de yanjiu* 西回鶻國史的研究, trans. Song Suying 宋肅瀛 et al. (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1985), 13.

¹²⁵ Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between Chian and the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 74-75.

¹²⁶ Landa, *Marriage and Power*, 46; Abe Takeo, *Xi huihu guo shi*, 30.

¹²⁷ Landa, *Marriage and Power*, 45-47, 56-57, 106-112.

¹²⁸ Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 32.

homeland and to counterbalance the influence of the Köden lineage princes in the region.¹²⁹ In 1311, Nigürin Tegin was enfeoffed as the third-rank Prince of Gaochang 高昌王.¹³⁰ Thereafter, the family maintained a dual administrative identity: documents with the seal of Idok Kut were circulated in the territory of Uyghur while documents sealed with Prince of Gaochang were valid within the Uyghur household in Yuan territory.¹³¹

Many members of the Idok Kut family held official positions in the Branch Secretariat of Gansu, where they retained significant power.¹³² By the 1330s, as most Uyghur territories had been annexed by the Čayadaid Khanate, the Idok Kut lineage lost the possibility of reclaiming their ancestral lands and also forfeited their hereditary privilege of marrying with the Golden Clan.¹³³ Nevertheless, they retained substantial military strength and continued to garrison Yongchang.¹³⁴

Overall, the most powerful princes in Gansu during the last years of Yuan were those of the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus centered around Suzhou, the Qonggirad son-in-law family in Xining and Idok Kut family in Yongchang.

2.2.2 Mdo smad

Similar to the situation in Gansu, the Mdo smad region was characterized by its complex ethnic composition, with Tibetans, Mongols, various Qiang groups, Muslims, Jurchens, Han Chinese, and submissive tribes from Central Asia that intermingled and coexisted with each other.¹³⁵ During the early Yuan period, the administration of the Mdo smad region was under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Religious Affairs (Ch. *xuanzheng yuan* 宣政院), with the Mdo

¹²⁹ Landa, *Marriage and Power*, 108; Jia, “Yuandai weiwu’er,” 21-22.

¹³⁰ Shang Yanbin 尚衍斌, “Yiduhu jiazhu shishi bianxi 亦都護家族史事辨析,” *Jinan shixue* 暨南史學, no.28 (2024): 44-45. For the genealogy of the Iduq qut clan in 13 and 14 centuries, see Dang Baohai 黨寶海, “13, 14 shiji weiwu’er yiduhu shixi kao 13、14 世紀畏兀兒亦都護世系考,” *Xibu minzu yanjiu* 西部民族研究, no.1 (1998): 35.

¹³¹ Zhang, *Yuanshi zhuzhuang biao*, 396.

¹³² Li, *Yuandai xingsheng zhidu*, 466.

¹³³ Landa, *Marriage and Power*, 111. Wang Hongmei 王紅梅, “Yuandai menggu wangshi yu weiwu’er yiduhu jiazhu lianyinkao 元代蒙古王室與畏兀兒亦都護家族聯姻考,” *Lanzhou xuekan* 蘭州學刊, no.6 (2009), 10-11.

¹³⁴ Thomas T. Allsen, “The Yüan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th Century,” in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 243-280; Tian Weijiang 田衛疆, *Gaochang huihu shigao* 高昌回鶻史稿 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006), 113.

¹³⁵ Ren Shumin 任樹民, “Yuandai tuosima xuanweisi tubo shehui zhuangkuang luekao 元代脫思麻宣慰司吐蕃社會狀況略考,” *Xizang yanjiu* 西藏研究, no.4 (1998): 45-46.

smad Pacification Commission as the primary administrative body, supplemented by the garrison system of imperial princes. After the establishment of the Branch Bureau of Religious Affairs of Tibet (Ch. *tubo xing xuanzheng yuan* 吐蕃行宣政院) in 1337, authority was consolidated under the Branch Bureau.¹³⁶

The Mdo smad Pacification Commission was located in present-day northeastern Qinghai and southwestern Gansu. Its administrative seat was initially situated in Xining or Linqiang (臨羌, modern Huangyuan County 湟源縣) during the early Yuan period and was relocated to Hezhou shortly after 1269.¹³⁷ The commission was led by a Pacification Commissioner (Ch. *xuanwei shi* 宣慰使), a position primarily held by Mongols, Han Chinese, and Tibetans.¹³⁸ Similarly, the Branch Bureau of Religious Affairs of Tibet was also headquartered in Hezhou. It was headed by a Chief Commissioner (Ch. *tou yuanshi* 頭院使), who concurrently served as the Shaanxi Manager of Governmental Affairs (Ch. *pingzhang* 平章). Its leadership likewise consisted mainly of Mongols, Han Chinese, and Tibetans.¹³⁹

The imperial princes in the Mdo smad region belonged to the lineage of Qubilai Khan's seventh son, *Oγruqči (Ch. Aoluchi 奧魯赤). This clan held six princely titles: Prince of Xiping 西平王, Prince of Zhenxi Wujing 鎮西武靖王, Prince of Liang (涼王 or 梁王), Prince of Xi'an 西安王, Prince of Yunnan 雲南王, and Prince of Yu 豫王.¹⁴⁰

*Oγruqči was enfeoffed as the fourth-rank Prince of Xiping in 1269 and was tasked with garrisoning the Tibetan regions.¹⁴¹ His appanage included Nan'en Zhou 南恩州 and several prefectures in Shanxi,¹⁴² but his princely residence was located at the ancient city of Sum mdo

¹³⁶ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Chen Jianjun 陳建軍, "Yuandai houqi tubo xing xuanzhengyuan yanjiu 元代後期吐蕃行院研究," *Xibei shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報 (社會科學版) 58, no.6 (2021): 120-121.

¹³⁷ Zhang Yun 張雲, *Yuandai tubo difang xingzheng tizhi yanjiu* 元代吐蕃地方行政體制研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), 146-151. It might be located at the seat of the Ming Gongchang Guard, see *KXGCFZ*, j. 16, 401.

¹³⁸ Zhang Yun, *Yuandai tubo*, 153-155. The Pacification Commission was a military-civilian joint management organization, with its subordinate organizations divided into various systems, see Wu Mu 武沐, "Yuandai tubo dengchu xuanweisi duyuanshuaifu de jigou shezhi 元代吐蕃等處宣慰司都元帥府的機構設置," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 23, no.3 (2012): 125-130.

¹³⁹ Hu and Chen, "Yuandai houqi tubo," 123-126.

¹⁴⁰ Renqing Zhaxi 仁慶扎西, "Xiping wangfu jin di kao 西平王府今地考," *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no.6 (1986): 107.

¹⁴¹ For the influence of Oγruqči in Tibet, see Li Keyu 李克鬱, "Gelete ji xiping wang aoluchi kao 格勒特即西平王奧魯赤考," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu (shehui kexue ban)* 青海民族研究 (社會科學版), no.2 (2003): 61-65.

¹⁴² Zhang Daiyu, *Yuandai zhuwang*, 417.

(meaning “three forks” in Tibetan) in present-day Huzhu County 互助縣 or in Hezhou.¹⁴³ His primary area of activity remained the Tibetan regions.

In 1297, *Oγruqči’s firstborn son, Temür Buqa (Ch. Tiemu’er Buhua 鐵木兒不花), was enfeoffed as the fourth-rank Prince of Zhenxi Wujing, effectively taking over the duties of the Prince of Xiping in governing Tibet.¹⁴⁴ Another son of *Oγruqči, PadmA dkar (Ch. Badema Dejia 八的麻的加),¹⁴⁵ inherited the title of Prince of Xiping.

Temür Buqa’s eldest son, *Laodiqan (Ch. Laodihan 老的罕), was enfeoffed as the fourth-rank Prince of Yunnan in 1309.¹⁴⁶ *Laodiqan’s son, Aratnaširi (= Ch. Alatenashili 阿剌忒納失里 < Sk. Ratnaśrī), was enfeoffed as the second-rank Prince of Xi’an in 1328 and later as the first-rank Prince of Yu in 1353. Aratnaširi’s young brother, Tarm-a (Ch. Da’erma 答兒麻),¹⁴⁷ inherited the title of the Prince of Xi’an at first,¹⁴⁸ and was subsequently re-enfeoffed as the Prince of Jing and tasked with garrisoning the Hexi Corridor, replacing the extinct Köden lineage.¹⁴⁹ Another son of Temür Buqa, *Čosbal (= Ch. Shuosiban 搠思班 < Ti. Chos bpal),¹⁵⁰ inherited the title of Prince of Zhenxi Wujing. In 1337, *Čosbal’s son, *Kiba (Ch. Qiba 乞八),¹⁵¹ was killed by the local Xifan tribes and posthumously honored as the Prince of Liang.¹⁵² *Kiba’s son PradzanyA (= Ch. Bunala 卜納剌 < Sk. Prajñā) then inherited the title.¹⁵³ Although the titles held by this lineage occasionally extended beyond the northwest frontier, their primary sphere activity remained the Mdo smad region.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴³ Renqing Zhaxi, “Xiping wangfu jin di kao,” 105-107. He may also have had a residence in Hezhou, see Zhang Daiyu, *Yuandai zhuwang*, 420; Hu Xiaopeng, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 23-24.

¹⁴⁴ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Chang Cheng 常成, “Yuan xiping wang aoluchi jiazu shixi yu zhizang shishi kaoshu 元西平王奧魯赤家族世系與治藏史事考述,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 32, no.2 (2022): 26.

¹⁴⁵ The Mongolian form of the name is Badmayar, which does not align with the Chinese transcription. See Sharavyn Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol’ (Kiril – Mongol – tailbartai)* (Ulaanbaatar: Ulaanbaatar Press, 2013), 481. Hambis reconstructs this name as Mo. Badimadiga < Ti. Padma rgya, which is not suitable. See Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVII*, 121. His name was recorded as Ichil Būqā in the *Compendium of Chronicles*, see Hambis, *Le Chapitre CVII*, 121; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 417.

¹⁴⁶ Hu and Chang, “Yuan xiping wang aoluchi jiazu,” 29.

¹⁴⁷ Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol’*, 313. His name was recorded as Rta rma tsiing dbang and Dharma shitra dbang in Tibetan sources, see Tshal pa kun dga’ rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po* (Pecin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981), 115; Shakya rin chen sde, *Yar lung chos ’byung* (Lha sa: Bod leongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1988), 87.

¹⁴⁸ Zhang Daiyu, *Yuandai zhuwang*, 325.

¹⁴⁹ Hu and Chang, “Yuan xiping wang aluchi jiazu,” 33.

¹⁵⁰ The modern Mongolian form of it is Čoibal, while the Ti. Chos was transliterated into Čos in Middle Mongolian. See Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol’*, 685; Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 325.

¹⁵¹ This prince bore another name, Dangwuban 黨兀班, see Hu and Chang, “Yuan xiping wang aoluchi jiazu,” 28.

¹⁵² Ibid., 28.

¹⁵³ *MTZSL*, j. 83, 1491. PradzanyA is a Tibetan name transliterated from Sk. Prajñā.

¹⁵⁴ Hu and Chang, “Yuan xiping wang aoluchi jiazu,” 33.

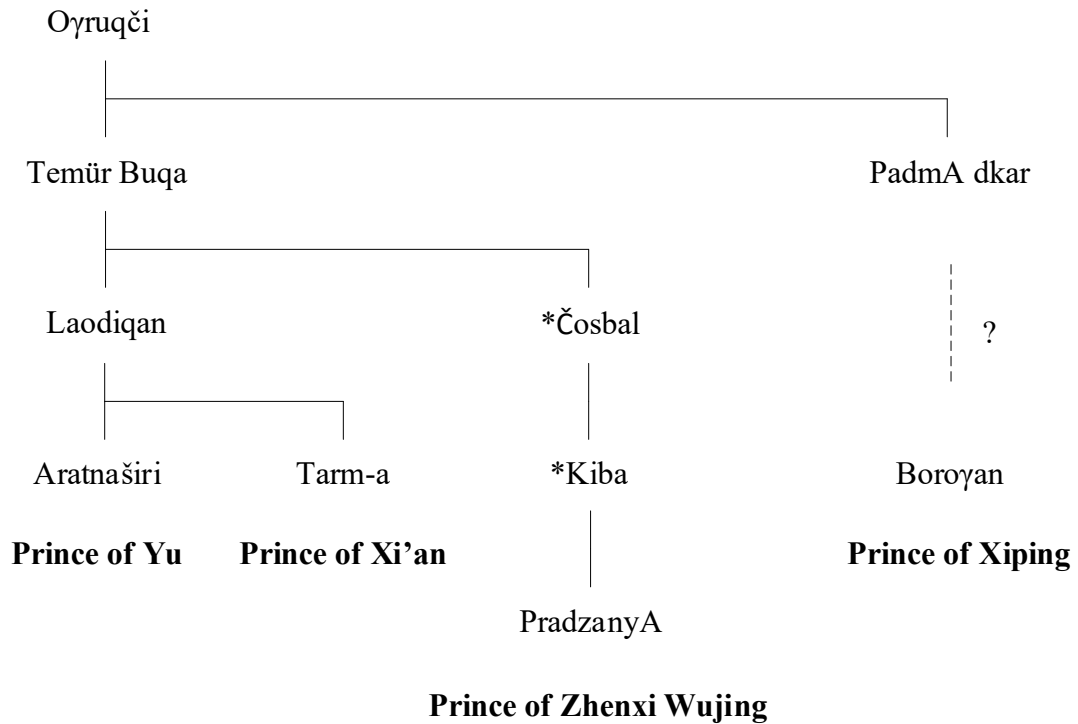


Figure 2.6. Genealogy of the *Oyruqči Clan.

2.3 The Ming conquest and management

In the late Yuan period, rebellions in the realm erupted repeatedly.¹⁵⁵ Among the various rebel forces, the army led by Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398) grew powerful and ultimately prevailed.¹⁵⁶ Zhu Yuanzhang established the Ming Dynasty and was enthroned as the Hongwu Emperor in 1368, while his army gradually advanced toward Dadu 大都.¹⁵⁷ In 1368, under the threat of the Ming army, the Yuan Emperor Toyon Temür (Ch. Tuohuan Tiemu'er 惠宗妥懽帖睦尔, 1320–1370) fled from Dadu north to Shangdu 上都. Faced with an increasingly desperate situation, Yuan ministers pinned their last hopes on the northwestern vassals. However, to prevent these princes from expanding their power and threatening his authority, as

¹⁵⁵ For research on the rebellion in the last years of the Yuan, see Han Rulin 韓儒林, *Yuanchao shi* 元朝史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008); *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, vol. 6, *Alien regimes and border states, 907-1368*, ed. Hebert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 580-586.

¹⁵⁶ For an introduction of Zhu Yuanzhang's rise to power, see F. W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999), 517-582.

¹⁵⁷ For the military system in the early Ming period, see Romeyn Taylor, "Yüan Origins of the Wei-so System," in *Chinese Government in Ming Times: Seven Studies*, ed. Charles O. Hucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 23-40; Li Xinfeng 李新峰, *Ming qianqi junshi zhidu yanjiu* 明前期軍事制度研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2016); Cao Xun 曹循, "Zhu yuanzhang jueqi de guiji: mingchao jianli qian zhu yuanzhang jituan de renshi yu zhidu 朱元璋崛起的軌跡——明朝建立前朱元璋集團的人事與制度" (master's thesis, Lanzhou University, 2008).

the sources tell us, Toyon Temür rejected the proposal to summon troops from the northwestern vassals for reinforcement.¹⁵⁸

Consequently, the northwestern princes maintained their military strength and retained intact armed forces before the Ming advance. When confronted with the Ming offensive, after brief resistance, most of these princes surrendered to this newly emerging powerful empire. They were subsequently reorganized into the Ming buffer system, becoming the northwestern buffer zone that was supposed to protect the Ming from foreign forces. The buffer system under the early Ming in the northwest consisted of a large number of guards (Ch. *wei* 衛), battalions (Ch. *suo* 所), and tribes (Ch. *zu* 族 or *cu* 簇) composed of non-Han people, such as the Hami Guard 哈密衛, Shazhou Guard and Čikin Mongol Guard supervised by the Suzhou Guard 肅州衛; the Anding Guard 安定衛, Aduan Guard 阿端衛, Quxian Guard 曲先衛, Handong Guard 罕東衛 and “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” (Ch. *xifan shisan zu* 西番十三族) supervised by the Xining Guard 西寧衛, and Xifan tribes supervised by the Hezhou Guard 河州衛, Taozhou Guard 洮州衛 and Minzhou Guard 岷州衛.¹⁵⁹

This section will show the progress of the transformation of the northwestern frontier’s population groups from them being northwestern vassals to the northwestern buffer zone (see Table 2.1) and demonstrate the power networks that connected those groups with the early Ming. The northwestern buffer zone discussed here could be classified into two zones: one supervised by the Xining Guard (thus called below the Qinghai buffer zone), which mainly defended the Ming from various unsubmitted Xifan tribes; and the other, supervised by the Suzhou Guard (that would be called below the Xiyu buffer zone, i.e. the Western Regions buffer zone), which mainly defended the Ming from the Western Regions powers.

¹⁵⁸ Liu Jie 劉佶, *Beixun siji* 北巡私記, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書, vol. 424 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 2. For example, the Prince of Bin *Buyan Temür 不顏帖木兒, the most powerful northwestern prince at the time, intervened in the internal factional struggles of the Yuan court in 1364, making Toyon Temür afraid of losing his power, see Hu, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 41-42.

¹⁵⁹ Here, I use the Chinese term “Xifan 西番,” which could be literally translated as “western barbarian.” Although most of those Xifan tribes were Tibetan, some of them could also be Mongolian or Uyghur tribes. Scholars also interpret these institutions composed of non-Han groups as regimes under the management of “loose reins (Ch. *jimi* 羈縻)” System, which led by *native* officials (Ch. *tuguan* 土官) and nominally submitted to the Ming. See Du Changshun 杜常順 and Guo Fengxia 郭鳳霞, “Mingdai ‘xifan zhu wei’ yu hehuangtaomin biandi shehui 明代 “西番諸衛 ” 與河湟洮岷邊地社會,” *Qinghai minzu daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 青海民族大學學報 (社會科學版), no. 4 (2010): 62-80; Zhou Min 周敏, “Biandi fanli: mingdai de ‘nama fanzu’ 邊地藩籬: 明代的 “納馬番族” ” (master’s thesis, Qinghai Normal University, 2019).

Table 2.1. *Correspondences between the Yuan Northwestern Vassals and the Ming**Northwestern Buffer Zone*

Yuan Vassal Princes				Prince Rank	Dominated Areas	Ming Buffer Zone
Hexi Čaya daid Ulus	Baidar family	Čübei	Prince of Bin	1	Suzhou to Čikin	-
			Prince of Xining	2	Shazhou to Kuyu	-
			Prince of Ningsu	2	Yijinai Circuit	-
			Prince of Weiwu Xining	3	Shazhou and Hami	Prince of Zhongshun; Hami Guard
		Qaban	Prince of Su	1	Hami to Barsköl	-
		Tuq Temür	Prince of Lökčün	2	Lökčün	-
	Büri family	Aĵigi	Prince of Weiyuan	3	Shandan	-
		Temür Buqa	Prince of Suyuan	5	-	-
		*Baba	No title	6	-	-
		Töre	Prince of Yue	1	Shazhou	-
	*Baidaqan family	*Baidaqan	No title	4	Shule River Basin, the	-
		Toyon	Prince of Anding	3	Yijinai Circuit and Sarıg Uygur	Prince of Anding; Anding Guard, Quxian Guard and Aduan Guard
Köden clan			Prince of Yongchang	unkno wn	Yongchang	-
			Prince of Fenyang	3		-
			Prince of Jing	1		-
Ayači			No title	unkno wn	Wulahai Circuit	-
Qonggirad sons-in-law			Prince of Ningpu	6	Xining	-
			Prince of Puyang	6		-
			Prince of Qi	1		Qishan Guard; Qining Guard;

				Li native official clan
Idok Kut family	Prince of Gaochang	3	Yongchang	Gaochang Guard
*Oγruqči clan	Prince of Xiping	4	Mdo smad	Qi native official clan
	Prince of Zhenxi Wujing	4		Wujing Guard
	Prince of Yunnan	4		-
	Prince of Xi'an	2		-
	Prince of Yu	1		-
	Prince of Jing	1		-
	Prince of Liang	unknown		-

2.3.1 Establishment of Ming's Qinghai buffer zone

The structure of Ming's Qinghai buffer zone is shown in Figure 2.7, and this section describes its formation process.

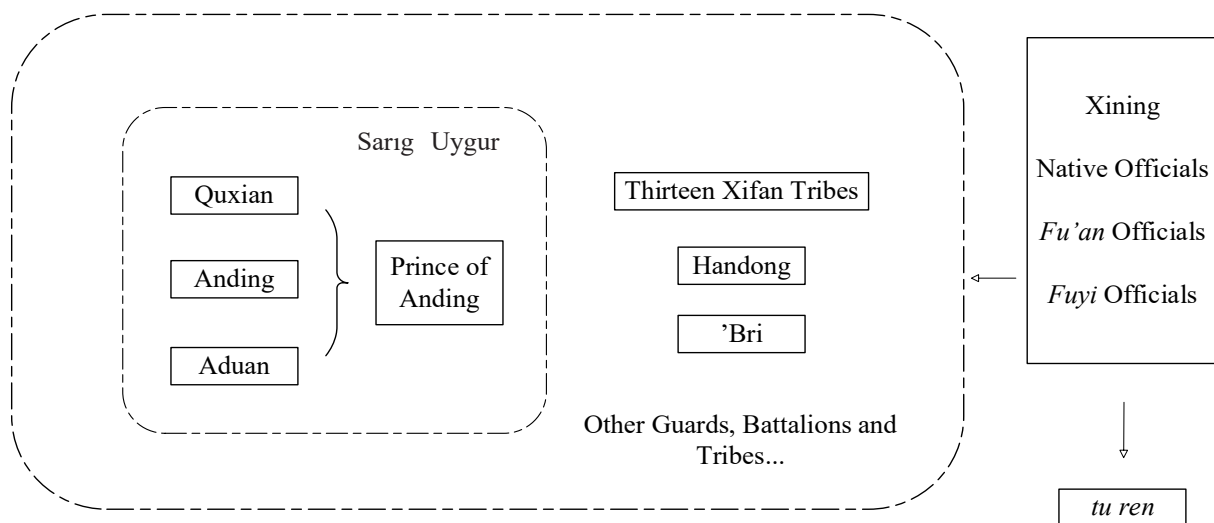


Figure 2.7. The Structure of the Qinghai Buffer Zone.

2.3.1.1 The Occupation of Lintao

In 1369, Xu Da 徐達 (1332-1385), one of the Ming's most formidable generals, attacked Shaanxi.¹⁶⁰ After capturing Fengxiang 鳳翔, he immediately advanced northwest. In the

¹⁶⁰ For the route of Xu Da's offensive and the situation in northern Shaanxi, see Zhou Song 周松, "Ming hongwu chao shanbei bianfang ji qi te dian 明洪武朝陝北邊防及其特點," *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 15, no. 1 (2005): 17-25.

fourth month, Xu Da resolved to first capture Lintao 臨洮.¹⁶¹ When the Ming army arrived at Lintao, the leader of the northwestern warlords, Li Siqi 李思齊 (1323-1374)¹⁶² and his adopted son Zhao Qi 趙琦 (also known as Toqto'a Temür (Ch. Tuotuo Tiemu'er 脫脫帖木兒) or Zhao Tuo'er 趙脫兒, fl.1369-1383), among other Yuan officials and generals, surrendered.¹⁶³ Subsequently, Xu Da dispatched Wei Zheng (韋正 or Ning Zheng 甯正, ?-1396) and Zhao Qi to garrison the city of Lintao.¹⁶⁴ At the time, the Ming army also captured Hezhou but soon abandoned it.¹⁶⁵ Afterwards, they attacked Xi'an 西安 and Pingliang 平涼, pressing the Prince of Yu and the Prince of Xi'an stationed there to flee away.¹⁶⁶

After capturing Lintao, the Ming's northwestern strategy began to take shape gradually. First, the Ming established the Lintao Guard 臨洮衛 and Lintao Prefecture 臨洮府, appointing Wei Zheng, who was “skilled in inducing surrenders”,¹⁶⁷ as the Commander (Ch. *zhihui* 指揮) of the Lintao Guard.¹⁶⁸ Second, the Ming endeavored to incorporate surrendered Yuan officials and troops into the garrison system.¹⁶⁹ Zhao Qi was appointed as the Assistant Commander (Ch. *zhihui qianshi* 指揮僉事) of the Lintao Guard and Vice Prefect (Ch. *tongzhi* 同知) of the Lintao Prefecture.¹⁷⁰ He, along with other defectors, was granted the right to travel to Nanjing, the capital, to pay tribute and receive rewards.¹⁷¹ Third, rather than launching further offensives, the Ming began to employ diplomatic personnel to induce surrender, among whom the most capable was Xu Yunde 許允德 (d. 1374). A native of Chang'an 長安 and a Metropolitan

¹⁶¹ *MTZSL*, j. 41, 815-816.

¹⁶² For the introduction on Li Siqi and other military forces in Shaanxi at the time, see Zhou Song 周松, “Yuanmo huanghezhongyou diqu de zhengzhi xingshi yu junfa jituan 元末黃河中游地區的政治形勢與軍閥集團,” *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 21, no.1 (2006): 72-80; Matsuda Koichi 松田孝一, “Kōkin no ran shoki Senshi Genchō-gun no zen'yō 紅巾の乱初期陝西元朝軍の全容,” *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋學報 75, no. 1-2 (1993): 1-30.

¹⁶³ *MTZSL*, j.41, 821-823.

¹⁶⁴ Henry Serruys, “The Mongols of Kansu During the Ming,” *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 10, no. 2 (1955): 225.

¹⁶⁵ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Wei Ziqiu 魏梓秋, “‘Ming xing ye ji’ and mingchu hezhou shishi kaolun 《明興野記》與明初河州史事考論,” *Xibei shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報 (社會科學版) 48, no. 6 (2011): 58.

¹⁶⁶ Hu and Chang, “Yuan xiping wang aoluchi jiazuo,” 34; Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Gao Qi 高旗, “Ming hongwu nianjian hetaomin zhu yi kaoshu: jianlun ‘xifan zhu wei’ junzhijhua geju de Xingcheng 明洪武年間河洮岷諸役考述——兼論“西番諸衛”均質化格局的形成,” *Xibei shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報 (社會科學版) 62, no. 3 (2025): 119-120.

¹⁶⁷ “善於招徠.” *MTZSL*, j. 45, 904-905.

¹⁶⁸ Yu Ben 俞本, *Jishi lu jianzheng* 紀事錄箋證, annotated by Li Xinfeng 李新峰 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 297.

¹⁶⁹ For a comprehensive introduction on the Ming's garrison system and its inheritance of Yuan military institutions, see Yiming Ha, “Taming the Army: Military Mobilization, Empire-building, and the Mongol Transformation of China, 1264-1644 CE” (PhD diss., Los Angeles: University of California, 2024).

¹⁷⁰ *LTFZ*, j. 19, 35a. Afterwards, he devoted himself loyally to the Ming, leading expeditions to Čayan Nayur 察罕腦兒, Gansu and the domain of the Prince of Anding, see Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, *Ming taizu ji* 明太祖集, annotated by Hu Shi'e 胡士萼 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1991), 109.

¹⁷¹ *MTZSL*, j. 50, 987; j. 128, 2033-2034.

Graduate (Ch. *jinshi* 進士),¹⁷² Xu Yunde was appointed as a Vice Director in the Branch Secretariat of Shaanxi (Ch. *shanxi xingsheng yuanwai lang* 陝西行省員外郎) due to his exceptional diplomatic skills. He was responsible for persuading Yuan officials and troops to surrender, particularly the Xifan tribes,¹⁷³ and supervising the tribute missions from Tibet.¹⁷⁴ In 1374, he was transferred to the Ministry of Rites as a Vice Director (Ch. *yuanwai lang* 員外郎, or Director (Ch. *langzhong* 郎中) according to *LTFZ*) and was sent on a mission to Tibet. He died in Hezhou in 1374 and was buried in Lintao Prefecture.¹⁷⁵

Finally, Wei Zheng provided all Yuan surrendered officials and generals with “(official) clothes and hats” (Ch. *yiguan* 衣冠), generously rewarded them, and sent them back.¹⁷⁶ Bestowing “clothes and crowns” upon the surrendered officials granted them political status as Ming officials, thus incorporating them into the Ming political system, while “generously rewarded” refers to economic incentives. “Sent them back” meant, in a contract of those troops and officials which were incorporated into the garrison system, the Ming allowed or commanded them to remain stationed in their original territories, revealing the basic framework of frontier strategy of the Ming that would be continually implemented thereafter: supporting regimes friendly to China to serve as a buffer zone in the border areas between China and the “barbarians”. Thus, the Ming started establishing a buffer zone, which not only shielded China from external military threats but also served as a reservoir of manpower for conscription in times of invasions by Inner Asian forces.

2.3.1.2 Occupation of Hezhou

At this time, the Ming had established a defensive frontier on the edge of Tibet. However, it had not yet advanced into the Hexi Corridor and Ningxia, where Köke Temür (Ch. Wang Baobao 王保保, the Prince of Qi 齊王, d. 1375) continued to pose a significant threat to the

¹⁷² *LTFZ*, j. 4, 16a.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, j. 4, 16a.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, j. 20, 2b

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, j. 20, 2b

¹⁷⁶ *MTZSL*, j. 45, 904-905.

new dynasty.¹⁷⁷ In 1370, Köke Temür launched a surprise attack on Lanzhou 蘭州,¹⁷⁸ and in response, the Hongwu Emperor ordered Xu Da to lead a large army to suppress him. As the result, Xu Da defeated Köke Temür, pressing him to fleeing to Qaraqorum.¹⁷⁹ The Ming army then captured Hezhou and dispatched Xu Yunde to summon and induce Tibetan chieftains to submit to Ming overlordship.¹⁸⁰

Hezhou was exactly the seat of the Mdo smad Pacification Commission, the Branch Bureau of Religious Affairs of Tibet, as well as of the *Oγruqči family discussed above. Following the capture of Hezhou and through the recruitment efforts of Xu Yunde, Yuan officials including the Mdo smad Pacification Commissioner and the Director of the Branch Bureau of Religious Affairs of Tibet He Bsod nams mgon po (Ch. He Suonanbu 何鎖南普, fl. 1370-1396),¹⁸¹ along with and the Prince of Zhenxi Wuqing PradzanyA, a descendant of the *Oγruqči family mentioned before, surrendered.¹⁸² Faced with the pressure of the approaching Ming army and its policy of recruitment, the Prince of Gaochang Heshang 和尚 in Yongchang, a descendant of the Idok Kut family, and the Prince of Qi *Arakibag (Ch. Alaqiba 阿剌乞巴) in Xining, a descendant of the Qonggirad son-in-law family, also surrendered with their forces. Subsequently, the Ming established the Hezhou Guard, appointing Wei Zheng, the Commander of the Lintao Guard, as its commander.¹⁸³ The core of Ming management over Tibet then transferred from Lintao to Hezhou, where a large amount of personnel with translation abilities were recruited.¹⁸⁴ This move can be seen as a clear inheritance of the Yuan's institutional legacy.

Thereafter, the Ming started to reorganize the old Yuan powers and groups on the ground. Personnel from the former Mdo smad Pacification Commission and the Branch Bureau of

¹⁷⁷ Darijab 達力扎布, "Beiyuan chuqi de jiangyu he hanwoerduo diwang 北元初期的疆域和汗斡耳朵地望," *Menggu shi yanjiu* 蒙古史研究, no. 3 (1989): 88-90; Cao Yongnian 曹永年, "Guanyu beiyuan xuanguang, tianyuan chao de ducheng 關於北元宣光、天元朝的都城," in *Mingdai menggu shi congkao* 明代蒙古史叢考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 19-32.

¹⁷⁸ *MTZSL*, j.47, 943.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, j.51, 1004.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, j.53, 1056-57.

¹⁸¹ For an extended introduction to He Bsod nams mgon po and his clan, see Elliot Sperling, "The He clan of Hezhou: A Tibetan Family in Service to the Yuan and Ming Dynasties," in *The Tibetan History Reader*, ed. Gray Tuttle and Kurtis R. Schaeffer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 301-313.

¹⁸² *MTZSL*, j.53, 1056-57.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, j.56, 1096.

¹⁸⁴ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 370.

Religious Affairs of Tibet were progressively registered into the Hezhou Guard, where they held positions as native officials. He Bsod nams mgon po, for example, like Zhao Qi in the Lintao Guard, was appointed as the Vice Commander (Ch. *zhihui tongzhi* 指揮同知) of the Hezhou Guard.¹⁸⁵

In the meantime, regarding the most powerful local forces—the Prince of Zhenxi Wujing PradzanyA, the Prince of Gaochang Heshang, and the Prince of Qi *Arakibag, all of whom had submitted—the Ming registered their leaders in Hezhou,¹⁸⁶ granting them “edicts elaborately decorated with five colors” (Ch. *wuhua gaochi* 五花誥敕),¹⁸⁷ while, however, establishing separate guards to accommodate their forces.

The forces of the Prince of Wujing PradzanyA were reorganized into the Wujing Guard 武靖衛, with PradzanyA serving as the Vice Commander. The Wujing Guard was merged into the Hezhou Guard around 1377, and PradzanyA’s descendants likely continued to hold positions within the Hezhou Guard, but the exact lineage is unknown.¹⁸⁸ Along with PradzanyA, other members of the *Oyruqči clan surrendered, including the sons of princes (Ch. *zongwang zi* 宗王子) Renba 任八, Geba 隔巴, Badmaširi (Ch. Badumashili 巴都麻失里),¹⁸⁹ and Šayjaširi (Ch. Shajiashili 沙加失里).¹⁹⁰

Additionally, the Prince Boroyan (Ch. Boluohan 孛羅罕) also surrendered and was enfeoffed as a Battalion Commander (Ch. *zheng qianhu* 正千戶).¹⁹¹ It is highly probable that he bore the title of the Prince of Xiping, since we know the activities of all the other princes of the *Oyruqči clan.¹⁹² The Xiping Guard 西平衛 was established, possibly on the basis of Boroyan’s force, in 1373 and disappeared shortly after in 1378. Furthermore, the Ming

¹⁸⁵ In addition to these, He Bsod nams mgon po also undertook the mission to Tibet, see Zhu, *Ming taizu ji*, 146.

¹⁸⁶ Zhou Song 周松, “Junwei jianzhi yu ming Hongwu chao de xibei jinglue 軍衛建置與明洪武朝的西北經略,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 28, no. 2 (2018): 70. Zhou Song mistakenly believed that the three guards were stationed in Hezhou. In reality, only the leaders of the three guards were registered in Hezhou, while the soldiers remained stationed in their original locations.

¹⁸⁷ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 322.

¹⁸⁸ Zhou, “Junwei jianzhi,” 71.

¹⁸⁹ He is the Pdama dha ri tsing dbang or Pad ma ta in Tibetan sources, see Shakya rin chen sde, *Yar lung chos 'byung*, 87; Dpal 'byor bzang po, *Rgya bod yig tshad chen mo* (Khreng tu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985), 267.

¹⁹⁰ *MTZSL*, j.62, 1196; j.67, 1267-1268. He was called Sang gra shri jan in Tibetan sources, see Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po*, 115.

¹⁹¹ *MTZSL*, j.66, 1237; Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente: Eine Lexikalische Untersuchung*, 188.

¹⁹² As what will be discussed soon, the Prince of Yu and the Prince of Xi'an continued to fight with the Ming. The fact that the Prince of Xiping was enfeoffed as a Battalion Commander instead of as a Vice Commander like the Prince of Wujing may signify that the Prince of Xiping was the least powerful prince (fourth rank) in the Oyruqči family.

established the Xiliang Guard 西涼衛 in 1374. Pradzanya is referred to as the “Prince of Xiliang” in Tibetan sources, suggesting that the establishment of this guard may be related to him.¹⁹³ After the establishment of the Liangzhou Guard in 1376, the Xiliang Guard was then integrated into it. As for the Prince of Xi’an and the Prince of Yu, another two princes from the *Oγruqči clan, they were defeated by troops dispatched by Wei Zheng in 1370 and subsequently vanished from historical records.¹⁹⁴

The forces of the Prince of Gaochang Heshang were reorganized into the Gaochang Guard 高昌衛, with Heshang appointed as the Vice Commander.¹⁹⁵ To support the campaign led by Feng Sheng 馮勝 (d.1395) against Gansu in 1372, Heshang was stationed at Yongchang and made responsible for grain transportation.¹⁹⁶ After the conclusion of the war that year, the Gaochang Guard gradually merged into other guard units, and Heshang’s family relocated to Nanjing, subsequently fading from historical records.¹⁹⁷

Similarly, the Prince of Qi *Arakibag and his force was reorganized into the Qishan Guard 岐山衛, with *Arakibag serving as its Vice Commander. He passed away during the surrender process, while Sengge Dorjibal (= Ch. Sangge Duo’erzhiban 桑哥朵兒只班 < Ti. Seng ge rdo rje dpal), the Manager of Governmental Affairs of the Branch Secretariat of Gansu, succeeded to the title of Prince of Qi and negotiated with the Ming. He soon sent his nephew Dorji Sangjai (= Ch. Duo’erzhi Shijie 朵兒只失結 < Ti. Rdo rje sangs rgyas), the Right Assistant Provincial Administrator of the Branch Secretariat of Gansu (Ch. *gansu xingsheng youcheng* 甘肅行省右丞), to announce his surrender. However, the surrender was ultimately only discussed and never materialized.¹⁹⁸ The negotiations continued until 1372, when Dorjibal went back to Xining, bringing the talks to an end. Thereafter, Dorjibal engaged in multiple battles with Ming forces. At the end of 1372, Dorji Sangjai, collaborating with Ming troops, attacked Dorjibal and seized the golden seal of the Prince of Qi. After several further conflicts, Dorjibal offered tribute to the Ming court at the end of 1373, which seems like a signal of surrender. In response, the

¹⁹³ Zhou, “Junwei jianzhi,” 75-6.

¹⁹⁴ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 294.

¹⁹⁵ Song Lian 宋濂, *Song lian quanji* 宋濂全集, annotated by Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2014), j. 7, 146.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Zhou, “Junwei jianzhi,” 71-72.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 72-73.

Ming reorganized his force into the Qining Guard 岐寧衛 in 1374.¹⁹⁹ To dilute the influence of Dorjibai, the Qining Guard was composed not only of the Prince of Qi's army but also included soldiers from other Chinese military units. However, in 1376, Dorjibai rebelled again, leading to the abolition of the Qining Guard.²⁰⁰ Dorjibai's final fate, however, remains unknown.

2.3.1.2 Establishment of the Xining Guard

Nevertheless, some subordinates of the Prince of Qi followed Dorji Sangjai and surrendered to the Ming in 1372.²⁰¹ The Ming reorganized them into the Xining Guard 西寧衛 in the following year, appointing Dorji Sangjai as the Assistant Commander.²⁰² Some scholars argue that this Xining Guard was a *jimi* guard, which was ruled by Dorji Sangjai and only nominally obeyed the Ming's rule.²⁰³ However, this view is inaccurate. In the imperial edict issued by Emperor Hongwu to Dorji Sangjai, it is stated: "Now I establish the Xining Guard and especially appoint you as its 'assistant' (Ch. *zuo* 佐)." ²⁰⁴ This indicates that the Xining Guard had other senior officials, and Dorji Sangjai's duty was to assist them. During 1385-1386, the Xining Guard merged with the Nianbei Guard 碾伯衛, which was primarily composed of Han troops, to form a new Xining Guard.²⁰⁵

After the establishment of the Xining Guard, numerous native officials were appointed to govern the *tu ren* 土人 (or *tu min* 土民, "native people"), who lived inside Ming territory and

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 73-74.

²⁰⁰ Zhou, "Junwei jianzhi," 74-75.

²⁰¹ His ethnicity is unclear, with some records referring to him as Tibetan, Mongolian, or Shatuo 沙陀, see Serruys, "The Mongols of Kansu During the Ming," 240. The ethnic composition of the Xining region is generally very complex. For example, the Li *native* official clan of Xining, although considered descendants of Xi xia, had ancestors who held Persian, Mongolian, and Tibetan names, illustrating the diversity of local culture and identity. See Wu Mu 武沐 and Chen Liang 陳亮, "Mingdai xining lishi jiazhu buque 明代西寧李氏家族補闕," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 27, no. 1 (2016): 128-129.

²⁰² *QLXNFXZ*, 850. At this time, many other local officials who had defected in the early Hongwu years were also appointed to be *native* officials of the Xining Guard: Shila 矢剌 (the progenitor of later A 阿 clan *native* officials), Nanmuge 南木哥 (the progenitor of later 汪 clan *native* officials), Nashami 納沙密, Jibao 吉保, Xueduerding 薛都爾丁 (the progenitor of later Ye 冶 clan *native* officials), Tiemulu 帖木祿 (the progenitor of later Gan 甘 clan *native* officials), Bietiemu 乧鐵木 (the progenitor of later Zhu 朱 clan *native* officials), Hala Fan 哈喇反 (the progenitor of later La 喇 clan *native* officials), and Duolibie 朵力乧 (the progenitor of later Xin 辛 clan *native* officials). See Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1992), 1331-1345; *QLXNFXZ*, 611-615.

²⁰³ Cai Yalong 蔡亞龍, "'Han''tu' heliu: Mingchu xining wei jianli kao '漢''土'合流: 明初西寧衛建立考," *Zhongyang minzudaxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 中央民族大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), no. 4 (2019): 110-111.

²⁰⁴ "今開設西寧衛, 特命爾為之佐." See *QLXNFXZ*, 850.

²⁰⁵ Cai, "'Han''tu' heliu," 111-112.

led an agricultural life, and *zu* (族, “tribe”), who usually lived outside Ming territory and led a pastoral life.²⁰⁶ The most prominent native officials in the Xining Guard were the Li family and the Eastern and Western Qi families. As the saying went, “Who else but the Li and Qi native officials upheld the great edifice of Xining?”²⁰⁷ Their status as native officials persisted until the early twentieth century, when the native official system was abolished, spanning over 500 years.²⁰⁸

The ancestors of the Li family once served in the administration of the Prince of Qi, a fact prominently emphasized in their genealogical records.²⁰⁹ According to the *Ming gongchen xifeng dibu* (明功臣襲封底簿, “Register of Hereditary Enfeoffments of Ming Meritorious Officials”),²¹⁰ Li Nange 李南哥 (d. 1430), who held the position of Vice Prefect of Xining Prefecture during the Yuan period, surrendered to the Ming in the early Hongwu period. In 1373, he was appointed as the Battalion Judge (Ch. *suo zhenfu* 所鎮撫) of the Xining Guard.²¹¹ His family later became the renowned Eastern and Western Li native official lineages.²¹²

Li Nange’s son, Li Ying 李英 (1382-1442), was the founder of the Eastern Li lineage. He campaigned in regions such as Liangzhou and Yongchang, and participated in the Yongle Emperor’s northern expeditions, achieving illustrious military merits. In 1427, he was enfeoffed as the Earl of Huining 會寧伯.²¹³ Li Wen 李文 (1398-1489), a nephew of Li Ying, was the founder of the Western Li lineage. Similarly distinguished through notable military achievements and deeply involved in court politics, he was enfeoffed as this Earl of Gaoyang 高陽伯 in 1458.²¹⁴ The deeds of Li Wen will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

²⁰⁶ The sources told us the Dabushou tribe 打卜受族 belonged to the Eastern Li clan *native* official, and Gudie tribe 古迭族 belonged to the Eastern Qi clan *native* official. *XNWZ*, 67; Zhang Lingxuan 張令琯, “Gansu Qinghai tusi zhi (xu) 甘肅青海土司志 (續),” *Gansu minzu yanjiu* 甘肅民族研究, no. 3 (1983): 160.

²⁰⁷ “西寧之共支大廈者，非李祁土司而誰也。” *QBJL*, 66.

²⁰⁸ For the abolishment of the native official system, see Xi Yusong 郗玉松, “Zailun tusi zhidu de zhongjie 再論土司制度的終結,” *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 32, no. 3 (2021): 28-33.

²⁰⁹ *XXLSSP*, 279.

²¹⁰ It was compiled during the Jiajing reign, recording the lineage, merits and deeds of dukes 公, marquises 侯 and earls 伯.

²¹¹ *Ming gongchen xifeng dibu* 明功臣襲封底簿, in *Mingdai zhuanji congkan: mingren lei* 明代傳記叢刊·名人類, vol. 20 (Taibei: Mingwen shuju, 1991), 271. For the analysis of Li Nange’s activities, see Wu and Chen, “Mingdai xining lishi jiazubaque,” 129; *XXLSZP*, 63-64; Wang Jiguang 王繼光, *Anduo zangqu tusi jiazupu jilu yanjiu* 安多藏區土司家族譜輯錄研究 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2000), 25.

²¹² For the lineage and internal structure of their family, see Wu and Chen, “Mingdai xining lishi jiazubaque,” 127-130; Zhang Shengyin 張生寅 and Cui Yonghong 崔永紅, “You ‘xixia lishi shipu kan li tusi zongzu neibu de zuzhi guanli tizhi 由《西夏李氏世譜》看李土司宗族內部的組織管理體制,” *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no. 2 (2006): 93-98.

²¹³ *XXLSSP*, 66.

²¹⁴ *XXLSSP*, 72-73.

The Eastern Qi family were descendants of Dorji Sangjai, thus representing a continuation of the Yuan Prince of Qi lineage. The ancestor of the Western Qi family was Qi Kun dga' seng ge 祁貢哥星吉 (d. 1398), who once served in the Provincial Judicial Secretary's Office (Ch. *liwen suo* 理問所) of Gansu during the Yuan era. He submitted to the Ming in 1368 and served under Wei Zheng, the Commander of the Hezhou Guard. In 1373, he was appointed as Battalion Vice Commander (Ch. *fu qianhu* 副千戶) and assigned to administer affairs in the Xining Guard.²¹⁵ In the memory of some members of the Western Qi family, they are descendants of members of the Yuan royal family.²¹⁶ Due to the similarity between the name Qi Kun dga' seng ge and Gönggabal 貢哥班, a descendant of *Oγruqči, many studies have asserted they were the same individual.²¹⁷ This claim, however, is not supported by any other evidence and is therefore unreliable.

Overall, the Western Qi family were descendants of the Prince of Qi, the Western and Eastern Li families were descendants of officials under the Prince of Qi, and the Eastern Qi family claimed descent from the Yuan royal family. They likely appropriated the authority of Yuan imperial princes to legitimize and strengthen their rule during the Ming period although no source ever records such practice.

In addition to the tribes and *tu ren* directly ruled by native officials of the Xining Guard, there were other tribes referred to as *zu* and known as the "Thirteen Xifan Tribes" in Xining.²¹⁸ These tribes submitted to the Ming by the recruitment of native officials, and thus also fell under their governance within the Ming frontier management system.²¹⁹ The officials in charge of these subordinate tribes were called *fu'an* officials 撫安官 in the early Ming period, and

²¹⁵ Wang, *Anduo zangqu tusi*, 176. *HDQSZP*, 5.

²¹⁶ *HDQSZP*, 2.

²¹⁷ Li Keyu 李克鬱, "Gelete ji xiping wang," 62; Zhang Haiyun 張海雲, "'Wanghua' jiazhu: jiyu dui xi qi tusi de lishi kaocha '王化' 家族——基於對西祁土司的歷史考察," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 21, no. 4 (2010): 121.

²¹⁸ For the detailed information about the Thirteen Tribes, see Zhao Zhonghua 趙忠花, "'Xining shisan zu' kao '西寧十三族' 考," *Qinghai shifan daxue minzu shifan xueyuan xuebao* 青海師範大學民族師範學院學報, no. 2(2012): 33-34; Xian Ba 先巴, "Lun mingdai 'ta'er si liuzu' de xingcheng yu fazhan 論明代 '塔爾寺六族' 的形成與發展," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究, no. 2(2013), 104-108.

²¹⁹ Similarly, the twenty-four Xifan tribes of Hezhou Guard are explicitly recorded as being under the jurisdiction of the four native officials—Su, Han, Ha, and Wang, with each native official having directly affiliated tribes, see *QBJL*, 35. Wang Jiguang summarized this model as "a combination of native and state governance," "using state-appointed officials to manage *native* officials, and using *native* officials to govern the tribal population." See Wang, *Shixue yanjiu lunwen ji*, 214-215.

*fu*yi officials in the later Ming period.²²⁰ Citing the *Xining fu xin zhi* 西寧府新志, scholars suggested that the “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” were recruited by Dorji Sangjai and Li Nange.²²¹ This narrative likely reflects later influences and diverges from the facts, as the Li and Qi clans of native officials shared and shouldered the responsibilities of the Xining Guard.²²² In reality, various native officials should have played a role in recruiting these subordinate tribes,²²³ and the formation of the Thirteen Xifan Tribes was a long process.²²⁴

Besides the Thirteen Xifan Tribes, the Xining Guard also supervised four different guards: Anding 安定, Aduan 阿端, Quxian 曲先, and Handong 罕東. The Prince of Anding and the three Sarig Uygur guards under his jurisdiction—Anding, Quxian and Aduan—were situated at the junction of southeastern Xinjiang and northwestern Qinghai, near Suzhou. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, during the Yuan period, these guards were supervised by the Prince of Bin stationed at Suzhou. However, in the Ming period, the Prince of Anding and the three guards were placed under the jurisdiction of the Xining Guard rather than the Suzhou Guard, a phenomenon that has sparked extensive discussion among scholars.²²⁵

This phenomenon arose due to multiple factors. Firstly, geographically, the routes connecting the Sarig Uygur with Handong and Xining remained unobstructed during the late

²²⁰ As of yet, only one reference to the office of *fu'an* official has been identified. According to the *Ming shilu*, the *fu'an* officials were responsible for granting rewards to Xifan people who paid tribute to Beijing. After accomplishing their duties, the *fu'an* Battalion Commander 撫安千戶 and banner troops 旗軍 could also receive rewards. In the *Libu zhigao* compiled in 1620 or 1621, “*fu'an guan* 撫安官” was written as “*fu'an guan* 撫按官,” which seems an error. See *MTZOSL*, j. 19, 346-7; *Libu zhigao* 禮部志稿, in *Jingyin Wenxuan ge siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 598 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1986), j. 91, 652-3.

²²¹ *QLXNFXZ*, 469; Zhao, “‘xining shisanzu’ kao,” 34.

²²² *QBJL*, 66.

²²³ For example, Qi Kun dga' seng ge undertook several inducement missions during 1378 to 1391, see Wang, *Anduo zangqu tusi*, 176.

²²⁴ According to the *Xining wei zhi*, Zhanza Tribe 占咂族, Geza Tribe 革咂族, Siguomi Tribe 思果迷族, Shenzang Tribe 申藏族, Longben Tribe 隆奔族, Zi na Tribe 西納族, Basha Tribe 巴沙族 and Bawa Tribe 巴哇族 were pacified and submitted in the 13th year of the Hongwu reign (1380-1381). The Shenzhong Tribe 申中族 was pacified in the 30th year of the Hongwu reign (1397-1398). The Xining tribes that paid tribute in the first year of the Yongle reign (1403-0404) included Basha and other nine tribes, while those paying tribute in the 17th year of Yongle (1419-1420) included “Longben, Bawa, Jia'erji 嘉兒即, Shenchong, Shenzang, Geza, Guomibu 果迷卜, Zhangza, Zi na, Longbu, and Basha,” totaling eleven tribes.²²⁴ In the first year of the Hongxi era (1425-1426), twelve tribes were recorded, and by the second year of the Zhengtong reign (1437-1438), thirteen tribes were officially recognized.²²⁴ Therefore, the “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” were formally established between the Hongxi and Zhengtong periods. Thereafter, the tribes of Xining continued to fluctuate, and the number of “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” was not fixed. See *XNWZ*, 64-70; *MTZSL*, j. 135, 2140; *MTZOSL*, j. 26, 483; j. 217, 2163; *MXUZSL*, j. 7, 182; *MYZSL*, j. 27, 544.

²²⁵ For a comprehensive discussion on this topic, see Chen Zhigang 陳志剛, “Cong zangchuan fojiao dao yislan jiao: 14 zhi 17 shiji zongjiao zhuanbian xia de hami shehui 從藏傳佛教到伊斯蘭教——14 至 17 世紀宗教轉變下的哈密社會,” *Lishi renlei xue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 18, no. 2 (2020): 6-11.

Yuan and early Ming periods,²²⁶ making it possible for the Xining Guard to supervise the Sarig Uygur effectively. Secondly, the various Sarig Uygur tribes had gradually expanded from the border area between Qinghai and Xinjiang deeper into the Mdo smad region, located along the critical route from Xining to Tibet,²²⁷ which facilitated increased communication between the Sarig Uygur and Xining. Lastly, in the early Ming period, the Prince of Anding of the *Baidaqan family and his forces were the first within the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus to surrender to the Ming. At the time of their submission, the Suzhou Guard had not yet been established, leading to their administration under the Xining Guard. This administrative arrangement persisted even after the establishment of the Suzhou Guard.

The establishment of the three Sarig Uygur guards unfolded as follows: In 1372, Wei Zheng, then the Commander of the Hezhou Guard, tried to induce the Prince of Anding.²²⁸ In 1374, the Prince of Anding (also referred to as the Prince of Ning 寧王) Buyan Temür (Ch. Buyan Tiemu'er 卜煙帖木兒) dispatched envoys to Nanjing to pay tribute.²²⁹ As the result of mutual communication, the Anding Woduan Guard 安定斡端衛 and the Quxian Dalin Guard 曲先答林衛 were established in 1375.²³⁰ However, due to internal conflicts and invasions by Dorjibal, the Prince of Qi, as mentioned above, these two guards under the Prince of Anding soon collapsed.

Thereafter, the Anding Guard was reestablished in 1396, with its administrative seat located at the site of a Ming-era fortress northwest of today's Tuanjie Township 團結鄉 in the Sugan Lake Basin 蘇干湖盆地 (known as Ser mthong or Xi'er Ding 昔兒丁 during the Ming period, see Figure 2.2), Qinghai.²³¹ Following this, the Quxian Guard was established in 1406, with its seat at Yaowang Tan 藥王灘, corresponding to the Mantang 曼塘 area in Suli Township 蘇里鄉 of present-day Tianjun County 天峻縣.²³² In the same year, the Aduan

²²⁶ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 394.

²²⁷ Tuo Chaoqun 妥超群 and Liu Tiecheng 劉鐵程, "Bilishu jiang kao: mingdai quxian wei diwang ji xiangguan diming xin zheng 畢力術江考——明代曲先衛地望及相關地名新證," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no.6 (2011): 61-70.

²²⁸ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 360.

²²⁹ For the influence sphere of the Prince of Anding during the end of Yuan to the early Ming period, see Chen, "Heishui cheng yuandai wenxian," 110-115.

²³⁰ Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 360; Li Xinfeng 李新峰, "Ming chu Sali weiwu'er she wei kao 明初撒里畏兀兒設衛考," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 4 (2012): 76.

²³¹ Li Bingcheng 李並成, "'Xitong' diwang kao: fu ln ming anding wei cheng '西桐' 地望考——附論明安定衛城," *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 西北民族研究, no. 1 (1998): 49-50.

²³² Tuo and Liu, "Bilishu jiang kao," 67.

Guard was established, located near Khotan.²³³ However, the descendants of the Prince of Anding did not show up until 1413, when Buyan Temür's grandson Yipandan 亦攀丹 came to Beijing from Gling tshang 靈藏, located near today's Dege 德格, to pay homage and be reestablished as the Prince of Anding.²³⁴ Nevertheless, due to his late submission, his authority over the three Sarig Uygur guards was significantly limited compared to the former period. Consequently, many of these tribes later either revolted against his rule or defected to the Moghul Khanate, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 3.

The three guards under the Prince of Anding comprised four subordinate units (Ch. *bu* 部):²³⁵ Aduan 阿端, Azhen 阿真, Kuxian 苦先, and Tieli 帖里. Among these, Kuxian corresponds to Quxian, namely Kuche 庫車, an oasis city located on the northern edge of the Tarim Basin; Tieli refers to the Tarim region, adjacent to the southern area of Kuche; Azhen is phonetically similar to Yanqi 焉耆, located near Kuche;²³⁶ and Aduan shares phonetic resemblance with Khotan.²³⁷ These four units formed during the Yuan's military withdrawal from the Western Regions in the late thirteen century. Because of Qaidu forces' consistent invasions, the Yuan abandoned Khotan in 1289 and relocated Khotan troops to the Quxian Dalin Commander-in-Chief Office (Ch. *quxian dalin du yuanshuai fu* 曲先答林都元帥府). Between 1299 and 1302, the Yuan further withdrew from the Quxian and Tarim regions.²³⁸ It is highly probable that those military units were then relocated to the Sarig Uygur territory and assigned to the Prince of Anding for management.

Regarding the Handong Guard, the Ming established the so-called Handong Company 罕東百戶所, which was led by previous Yuan officials of the Branch Bureau of Religious Affairs

²³³ Ceng Zhongmian 岑仲勉, "Mingchu quxian aduan anding ahndong si wei kao, 明初曲先阿端安定罕東四衛考," in *Jindai xuebao huikan* 近代學報彙刊, vol. 97 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 94-97.

²³⁴ *MTZOSL*, j. 140, 1684.

²³⁵ Atwood suggested the term "*bu* 部" was used in the sense of a military unit in Chinese sources, see Christopher P. Atwood, "The Empire of the Great Khan: The Yuan Ulus, 1260-1368," 594-595.

²³⁶ Ceng, "Mingchu quxian aduan," 102-103.

²³⁷ Ceng Zhongmian 岑仲勉, "Mingchu quxian aduan anding ahndong si wei kao, 明初曲先阿端安定罕東四衛考," in *Jindai xuebao huikan* 近代學報彙刊, vol. 97 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 94-97. Ceng Zhongmian suggested that "Anding 安定" and "Aduan 阿端" are phonetically similar, proposing that "the Prince of Anding" might be a variant translation of "the Prince of Aduan (Khotan)." However, Given that in 1289, the Yuan has already withdrew from Khotan 斡端 and the title "Prince of Anding" was enfeoffed in 1313, Ceng Zhongmian's hypothesis is chronologically untenable. See Liu, *Chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 281.

²³⁸ Liu, *Chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 277-286; Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝, "Yuandai quxian talin kao 元代曲先塔林考," *Zhongya xuekan* 中亞學刊, no. 1 (1983): 243-252.

of Tibet in 1375.²³⁹ However, the tribes in Handong rebelled later and the Ming sent an army to suppress them in 1392.²⁴⁰ At last, the Tibetan monk Sanla 三刺 recruited the Handong people, settled them in a newly established monastery at Ledu 樂都, east of Xining, and paid tribute to the Ming in 1393. The Hongwu Emperor commended Sanla's deeds and bestowed the name Qutan (瞿曇 < Sk. Gautamā) upon the monastery.²⁴¹ However, those Handong people were not the predecessors of the Handong Guard since the Handong Guard was located west of Xining.

The Handong Guard was established later in 1397-1398, located to the northwest of Xining,²⁴² under the leadership of the chieftain Bsod nams grags (Ch. Suonan Jilasi 鎖南吉刺思), who was appointed as the Assistant Commander.²⁴³ Little is known about Bsod nams grags. It is highly possible that he was a newly emerging figure rising in the Handong region rather than an original Yuan official, which should be specifically emphasized in the sources.

Geographically, the Anding, Aduan, and Quxian Guards were active in northwestern Qinghai, bordering Khotan to the west, Shazhou to the north, and Qinghai Lake to the east. The Handong Guard, on the other hand, was located northeast of Qinghai Lake, extending to the northern bank of Guide 歸德.²⁴⁴ They were collectively known as the "Four Guards" under the supervision of the Xining Guard.

The leaders of the Four Guards and Thirteen Xifan Tribes were granted official titles such as Commander and Imperial Preceptor (Ch. *guoshi* 國師) to govern their respective units, with the Prince of Anding retaining his original title. Notably, apart from Anding, Aduan, and Quxian, the leaders of Handong and Thirteen Xifan Tribes were often referred to as native officials. Those native officials certainly shared many similarities with the native officials of the Xining Guard (such as Li and Qi native official family mentioned before): They all ruled

²³⁹ MTZSL, j.96, 1645.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., j.217, 3196.

²⁴¹ Ibid., j.225, 330-331.

²⁴² Tang Jingshen 唐景紳, "Mingdai handong wei diwang xiao kao 明代罕東衛地望小考," *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no. 2 (1985): 94-97.

²⁴³ DMYTZ, vol. 10, j. 89, 5501; Cheng Liying 程利英, "Mingdai guanxi qi wei yu xifan zhu wei 明代關西七衛與西番諸衛," *Xizang yanjiu* 西藏研究, no. 3 (2005), 15.

²⁴⁴ The territorial boundaries described here reflect the situation in the early Ming period. For the changes in the regions of the four guards, see Tuo and Liu, "Bilishu jiang kao," 61-70; Tang, "Mingdai handong wei diwang xiao kao," 94-97.

over tribes which had obligations such as tribute payments in horses.²⁴⁵ Similar to the fact that the native officials of 'Bri Guard 畢里衛 has been registered in the Hezhou Guard,²⁴⁶ it is likely that the native officials of Handong and “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” also has been registered in the Xining Guard.

However, there are subtle differences between the native officials of the Handong Guard and the “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” and those of the Xining Guard. The native officials of the Xining Guard mainly governed the *tu ren*, while the Handong Guard and the “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” governed the *fan min* (番民, “(western) barbarian people”), which lived beyond the boundary markers.²⁴⁷ In addition, the fundamental distinction was that native officials of the Xining Guard could enter the Ming administration system and serve elsewhere,²⁴⁸ while the native officials of Handong and of the Thirteen Xifan Tribes could not.

In conclusion, during the early Ming period, the Xining Guard oversaw a hierarchical buffer system with three layers: native officials of the Xining Guard in the core, native officials and other secular and religious leaders of the Handong Guard and the Thirteen Xifan Tribes in the middle, and the Anding, Quxian, and Aduan Guards under the Prince of Anding in the outside zone. The closer an institution was to the core, the more deeply it was under the rule of the Ming. This structure, which was then called the buffer zone by the Chinese, reflected the Ming's intention to establish a stable, amicable and potentially expansive frontier.

To secure the frontier and obtain horses for military purposes, the Ming conducted horse-tea trade with those groups of the buffer zone from 1375.²⁴⁹ For this purpose, the Ming established the Hezhou Tea and Horse Trading Office (Ch. *hezhou chamasi* 河州茶馬司) in

²⁴⁵ The *XNWZ* groups the “Thirteen Tribes of Barbarians” and the “Barbarian Tribes” under the jurisdiction of Xining Guard's native officials together without distinction under the categorical entry for “Fan Tribes 番族.” See *XNWZ*, 64-70.

²⁴⁶ Qinghai sheng bianji zu 青海省編輯組 ed., *Qinghai sheng zang zu menggu zu shehui lishi diaocha* 青海省藏族蒙古族社會歷史調查 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1985), 5; Xu Ruobing 許若冰, “Bianjiang zhili shiyu xia mingdai longwu he liuyu minzu huqian geju de xingcheng 邊疆治理視闕下明代隆務河流域民族互嵌格局的形成,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究, no. 4 (2023): 123.

²⁴⁷ Qu Bin 屈斌, “Mingdai Qinghai huangbei shanqu de ‘fan zu’ zhili yu shehui bianqian 明代青海湟北山區的“番族”治理與社會變遷,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 2 (2023): 111, 119. It is worth mentioning that although there existed boundary markers between the Ming and *fan min*, they were in practice rarely observed. Chinese sources complain that *fan min* frequently crossed these markers to enter Ming territory for hunting, logging or theft. See *MYZSL*, j. 85; 1707; *MXZSL*, j. 173, 3124-5.

²⁴⁸ See Wu Mu 武沐 and Jin Yanhong 金燕紅, *13-19 shiji hehuang duo minzu zoulang lishi wenhua yanjiu* 13-19 世紀河湟多民族走廊歷史文化研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017), 147-151.

²⁴⁹ Chu Ning 褚甯 and Tan Xin 譚欣, “Sheng shu zhi jian: mingdai “chaifa ma” yu hehuangtaomin difang zhixu de bianqian 生、熟之間：明代“差發馬”與河湟洮岷地方秩序的變遷,” *Jinan shixue* 暨南史學, no. 20 (2020): 75.

1374 and the Xining Tea and Horse Trading Office (Ch. *xining chamasi* 西寧茶馬司) in 1379.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, in 1393, the Ming established the “Gold Medal Tribute System” (Ch. *jinpai chaifa zhi* 金牌差發制) in Xining, Hezhou, Taozhou, and Minzhou.²⁵¹ Under this system, the Ming court issued gold medals to the leaders of all Xifan tribes as credentials of identification. Every three years, Ming envoys were dispatched to the Xifan camps to collect horses, or the tribes were summoned to bring horses to Ming cities for trade, for which the Ming paid in tea.²⁵² Tribes participating in the Gold Medal Tribute System were referred to by the Ming as the “cooked Fan” (Ch. *shu fan* 熟番), whereas those that did not participate were called the “raw Fan” (Ch. *sheng fan* 生番), indicating that they remained outside the Ming administrative framework.²⁵³ The Four Guards and Thirteen Xifan Tribes of the Qinghai buffer zone were all classified as “cooked Fan,” and they also participated in the horse–tea trade with the Ming under the Gold Medal Tribute System.

Finally, as an important addition, it is worth mentioning that, apart from the Xining Guard, the Hezhou Guard also played a role in Ming control over Tibet, as demonstrated in several aspects. Firstly, the Ming established the Shibaochi Battalion 失保赤千戶所 in Shazhou in 1375, which was subordinated to the Hezhou Guard.²⁵⁴ This battalion was established at nearly same time as the establishment of the Anding Woduan Guard and the Quxian Dalin Guard, thus its creation might have served to counterbalance and monitor the forces of the Prince of Anding. Second, even after the establishment of the Xining Tea and Horse Trading Office (Ch. *xining chamasi* 西寧茶馬司) in 1379, the horse tribute and tea rewards of the Anding Guard were still managed by the Hezhou Tea and Horse Trading Office (Ch. *hezhou chamasi* 河州茶馬司).²⁵⁵ Third, some Xining tribal leaders—such as Irinjinbal (Ch. Yilinzenban 亦鄰真班)—

²⁵⁰ Chu and Tan, “Sheng shu zhi jian” 81; *MTZSL*, j. 93, 1628; *MXUZSL*, j. 13, 360.

²⁵¹ Wu Ting-Chih, “Borders Created by Horses: Bureaucratic Pastoralism and Environmental Governance in Northwest China under the Ming Dynasty,” *Asia Major* 37, no. 1 (2024): 67-109; Chu and Tan, “Sheng shu zhi jian,” 70-92; Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 3, 73-74; For the horse-tea trade with the Xifan in ancient China, see Wei Kongming 魏孔明, *Xibei minzu maoyi yanjiu: yi chama hushi wei zhongxin* 西北民族貿易研究——以茶馬互市為中心 (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2003).

²⁵² Chu and Tan, “Sheng shu zhi jian,” 78-79.

²⁵³ Generally, “cooked Fan” was referred to those non-Han groups in the frontier who obeyed the rule of China, while the “raw Fan” people mainly lived outside the management system of China. See Magnus Fiskesjö, “On the ‘Raw’ and the ‘Cooked’ Barbarians of Imperial China,” *Inner Asia* 1, no. 2 (1999): 139-168.

²⁵⁴ Zhou Song 周松, “Mingdai shazhou ‘daren’ neiqian xinlun 明代沙州‘達人’內遷新論,” *Qinghua daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 清華大學學報（哲學社會科學版）, no. 5 (2017): 101.

²⁵⁵ Chu and Tan, “Sheng shu zhi jian,” 81.

petitioned to submit to the Ming and were then incorporated into the Chuanbuzu Battalion 川卜族千戶所 of the Hezhou Guard.²⁵⁶ Lastly, it is worth mentioning the 'Bri Guard 必里衛, which was deeply involved in the frontier management of the Qinghai region. During the Yuan period, the 'Bri Brigade 必里萬戶府 was under the Mdo smad Pacification Commission, located north of Guide 歸德,²⁵⁷ adjacent to Handong. It surrendered to the Ming and was established as the 'Bri Battalion 必里千戶所 in 1373, and was promoted to the 'Bri Guard 必里衛 in 1403, bordering the Handong Guard. The Hezhou official Kang Shou 康壽 was repeatedly dispatched to negotiate and reward the “Four Guards” of Xining. He was firstly an official in the Hezhou Guard and was later promoted to a native official in the 'Bri Guard and eventually as the Regional Military Assistant Commissioner (Ch. *duzhihui qianshi* 都指揮僉事). During this period, his family resided among the tribe of Nie'nabuza 捏納卜啞 in the Xining and 'Bri areas.²⁵⁸ This data suggests that Kang Shou may have been a native of the 'Bri region who, after submitting to Ming, initially served in the Hezhou Guard but later operated primarily in 'Bri. This pattern aligns with that of Xining native officials who first submitted and settled in Hezhou and later returned to serve under the newly established Xining Guard. Although the Hezhou Guard once played a vital role in Qing frontier management, its influence declined significantly during the fifteenth century.²⁵⁹

2.3.2 Establishment of Ming's Xiyu buffer zone

Compared with its conquest of the Qinghai region, the Ming's conquest of the Western Regions was far later and faced fiercer resistance from the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus. It was the Yongle Emperor who finally conquered the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus, along with other Yuan powers, and transformed them into the Xiyu buffer zone.

²⁵⁶ MTZSL, j. 233, 3412; MTZOSL, j. 20 *shang*, 356.

²⁵⁷ Wang Jiguang 王繼光, “Mingdai bili wei xin kao 明代必里衛新考,” *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 西北民族研究, no. 1 (1993): 156.

²⁵⁸ MTZOSL, j. 20, 364; MXUZSL, j. 7, 182, j. 10, 266.

²⁵⁹ A landmark event was the disappearance of the 'Bri Guard at the end of fifteenth century, see Xu, “Mingdai longwu he,” 122-130.

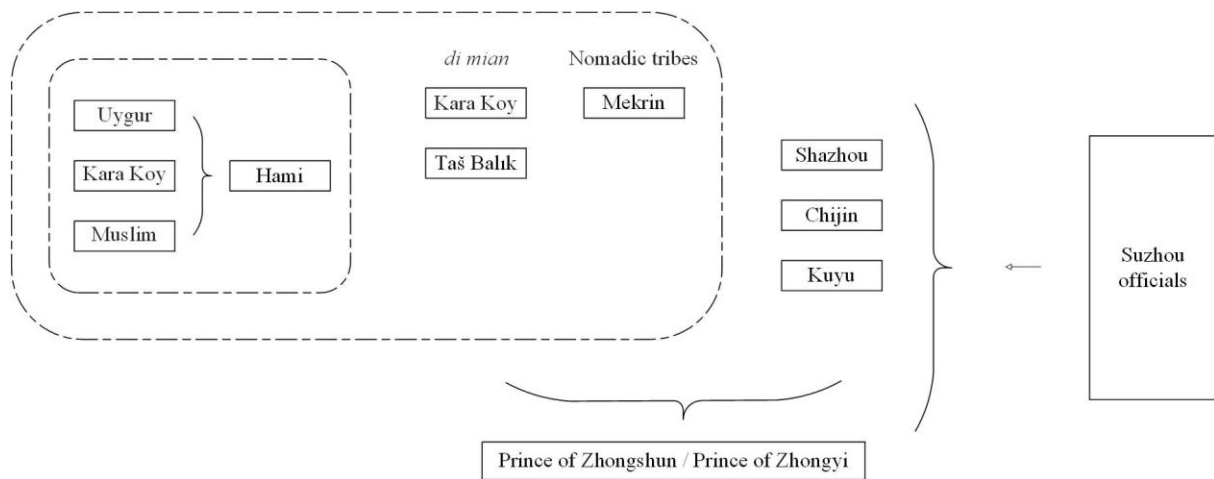


Figure 2.8. The Structure of the Xiyu Buffer Zone.

2.3.2.1 Fighting against the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus

As mentioned in the last section, Xu Da defeated Köke Temür in 1370. Afterward, two Ming generals Tang He 湯和 (1326-1395) and Guo Ying 郭英 (1335-1403) captured Ningxia. However, after the northern expedition army led by generals such as Xu Da was defeated at places such as Qaraqorum by remaining Yuan forces in 1372, the Ming abolished the Ningxia Prefecture 寧夏府 and subsequently established the Ningxia Guard 寧夏衛, to reinforce the military power of the region.²⁶⁰ Regarding the Wulhai Circuit, it was referred to by the Ming at this time as Tatan 塔灘 (derived from its Yuan period name Tatali 塔塔里 < Mo. *datayal* or *tataul*, “irrigation canal”),²⁶¹ and had a significant concentration of Yuan military forces.²⁶²

In 1372, Feng Sheng launched a western expedition, advancing into the territory of Yuan-controlled Gansu. Feng Sheng firstly gathered a large army in Lanzhou, subsequently capturing Liangzhou and Yongchang, and then advancing northward along the southern route of the

²⁶⁰ Zhou Song 周松, “Hongwu shiqi mingchao zai ningxia diqu de jinglue 洪武時期明朝在寧夏地區的經略,” *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學, no. 6 (2006): 99-102.

²⁶¹ Wang and Shi, “Yuandai tatali tuntian,” 98-99; Peter Golden, and Tibor Halasi-Kun, eds., *The King's Dictionary: The Rasūlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth Century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian and Mongol* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245.

²⁶² Zhou Song 周松, “Ru ming menggu ren zhengzhi jue de zhuanhuan yu rongheL yi mingdai menggu shijue wu Yuncheng badu tiemuer wei li 入明蒙古人政治角色的轉換與融合——以明代蒙古世爵吳允誠（把都帖木兒）為例,” *Beifang minzu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 北方民族大學學報（哲學社會科學版）, no. 1 (2009): 27-32; Zhou Song 周松, “Tatan xin kao 塔灘新考,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 19, no. 4 (2009): 117-125; Zhou Song 周松, “Hongwu chao tatan menggu yu mingchao de guanxi 洪武朝塔灘蒙古與明朝的關係,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 21, no. 2 (2011): 60-67.

Nalian Route 納憐道 to Yijinai,²⁶³ which was soon taken.²⁶⁴ Later, the army conquered Ganzhou and Suzhou, and further marched into the Shule River Basin.²⁶⁵ However, under threat from Čayadaid princes in Hami and Sarig Uygur, Feng Sheng quickly abandoned the territories of Gansu and Ningxia.²⁶⁶ Regardless of Feng Sheng's retreat, the Ming still made some progress and established the Zhuanglang Guard 莊浪衛 and Gansu Regional Military Commission 甘肅都衛 in the same year. Moreover, in 1374, the Liangzhou Guard (also known as the Xiliang Guard or Liangzhou Native Guard) was established.²⁶⁷

Afterward, the Ming advance into Gansu consistently encountered resistance from newly established Yuan institutions in Gansu, such as the Left and Right Offices of Gansu Province (Ch. *gansu sheng zuoyou si* 甘肅省左右司),²⁶⁸ the Branch Bureau of Military Affairs in Yongchang and other locations (Ch. *yongchang deng chu xing shumiyuan* 永昌等處行樞密院,²⁶⁹ the Yijinai Branch of the Branch Secretariat of Gansu (Ch. *yijinai fensheng* 亦集乃分省),²⁷⁰ as well as opposition from the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus.²⁷¹ In 1375, the Prince of Ningsu departed from the Yijinai Circuit and surrendered, only to fall ill and die soon.²⁷² In 1376, the

²⁶³ Ma Shunping points out that Ming army conducted offensives against the Northern Yuan along the Yuan postal routes, see MA Shunping 馬順平, "Hongwu wunian mingmeng zhanzheng xilu zhanyi yanjiu 洪武五年明蒙戰爭西路戰役研究," *Zhongguo bianjiang minzu yanjiu* 中國邊疆民族研究, no. 3 (2010): 7.

²⁶⁴ Robinson, *In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire*, 115-118; Zhao Xianhai 趙現海, "Hongwu chunian gansu diyuan zhengzhi yu ming chao xibei jiangjie zhengce: you feng sheng 'qi di' shijian yinfa de sikao 洪武初年甘肅地緣政治與明朝西北疆界政策——由馮勝「棄地」事件引發的思考," *Gudai wenming* 古代文明 5, no. 1 (2011): 80; Ma, "Hongwu wunian," 8-11.

²⁶⁵ Ma Shunping 馬順平, "明代陝西行都司及其衛所建置考實," *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 23, no. 2 (2008): 111.

²⁶⁶ According to *Jishi lu*, the retreat of Feng Sheng's army was attributed to "fear of the Huihu troops." Zhao Xianhai suggests that "Huihu" refers to the Moghul Khanate. However, Robinson has already indicated that the Moghul Khanate was experiencing significant internal turmoil and the assaults of Tamerlane at this time, thus improbable to make an invasion into the Ming. Ma Shunping believes that "Huihu" denotes the Čayadaid princes in Turpan and Hami, which is correct. Additionally, the Sarig Uygur area also posed threats to the Ming troops stationed at Yijinai and Gansu. Yu, *Jishi lu jianzheng*, 364; Zhao, "Hongwu chunian gansu diyuan zhengzhi," 85-88; Robinson, *In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire*, 118; Ma, "Hongwu wunian mingmeng zhanzheng," 11.

²⁶⁷ *MTZSL*, j. 93, 1627.

²⁶⁸ Luo fuyi 羅福頤, "Beiyuan guanyin kao 北元官印考," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, no. 1 (1979): 34.

²⁶⁹ Li Ling 李嶺, "Yuanmo mingchu beiyuan yu mingchao dui hexi zoulang de zhenduo: tianyuan yuannian 'yongchang dengchuxing shumiyuan duanshigun yin' ba 元末明初北元與明朝對河西走廊的爭奪——天元元年「永昌等處行樞密院斷事官印」跋," *Zhongyangminzu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 中央民族大學學報(哲學社會科學版) 43, no. 2 (2016): 110-114.

²⁷⁰ Ma Shunping 馬順平, "Beiyuan 'xuanguang ernian gansu dengchu xing zhongshusheng Yijinai fensheng ziwen' kaoshi 北元「宣光二年甘肅等處行中書省亦集乃分省諸文」考釋," *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報(哲學社會科學版) 40, no. 2 (2008): 32-36; Liu Zhiyue 劉志月, "Beiyuan chunian Yijinai fensheng tuogan wenti de zai tantao 北元初年亦集乃分省若干問題的再探討," *Xibu menggu luntan* 西部蒙古論壇, no. 1 (2019): 46-52.

²⁷¹ Chen, "Heishui cheng yuandai wenxian," 110-115; Yang Fuxue 楊富學 and Zhang Haijuan 張海娟, "Mnenggu binwang jiazou yu yuandai Yijinai luz hi guanxi 蒙古圖王家族與元代亦集乃路之關係," *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, no. 3 (2013): 163.

²⁷² *MTZSL*, j. 102, 1724.

Liangzhou Guard was established.²⁷³ In 1380, Pu Ying 濮英 (d.1386) led a successful western expedition, capturing the Prince of Lökčün at first,²⁷⁴ and subsequently advanced to the Čikin Station 赤斤站, where they captured the Prince of Bin, Irinjin (Ch. Yilinzhen 亦憐真), and his 1,400 subordinates.²⁷⁵ Pu Ying also requested to lead troops to open the route from the Central Asia to China through Hami to facilitate trade, which was approved by the Hongwu emperor but seems not to have been carried out.²⁷⁶ After a series of military successes, the Yongchang Guard was established in 1383 and the Shandan Guard and Ganzhou Left Guard 甘州左衛 in 1390.²⁷⁷

At this time, Gunaširi (Ch. Wunashili 兀納失里, P. Kunāšīrīn) ruled Hami.²⁷⁸ Originally bearing the title of the Prince of Weiwu Xining, he assumed the title of the Prince of Su after the extinction of the Prince of Su's lineage.²⁷⁹ Gunaširi seems to have acquired supreme power within the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus after the decline of the Prince of Bin's family's power, so he appeared many times in Ming sources and the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus was called “Hameili 哈梅里 (i.e. Hami, OU. Kamıl)” at the time.²⁸⁰ In 1388, Namun (Ch. Namen 納門), the imperial son-in-law of the Moghul Khanate and Engke Tura (Ch. Angke Tula 昂客秃刺) the Brave (leader of the Erkenüt tribe of the Moghul Khanate) wrote to the Hongwu Emperor from the region of Qala Tel (Mongolian term meaning “Black Steppe”) in Semirechye, requesting the emperor to urge Gunaširi to open trade routes. Their primary goal was to form an alliance with the Ming and Gunaširi, and to welcome Gunaširi to the Moghul Khanate to ascend the throne

²⁷³ *Zhongguo xingzheng qihua tongshi* 中國行政區劃通史, ed. Zhou Zhenhe 周振鶴, *Mingdai juan* 明代卷, ed. Guohong 郭紅 and Jin Runcheng 靳潤成 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 408.

²⁷⁴ *MTZSL*, j. 131, 2077-78.

²⁷⁵ *MTZSL*, j. 131, 2087-2088.

²⁷⁶ *MTZSL*, j. 131, 2078.

²⁷⁷ Ma, “Mingdai shanxi xingdusi,” 112. Since the Ming changed the Ganzhou Left Guard to Suzhou Guard in 1394, Shi Xinrong suggested that the Ganzhou Left Guard established at this time was located in Suzhou. However, considering that the Ganzhou Left Guard was established following the Shandan Guard, it is more likely to have been situated in Ganzhou, near Shandan. There is no reason for the Ming to skip Ganzhou and establish a guard in Suzhou. See Shi Xinrong 施新榮, *Tulufan xue yu xiyu shi lungao* 吐魯番學與西域史論稿 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2017), 117.

²⁷⁸ Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 563.

²⁷⁹ Shi, *Tulufan xue*, 113.

²⁸⁰ The territory of Kamıl (Ch. Hamili 哈密力) depicted in *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* is not reliable since the editor actually depicted the territory of today's Hami rather than of the Yuan or Ming period. See Tan, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji*, vol. 7, *yuan ming shiqi*, 22; Deng Ruiling 鄧銳齡, “*Zhongguo lishi ditu ji*” *nansong, yuan shiqi xibei bianjiang tufu dili kaoshi* 《中國歷史地圖集》南宋、元時期西北邊疆圖幅考釋 (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2016), 201.

as Khan, in order to resist the invasion by Temür, the founder of the Timurid Empire. However, with Engke Tura's defeat by Temür in 1389, Gunaširi lost this opportunity.²⁸¹

Facing the Ming advance, the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus chose to submit tribute. In 1389, the Hongwu Emperor summoned Gunaširi to surrender.²⁸² In a response, Gunaširi sent envoys to present tribute in 1390.²⁸³ In 1391, *Erkeširi (Ch. Alugesili 阿魯哥失里),²⁸⁴ a descendant of the Prince of Xining, sent envoys to present tribute from Shazhou.²⁸⁵ In the same year, Gunaširi requested to establish horse trade markets in Yan'an 延安, Suide 綏德, Pingliang 平涼, and Ningxia.²⁸⁶

At the time, areas around Suzhou remained under the control of the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus. Later in 1391, Song Sheng 宋晟 (d.1407) launched an expedition against the Ulus. The reason given was that envoys from the Western Regions coming to pay tribute were often obstructed by Gunaširi, the King of Hami (Ch. *hameili wang* 哈梅里王).²⁸⁷ It was reported that Song Sheng broke through the city of Hami, which seems doubtful. Since Gunaširi once requested the mutual trade in Yan'an, Suide, Pingliang, and Ningxia, he should have had a great military influence in Gansu and north of Shaanxi. However, Song Sheng's army set out from Liangzhou. It seems unlikely that this army was able to cross through the vast desert within hostile territory and reach the city of Hami. Thus, the city that Song Sheng conquered should be in the Gansu region controlled by Gunaširi, the King of Hami. The result of the fight was that Gunaširi fled with his family, while the Prince of Bin Bilge Temür (Ch. Bie'erqie 別兒怯, erroneously written as Ch. Lie'erqie 列兒怯 in the sources) and his family were caught and beheaded.²⁸⁸ Thus, I propose that the city that Song Sheng conquered was more likely to have been Suzhou, the seat of the Prince of Bin.

²⁸¹ Oyunguw-a, *Ming siyi guan*, 125-127, 166; Kim, "'Hwa-i yǒgǒ' ūi 'napmun puma sǒ'," 15-34; Kim, "The Early History of the Moghul Nomads: The Legacy of the Chaghatai Khanate," 290-318.

²⁸² *MTZSL*, j. 198, 2977.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, j. 202, 3023.

²⁸⁴ Masaaki, *Mongoru Teikoku to Dai Gen Urusu*, 273.

²⁸⁵ *MTZSL*, j. 207, 3084.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, j. 207, 3087.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, j. 211, 3138.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; Masaaki, *Mongoru Teikoku to Dai Gen Urusu*, 264-269.

At this point, the lineage of the Prince of Bin was eradicated, and the lineage of the Prince of Xining also disappeared, with Shazhou coming under the control of other Mongol leaders.²⁸⁹ Consequently, the Ming occupied the Hexi Corridor and began to establish more guards: the Ganzhou Guard was established in 1392; the Suzhou Guard was established in 1394; the Weilu Guard 威虜衛 was established around 1394, governing the Baichengzi Battalion 白城子所 and Weiyuan Battalion 威遠所, but was then abolished in 1389. It was reinstated in 1403 and abolished again in 1405. Around 1396, the Linhe Guard 臨河衛 was established and renamed the Zhenfan Guard 鎮番衛 in 1397.²⁹⁰ By this time, the Ming had largely completed the establishment of the Gansu and Ningxia garrisons in the northwest, with the number of soldiers there which can be seen in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. *Number of Soldiers in Ningxia and Gansu*

Time	Ningxia	Time	Gansu
Yongle 1st (1403-1404)	20413	Yongle period (1403-1425)	70000
Yongle period (1403-1425)	41749	Zhengtong 10th (1445-1446)	42800
Chenghua 14th (1478-1479)	36500	Tianshun period (1457-1465)	89000
Hongzhi period (1488-1506)	23000	Chenghua 3rd (1467-1468)	41800
Zhengde period (1506-1522)	30787	Hongzhi 13th (1500-1501)	37500
Jiajing 10th (1531-1532)	41614	Hongzhi 16th (1503-1504)	41060
Jiajing 19th (1540-1541)	35144	Zhengde 13th (1518-1519)	28000
Jiajing 25th (1546-1547)	24927	Jiajing 4th (1525-1526)	30000
Jiajing 28th (1549-1550)	31890	Jiajing 10th (1531-1532)	40245
Jiajing 34th (1555-1556)	28000	Jiajing 19th (1540-1541)	36164
Jiajing 45th (1566-1567)	71693	Jiajing 25th (1546-1547)	38022
Longqing 3rd (1569-1570)	37837	Jiajing 28th (1549-1550)	39882

²⁸⁹ Zhou Song 周松, "Ming hongwu chao shazhou shi xintan 明洪武朝沙州史新探," *Qinghai shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 青海師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 45, no. 6 (2023): 24-30; Zhou Song, "Mingdai shazhou," 100. Sugiyama Masaaki and Hu Xiaopeng suggested that the Shazhou Guard of the Ming was transformed from the Prince of Xining. however, this view is not supported by any sources. Sugiyama, *Mongoru Teikoku*, 273; Hu, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 45.

²⁹⁰ Ma, "Mingdai shanxi xingdusi," 116.

Wanli 8th (1580-1581)	27934	Jiajing 34th (1555-1556)	35000
Wanli 23rd (1595-1596)	31500	Jiajing 45th (1566-1567)	91571
Wanli 48th (1620-1621)	31624	Longqing 3rd (1569-1570)	47512
Chongzhen 1st (1628-1629)	31406	Wanli 8th (1580-1581)	46901
		Mid-Wanli period (around 1596-1597)	50000
		Wanli 48th (1620-1621)	59081
		Chongzhen 1st (1628-1629)	51980

Source: Wang Zunwang 王尊旺, *Mingdai jiubian junfei kaolun* 明代九邊軍費考論 (Tianjing: Tianjing guji chubanshe, 2014), 82.

2.3.2.2 Submission of Hami and its surrounding regimes

After the accession of the Yongle Emperor in 1403, he actively sought to recruit the Western Regions' powers. By this time, Gunaširi had died, and his brother Engke Temür (Ch. Anke Timu'er 安克帖木兒) succeeded him as the Prince of Su. After multiple negotiations, Engke Temür submitted in 1404 and was enfeoffed as the Prince of Zhongshun 忠順王 by the Ming.²⁹¹ Shortly after this submission, Engke Temür was poisoned by Gülichī (Ch. Guilichi 鬼力赤, ?-1408), the Mongol Khan who sought to weaken the Ming vassals.²⁹² Afterwards, the Yongle Emperor forcibly installed Toqto'a (Ch. Tuotuo 脫脫), who was a descendant of the Prince of Anding and had grown up in the Ming palace, as the Prince of Zhongshun to rule Hami (see Figure 2.9). The local Hami faction was unsatisfied with a ruler from another lineage rather than the descendant of the Prince of Su. In order to provide military support for consolidating Toqto'a's rule, the Ming conscripted a large number of soldiers from Gansu and other areas, garrisoned them in Hami, and thus established the Hami Guard.²⁹³

²⁹¹ Shi, *Tulufan xue*, 129-133.

²⁹² Shi Xinrong suggested that the specific date is the 11th or 12th month of the second year of the Yongle reign (December 1404 to January 1405), see Shi, *Tulufan xue*, 129-133.

²⁹³ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬, "Hami zhongshun wang tuotuo shenshi ji xiangguan wenti kaoshu," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 4 (2010): 84-86.

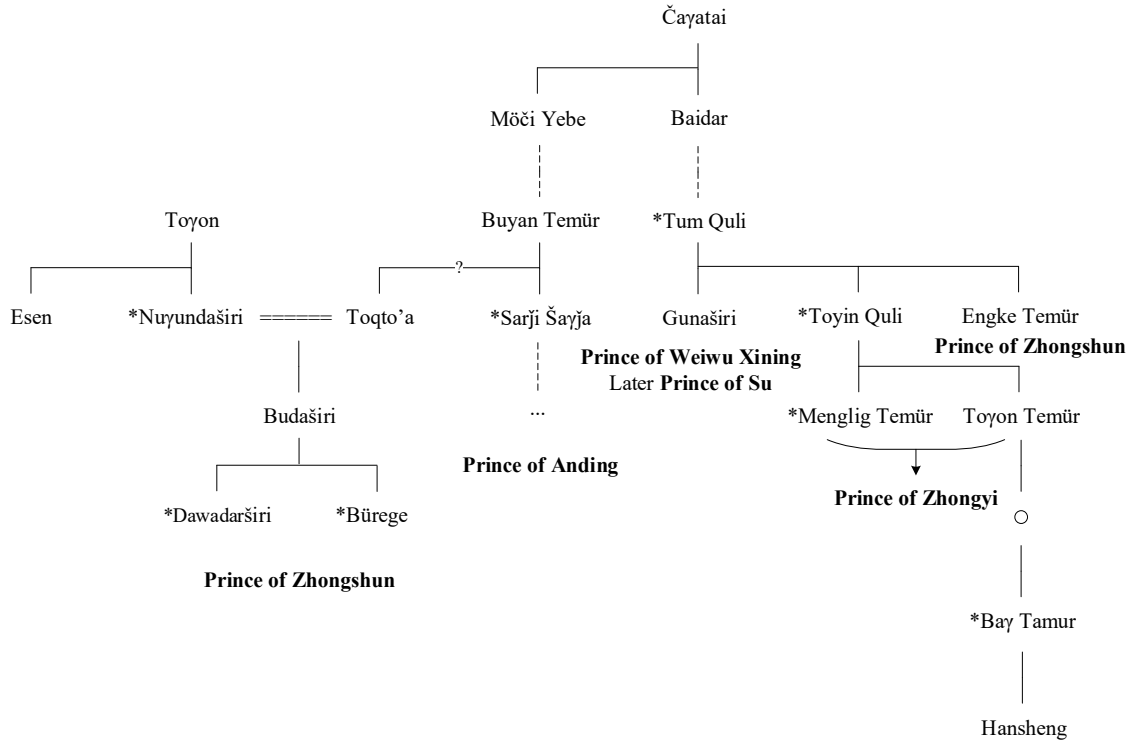


Figure 2.9. Genealogy of the Princes of Zhongshun, Zhongyi and Anding.

After Toqto'a's death, *Menglig Temür (Ch. Mianli Timu'er 免力帖木兒), a son of Engke Temür's brother, *Toyin Quli (P. Tūyīn Qulī, see Figure 2.9),²⁹⁴ was enfeoffed as the Prince of Zhongyi 忠義王 and ruler of Hami in 1411, representing a compromise of the Ming to local factions in Hami.²⁹⁵ Subsequently, the Prince of Zhongshun and the Prince of Zhongyi were both active in Hami, leading to intense power struggles and frequent assassinations. By the time of the death of the Prince of Zhongshun *Bürege (Ch. Buliege 卜列革) during the Tianshun reign (1457-1464), Hami's internal power was divided between two factions: that of *Bürege's mother *Nuyundaširi (Ch. Nuwendashili 弩溫答失里), who was a daughter of Toyon (Ch. Tuohuan 脫歡) of the Oirat, and *Bay Tamur (Ch. Ba Tamu'er 把塔木兒), who was a son of an unknown son-in-law of the Prince of Zhongyi and inherited the fame and faction of the Prince of Zhongyi after the end of his lineage.²⁹⁶ The subsequent history will be detailed in the next chapter.

²⁹⁴ Tsuneaki, "Hoshira no seikō to Baidaru e Chaghatai-ke," 233.

²⁹⁵ Hu, "Hami zhongshun wang," 86-87.

²⁹⁶ Hu, "Hami zhongshun wang," 88-89.

Apart from the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus, in 1404, Talini 塔力尼, a son of a Yuan Grand Councilor (Ch. *chengxiang* 丞相), submitted and his force was reorganized into the Čikin Mongol Battalion 赤斤蒙古千戶所, which was under the management of the Suzhou Guard. In 1405, the Shazhou Guard was established, with the local leaders Kunjilai 困即來 and Maizhu 買住 appointed as Commanders.²⁹⁷ In 1410, to reward them for their loyalty to the Ming during the *Kara Mayak (Ch. Hala Maya 哈刺馬牙) rebellion in Suzhou, Kunjilai was promoted to the Assistant Regional Military Assistant Commissioner, while the Čikin Mongol Battalion was elevated to Guard status, and Talini was appointed as Assistant Commander.²⁹⁸ Thereafter, due to persistent raids from Hami, Handong, the Čikin Mongol and the Oirats, the Shazhou Guard gradually migrated into Ming territory. Its officers and troops were progressively relocated to Gansu, Shandong, Nan Zhili 南直隸, Guangdong and Guangxi.²⁹⁹ Although some of them defected to the Oirats, they were eventually captured and also moved inland.³⁰⁰ As a result, the Shazhou Guard's history came to an end. Subsequently, Shazhou was gradually occupied by the Handong Guard, which will also be discussed in the next chapter.

Overall, the aforementioned various groups constituted the Xiyu buffer zone, the structure of which is depicted in Figure 2.8. Among the Xiyu buffer zone, the Prince of Zhongshun enjoyed the greatest influence, which was not confined to the Hami Guard but also extended over various powers from Hami to the Shule River Basin, both the sedentary population and the nomads. The population within Hami was divided into three groups: the Uyghurs, the Muslims (Ch. *huihui* 回回), and the Kara Koy (Ch. *hala hui* 哈刺灰, “black sheep”). The Kara Koy population had diverse origins, including Mongols stationed at Hami during the Yuan period, as well as later migrations from the Mekrin, Oirat, Shazhou and Turpan people.³⁰¹ The

²⁹⁷ MTZOSL, j. 47, 720-21.

²⁹⁸ Cheng Liying 程利英, “Mingdai guanxi qi wei tanyuan 明代關西七衛探源,” *Neimenggu shehui kexue (hanwen ban)* 內蒙古社會科學 (漢文版) 27, no. 4 (2006): 48.

²⁹⁹ Zhou, “Mingdai shazhou,” 101-111.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 105.

³⁰¹ Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬 and Zheng Xuzhuo 鄭煦卓, “Mingdai hami wei zhi ‘hala hui’ mingshi kao 明代哈密衛之“哈刺灰”名實考,” *Xibei shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報 53, no. 6 (2016): 86-88. Kara Koy was divided into “old Kara Koy 舊哈刺灰,” who used to live in forts in Hami region such as Lapčuk 刺術 and Kara Kara Koy 哈刺哈兒畏, and “new Kara Koy 新哈刺灰,” who used to live in the city of Taš Balık 他失把力城 and had close connection with the Mekrin. See SZHYZ, 281; Shōgaito Masahiro 庄垣内正弘, “‘Uiguru-kan yakugo’ no kenkyū: Mindai Uiguru kōgo no saikō 『畏兀兒館譯語』の研究 -明代ウイグル口語の再構-,” *Kōbe-shi Gaikokugo Daigaku gaikoku kenkyū* 神戸市外国語大学外国語研究, no. 14 (1984): 117; Hu, *Yuandai xibei lishi*, 49

Kara Koy were numerous and occupied several key strongholds around Hami: the city of Lapčuk (刺術城 present-day Sibao 四堡), the city of Taš Balık 塔失八里城, Kara Kara Koy (哈刺哈刺灰, present-day Xingxing Xia 星星峽), and *Sum Kara Koy 速卜哈刺灰 (present-day Toubao 頭堡).³⁰²

Looking at the nomadic populations in the area, part of the Mekrin were subordinate to the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus during the Yuan era, with certain groups among them responsible for postal station duties at Taš Balık under the administration of the Prince of Su.³⁰³ During the Ming period, the Prince of Zhongshun, who came from the lineage of the Prince of Su, inherited this subordinate relationship with the Mekrin.³⁰⁴ However, not all Mekrin were under the authority of the Prince of Zhongshun. Some of them migrated to Moghulistan and adopted a pastoral lifestyle within the territory of the Moghul Khanate.³⁰⁵

The Prince of Zhongshu also supervised the settlements and guards in the Shule River Basin: Kuyu, Shazhou and Čikin Mongol. Kuyu, today's Ancient City in Yumen Town 玉門鎮古城, had close ties with Hami over a long period. Kuyu was a critical node on the route from Hami to Suzhou.³⁰⁶ During the Yuan era, Kuyu was referred to as “Quyong 曲尤”,³⁰⁷ which, along with all of the Guazhou and Shazhou regions, was under the rule of the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus.³⁰⁸

In 1405, the Ming settled various submitted leaders of Hami in Kuyu. In 1406, after Engke Temür's submission to the Ming,³⁰⁹ one leader under his rule called Muḥammad Kh^vāja (Ch. Mahama Huozhi 馬哈麻火只) was promoted as the Commander and settled in Kuyu.³¹⁰ It is clear that the Prince of Zhongshun still maintained control over the former domain of the Hexi

³⁰² Hu and Zheng, “Mingdai hami wei,” 88; Nurlan Kenzheakhmet, *Eurasian Historical Geographical as reflected in Geographical Literature and in Maps from the 13th to the Mid-17th Centuries* (Gossenberg: OSTASIEN verlag, 2021), 125, 151; Zheng, “Hami zhengquan yanjiu,” 92.

³⁰³ Temule 特木勒, “Yuanming shiqi mekrin bu shishi kao 元明時期 Mekrin 部史事考,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 1 (2015): 85-86.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 88.

³⁰⁵ Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 293.

³⁰⁶ Wang Yingxuan 王穎璇, “Mingdai Dunhuang lishi dili yanjiu 明代敦煌歷史地理研究,” (master's thesis, Lanzhou: Lanzhou University, 2023), 58-62; Gao Qian 高啟安, *Jiaowang yu ronghe: dansheng zai hexi zoulang de yugu zu yanjiu 交往與融合：誕生在河西走廊的裕固族研究* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2023), 112-132.

³⁰⁷ Li Zhengyu 李正宇, “‘Quyong’ kao ‘曲尤’考,” in *Sichou zhi lu minzu gu wenzi yu wenhua xueshu taolun hui wenji 絲綢之路民族古文字與文化學術討論會文集* (Xian: Sanqin chubanshe, 2007), 248.

³⁰⁸ Yang and Zhang, *Cong menggu binwang*, 36-37.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 37.

³¹⁰ *MTZOSL*, j. 52, 787; *SYZZL*, j. 12, 412.

Čayadaid Ulus, thus maintaining rule over Kuyu. The sources from the Zhengtong 正統 period (1436-1449) of the Ming era indicate that the city of Kuyu had by then come under the control of Shazhou and Čikin. On the one hand, however, these two guards may have been subordinate to Hami;³¹¹ on the other hand, envoys from Hami, such as Toytoy-a Buqa (Ch. Tuotuo Buhua 脫脫不花), were escorted by Gansu officials and troops to station at Kuyu,³¹² demonstrating that Hami still retained a degree of influence over the area. In 1466, *Nuyundaširi, the mother of the Prince of Zhongshun, even led her followers to seek refuge in Kuyu,³¹³ demonstrating that she exercised a certain degree of control over the city.

Apart from the Xiyu buffer zone, the Turpan region may have continued under the dual-subordination model during the Yuan era as discussed in Section 2.2.1 and acknowledged both the rule of the Moghul Khanate and of the Ming. The Prince of Lökčün had been captured in Xiliang 西涼 and not Lökčün, which may indicate that he had moved into the Hexi corridor already during the Yuan period. Therefore, his influence in the Turpan region should have ceased before the establishment of the Ming. It is true that the Turpan region submitted in this period to the rule of the Čayadaid Khanate, as evidenced by the decrees of the Čayadaid and Moghul khans excavated in the area.³¹⁴ At the same time, Turpan also appeared to honor the sovereignty of the Ming: the Ming established the Prefectural Office of Buddhist Affairs (Ch. *senggang si* 僧綱司) there in the 1408,³¹⁵ and designated officials in Kara Kočo within the Turpan region to receive and inspect tribute missions.³¹⁶ Moreover, in the perception of Muḥammad Dughlat, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, the Moghul khans considered Turpan and Kara Kočo to be “two very important towns, situated at the border of Khitai (P. Khitāy, i.e. China)”, which justified launching *jihād* (holy war) against them.³¹⁷ When Bābur declared that

³¹¹ Xu Jin 許進, *Pingfan shimo* 平番始末, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *shi bu* 史部, vol. 46 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996), 585.

³¹² *MYZSL*, j. 175, 3361-62.

³¹³ *MXZSL*, j. 28, 563.

³¹⁴ Akasaka, “Hoshira no seikō,” 631-633; Herbert Franke, “Zur Datierung Der Mongolischen Schreiben Aus Turpan,” *Oriens*, no. 15 (1962): 399-410; Qu, “De cang liu fen tulufan menggu wen xingzheng wenshu zai yanjiu,” 19.

³¹⁵ Guo Shengli 郭勝利, “Mingchao tulufan senggang si kao 明朝吐魯番僧綱司考,” *Qinghai minzu daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 青海民族大學學報 (社會科學版) 38, no. 1 (2012): 85-90.

³¹⁶ Ghiyathuddin Naqqash, “Report to Mirza Baysunghur on the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court at Peking,” in *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, ed. Thackston, W. M. (Cambridge: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989), 281; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, *A History of Cathay: a Translation and Linguistic Analysis of a Fifteenth-Century Turkic Manuscript* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), 159.

³¹⁷ *TIR*, 52.

he had a desire to go to Khitāy in 1502, where he really wanted to go was Moghulistan centering on Turpan, which shows that the Turpan region was closely associated with China in his perception.³¹⁸

It is noteworthy that one could travel in this period from the Turpan region, march east along the Tarim River to Lop Nur, and then proceed west along the Čerčen River to arrive at Čerčen, as discussed in Section 2.1.1 and shown in Figure 2.2.³¹⁹ Although the southernmost route of the Silk Road in Xinjiang was largely severed during the Ming period and saw very little traffic,³²⁰ the transportation corridor along the Čerčen River remained unimpeded.³²¹ This accessibility fostered close ties between Turpan and Čerčen,³²² and further to the Sarig Uygur region, which will be revealed in the following chapters.

2.4 Conclusion

During the Yuan period, the system of the so-called “northwestern vassals” was established along the Yuan northwestern frontier to resist their political rivals in Inner Asia. Among them, the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus in the Western Regions, as well as the *Oγruqči clan and the Qonggirad

³¹⁸ Wheeler M. Thackston, trans., *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 138-139; Eiji Mano 間野英二, “‘Bāburu Nāma’ no kenkyū (I): ‘Ferugāna-shō’ Nihongo-yaku 『バーブル・ナーマ』の研究 (I): 「フェルガーナ章」日本語訳,” *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Kiyō* 京都大學文學部研究紀要, no. 22 (1983): 321.

³¹⁹ Kenzheakhmet, *Eurasian Historical Geography*, 305; Liu Guofang 劉國防, “Mingchao chuqi dui xiyu de guanxia ji wanglai guanxi 明朝初期對西域的管轄及往來關係,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1 (1992): 36.

³²⁰ Naqqash, “Report to Mirza Baysunghur on the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court at Peking,” 297; Bellér-Hann, *History of Cathay*, 185.

³²¹ For an introduction to the Silk Road during the Ming period, see Hayakawa, “Mindai higashi torukisutan no kōeki to sono henshen,” 83-110.

³²² Both the *Bianzheng kao* and *Xiyu tudi renwu lüe* note that Čerčen and the Čerčen River (modern-day Qarqan River) were located south of the Čališ (察力失, in today’s Yanqi County 焉耆縣), requiring approximately an eight-day journey to reach. This route likely corresponds to the road mentioned before. See Lin Meicun 林梅村, *Menggu shanshui ditu* 蒙古山水地圖 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2011), 96, 199; Kenzheakhmet, *Eurasian Historical Geography*, 305. *Bayin guoleng menggu zizhi zhou xingzheng quhua tu* 巴音郭楞蒙古自治州行政區劃圖, in *Bayin guoleng menggu zizhi zhou zhi* 巴音郭楞蒙古自治州志 (Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 1994), frontispiece. *Xiyu tudi renwu lüe* records that the Čerčen River was situated south of the city of Kara Shahr 哈刺哈失鐵, while the city of Čerčen was located to the south of Čališ. This indicates that the Čališ region and Čerčen were connected by transportation routes, likely similar to the path described in the *Bian Zheng Kao*: south of Čališ lies the Black Water Spring 黑水泉, and traveling east to the Čerčen River takes eight days. See Shen Yuping 沈玉萍, “Youguan ‘xiyu tudi renwu lüe’ zuozhe de kaocha 有關《西域土地人物略》作者的考察,” *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 西北民族研究, no. 63 (2009), 132; Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格 and Zhang Kang 張閔, *Tongwen zhi sheng: “xiyu tongwen zhi” zhengli yu yanjiu* 同文之盛: 《西域同文志》整理與研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2022), 29; Lin, *Menggu shanshui ditu*, 95, 96, 199; *BZK II*, j. 8, 5b. A Yuan source, *Qiangdong Leigao* 牆東類稿, mentions the city of Xileqin 錫勒沁, one of the five Uyghur cities, which “connects to the desert in the north and pacifies the Qiang tribes in the south 北連沙磧, 南撫諸羌.” This city should exactly be the city of Čerčen, suggesting that during the Yuan period, Čerčen was already closely linked to Turpan. See Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝, “Yuandai weiwu’er diming ji qi lishi yange 元代畏兀兒地名及其歷史沿革,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 4 (1992): 25.

son-in-law family in the Tibetan region, occupied the most strategically critical positions and possessed the most formidable power.

During the Yuan-Ming transition, the northwestern vassals either resisted or surrendered to the new regime. Among them, the Prince of Weiwu Xining lineage from the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus first changed to the Prince of Su to garrison Hami, known as the King of Hami, then submitted to the Ming, being granted the title of the Prince of Zhongshun. Subsequently, due to Ming intervention, Toqto'a from the Prince of Anding lineage inherited the Prince of Zhongshun, while the original Prince of Su family obtained the new title—Prince of Zhongyi. By the mid-fifteenth century, the ruling faction in Hami was divided between *Nuyundaširi, the mother of the Prince of Zhongshun,³²³ and *Bay Tamur, a son of the son-in-law of the Prince of Zhongyi. Together, they administered the three different population groups in Hami: the Uyghurs, Muslims and Kara Koy, and exerted significant control over nomadic groups such as the Mekrins, as well as frontier Guards such as the Shazhou Guard and the Čikin Guard. Together, they constituted the Ming's Xiyu buffer zone.

With regards to the Tibetan region, after the submission of the *Oyruqči clan and the Qonggirad sons-in-law, their subordinate officials transformed into the Li and Qi native official clans, which further developed into the core force of the Xining Guard. The leaders of the Handong Guard and the Thirteen Xifan Tribes, who also served as native officials but were unable to relocate inland, commanded their tribes to garrison the vicinity of the Xining Guard. The three Sarig Uygur guards controlled by the Prince of Anding—Anding, Quxian and Aduan—were more remote, submitting to the Ming and offering tribute. These groups constituted the Ming's Qinghai buffer zone.

For the Ming, a newly rising regime, a strategy for controlling the northwestern frontier had already taken shape in the process of successively capturing Lintao, Hezhou, and Xining: cultivating friendly non-Han ethnic groups in the border regions and then establishing them as buffer zones to resist invasions from various Inner Asian forces. The establishment of the Xiyu

³²³ This female ruler of Hami enjoyed high respect and rewards from the Ming, see Choi So Young, “Myeongcho dae hami jeongchaeg-e daehan ilgochal: boktak sayeoreul jungsimeuro 明初對哈密정책에 대한一考察—복탁사여를 중심으로—,” *Monggolhak* 몽골학, no. 76 (2024): 171-203.

buffer zone and the Qinghai buffer zone was precisely the implementation of this strategy. In addition, the northwestern buffer zone also assisted the Ming in negotiating with foreign forces, such as receiving tribute missions from groups in the Western Regions, and in collecting Inner Asian intelligence for the Ming's strategical choices. Therefore, the northwestern buffer zone was not only offensive but also represented the Ming in exerting influences in Inner Asia.

The leaders of these groups of the buffer zones generally held Ming military appointments. They could hereditarily obtain high-ranking positions such as Commissioner (Ch. *dudu* 都督), while the common Ming officers could only inherit low-ranking positions, and were further able to assume the same positions if they migrated into Ming territory away from the threat from Inner Asian forces. These leaders enjoyed the right to present tribute, which served economic purposes alongside two key political functions. Firstly, it allowed them to legitimize hereditary succession. Due to inconsistent Ming records on these border leaders—with neither the Ministry of Rites nor the Ministry of War maintaining detailed rosters—successors had to present the imperial edicts (Ch. *chishu* 敕書) previously granted to their fathers in Beijing to inherit their positions. Secondly, tribute missions provided a channel to seek imperial guidance or aid during major crises, such as the extinction of a ruling lineage or foreign invasion. In addition, these groups could also turn to local Ming officials in Suzhou or Xining for assistance in resolving routine economic difficulties or internal disputes.

The Ming officials managing these buffer zones were mainly Suzhou officials and Xining native officials. Among the Xining native officials, there were *fu'an* officials, renamed approximately after the Tumu Crisis of 1449 as *fuyi* officials,³²⁴ specifically responsible for managing frontier affairs. During the Yuan period, the *Oγruqči clan seated in Hezhou frequently participated in Western Regions affairs.³²⁵ Similarly, Xining's native officials and

³²⁴ The first person who was referred to as the *fuyi* official, to my knowledge, was Lian Zhong 廉忠. After the Tumu Crisis, the Ming court was afraid of the rebellion of non-Han people, thus set about moving them to Nanjing and other southern regions. Lian Zhong, who was proficient in “barbarian languages,” was appointed as the Nanjing Regional Military Commissioner In Charge of Pacification 南京撫夷都指揮 to those migrators and led them to quell the rebellions in Guangxi and Guangdong. After that, the *fu'an* officials in the northwest were also referred as *fuyi* officials. See Zhou, “Mingdai shazhou ‘daren’ neiqian xinlun,” 106-107; *MYZSL*, j. 305, 6438; j. 307, 6461; j. 327, 6735-6. *MXZSL*, j. 14, 317.

³²⁵ See Aotegen 敖特根, “Mogao ku bei qu chutu ‘alatanashili lingzhi’ canpian 莫高窟北區出土“阿剌忒納失里令旨”殘片,” *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, no. 3 (2006): 30-31; Guo Xiaohang 郭曉航, “Yuan yu wang alatenashili kaoshu 元豫王阿剌忒納失里考述,” *Shehui kexue* 社會科學, no. 9 (2007): 176-183; Chen Guangwen 陳光文, “Yuandai zhuwang chuzhen dunhuang xiangguan wenti xintan 元代諸王出鎮敦煌相關問題新探,” *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, no. 2 (2017): 28-42.

fuyi officials also handled foreign conflicts near Suzhou during the early Ming period.³²⁶ At the time, the number of *fuyi* officials was small, and their status was low. In fact, we do not know the name of any specific *fuyi* official. However, when the Ming's northwestern buffer zone weakened under the attacks of Inner Asian forces, the *fuyi* officials gradually became the most important frontier officials, maintaining relations between the Ming and various Inner Asian ethnic groups, as will be shown below.

³²⁶ For example, when Gansu officials dealt with a case that the Xifan people had stolen the horses in 1424, they did not forward the case to the Ganzhou Guard, where the incident had occurred, but instead requested the native official Li Ying of the Xining Guard to conduct an investigation. Similarly, in 1432, the Gansu Regional Commander dispatched the Xining native official Li Wen to Ganzhou and Suzhou to pacify and recruit fugitive Tibetans. See *MRZSL*, j. 4 *xia* 下, 147-148; *MXUZS*, j. 87, 2010.

Chapter 3: Moghul Khanate's Invasion and the Establishment of the “*Fuyi* System”

From 1473 to 1529, the Moghul Khanate organized repeated invasions into the Ming's northwestern frontier zone, eventually occupying Hami and pushing the Hami Guard, Čikin Guard and Handong Left Guard to migrate inside the Suzhou and Ganzhou domains, thus totally dismantling the Ming's Xiyu buffer zone. At first, the Ming attempted to utilize native officials of the Xining Guard to fight against Moghul invasion, similar to what they had done when they faced frontier conflicts in the early Ming era. However, native officials failed to contest powerful Moghul forces and made no progress. The Ming then turned to support Hanshen 罕慎, *Bay Tamur's son and the Uyghur Commissioner, in an attempt to reestablish the Hami Guard at Kuyu and Hami. Although Hanshen recovered Hami and established an influential rule, he was eventually killed through a conspiracy involving the Moghul Khanate and Hami elements.

The total failure of the original buffer system forced the Ming to reform its frontier strategy, which resulted in the establishment of the *fuyi* system. The Ming began to recruit *fuyi* officials in Suzhou and Ganzhou from the local people and submitted commanders of the Hami Guard, ordering them to fight against Moghul invasions, to manage the submitted populations, and to handle the tributary missions, aiming at restoring the Xiyu buffer zone. Although the activity of the *fuyi* officials also failed to reoccupy Hami, they enabled the Ming to maintain peaceful relations with the Moghul Khanate and reestablish the tributary system in the Western Regions.

3.1 The Moghul Khanate's invasions

In the mid-fourteenth century, as a result of the conflicts between the sedentary culture of the Islamized West and the traditional Mongol nomadic culture of the East, as well as the rise of *amirs* (military commanders, among whom the *güregens* (Činggisids sons-in-laws) were the most important),³²⁷ the Čayadaid Khanate disintegrated into two parts. Its western part, mainly Transoxiana, came to be ruled by the non-Činggisid *amirs*, while the eastern part, namely the

³²⁷ See Michal Biran and Ishayahu Landa, “The Chinggisid Crisis of the Mid-Fourteenth Century: Reasons and Consequences,” in “The 14th century Chinggisid Crisis,” ed. Michal Biran and Ishayahu Landa, special issue, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 35, no. 1 (2025): 13-20.

Moghul Khanate, roughly the southern region of present-day Xinjiang, was ruled by Čayadaid descendants until the seventeenth century.³²⁸ The Moghul Khanate's territory primarily comprised three regions: Moghulistan (the steppe north of Tianshan Mountain), Mangalāy Sūbe (mainly the Tarim Basin), and Uyghuristan (mainly the Turpan region).³²⁹ The rulers of the Moghul Khanate were descendants of Tūghluq Tīmūr Khan (r. c. 1347-1363), a sixth-generation descendant of Čayatai, and their legitimacy to rule the khanate stemmed from their status as members of the Golden Clan.³³⁰

The social hierarchy of the Moghul Khanate was composed of two groups. First, the “Moghul”, which was not a purely ethnic designation but a political one. It denoted the ruling aristocratic stratum of society, who frequently claimed that their ancestors had rendered distinguished service to the Golden Clan and thereby obtained the status of rulers. Second, the *ra'iyat*, meaning subjects or peasants.³³¹ The population of the Moghul Khanate consisted mainly of urban residents and pastoral nomads. In an ideal case, urban residents lived by agriculture and commerce, supplying essential goods and medical services to the nomads,³³² whereas the nomads were responsible for protecting the inhabitants and caravans, as well as for raiding and enslaving,³³³ which was extremely important since the vast majority of the Moghul Khanate's army were slaves.³³⁴ Islam, especially the Naqshbandī Sufi order, was more and more influential within the Moghul Khanate. With the course of time, the idea of the “holy war” became the primary justification for external expansion, although the real motives were often

³²⁸ V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. II, *Ulugh-Beg*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 10-11; W. Barthold, “12 Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens,” trans. Theodor Menzel, *Die Welt des Islams*, no. 17 (1935): 205-209.

³²⁹ See Tian Weijiang 田衛疆, *Sichou zhi lu yu dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu* 絲綢之路與東察合台汗國史研究 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1997), 1-13; Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 270.

³³⁰ After the collapse of the Mongol Empire, the status of being a member of the Golden Family remained a crucial source of legitimacy for various regimes across Eurasia, even though many descendants of the Golden Family became puppets of the actual rulers. See Thomas T. Allsen, “Eurasia after the Mongols,” in *The Cambridge World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, vol. 6, *The Construction of a Global World, 1400-1800 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 161-165; Biran and Landa, “The Chinggisid Crisis of the Mid-Fourteenth Century,” 13-20.

³³¹ Ali Anooshahr, *Turkestan and the Rise of Eurasian Empires: A Study of Politics and Invented Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 117-119.

³³² Seify, “Appendice V,” in *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale*, trans. Charles Schefer (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970), 296.

³³³ Federico De Renzi, “Un Esempio di Teocrazia Islamica in Asia Centrale: I Khōja del Turkestan Orientale (1678-1759),” *Divus Thomas* 112, no. 3 (2009): 162.

³³⁴ Anooshahr, *Turkestan and the Rise of Eurasian Empires*, 133.

the extension of power, the control of trade routes, and the acquisition of wealth.³³⁵ Importantly, the interests of nomads and merchants did not always align. If unchecked expansion led the Ming to suspend tribute relations, merchants would suffer significant economic losses. As will be shown later, by exploiting this tension between commercial and nomadic interests, the Ming managed to induce the Moghuls to retreat at relatively low cost.

The Moghul Khanate relied primarily on cavalry in warfare, and records indicate their use of firearms in attacks on Ming cities.³³⁶ These firearms were likely seized from the Ming, or as argued by Samuel Adshead, transmitted from the Ottoman Empire to Central Asia.³³⁷ It is also worth mentioning that, by the mid-seventeenth century, firearms had already become major weapons in the Yarkand Khanate (a successor to the Moghul Khanate).³³⁸ In the early fifteenth century, under the reign of Vaīs Khan (r. 1420-1432), a fourth-generation descendant of Tūghluq Tīmūr Khan (the later genealogy is shown in Figure 3.1), the Moghul Khanate grew increasingly powerful.³³⁹ It fought westward against the Timurid Empire and northward against the Oirats, while to the east, between 1422 to 1434, it steadily strengthened its control over the Turpan region, expelled the pro-Ming Inggirčaq (Ch. Yinji'ercha 尹吉兒察) family, and gradually threatened the northwestern buffer zone of the Ming.³⁴⁰

³³⁵ For the spread of Islam in the Moghul Khanate, see De Renzi, “Un Esempio di Teocrazia Islamica in Asia Centrale,” 152-168; Kim Hodong, “Muslim Saints in the 14th to the 16th Centuries of Eastern Turkestan,” *International Journal of Central Asian Studies*, no. 1 (1996): 285-322.

³³⁶ Pu Hong 浦鋹, *Ming shilang puzhu tang xiansheng zouyi* 明侍御浦竹堂先生奏議 (Taipei: Fu Ssu-nien Library, 1583), j. 3, 13a.

³³⁷ S. A. M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1993), 123-124.

³³⁸ Kung Ling-Wei 孔令偉, “Taomin zangchuan fosi ruqing zhi xingshuai ji qi beihou de menggu yinsu: yi ‘neige daku dang’ yu ‘lifan yuan manmeng wen tiben’ wei hexin 洮岷藏傳佛寺入清之興衰及其背後的蒙古因素——以《內閣大庫檔》與《理藩院滿蒙文題本》為核心,” *Bulletin of IHP* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 86, no. 4 (2015): 872.

³³⁹ For the achievement of Vaīs Khan, see Mano Eiji 間野英二, “Jūgo-seiki shotō no Mogūrisutān: Vaisu-Kan no jidai 十五世紀初頭のモグーリスターン: ヴァイス汗の時代,” *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 23, no. 1 (1964): 1-27; for earlier Ming–Moghul relations, see Carol Fan 范茸, “The Timurid Regions and Moghulistan through the Eyes of a Ming Diplomat: An Annotated Translation of the Xiyu fanguo zhi and Selected Poems by Chen Cheng (1415),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 66 (2023): 803-805.

³⁴⁰ See Kim Hodong 金浩東, “Isūllamseryōk ūi tongjin wa Hamiwangguk ūi mullak 이슬람세력의 동진과 (東進) 하미왕국의 몰락 (沒落),” *Chindanhakpo* 진단학보, no. 76 (1993): 115-116. Tian, 田衛疆, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 72-74; Qu Qiang 曲強, “Yuan ming zhi ji tulufan zhengzhi bianqian kao 元明之際吐魯番政治變遷考,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 31, no. 4 (2021): 55-65. Inggirčaq means “(bad) saddle,” see Kuribayashi, “Genshō Hishi” *Mongoru-go*, 209; Eldengtei 額爾登泰, Oyundalai 烏雲達賚 and Asaraltu 阿薩拉圖, “Menggu mishi” *cihui xuanshi* 《蒙古秘史》詞彙選釋 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 1980), 110.

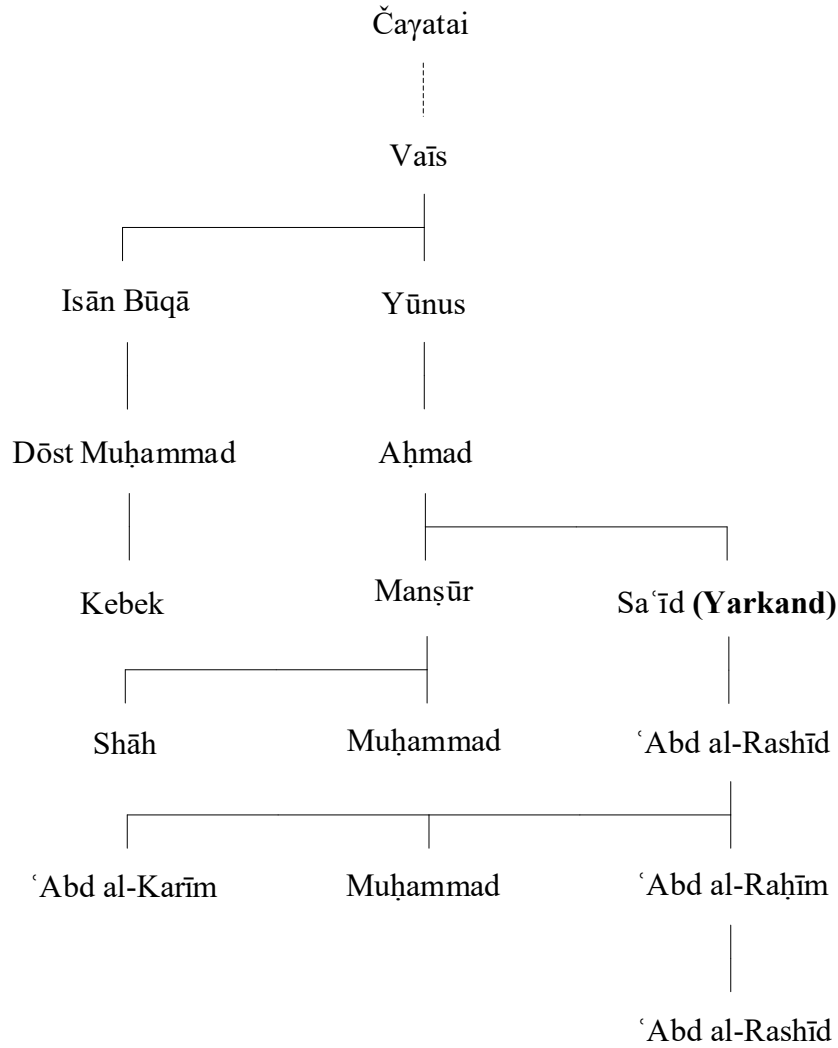


Figure 3.1. Genealogy of the Moghul Khanate and Yarkand Khanate (Selected Descendants).

3.1.1 The failure of native officials

In 1473, Sulṭān ‘Alī (?-1478), a local ruler of the Moghul Khanate who oversaw the Turpan region,³⁴¹ invaded Hami and kidnapped *Nuḡundaširi, who ruled Hami after the death of her son *Būrege, the Prince of Zhongshun. As Morris Rossabi argues, this invasion stemmed from several Míng refusals of Sulṭān ‘Alī’s financial demands.³⁴² A Hami Muslim named Muḥammad (Ch. Maheima 馬黑麻) stole horses from the invader and fled to the Čikin Guard, who then sent people to escort him to Suzhou and informed Gansu officials, who, in turn,

³⁴¹ Kim Hodong reckons that this Sulṭān ‘Alī belonged to the Chorās tribe, see Kim Hodong, “Isūllamseryök ūi tongjin,” 131; *TIR*, 121. For more information about the Chorās tribe, see Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 292, 300-301.

³⁴² Morrisa Rossabi, “Míng China’s Relations with Hami and Central Asia, 1404-1513: A Reexamination of Traditional Chinese Foreign Policy” (PhD diss., New York: Columbia University, 1970), 184-185.

reported the situation to Beijing soon after,³⁴³ showing the effective operation of the intelligence collection and transmission function of the northwestern buffer zone.

In response, the Ming court immediately decided to send the Interpreter Commander (Ch. *tongshi du zhihui* 通事都指揮) Zhan Sheng 詹昇 with a decree to Sultān ‘Alī, urging him to apologise, withdraw from the territory of Hami, and release *Nuγundaširi. Simultaneously, Čikin and other guards were ordered to assemble the army to protect one another, while Gansu generals were instructed to keep the military units on standby, ready to engage the enemy.³⁴⁴ Once served as a Muslim Interpreter (Ch. *huihui tongshi* 回回通事), Zhan Sheng was fluent in at least Persian, Mongolian and Chinese, and had previously already undertaken missions to the Western Regions and Mongolia.³⁴⁵ He may also have been able to speak Uyghur, which was the common language in the Western Regions at the time. He had also been dispatched to the Jurchens, so he might have spoken their language as well.³⁴⁶ As said, the focus of Zhan Sheng’s mission was on persuading Sultān ‘Alī to repent and retreat. However, the Ming court soon received the news from the Xifan Commissioner (Ch. *xifan dudu* 西番都督) Chiboge 赤伯革 that Sultān ‘Alī “usurped the great title [i.e. the title of “khan”] and coerced the neighboring territories.”³⁴⁷ Zhan Sheng, whose previous missions had involved tribute and peace negotiations, had no experience dealing with hostile forces. Thus, the Ming court cancelled his mission.³⁴⁸

I suggest that this Chiboge, the person who reported the news to the Ming court, was Kebek Sultān, the son of Dōst Muḥammad Khan of the Moghul Khanate. There are at least three reasons that substantiate this assessment. Firstly, among the leaders of the Western Regions, only the rulers of Turpan and the leaders of the frontier guards (i.e. the Hami Guard, the Čikin Guard, etc.) were bestowed the title “Commissioner”. However, none of the frontier guard

³⁴³ *MXZSL*, j. 1515, 2224-2225.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Chen Liang 陳亮, “Mingdai huihui tongshi zhan sheng shiji kao 明代回回通事詹昇史跡考,” *Huizu yanjiu* 回族研究, no. 4 (2012): 14-16.

³⁴⁶ See Chen, “Zhan sheng shiji kao,” 16-17. However, since the correspondence between the Jurchens and the Ming in *Huayi Yiyu* was conducted entirely in Mongolian, it is speculated that Zhan Sheng might have been able to fulfill his diplomatic mission to the Jurchens relying solely on his knowledge of Mongolian.

³⁴⁷ “僭擬大號,挾制鄰境.” *MXZSL*, j. 115, 2238.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

commanders were called “Chiboge”.³⁴⁹ Moreover, if commanders of the frontier guards sent an envoy to report on the frontier situation, the sources would record which Guard they belonged to, rather than just referring to them as “Western Barbarian”. Besides the frontier guards, the original ruler of Turpan Inggirčaq also held the title of Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *dudu qianshi* 都督僉事) and was driven out by Vaīs Khan in 1426, fleeing to the Ming.³⁵⁰ There exists the possibility that, from then on, the title of Commissioner-in-Chief was inherited by the Moghul khans (Vaīs Khan, his son Isān Būqā, his grandson Dōst Muḥammad, and his great-grandson Kebek).³⁵¹ Secondly, “Chiboge” has phonetic similarities to “Kebek”. The Mongolian form of “Kebek” is “Kebeg”. It is obvious that *beg* sounds similar to *boge*. *Ke* in *kebeg* is often rendered as *qie* 怯 (pronounced [kʰiɛ]) in Yuan and Ming sources. The sound [kʰ], influenced by the vowel [i], easily undergoes palatalization into [tɕʰ],³⁵² while [tɕʰ], due to the presence of [i], further tends to retroflex into [tɕʰʲ],³⁵³ namely the consonant of *chi*. Therefore, it is phonetically possible for “Kebeg” to be transcribed as “Chiboge.” Thirdly, after Dōst Muḥammad Khan’s death, his son Kebek should have inherited the khanate, but he was captured from Aksu and taken to Turpan, while the khanate was usurped by Yūnus Khan, another son of Vaīs Khan.³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Chiboge’s claim that Sultān ‘Alī “usurped the great title”³⁵⁵ shows that Sultān ‘Alī also claimed to be a “khan”. Therefore, Kebek still failed to gain a proper status in Turpan and had ample reasons to condemn Sultān ‘Alī for his transgression. Overall, Kebek was the person with a proper identity and the most motivation to report Sultān ‘Alī’s intelligence to the Ming. He was, however, killed by his subordinates in the same year he submitted the report.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁹ At that time, the Čikin Mongol Guard had Left Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *zuo dudu* 左都督) Shangbo’erta 賞播塔兒 and Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *dudu qianshi* 都督僉事) Kunzang 昆藏. In Hami, there were Right Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *you dudu* 右都督) Hanshen 罕慎 and Vice Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *dudu tongzhi* 都督同知) Wusunsha 都督同知兀孫沙. See Cheng Liying 程利英, “Mingdai xibei bian jiang zhengce yu guanxi qi wei yanjiu 明代西北邊疆政策與關西七衛研究” (master’s thesis, Northwest Normal University, 2004), 66, 77-78.

³⁵⁰ See Yao Sheng 姚勝, *Mingdai tulufan yu “da liyi” yanjiu* 明代吐魯番與“大禮議”研究 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2018), 35.

³⁵¹ Yao, *Mingdai tulufan*, 36.

³⁵² Wang Li 王力, *Hanyu shi gao* 漢語史稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 144.

³⁵³ Zhang Weijia 張維佳, “Hanyu fangyan juanshe yin lei de dili gongxian yu gongbian 漢語方言捲舌音類的地理共現與共變,” *Yuyan yanjiu* 語言研究 31, no. 4 (2011): 87.

³⁵⁴ Yao, *Mingdai tulufan*, 36; *TIR*, 90.

³⁵⁵ *MXZSL*, j. 74, 1381, 1385.

³⁵⁶ Yao, *Mingdai tulufan*, 36.

After three months of preparation and discussion, out of concern that “Hami is the throat of the Western Regions and if abandoned without rescue, there is a risk that the territories of Čikin Mongol, Handong, Quxian, Anding, Kuyu, Shazhou, and other guards may also be threatened by Turpan”,³⁵⁷ the Ming court decided to send Vice Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *dudu tongzhi* 都督同知) Li Wen 李文 and Transmission Vice Commissioner of the Right (Ch. *tongzheng si you tongzheng* 通政司右通政) Liu Wen 劉文 to restore Hami under the recommendation of the Marquis of Huichang 會昌侯 Sunjizong 孫繼宗 (1395-1479).³⁵⁸ The choice of Li Wen and Liu Wen to lead the expedition was politically motivated, as the two and Sun Jizong, who held significant power within the court, were among the meritorious officials who assisted in the restoration of the Zhentong 正統 Emperor (r. 1436-1450), who survived the Tumu Crisis.³⁵⁹ In addition, both Li Wen and Liu Wen were undoubtedly suitable candidates from a personal competence standpoint.

Li Wen, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was a descendant of Xining Li clan native official. He moved in his youth to the lands of his uncle, the Earl of Huining Li Ying, to “specialize in pacifying the barbarians (Ch. *zhuanfu fanyi* 專撫番夷)”—managing his clan’s military forces and the people of Four Guards and Thirteen Xifan Tribes under the jurisdiction of the Xining Guard—and repeatedly achieved military success.³⁶⁰ Later, due to his contribution during the restoration of the Zhentong Emperor, he was promoted to the Datong 大同 Regional Commander and appointed the Earl of Gaoyang for his meritorious service. However, because of his failure in border defense, he was stripped of his earldom and sent to Yansui to prove himself. He later rose through the ranks for further military achievements and was promoted to Vice Commissioner-in-Chief. At the time of the Hami Crisis, he had no duty and was residing in the capital.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ “哈密實西域諸夷咽喉之地，若棄而不救，竊恐赤斤，蒙古，罕東，曲先，安定，苦峪，沙州等衛亦為土魯番所脅。” *MXZSL*, j. 118, 2270.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ Qin Bo 秦博, “Tianshun chu zhengju yu shi biao, yang neng, li wen, yang xin si chen de fengren 天順初政局與石彪、楊能、李文、楊信四臣的封任,” *Jinyang xuekan* 晉陽學刊, no. 5 (2021): 39-40; *MYZSL*, j. 274, 5820, 5824. For a detailed introduction to the restoration of the Zhentong Emperor, see Kai Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit (1368-1644)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 114-142.

³⁶⁰ *MXZSL*, j. 33, 731.

³⁶¹ Cui Yonghong 崔永紅, “Mingdai qinghai tuguan li wen zhi jiguan ji shengping kaolue 明代青海土官李文之籍貫及生平考略,” *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no. 4 (1992): 76-79; Wu Mu 武沐 and Chen Liang 陳亮, “Mingdai xining li shi,” 127-12; Qin Bo 秦博, “Tianshun chu zhengju yu shi biao,” 39.

Liu Wen, also a meritorious official from the restoration period, worked at the Translators' Institute in Beijing. He had once been demoted and transferred due to his involvement in the insurgency of Shi Heng 石亨 (?-1460) but was reinstated when a vacancy arose at the Bureau,³⁶² likely due to the scarcity of qualified translators. Although he had been promoted to the position of the Transmission Vice Commissioner of the Right (Ch. *you tongzheng* 右通政) at the time, he continued to oversee the Translators' Institute.³⁶³ He would have received several Turpan tribute missions and processed the related tribute documents.

Overall, Li Wen could draw on resources from the native officials he was familiar with, while Liu Wen was more experienced in communicating with the Turpan people. In addition to them, the Ming court also further sent individuals familiar with the customs of the Moghul Khanate and the northwestern buffer zone.³⁶⁴ They were Imperial Bodyguard Battalion Commander (Ch. *Jinyi wei zheng qianhu* 錦衣衛正千戶) Ma Jun 馬俊,³⁶⁵ Platoon Commander (Ch. *zongqi* 總旗) Wang Xigong 王希恭, and Muslim Interpreter Assistant Commander Qalin (or P. Karīm?) 哈林, among others.³⁶⁶

The main tasks of this group were twofold. Firstly, to personally visit the Čikin Mongol, Handong, and other Guards, declare the imperial will, and pacify the local people, preventing the Moghul Khanate from inciting rebellion and ensuring the firm defense of the northwestern buffer zone. Secondly, they had to send envoys to Sulṭān 'Alī to demand the return of Hami city and the expulsion of foreign troops, allowing the people of Hami to return to their original lands and live as before.³⁶⁷

³⁶² *MXZSL*, j. 23, 455.

³⁶³ *MXZSL*, j. 74, 1422.

³⁶⁴ Li and Li, *Xixia lishi shipu*, 74. *Ming Shilu* deleted this content when it cited this edict, See *MXZSL*, j. 118, 2270-2271.

³⁶⁵ His name was also recorded as "Ma Jun 馬駿." According to a register of the Imperial Bodyguard personnel, there was a certain Ma Jun, whose father is a submitted person named *Abū Sayyid or *Abū Sa'īd (Ch. Busaiyi 卜賽亦). Ma Jun, whose original name is Jiao'erlong 郊兒龍 (?), the handwriting of his name is hard to read), performed meritorious service in a battle in Liangguang 兩廣, promoted to the Assistant Commander and changed the name to Ma Jun 馬俊. However, since the positions of these two Ma Jun do not match, they may not be the same person. See *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan* 中國第一歷史檔案館 and *Liaoning sheng dang'an guan* 遼寧省檔案館, eds., *Zhongguo mingchao dang'an zonghui* 中國明朝檔案總彙, no. 49 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 368, 404.

³⁶⁶ *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2465. Qalin is a common Mongolian name meaning "to soar", implying intelligence and talent. Nasunbatu 那順巴圖 and Narasu 娜日蘇, *Menggu yu renmin dimin wumin hanshi shouce* 蒙古語人名地名物名漢釋手冊 (Huhehaote: Niemenggu renmin chubanshe, 2014), 60.

³⁶⁷ Li and Li, *Xixia li shi shipu*, 74.

Some studies argue that the mission of Li Wen and Liu Wen was a failure because they returned without achieving their intended objectives.³⁶⁸ This assessment is consistent with major historical accounts. For example, in 1475, the Ministry of War reported that although Li Wen and Liu Wen were sent to Gansu, they failed to achieve any results.³⁶⁹ Likewise, the Minister of War (Ch. *binbu shangshu* 兵部尚書) Ma Wensheng 馬文升 (1426-1510) wrote in his *Xingfu hami guowang ji* (興復哈密國王記, “Record of the Restoration of the Prince of Hami”): “The emperor sent the Earl of Gaoyang Li Wen and Transmission Vice Commissioner Liu Wen to pacify the region. When they arrived, they were only able to gather several thousand soldiers from Handong and Čikin to station at Kuyu and did not dare to advance further. Since then, the foreign troops began to regard Chinese forces with increasing disregard. In the end, they returned without success.”³⁷⁰

However, these narratives should not be taken as truthful contemporary evaluations of Li Wen and Liu Wen. The Hami Crisis continued to escalate during the Hongzhi 弘治 and Zhengde 正德 periods (1488-1522), and criticisms of Li Wen and Liu Wen for not advancing on Hami and resolving the crisis were to be expected in records like *Ming xianzong shilu* and *Xingfu hami guowang ji*, which were compiled during these later periods. Such criticism, however, is contrary to contemporary perception. For instance, Ma Wensheng, who criticized Li Wen and Liu Wen for returning without success in the later sources, had written a poem upon their return to the capital, congratulating their success: “The rebellious barbarians [i.e. Sultān ‘Alī and his force] have followed the new imperial orders, and the western barbarians [i.e. the frontier guards] resumed their old tents.”³⁷¹ This indicates that, in contemporary understanding, Turpan had adhered to the Ming court’s commands, and the frontier guards had resumed their lost territory, with Li Wen and Liu Wen having successfully completed their task.

³⁶⁸ Rossabi, “Ming China’s Relations with Hami and Central Asia,” 187-188; Shi, *Tulufan xue*, 66-49.

³⁶⁹ *MXZSL*, j. 137, 2580.

³⁷⁰ Ma Wensheng 馬文升, *Xingfu hami guowang ji* 興復哈密國王記, in *Ma duansu gong san ji* 馬端肅公三記, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu bubian* 四庫全書存目叢書補編, vol. 76 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2001), 208. For an introduction to the editing and printing process of *Xingfu hami guowang ji*, see Ma Jianmin 馬建民, “Mingdai ma wensheng ‘ma duansu gong sa ji’ banben kaoshu 明代馬文升《馬端肅公三記》版本考述,” *Beifang minzu daxue xuebao* 北方民族大學學報, no. 6 (2020): 126-127.

³⁷¹ “逆虜已遵新號令，西戎復守舊旃廬。” Ma Wensheng 馬文升, *Ma duansu gong shiji* 馬端肅公詩集, in *Huizu wenxian congkan* 回族文獻叢刊, vol. 5, ed. Li Wei 李偉 and Wu Jianwei 吳建偉 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 1910.

Therefore, Ma Wensheng believed that they would be rewarded by the Chenghua 成化 Emperor (r. 1465-1487): “Upon entering to report, the face of the dragon [i.e. the emperor] will certainly be joyful, and when discussing merits, their achievements will be highly rewarded.”³⁷²

Furthermore, the evidence shows that the fact that Li Wen and Liu Wen’s march to Hami was not a failure but rather adhered to the orders of the Chenghua Emperor. *Xixia lishi shipu* 西夏李氏世譜, the genealogy of Li Wen’s clan, contains two edicts issued by the Chenghua Emperor to Li Wen during this conflict. The first of them does not differ significantly from the *Ming shilu*, while the second edict was, however, not included in the *Ming shilu*. It appears that this unrecorded edict reflects the Chenghua Emperor’s true intentions. The edict first recorded Li Wen and Liu Wen’s report that they had already sent Ma Jun and others to persuade Sulṭān ‘Alī to retreat from Hami and gather intelligence during their mission.³⁷³ As record in another memorial, Ma Jun came back and reported that Sulṭān ‘Alī’s army consisted of no more than 300 cavalry and less than 2,000 infantry.³⁷⁴ Therefore, Li Wen and Liu Wen embarked on assembling 1,000 Chinese troops, along with soldiers from Čikin and Handong, to march on Hami.³⁷⁵

However, in the second part of the edict, the Chenghua Emperor commanded Li Wen and Liu Wen to withdraw the army. Given the high risk and expenditure of the mission, the emperor only permitted them “to use barbarians to attack barbarians” (Ch. *yi yi gong yi* 以夷攻夷) and that the Chinese army should not have been deployed. Instead, the Chinese soldiers should have held the borders to prevent possible incursions by the Moghul Khanate. The reason behind this decision was that the conflict between Turpan and Hami was an issue among the foreign tribes, and if the Ming intervened, it would effectively declare Turpan as an enemy of the empire. At that time, the Ming state was already facing numerous border crises, including the invasions by the Mongols into the Hetao Plain,³⁷⁶ as well as an unrest in Annam,³⁷⁷ which the Ming was

³⁷² “入觀龍顏應有喜，論功准擬重褒予。” Ibid.

³⁷³ Li and Li, *Xixia li shi shipu*, 74. For the detail of this negotiation, see *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2465-2467.

³⁷⁴ *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2465-2467.

³⁷⁵ Li and Li, *Xixia li shi shipu*, 74. *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2465-2467.

³⁷⁶ For the frontier disturbance and crisis in Hetao, see Darijab 達力扎布, *Mingdai monan menggu lishi yanjiu* 明代漠南蒙古歷史研究 (Haila’er: Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 1997), 28-49.

³⁷⁷ For the Ming-Annam conflicts, see Chen Wenyuan 陳文源, “Mingchao yu annan guanxi yanjiu 明朝與安南關係研究” (PhD diss., Guangzhou: Jinan University, 2005), 62-63.

attempting to quell. Under such circumstances, the dynasty was absolutely unwilling to elevate Turpan to the status of a direct enemy. This consideration underpinned the Ming government's approach throughout the Hami Crisis.

Moreover, in the last part of the edict, the emperor asked Li Wen and Liu Wen to settle the Hami people in Kuyu. In the eventuality that they recovered the city of Hami, they should select a suitable successor to the title of the Prince of Zhongshun. The candidate could be chosen either from the Prince of Anding's lineage—which belongs to the Golden Clan and shares ancestry with the extinct house of the Prince of Zhongshun—or else Han Shen, who was the son of *Bay Tamur, and had served as the Uyghur Commissioner, and came from a son-in-law family to the extinct lineage of the Prince of Zhongyi, as discussed in Section 2.3.2.³⁷⁸

Upon receiving the edict, Li Wen and Liu Wen took immediate action to relocate the displaced people of Hami. Following this, the Ming's main aim became to rebuild the Xiyu buffer zone to isolate and resist the influence of the Moghul Khanate. After the fall of Hami, the refugees were primarily led by Hanshen and Toytoy-a Buqa (Ch. Tuotuo Buhua 脫脫不花), who commanded the Uyghur, Kara Koy, and Mekrin peoples.³⁷⁹ The reason to settle the Hami people at Kuyu originates from the close connection between Kuyu and Hami, as depicted in Section 2.3.2. Later, following the emperor's command “to use barbarians to attack barbarians”, Li Wen and Liu Wen assembled troops from Čikin and Handong in Shule River, preparing to march towards Hami.³⁸⁰

However, they soon found that Sultān ‘Alī had already made alliance with a number of frontier groups, as depicted in Figure 3.2. It is reported that Anben 俺奔 of Yaglakır (Ch. Yilangu 亦郎骨),³⁸¹ Nananben 那南奔 of Baihe'er 白河兒, and others gathered 4,000 cavalry,

³⁷⁸ Li and Li, *Xixia li shi shipu*, 75.

³⁷⁹ For a list of Hami leaders, see Oda Juten, “Part I. Uighuristan,” *Acta Asiatica*, no. 34 (2015): 35-37.

³⁸⁰ *MXZSL*, j. 134, 2515.

³⁸¹ Yaglakır or Yaglakar, the first imperial clan of the Uyghur Khanate from 744, is a tribe with long history. For the relationship between Yaglakır and Sarıg Uyğur, see Erkin Ekrem, “Sarı Uyğurların Kökeni,” *Modern Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 3 (2007): 156-180. It is believed that Yaglakır's descendants are the tribe of Yalege 亞樂格 of the Western Yugur 西部裕固, see Gao Zihou 高自厚, *Jiaowang yu ronghe: Dansheng zai hexi zoulang de yugu zu yanjiu* 交往與融合: 誕生在河西走廊的裕固族研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2023), 72. According to David Somfai Kara, today's last Shamanic specialist of the Western Yugur comes from the Yaglakır clan, see David Somfai Kara, “The Last Yugur Shaman from Sunan, Gansu (China),” *Shaman: An International Journal for Shamanistic Research* 24, no. 1-2 (2016): 116. “Anben 俺奔” is a common name of Tibetan people record in Chinese sources. However, its original Tibetan form remains unknown.

intending to seize Čikin and Handong's homes and assets after they had left.³⁸² Nevertheless, Sultān 'Alī had also mobilized forces from Čerčen to bolster his defenses.³⁸³ As discussed in Chapter 2, Turpan had a close connection with the Čerčen region. Thus, it was reasonable for the Moghul Khanate to further communicate and form a good relationship with Yaglakır, a powerful faction of the Quxian Guard, Nananben, a Regional Military Commissioner (Ch. *du Zhihui* 都指揮) of the Anding Guard,³⁸⁴ and other forces near the Čerčen basin, namely certain tribes of the Sarıg Uyğur and other regions in Qinghai. Faced with this situation, Li Wen and Liu Wen could only retreat and return to Suzhou, splitting their forces to communicate with the tribe of Aji 阿吉 under the Xining Guard, the tribe of Qiangza 羌咂 under the Handong Guard and others to ensure their obedience and thus prevent the spread of the influence of Sultān 'Alī.³⁸⁵ The tribes of Aji and Qiangza were located near the southern mountains of Gansu and connected to the Čerčen and Shule Basin.³⁸⁶ To prevent Turpan's influence from penetrating into Qinghai, the Ming began strengthening its ties with these local tribes, consolidating alliances in advance.

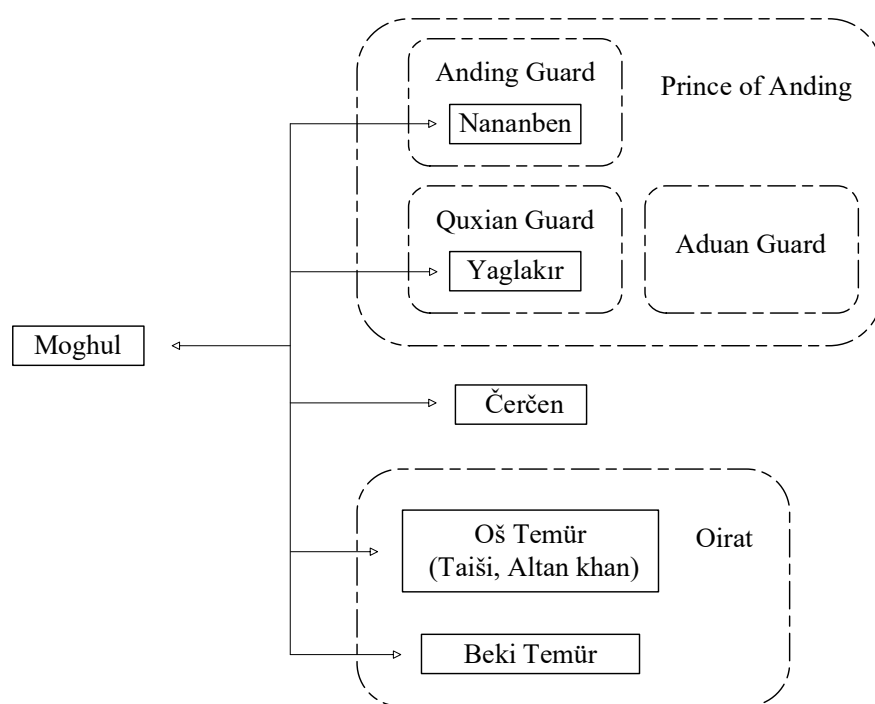


Figure 3.2. Sultān 'Alī's Allies.

³⁸² *MXZSL*, j. 134, 2515.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*; Liu, "Mingchao chuqi dui xiyu de guanxia ji wanglai guanxi," 36.

³⁸⁴ *MYZSL*, j. 155, 3024.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, j. 134, 2515-2516.

³⁸⁶ *BZK I*, j. 9, 243.

However, the situation worsened over time. By 1475, Sultān ‘Alī claimed that he had already made an alliance with Oš Temür (Ch. Woshi Tiemu’er 斡失帖木兒 or Ashi Timu’er 阿失帖木兒, also known as Mo. Ubasanča),³⁸⁷ who was the second son of Esen and owned the title “Taiši” and “Altan Khan” (Ch. Antan Wang 奄檀王) at the time,³⁸⁸ as well as Dawlat Khvāja (Ch. Daola Huozhi 倒刺火只), who was the leader of Quxian and Yisike 亦思渴.³⁸⁹ Furthermore, reports emerged that the Oirat Beki Temür (Ch. Bieji Tiemu’er 北吉帖木兒) had gathered forces near Hami. The Ming feared that if he allied with Sultān ‘Alī to attack its borders, the Kara Koy people, who had a close connection with the Oirats (as discussed in Chapter 2) could have supported him.³⁹⁰

At this time, although the Čikin Mongols remained loyal to the Ming and refused the Moghul Khanate’s surrender demands,³⁹¹ it had conflicts with the tribe of A’nian 阿年族 and the Handong Guard, leading to years of feuding.³⁹² Meanwhile, the Mekrin showed signs of rebellion and later indeed defected.³⁹³ The northwestern buffer zone of the Ming faced internal strife and external threats, teetering on the brink of collapse at any moment.

3.1.2 The failure of Hanshen

³⁸⁷ For the reconstruction of his name and the man’s life story, see Danbi and Ge, *Menghan duizhao tuote wenzi*, 9; Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 280; Qu Qiang 曲強, “Bosi wen ‘lashide shi’ ‘yexian taishi’ jiazhu shiliao yizhu yu yanjiu 波斯文《拉施德史》“也先太師”家族史料譯註與研究,” *Oyirad Studies*, no. 10 (2024): 66-68; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 188; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 112; Hosung Shim, “The State Formation of the Zunghar Principality: A Political History of the Last Centralized State of the Eurasian Steppe” (PhD diss., Bloomington: Indiana University, 2021), 61-62; V. V. Barthold, “History of the Semirechye,” in *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 1, trans. V. and T. minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 148.

³⁸⁸ The title “Taiši” derived from Chinese Taishi (太師, “Grand Preceptor”). Owning this title means the man carried considerable prestige. See Henry Serruys, “The Office of Tayisi in Mongolia in the Fifteenth Century,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 37, no. 2 (1977), 353-380. According to Seify, who was a *daftardār* (bookkeeper) for a Persian or Bukharan merchant, once travelled (at least he claimed to have) to China and died in 1582, the ruler of the Oirats owned the title “Altan Khan 奄檀王,” see Seify, “Appendice V,” 292; Xing Jiechen 邢潔晨, “Zhungaer bu Xingcheng kaobian 準噶爾部形成考辨,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 3 (2001): 60-63. However, Seify mistakenly took the ruler of the Oirats as a descendant of Činggis Khan, misleading Barthold to identify the Altan Khan of the Oirats as the certain Altan Khan of Tūmed. See Barthold, “History of the Semirechye,” 158. Miyawaki Junko once claimed that only the Qošut ruler once held the title “Khan” within the Oirat Alliance, which should not be true according to the discussion here, see Miyawaki Junko, “The Birth of the Oyirad Khanship,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 41, no. 1 (1997): 38-75.

³⁸⁹ *MXZSL*, j. 137, 2575.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, j. 137, 2580. For the Moghul–Oirat before the period under consideration in this dissertation, see S. Akhmetkul, G. Zhapekova, and Z. Dzhandosova, “The History of Moghul–Oirat Relations (from the Mid-14th to the Early 16th Century),” *Gumilyov Journal of History* 152, no. 3 (2025): 29–45.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, j. 126, 2407-8.

³⁹² *MXZSL*, j. 134, 2518-9; j. 171, 3096.

³⁹³ Temule, “Yuanming shiqi mekrin,” 87-88.

To solidify the buffer system, the Ming provided significant support to Hansheng, who successfully recovered Hami and ruled for a time there but was ultimately murdered.

3.1.2.1 Reclamation of Hami

To rebuild the Xiyu buffer zone, resist the invasion of the Moghul Khanate, and recapture Hami, the Ming increased its support to the three guards of Hami, Handong, and Čikin, thereby instituting a new administrative framework led by Hanshen. Firstly, the Ming reestablished the Hami Guard at Kuyu, casting the Hami Guard seal and awarding it to Hanshen in 1476,³⁹⁴ and ordered Wang Xi 王璽 (?-1488), the Gansu Regional Commander, to build a city at Kuyu to settle the Hami people in 1477.³⁹⁵ This indicated the Ming court's recognition of Hanshen as the leader of the Hami Guard. Second, sticking to the "to use barbarians to attack barbarians" strategy, the Ming encouraged Handong and other frontier Guards to resist the Moghul Khanate and rewarded them repeatedly.³⁹⁶

Sultān 'Alī passed away in 1478.³⁹⁷ A power transition occurred immediately afterwards within Turpan as a large number of Sultān 'Alī's subordinates defected.³⁹⁸ As the result, Aḥmad (Ch. Aheima 阿黑麻, r. 1487-1504), the Moghul Khan, who was the son of Yūnus Khan, took over the rule of Turpan.³⁹⁹ Facing this situation, the Gansu Grand Coordinator Wang Chaoyuan 王朝遠 (1433-1480) proposed mobilizing 5,000 soldiers from Čikin and Handong, 10,000 cavalry and infantry troops from Gansu and Liangzhou, and 700 soldiers under Hanshen's command to recover Hami at the time of the internal strife in the Moghul Khanate.⁴⁰⁰ However, his proposal was opposed by the Ministry of War and other court officials. One reason given was that longstanding animosities existed among the non-Han soldiers. If they rebelled, turned back midway, or violated camp discipline, it would be difficult

³⁹⁴ *MXZSL*, j. 159, 2905

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, j. 171, 3096.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, j. 173, 3126; j. 177, 3198-3199.

³⁹⁷ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 583.

³⁹⁸ *MXZSL*, j. 180, 3245.

³⁹⁹ Between Sultān 'Alī and Aḥmad, several rulers held short-term control over Turpan, see Yao, *Mingdai tulufan*, 55-57.

⁴⁰⁰ *MXZSL*, j. 180, 3244-5.

to succeed. This shows that the Ming court still had serious doubts about the relationships among the frontier guards and their loyalty to the Ming.⁴⁰¹

In order to improve their relationship and reinforce the Xiyu buffer zone, the Ming further strengthened its support for these groups of the buffer zone. Firstly, the Ming court, acceding to the requests of the Čikin and Handong guards in 1478, dismissed Shangbota'er 賞播塔兒,⁴⁰² who was the Left Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *zuo dudu* 左都督) of the Čikin Guard but too young to serve in the position. As a replacement, the Ming appointed Jiading 加定, who was trusted and obeyed by the masses, as the Regional Military Assistant Commissioner, temporarily entrusting him with the seal.⁴⁰³

Secondly, the Ming dispatched *fuyi* officials to strengthen control over Shazhou. It is worth emphasizing that this marks the first appearance of the *fuyi* officials serving in Suzhou. In 1477, the Suzhou Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi zhihui* 撫夷指揮) Shi Ying 師英 and the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi qianhu* 撫夷千戶) Dong He 董和 led 2,000 soldiers to Shazhou to ensure the obedience and secure the support of the indigenous people and root out the sources of instability.⁴⁰⁴ In 1478, Shi Ying again led 1,000 soldiers to Shazhou to secure the frontier buffer zone.⁴⁰⁵ In 1479, Shi Ying once more led troops to Shazhou to manage the indigenous people in Shazhou and surrendered individuals, likely part of Sulṭān 'Alī's subordinates who fled to the Ming after the internal conflict in Turpan.⁴⁰⁶ That same year, the Ming court established the Handong Left Guard at Shazhou and tasked it with governing there.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., j. 180, 3245.

⁴⁰² A tentative reconstruction of his name could be *Sāh-buddhṛ. "Sāh" is a Sanskrit word meaning "powerful, mighty", while "buddhṛ" means "one who perceives or comprehends." See Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), 734, 1212.

⁴⁰³ *MXZSL*, j. 182, 3279-80.

⁴⁰⁴ Paul Pelliot, *Boxihe Dunhuang shiku biji* 伯希和敦煌石窟筆記, trans. Geng Sheng 耿昇 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2007), 132-133. Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 ed., *Dunhuang gongyang ren tiji* 敦煌供養人題記 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 48.

⁴⁰⁵ Chen Guangwen 陳光文 and Zheng Binglin 鄭炳林, "Mogao ku, yulin ku mingdai youren tiji yanjiu 莫高窟、榆林窟明代遊人題記研究," *Lanzhou daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 蘭州大學學報 (社會科學版) 43, no. 5 (2015): 115-116.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 116.

⁴⁰⁷ *MXZSL*, j. 194, 3423-4.

The background of Shi Ying, the first *fuyi* official ever known in Suzhou, is unclear, and he did not appear again thereafter.⁴⁰⁸ Dong He likely came from a prominent local family in Suzhou, as individuals with the surname Dong continued to serve as *fuyi* officials in later periods. In 1480, Hami, having been repeatedly plundered by the Čikin, sought assistance from the Ming. Consequently, the Ming dispatched Dong He and fourteen others to mediate the conflicts. However, when Dong He reached the territory of Čikin, he was killed by a Čikin leader.⁴⁰⁹ Dong He's death revealed the internal conflicts within the frontier guards and prompted the Ming to take the third measure: to establish a joint Han and non-Han army. This action aimed both to enhance combat effectiveness and to strengthen control over the frontier guards. As a result, the Čikin Guard resumed obeying Ming orders. In 1482, Chinese troops from the Suzhou Guard collaborated with the soldiers from the Čikin Guard to kill “bandits (Ch. *zei* 賊)” —possibly Mongols or a section of the Moghul army—for which they received rewards from the Ming court.⁴¹⁰

Despite the costs, which included the sacrifice of Dong He, the Ming court's efforts to rebuild the Xiyu buffer zone soon yielded results. In 1482, Wang Xi successfully assembled a force which comprised 8,600 Hami soldiers and 1,300 soldiers from Čikin and Handong.⁴¹¹ This joint army launched an attack against the Moghul Khanate and finally successfully reclaimed Hami.⁴¹²

3.1.2.2 The “Hanshen System”

⁴⁰⁸ He likely came from a prominent Suzhou native family like Dong He since there were other Suzhou Commanders 指揮 surnamed Shi 師, like Shi Jing 師經 and his son Shi Jin 師瑾, See *SZHYZ*, j. 2, 133; j. 4, 249, 266, 284-285.

⁴⁰⁹ *MXZSL*, j. 209, 3648. The reason for the fact that Dong He had only 14 men under his command was twofold: firstly, the operation was originally intended for negotiations with the Čikin Guard rather than a military campaign; secondly, the Ming deliberately restricted the power of *fuyi* officials to prevent them from exploiting their unique status to act arbitrarily, as evidenced by numerous instances discussed later in this dissertation. Despite his small contingent, Dong He's title of “Battalion Commander In Charge of Pacification 撫夷千戶” signified that he acted as a representative of the Ming emperor, entrusted with the governance and pacification of the frontier guards. This official status fundamentally distinguished him from ordinary interpreters.

⁴¹⁰ *MXZSL*, j. 194, 3874.

⁴¹¹ Chen Gaohua considered the number of Hami soldiers to be excessively high, see Chen Gaohua 陳高華, “Guanyu mingdai tulufan de jige wenti 關於明代土魯番的幾個問題,” in *MDHM*, 439. Compared with the former plan of Wang Xi, the number of Hami soldiers recorded here should comprise the Han soldiers from Gansu.

⁴¹² *MXZSL*, j. 194, 3874, 3877.

After the recovery of Hami, the Ming court focused its efforts on Hami to rebuild the Xiyu buffer zone and expected that Hanshen and his subordinates would resume the previous responsibilities of the Prince of Zhongshun and the Hami Guard. This is reflected in the following three aspects. Firstly, the Hami administration once again took on the task of receiving tributary missions and escorting the missions to the capital.⁴¹³ Secondly, Hami regime gradually restored its former status as the preeminent state of the Western Regions, exercising authority over the Čikin and Handong Guards.⁴¹⁴ Thirdly, Hami officials worked to recruit the defected Mekrin people, contain the Oirat, and stabilize the situation in the Western Regions. At that time, the political landscape in Inner Asia underwent significant change, marked by the withdrawal of the Moghul Khanate and the rise of the Oirats and Meksins north of Tianshan Mountains. Hanshen, for his own benefit and the border security of the Ming, began to navigate among these forces.

After the recovery of Hami, relations between the Ming and the Moghul Khanate began to ease. In 1484, the Ming court decided to release the Turpan individuals imprisoned in Ganzhou as a gesture of goodwill toward the Moghul Khanate.⁴¹⁵ As a result, the Ming and Hanshen arrived at a temporary peace with their western neighbor.

However, the arrival of Isman⁴¹⁶ (= Ch. Yisimayin 亦思馬因 < P. 'Ismā'īl) brought new frontier challenges. In 1483, Isman, Taiši of the Mongols and leader of the Yüngšiyebü Mongol (with the Meksins as the main body), broke with Dayan Khan (Mo. Dayan ~ Dayun Qayan < Ch. Dayuan Han 大元汗),⁴¹⁷ the Great Khan of the Mongols, and fled with his followers to the areas north of Gansu and Hami. There, he allied with Kešig (Ch. Keshe 克捨), Oš Temür's son who inherited the title of Taiši of the Oirats, to fight against Dayan Khan.⁴¹⁸ A detailed

⁴¹³ MXZSL, j. 247, 4182.

⁴¹⁴ This is reflected in the fact that Hanshen requested the promotion of Čikin leaders. MXZSL, j. 282, 4783.

⁴¹⁵ MXZSL, j. 256, 4331.

⁴¹⁶ This is the Mongolian form of his name. His name was also recorded as “Smal” and “Samul” in Mongolian sources, see Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 245.

⁴¹⁷ Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, “Dayan Khan as a Yuan Emperor: The Political Legitimacy in 15th Century Mongolia,” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, no. 81 (1994): 52-53. Cai Meibiao argues that Dayan is not a transliteration of Chinese *dayuan*, but a Mongolian word means “entire country,” see Cai, “Mingdai menggu yu dayuan guohao,” 468-472.

⁴¹⁸ Buyandelger 寶音德力根, “Yingshaobu wanhu de bianqian 應紹不萬戶的變遷,” *Xibei minzu luncong* 西北民族論叢, no. 2 (2003), 163.

analysis of the Yüngšiyebü Mongols and the Oirats at this time will be given in Chapter 5. Here, this dissertation focuses on their interactions with Hanshen, depicted in Figure 3.3.

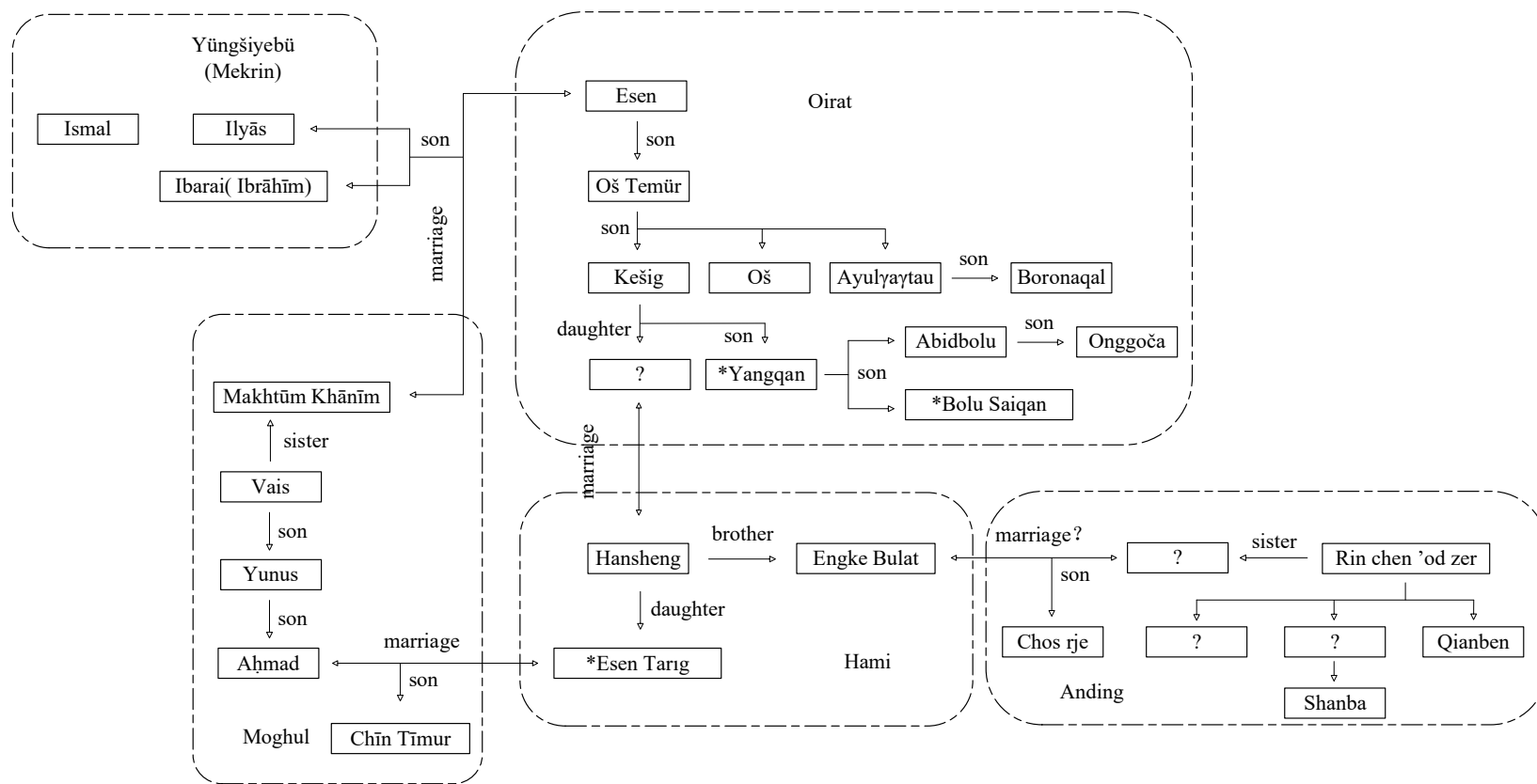


Figure 3.3. The Structure of the Hanshen System.

In order to expand their power, Isman and the Oirats started invading Čikin and Handong. Between 1483-1484, Isman's forces attacked Čikin and Zhenfan. Consequently, in 1484, the Ming court ordered Hanshen to admonish and, if possible, recruit them.⁴¹⁹ It is noteworthy that Isman's followers were sometimes referred to as "Wild Mekrin", a designation used to distinguish them from the Mekrins under the rule of Hami.⁴²⁰ Some of Hami's Mekrin were also believed to have rebelled and joined the "Wild Mekrin". Nevertheless, the Kara Koy of Hami were believed to be related to the Wild Mekrins.⁴²¹ Therefore, Hanshen's mission to admonish and recruit the Wild Mekrins was rooted in the existing Inner Asian interpersonal networks

Hanshen's efforts, however, did not take effect in the short term. In 1485, Isman's forces invaded the Handong Left Guard's territory, resulting in heavy casualties.⁴²² The Ming repaired and fortified the small town of Humuge 虎木哥 (derived from OU. Kum, meaning "sandy") to resettle people from Handong and rewarded the meritorious officers and soldiers of the guard.⁴²³ In 1486, Kešig died, and his brother Oš (Ch. Asha 阿沙) was championed to become the *[Q]amuy Taiši (Ch. Amuke Taishi 阿木克),⁴²⁴ with his tribe being called the Great Oirat (Ch. *da wala* 大瓦剌) or the Great Ögeled. Kešig's son *Yangqan 養罕 became the Čingsang (< Ch. *chengxiang* 丞相, "Grand Councilor"), titled the Prince of *Yangqan 養罕王,⁴²⁵ and his tribe was known as the Little Ögeled (Ch. *xiao lietu* 小列禿).⁴²⁶ Additionally,

⁴¹⁹ MXZSL, j. 248, 4200-1.

⁴²⁰ Rossabi and Temule incorrectly took the Wild Mekrin as the Mekrin from Hami who rebelled. Although some of the Hami Mekrin in fact attended the Wild Mekrin, the main body of the Wild Mekrin was those who was under the command of Isman and had fled from Inner Mongolia. See Rossabi, "Ming China's Relations with Hami and Central Asia," 192; Temule, "Yuanming shiqi mekrin," 88.

⁴²¹ Hu and Zheng, "Mingdai hamı wei," 86-87.

⁴²² MXZSL, j. 266, 4509-10.

⁴²³ Jens Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen, Altuigurisch-Deutsch-Türkisch* (Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 2021), 422; Nurlan Kenzheakhmet, "Ethnoyms and Toponyms of the old Turkic Inscirptions in Chinese Sources," *Studia et Documenta Turcologica*, no. 2 (2014): 315.

⁴²⁴ "[Q]amuy" means "the highest". Mattai Haltod et al., eds, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 926; Neimenggu daxue menggu xue yanjiuyuan menggu yuwen yanjiusuo 內蒙古大學蒙古學研究院蒙古語文研究所, *Menghan cidian: menghan duizhao* 蒙漢詞典: 蒙漢對照 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 1999), 558.

⁴²⁵ In Oirat Mongolian, people call the son of a khan as Mo. Wang = P. üng < Ch. Wang (王, "prince"), see Qu, "Bosi wen 'lashide shi'," 56-57; Neimenggu daxue, *Menghan cidian*, 770. Reconstruction of the name follows Shim, "The State Formation Of The Zunghar Principality," 69.

⁴²⁶ Bai Cuiqin 白翠琴, *Wala shi* 瓦剌史 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2006), 95. Jinfeng and others suggest that the tribe of Oš and *Yangqan should be respectively called Great Ögeled and Little Ögeled, see Badai 巴岱, Jinfeng 金峰 and E'erdeni 額爾德尼, "Lun si weilate lianmeng 論四衛拉特聯盟," in *Weilate shi lunwen ji* 衛拉特史論文集 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang shifan daxue xuebao bianjieshi, 1987), 27, 49. Xing Jiechen argues that this division as two tribes follows the traditional paradigm of left and right wings of the nomadic people, see Xing, "Zhungaer bu Xingcheng kaobian," 61.

Kešig's youngest brother Ayulaytau (Ch. Aliguduo 阿力古多), who was at odds with Oš, established his own faction.⁴²⁷

That same year, the Ming court received intelligence claiming that Isman had allied with the Oirats and was about to invade Čikin and Hami. Therefore, the Ming court sent envoys to instruct Hanshen to form a strong alliance with the Little Ögeled, and through them, lure chieftains such as Isman to gather around Hami and remain, preventing them from moving eastward and becoming a threat to the Ming border.⁴²⁸ This strategy was formulated based on the crucial “nephew-uncle relation (Ch. *shengjiu zhi fen* 甥舅之分)” between Hanshen and *Yangqan.⁴²⁹ However, no source explained how the two had become related. The possible answer was that Hanshen was recorded as the nephew of *Nuyundaširi,⁴³⁰ daughter of Esen, and thus had established marriage relations with the Oirat rulers. Another possible answer is that *Nuyundaširi was the wet nurse (Ch. *rumu* 乳母) of *Bay Tamur,⁴³¹ Hanshen's father, and thus this relationship was symbolic rather than biological.

Not long after, Isman passed away.⁴³² After that, *Yangqan and Ayulaytau formed an alliance and planned to migrate to Shazhou and Guazhou, while Ayulaytau further proposed to make a marital alliance with Hanshen.⁴³³ At this point, Hanshen's interests diverged from those of the Ming. The Ming court hoped he would contain the various powers in the Western Regions but did not agree to him forming marital relations with them, which is a traditional Inner Asian manner to make alliances. The Ming court undoubtedly did not want Hanshen to become too close to these Inner Asian powers. However, for Hanshen, who sought to expand

⁴²⁷ For the reconstruction of Ayulaytau's name and genealogy of the Oirat rulers, see Nashundalai 那順達來, “Weilate du'erbote bu yanjiu 衛拉特杜爾伯特部研究” (master's thesis: Inner Mongolia University, 2004), 4-11.

⁴²⁸ *MXZSL*, j. 279, 4705.

⁴²⁹ *MXZSL*, j. 289, 4885.

⁴³⁰ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 583.

⁴³¹ Yao Kui 姚夔, *Yao wenmin gong yigao* 姚文敏公遺稿, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *ji bu* 集部, vol. 34 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 589; It is a common practice in Mongol or Inner Asia to employ a wet nurse to breastfeed the infants. It is also a means of forming familial alliances in many hierarchical societies. See Anne F. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 26; Balkrishan Shivram, “Imperial Wet Nurses in the Reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33, no. 2 (2023): 351-2. However, it was not common for a person of high status such as *Nuyundaširi, to serve as the wet nurse. *Nuyundaširi's real intention may be to form close relations with the faction of the Prince of Zhongyi.

⁴³² *MXZSL*, j. 280, 4730.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, j. 280, 4731; j. 282, 4782-3.

his own influence, forming marital alliances with the various sides was the more advantageous choice.

In 1487, the Ming received the message that since Hanshen followed the Ming's instructions and refused the marriage proposal, *Yangqan plundered the city of Lapčuk and asked for a marital alliance again. Moreover, *Yangqan and Ayulıytau planned to further plunder Gansu together. The Ming asked Hanshen to contain *Yangqan and hold back his invasion.⁴³⁴ Contrary to the expectation of the Ming, later in the same year, Hanshen married *Yangqan's sister.⁴³⁵ After that, *Yangqan sent envoys to the Ming court, following those of Hami, to petition his desire to present tribute. This shows that the marriage relationship between Hanshen and *Yangqan, in a positive turn of events for the Ming, formed a restriction to the actions of *Yangqan, making him willing to integrate into the tribute system organized by the Ming.⁴³⁶

Besides the Oirats, Hanshen's family also formed marital alliances with the lineage of the Prince of Anding (see Figure 3.3). It is recorded that Chos rje (Ch. Chuo'erjia 綽兒加), the younger brother of the Prince of Anding Qianben 千奔, was the "nephew (Ch. *zhi* 姪)" of Hanshen.⁴³⁷ This indicates that Chos rje was likely a son of the sister of Rin chen 'od zer (Ch. Lingzhan Woxie'er 領占斡些兒), the former Prince of Anding and Qianben's father, and a brother of Hanshen, probably Engke Bulat (Ch. (Y)anke Bola 奄克孛剌), the only brother of Hanshen we know of. It has been shown in the previous section that apart from Hanshen, the Ming also considered appointing a member from the Prince of Anding family to succeed to the title of the Prince of Zhongshun. Therefore, Hanshen family's marital alliance with the lineage of the Prince of Anding neutralized potential threats to his position and strengthened his political authority.

Overall, Hanshen made marital alliance with the Oirats and the Prince of Anding, restored Hami's rule over Čikin and Handong, and contributed to mitigating border threats from the Oirats, Wild Mekrin and the Moghul Khanate, and ultimately succeeded in reestablishing the

⁴³⁴ Ibid., j. 289, 4885.

⁴³⁵ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 588.

⁴³⁶ *MXIZSL*, j. 6, 98.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., j. 71, 1340.

Xiyou buffer zone. To reward his merits, the Ming decided to enthrone him as the Prince of Zhongshun.⁴³⁸

However, before the arrival of the official document and reward to announce the enthronement, Hanshen was killed by a conspiracy plotted by the Moghul Khanate and Hami people. In 1488, Aḥmad Khan of the Moghul Khanate promised to make a marital alliance with Hanshen. However, seizing the moment that Hanshen was off guard, Aḥmad Khan attacked and killed him, along with *Yangqan's sister and brother.⁴³⁹ The superficial motive behind the assassination was that Aḥmad Khan considered Hanshen to be of humble lineage and therefore lacking the legitimacy to claim the title of Prince of Zhongshun.⁴⁴⁰ This invocation of the "Činggisid Principle" was not as sincere as Aḥmad Khan claimed, otherwise he would not have agreed to make the marriage alliance with Hanshen, which he followed up on despite killing Hanshen. He married Hanshen's daughter *Esen Tarıg (Ch. Yexian Dali 也先答力),⁴⁴¹ who bore him a son called Chīn Tīmūr (Ch. Zhen Tiemu'er 真帖木兒).⁴⁴² It is worth mentioning that Hanshen's father-in-law Mollā Tūr (Ch. Manla Tu'er 滿刺土兒) was one of the Hami people who were involved in cooperating with Aḥmad Khan's conspiracy to kill Hanshen.⁴⁴³ Therefore, the murder of Hanshen seems to have been a cooperation between a Hami political faction and the Moghul Khanate.

The rise and fall of Hanshen's rule were remarkably swift. He first reestablished the rule of the Hami Guard at Kuyu, integrating the scattered Hami people. Subsequently, with Ming support, he recaptured the city of Hami, restored Ming rule over Čikin and Handong, and was eventually permitted to inherit the title and the position of the Prince of Zhongshun. Moreover, he actively adopted the Inner Asian model of marital alliances, forming matrimonial ties with the Oirats, the Prince of Anding family, and the Moghul Khanate, establishing an influential regime in Inner Asia on behalf of the Ming.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., j. 11, 249-250.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., j. 20, 481-482; Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 588.

⁴⁴⁰ Kim Hodong, "Isūllamseryōk ūi tongjin," 134-135.

⁴⁴¹ Zheng, "Hami zhengquan yanjiu," 43.

⁴⁴² *TJR*, 161.

⁴⁴³ *MXIZSL*, j. 44, 896.

His failure can be attributed to two key reasons. Firstly, there was his own identity. Originating from a *güregen* lineage rather than the Golden Clan, the “legitimacy of his rule” (Ch. *genjiao* 根腳) remained questionable. The Ming hesitated for a long time before agreeing to install him as the Prince of Zhongshun, and Aḥmad Khan used his non-Činggisid identity as a pretext to kill him. Secondly, Hanshen ultimately failed to secure and unify military and administrative authority over Hami and other frontier guards. It is true that he achieved a degree of control over Čikin and Handong, remarkably organizing a joint army to fight against outer invasion. However, the internal vendettas along the frontiers never ceased and they even killed Ming envoys, as the case of Dong He’s murder exemplifies. Furthermore, Hanshen was even unable to quell internal strife within the Hami Guard and was ultimately betrayed by his own father-in-law. The collapse of the Hanshen system compelled the Ming to shift its strategy and establish a more direct form of control, fostering the establishment of the *fuyi* system, which was led and managed by the *fuyi* officials.

3.2 Recruitment of *fuyi* officials in Suzhou and Ganzhou

In order to dispel suspicion among the frontier guards, integrate non-Han troops, and ultimately recover Hami, the Ming established the office of *fuyi* officials in Suzhou and Ganzhou in late fifteenth century. Prominent among these officials at the time were Yang Zhu 楊翥, Ḥājjī Ḥasan (Ch. Haji Hasan 哈只哈三), and Dong Jie 董傑, who formed a mentor–disciple relationship. They played a crucial role in Ming management of the Western Regions crisis during the mid and late Ming period.

3.2.1 Establishment of *fuyi* officials

In 1475, the Gansu Grand Coordinator Zhu Ying 朱英 repaired the previously abandoned foreign guesthouse inside Ganzhou and recruited officials, interpreters and translators to receive tribute envoys and those who came in submission.⁴⁴⁴ This marks the moment when the institution of *fuyi* officials began. Based on the research of this dissertation, the positions of *fuyi*

⁴⁴⁴ *MXZSL*, j. 141, 2622-4.

officials included such titles as the Gansu Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *gansu fuyi zhihui* 甘肅撫夷指揮), Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs (Ch. *zongli yiqing zhihui* 總理夷情指揮), Commander in Charge of Pacification, Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, and Company Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi baihu* 撫夷百戶). The highest *fuyi* official in Suzhou was the Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs who simultaneously served as the Jiayu Pass Municipal Military Commander (Ch. *jiayug guan shoubei* 嘉峪關守備), while the highest *fuyi* official in Ganzhou was Gansu Commander in Charge of Pacification.

The *fuyi* officials worked under the command of several officials: the Assistant Commander, the Regional Commander, the Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of a Military Defense Circuit (Ch. *bingbei dao* 兵備道), the Grand Coordinator and the Supreme Commander. Nevertheless, since *fuyi* officials were considered the experts who knew how to negotiate with Inner Asian forces, they had considerable autonomy when carrying out their missions. Furthermore, when they made great achievements, they could be promoted to higher positions. For example, Yang Zhu, a Suzhou *fuyi* official, was promoted to Suzhou Assistant Commander in 1497,⁴⁴⁵ while Liu Chengsi 劉承嗣, a Ganzhou *fuyi* official, was promoted to Ningxia Regional Commander in 1584 and Gansu Regional Commander in 1585.⁴⁴⁶ In these cases, they became high-ranking officers who made strategic decisions.

Regarding the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the *fuyi* officials on the northwestern frontier, some were individuals who had submitted to the Ming from Hami, such as Hājji Hasan, who served for a time as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification and will be discussed in detail in Section 4.3. Others came from prominent local families in Suzhou and Ganzhou.⁴⁴⁷ As most *fuyi* officials appeared under their Chinese names in the sources, their ethnicities remain unclear.⁴⁴⁸ From the following analysis, especially in Chapters 7 and 8, it is

⁴⁴⁵ *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2307.

⁴⁴⁶ *MSZSL*, j. 155, 2865; j. 162, 2968.

⁴⁴⁷ The Yang Family is a notable example. The *fuyi* official Yang Zhu's daughter married the local commander Zhou Xi 周璽, while Yang Rong 楊榮, who was likely his relative, were recruited as an Usher 序班 in the Court of State Ceremonial 鴻臚寺 in Beijing due to his familiarity with both foreign scripts and Chinese characters. Another instance is the Dong family, which successively cultivated two *fuyi* officials, Dong He and Dong Jie. See *SZHYZ*, j.2, 134; j.4, 266.

⁴⁴⁸ For example, Yun Mao 雲冒, the Suzhou Assistant Commander 肅州參將, once claimed that he was originally a foreigner (*semu* 色目), see Yang Yiqing 楊一清, *Yang yiqing ji* 楊一清集, ed. Tang Jingshen 唐景紳 and Xie Yujie 謝玉傑

revealed that when non-Han people submitted to the Ming and served as the *fuyi* officials, they were always requested to change to a more Han-style name.

Little is known about who proposed the idea or the original motivation behind the establishment of the office of the *fuyi* officials. Nevertheless, once established, they were soon entrusted with four major duties: first, to reestablish the reception of tributary missions from the Western Regions and the translation of tributary documents after the fall of Hami; second, to conduct diplomatic missions to negotiate with the Moghul Khanate; third, to coordinate and communicate with frontier guards such as those of Hami, Čikin, Handong, Mekrin, and the Oirats, reconstructing a defensive and offensive Xiyu buffer zone between the Ming and the Moghul Khanate; and fourth, to organize and manage a joint Han and non-Han force to launch attacks against the Moghul Khanate or defend against invasions of the Eastern Mongols.

The following section will focus primarily on the latter three duties of the *fuyi* officials; their task of receiving foreign missions will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.2.2 Fighting against Moghul invasions

The cooperation of the *fuyi* officials and frontier guards soon made significant progress. During 1491-1492, due to the mediation of Sayyid Ḥusayn (Ch. Xieyi Huxian 寫亦虎仙), a Hami Muslim, and Yang Zhu 楊燾, the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, the Moghul Khanate decided to return the city of Hami to Ming control. The Moghul Khan Aḥmad sent the envoy Sayyid Maṣṣūr (Ch. Xieyi Mansu'er 寫亦滿速兒) and others to handle the handover, deliver the seal of Hami and send tribute to Beijing.⁴⁴⁹

Sayyid Ḥusayn was the nephew of *Sayyid Sanlung (Ch. Sayi Salong 賽亦撒隆),⁴⁵⁰ the deceased Hami Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief, and was at the time residing in Gansu.⁴⁵¹

(Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 602. The designation of *semu* was created by the Yuan court to name a certain foreign group. For more explanation to *semu*, see Funada Yoshiyuki 船田善之, “The Image of the Semu People: Mongols, Chinese, Southerners, and Various Other Peoples under the Mongol Empire,” *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 西域歷史語言研究集刊, no. 7 (2014): 199-221, Zhou Sicheng 周思成, “Cong yuwai shiliao suojian zuqun fenlei kan yuandai de zuqun guanxi: “semu ren” ji “siding ren zhi” zai fansi 從域外史料所見族群分類看元代的族群關係——“色目人”及“四等人制”再反思,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no.1 (2025): 89-103.

⁴⁴⁹ *BZK I*, j. 11, 274; *MXZSL*, j. 58, 1124-5.

⁴⁵⁰ The reconstruction of the person's name follows Oda, see Oda, “Part I. Uighuristan,” 36. Paul Pelliot suggested that this person's name was wrongly recorded, see Pelliot “Le Ḥōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l'Histoire des Ming,” 130.

⁴⁵¹ Zhang Wende 張文德, *Chaogong yu rufu: mingdai xuyu ren lai hua yanjiu* 朝貢與入附——明代西域人來華研究 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 2013), 117.

Sayyid Ḥusayn was likely a local religious leader in Hami and also engaged in the sale of “rouge (Ch. *yanzhi*, 胭脂)”.⁴⁵² Involved in the political struggles of the early Jiajing period (1522-1567), he ultimately died in prison, accused of maintaining private contacts with the Moghul Khanate and of associating with eunuchs,⁴⁵³ which led Ming sources to hold negative views of him. The Minister of War Ma Wensheng even omitted his name in his *Xingfu hami guowang ji* and merely referred to him as “a Hami barbarian once living in Ganzhou”.⁴⁵⁴ Nevertheless, it is indisputable that Sayyid Ḥusayn’s successful mediation with Aḥmad Khan demonstrated his outstanding ability and the trust the Ming state had in him at that time.⁴⁵⁵ To reward his achievement, Sayyid Ḥusayn was even permitted to inherit his uncle’s position as Hami Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief.

The accompanying *fuyi* official Yang Zhu, likely the successor to the murdered Dong He, the former Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, was recorded as being of the Suzhou Guard.⁴⁵⁶ Judging from his long-term interactions with the Moghul Khanate and frontier guards such as Hami, Čikin and Handong, he was likely proficient in Persian, Mongolian and Uyghur. His mission was probably multifaceted: assisting Sayyid Ḥusayn in persuading Aḥmad Khan to return the city of Hami, monitoring Sayyid Ḥusayn to prevent him from secretly conspiring with the Moghul, and investigating the landscape, political situation and local customs between Jiayu Pass and Turpan. After the successful completion of this mission, Yang Zhu was promoted higher to the Commander in Charge of Pacification.⁴⁵⁷

Upon recovering the city of Hami, the Ming appointed *Šamba (Ch. Shanba 陝巴 or 陝巴),⁴⁵⁸ a nephew of the Prince of Anding, who enjoyed the Čayatai descendants’ legitimacy to rule over Hami, as the new Prince of Zhongshun. To secure *Šamba’s enthronement, the Ming dispatched *fuyi* officials and interpreters to lead a joint army consisting of Chinese and

⁴⁵² MDHM, 395-6.

⁴⁵³ Zhang, *Chaogong yu rufu*, 128.

⁴⁵⁴ Ma, *Xingfu hami*, 208.

⁴⁵⁵ *MXIZSL*, j. 65, 1247.

⁴⁵⁶ *SZHYZ*, j. 3, 224.

⁴⁵⁷ *BZK I*, j. 11, 274.

⁴⁵⁸ The Mongolian name “*Šamba” is the transliteration of Tibetan *byams pa*, the Tibetan name of Maitreya. 18. Choimaa and others reckon that “*Šamba” derived from Manchu, which is not the case. See Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, “*Asalakeqi shi*” *yanjiu* 《阿薩喇克其史》研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2009), 17-18; Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol*, 753.

submissive Hami soldiers to escort him to the Shule River Basin, where they handed the guard duty to the leaders of Hami, Handong and Čikin, who finally escorted *Šamba to the city of Hami.⁴⁵⁹ *Šamba soon married a woman from the “Wild Mekrin”, thus forming an alliance with Ilyās and Ibarai, the sons of Esen, whose activities will be analyzed in Chapter 5.⁴⁶⁰

Unfortunately for Ming designs on the region, in 1493, the Moghul Khanate occupied Hami again and kidnapped *Šamba. Although the Ming sent Zhang Hai 張海, the Right Vice Minister of War (Ch. *bingbu you shilang* 兵部右侍郎), and Gou Qian 綏謙, the Vice Commissioner-in-Chief, to manage the situation, they failed to make any progress.⁴⁶¹ Therefore, the Ming once again placed hopes for the recovery of Hami on the *fuyi* officials.

At that time, the Gansu Grand Coordinator Xu Jin 許進 (1437-1510) and Minister of War Ma Wensheng both considered reclaiming Hami through military operations. To formulate a concrete plan, Xu Jin sent Yang Zhu as an envoy to Hami to gather intelligence in 1495.⁴⁶² After Yang Zhu completed his mission, he was summoned to Beijing by Ma Wensheng for further discussions.⁴⁶³ Here, Yang Zhu demonstrated the routes from Handong to Hami in detail, and proposed a detailed operational plan: “If we select 3,000 Handong soldiers as the vanguard and 300 Han soldiers as reinforcements, carrying a few days’ supplies to launch a surprise attack, Hami must be recovered.”⁴⁶⁴ Ma Wensheng agreed with his proposal, and entrusted the specific actions to Xu Jin.

Before marching to the city of Hami, Xu Jin decided to establish friendly relations with the frontier guards and other Inner Asian forces by sending *fuyi* officials to undertake pacification missions, in order to reestablish a defensive and offensive Xiyu buffer zone. At this time, the Moghul Khan Aḥmad asserted that he, like the former Prince of Hami, was a descendant of Čayatai, and claimed the rulership over Hami, demanding the submission and tribute of the Handong Left Guard.⁴⁶⁵ In response, Xu Jin first rewarded the Handong Left Guard leaders,

⁴⁵⁹ *MXIZSL*, j. 58, 1124-5.

⁴⁶⁰ *MXIZSL*, j. 68, 1296-7.

⁴⁶¹ For the mission of Zhang Hai and Gou Qian, see Rossabi, “Ming China’s Relations with Hami and Central Asia,” 210-212; For the demotion of Zhang Hai after his failure, see Wang Qiong 王瓊, *Wang qiong ji* 王瓊集, commented and edited by Shan Jinheng 單錦珩 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991), 17.

⁴⁶² Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 584.

⁴⁶³ Ma, *Xingfu hami*, 210.

⁴⁶⁴ “選罕東番兵三千為前鋒,漢兵三千為後援,持數日糧,間道兼程襲之,克之必矣.” *MXIZSL*, j. 102, 1866.

⁴⁶⁵ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 584.

then sent envoys with gifts of cloth and food to Čikin, Handong, and other guards to reward them, instructing them to prepare their troops for the upcoming war and to remain loyal to the Ming.⁴⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Hami officials stationed at Kuyu reported that their city was set on fire and raided by the Xifan tribe of Suldus (or Sulduz, Ch, Suludusi 速魯都思).⁴⁶⁷ In reply, Xu Jin had Hami officials go to Suzhou to receive seeds for agriculture and ordered *fuyi* officials to apprehend the leaders of the Xifan Suldus, demanding that they return the looted goods to their owners.⁴⁶⁸

Once the situation in Kuyu, Čikin, and Handong was stabilized, Xu Jin ordered *fuyi* officials to meet with tribute missions from the Western Regions and Mongolia, informing them that the Ming intended to recapture Hami and requesting their cooperation in the operation.⁴⁶⁹ Later, Xu Jin received news from the “Wild Mekrin” stationed at Yijinai, which was then led by Ilyās and Ibarai, who declared their willingness to support the Ming campaign. To pursue further negotiations with the Wild Mekrin, Xu Jin sent Chen Jie 陳傑, the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, as well as two Kara Koy messengers to Yijinai, along with gifts of sheep, alcohol, rice, and flour. After detailed discussions, the Wild Mekrin were permitted to continue pasturing in Weiyuan and Yijinai, to pay tribute in the same manner as Hami, and to conduct seasonal trade with the Ming, as did the people of Čikin and Handong.⁴⁷⁰ Following this agreement, Xu Jin successively appointed the leaders of the “Wild Mekrin” and

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ The Suldus were a powerful tribe with long history as its leader Čila’un was selected as one of the “four steeds” of Činggis Khan during his rise. It also played a vital role in the Čayadaid Khanate and Moghul Khanate. See Christopher P. Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York: Facts On File, Inc, 2004), 89, 99; Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 295, 298; Beatrice Forbes Manz, “The Ulus Chaghatay Before and After Temür’s Rise to Power: The Transformation from Tribal Confederation to Army of Conquest,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 27, no. 1/2 (1983): 83. The Lu native clan official also claimed themselves as descendants of Suldus tribe, see Tao Hongyu 陶鴻宇 and He Weiguang 賀衛光, “Liancheng lu tusi jiazhu yuanyuan kaobian 連城魯土司家族淵源考辯,” *Sheke zongheng* 社科縱橫 36, no. 1 (2021): 147-153; Zhang Zhonglei 張中磊, “Mingqing liancheng tusi lushi jiazhu yanjiu 明清連城土司魯氏家族研究” (PhD diss., Xining: Qinghai Normal University, 2022), 7-8. The Suldus (速魯都思 or 速魯土思) tribe mentioned here should be under the jurisdiction of the frontier guards, since they were “pacified” by the *fuyi* officials and had close connection with Temüge 帖木哥, one powerful leader of the Handong Left Guard. It is recorded that two leaders of the Suldus tribe were Aben 阿本 and his brother Alunben 阿倫奔. See Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 13, 487. Later, this certain Suldus tribe submitted to the Ming and migrated to Gansu, become part of the ancestors of today’s Yugur people. Nowadays, we can still find people who take “Suldus 蘇勒都斯” as their surnames in both Western and Eastern Yugur. See Gansu sheng sunan yugu zu zizhi xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 甘肅省肅南裕固族自治縣地方志編纂委員會, *Sunan yugu zu zizhixian zhi* 肅南裕固族自治縣誌 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1994), 99-102.

⁴⁶⁸ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 586.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 586-587.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 588.

Kara Koy to act as envoys, sending them with a “Mongolian letter” (Ch. *fan zi shu* 番字書) to recruit the Little Ögeled, who harbored grievances with Aḥmad Khan due to the latter’s assassination of Hansheng and *Yangqan’s sister and brother.⁴⁷¹ Through these efforts, Xu Jin successfully forged an alliance with the Little Ögeled.⁴⁷²

After these efforts, Xu Jin, with the help of the *fuyi* officials and frontier tribes, successfully reestablished a Xiyu buffer zone composed of Hami, Čikin, Handong, Mekrin, Little Ögeled and other frontier groups, consolidating the frontier and preparing well for the expedition towards Hami.

After receiving permission for the expedition, Xu Jin first dispatched Yang Zhu to the Hami Guard, instructing Hami’s governor Engke Bulat and Sayyid Ḥusayn to send men to Hami to gather intelligence. Soon, the spies brought back encouraging news that Aḥmad Khan’s forces had been severely defeated by the Little Ögeled. Moreover, Aḥmad Khan went to Turpan to celebrate *Eid al-Adha*, the Islamic Feast of the Sacrifice, leaving the city of Hami defenseless. Seizing this opportunity, Xu Jin immediately sent Yang Zhu to gather leaders from Hami, Čikin, and Handong to discuss strategies and soon established a joint army with 1,500 Han soldiers and 1,500 non-Han soldiers from the Čikin and other groups, which were all summoned and led by Yang Zhu. On their way to Hami, Yang Zhu learned that the Little Ögeled had blocked the route from Turpan to Hami, cutting off reinforcements from the Moghul Khanate. Therefore, Yang Zhu led the army to advance swiftly toward Hami and quickly captured the city. After this great victory, the Ming court awarded promotions to the generals and soldiers, while Hami, Čikin, and the Little Ögeled were rewarded generously by Xu Jin.⁴⁷³

Although in the following year of 1496, Aḥmad Khan led his men, along with his commander Sattār (Ch. Sata’er 撒他兒), to raid and occupy Hami, they quickly withdrew under the threat from the Oirats. Sattār was soon killed in the combined attack by Hami and the

⁴⁷¹ As examined before, Oš Temür had good relations with Sulṭān ‘Alī, whose reign over the Turpan region was ended by the Moghul Khan. This could be the initial reason for the conflict between the Oirats and the Moghul Khanate.

⁴⁷² Xu, *Ping fan shimo*, 588-589.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 591-593.

Oirats, and his head was sent to Xu Jin. Unable to proceed further, Aḥmad Khan returned *Šamba and the seal of Hami to the Ming in 1497.⁴⁷⁴

After the recovery of Hami, Yang Zhu was promoted to Suzhou Right Assistant Regional Commander.⁴⁷⁵ To cultivate a formidable force to defend against the threats from the Western Regions and other frontiers of Gansu, the Ming then established a Han and non-Han joint army in Suzhou and gave the command of the army to the *fuyi* officials. In 1497, the Mongols raided Čikin. As a response, Liu Da 劉達, the Suzhou Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, led a combined force of more than 400 Han and non-Han soldiers to defeat them at Wangzi Estate 王子莊,⁴⁷⁶ killing 9 invaders and reclaiming 74 captives and over 2,100 cattle and sheep.⁴⁷⁷ Later in the same year, a few hundred Mongol riders stationed outside Suzhou were about to raid. Yang Zhu and Tian Zhishen 田志深, a Battalion Commander, led the “Han–Barbarian” army to fight against them, killing 40, captured 241 horses, and seized over 1,000 weapons.⁴⁷⁸

At the time, *Šamba, the Prince of Zhongshun from the Prince of Anding lineage, was at odds with Engke Bulat, Hanshen’s brother and the Uyghur Commissioner at the time. To mediate the relationship between the two factions, the Ming court command *Šamba to marry *Esen Ĵula (Ch. YexianZhula 也先主刺), Hanshen’s daughter.⁴⁷⁹ Later in 1499, the Ming sent several *fuyi* officials, including Yang Zhu and Hājī Ĥasan, a Hami officer who initially served as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification and then changed to the Battalion Commander in Charge of the Barbarian Soldiers (Ch. *yibing zheng qianhu* 夷兵正千戶) after the recovery of Hami, to escort *Šamba and the Hami people who were stranded in the Ming territory back to the city.⁴⁸⁰ In 1504, however, internal strife broke out in Hami as some intended to install Chīn Tīmūr, the son of Aḥmad Khan and Hanshen’s daughter, as ruler,

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 594-599.

⁴⁷⁵ *MXZSL*, j. 130, 2306-2307.

⁴⁷⁶ Wangzi Estate was located at the northwest of Kuyu. The people who lived here, along with the place name, migrated into Ming territory later, see Zhang Lianyin 張連銀, “Jiayu Pass wai: neidi hua jincheng zhong de bianchui shehui: yi mingqing shiqi de wangzi Zhuang wei ge’an 嘉峪關外：內地化進城中的邊陲社會：以明清時期的王子莊為個案,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 27, no. 1 (2017): 151-163.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., j. 132, 2327.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., j. 137, 2392.

⁴⁷⁹ *BZK I*, j. 11, 275.

⁴⁸⁰ Ma, *Xingfu hami*, 211.

forcing *Šamba fleeing to Kuyu. As the response, the Ming sent Hājī Hāsan,⁴⁸¹ along with Company Commander Dong Jie 董傑 and the leaders of Hami, to escort *Šamba to Hami, where they killed those who opposed Ming rule.⁴⁸²

However, after *Šamba's death in 1505,⁴⁸³ his son Sulṭān Bāyazīd (Ch. Sutan Baiyaji 速檀拜牙即) succeeded to the throne and then defected to Turpan around 1513, with Hami occupied by Turpan again.⁴⁸⁴ Strangely, it seems that Sulṭān Bāyazīd's Činggisid identity was forgotten, since he was reckoned as having a "Western Barbarian bone (Ch. *xifan gutou* 西番骨头)" by the people.⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, Sulṭān Maṣṣūr (Ch. Sutan Mansu'er 速檀满速儿, r. 1501/1502-1543), the then Moghul Khan, recognized Sulṭān Bāyazīd's competence and promised to marry his sister to him.⁴⁸⁶

The situation went even worse as Ibarai, now the leader of the Mongols of the Right Wing, who led his people into Gansu and Qinghai, raided the Han population and other frontier groups there since 1506. In the face of this situation, *fuyi* officials were no longer able to resist: Yang Zhu died in the battle against the Mongols;⁴⁸⁷ Hājī Hāsan disappeared from the sources after Hami's fall; Dong Jie, serving as the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification in 1508, reconciled the rebellious Shazhou tribes and led them back.⁴⁸⁸ Later in 1512, he was promoted to the position of Suzhou Regional Military Vice Commissioner, achieving a great victory against the Mongols by killing 101 enemy warriors..⁴⁸⁹ However, he was later demoted as a Commander,⁴⁹⁰ probably due to some military defeat. After that, the Ming started to send high-ranking officials, such as those who had a title of Supreme Commander to oversee Shaanxi, while the *fuyi* officials lost their prominence and served under them.

Overall, the most prominent *fuyi* officials during this period were Yang Zhu, Hājī Hāsan, and Dong Jie. Yang Zhu first visited Turpan as a Battalion Commander accompanying Sayyid

⁴⁸¹ *MWZSL*, j. 10, 309; *MDHM*, 395.

⁴⁸² *MDHM*, 424.

⁴⁸³ *MWZSL*, j. 6, 192.

⁴⁸⁴ *BZK I*, j. 11, 276-7.

⁴⁸⁵ *MDHM*, 396.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 395-6.

⁴⁸⁷ *SZHYZ*, j. 2, 147.

⁴⁸⁸ *MWZSL*, j. 36, 872.

⁴⁸⁹ *MXZSL*, j. 83, 1795; j. 91, 1943.

⁴⁹⁰ *MDHM*, 395.

Ḥusayn; Ḥājjī Ḥasan began handling Hami affairs as a Battalion Commander under the command of Yang Zhu; Dong Jie first visited Hami as a Company Commander following Ḥājjī Ḥasan. Clearly, during this period, the *fuyi* officials had a structured succession system that helped them to familiarize themselves with the situation in the Western Regions and to master diplomatic skills, which provided the Ming with a reliable team for handling Western Region affairs.

In conclusion, the office of the *fuyi* officials were established around 1475 to resist the Moghul Khanate's attempted takeover of Hami, tasked with uniting the northwestern buffer zone, gathering non-Han soldiers, conducting foreign diplomacy, and receiving tribute missions. Indeed, they provided crucial support for Ming's handling of the Hami crisis. However, as the Mongol forces entered the region, the power of the *fuyi* officials became relatively weak, and they were temporarily relegated to auxiliary roles, a situation that lasted until the conclusion of the Longqing Peace Treaty in 1571. Nevertheless, they still took over important missions such as managing the submitted frontier guards, receiving the tributary missions and negotiating with the Qinghai Mongol population.

3.3 Reorganization of the northwestern buffer zone

3.3.1 Regulation of submitted people by *fuyi* officials in Ganzhou and Suzhou

By 1528, the Ming recognized the Moghul Khanate's sovereignty over the territories beyond the Jiayu Pass, a fact that implied that it also gave up supporting the Xiyu buffer zone. As a result, part of the Hami, Handong and Čikin people, who had already submitted to the Ming and migrated into Ming territory under the threat of the Moghul Khanate, could not return to their hometown.⁴⁹¹ In addition, due to the invasion of Qinghai by the Ibarai group since 1512, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the Qinghai buffer zone also collapsed, with part of the Handong and Sarıg Uygur people migrating to Suzhou and Ganzhou. These submissive

⁴⁹¹ For a detailed account of the progress of their migration, see Juyeon Lee, "Monggol jeguk janjon seryeog-ui husok yeoksa sogo: Myeongdae seobuk-ui Gwanseo wisoreul jungsimeuro 몽골제국 잔존세력의 후속 역사 소고(小考): 명대(明代) 서북(西北)의 관서(關西) 위소(衛所)를 중심으로," *Asia Review* 아시아리뷰 12, no. 2 (2022): 406-416.

groups were then incorporated into the *fuyi* system and ruled by the *fuyi* officials, in order to reestablish a buffer zone against the Inner Asian forces.

To systematically settle those non-Han populations, Wang Qiong 王瓊 (1459-1532), the Shaanxi Supreme Commander, started the investigation of data and records pertaining to the hereditary succession of their leaders, who were called “Barbarian officials” (Ch. *fan guan* 番官) at the time. To complete the task, Wang Qiong dispatched two *fuyi* officials—the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander (Ch. *gansu youji jiangjun* 甘肅遊擊將軍) Peng Jun 彭濬 and Sunzhou Guard Commander in Charge of Pacification Liu Yun 劉雲—to mediate with the leaders of the submissive groups.

Peng Jun, a member of the Lanzhou Guard of unknown ethnicity,⁴⁹² served in Xining and Hongchengzi 紅城子 between 1525 to 1528,⁴⁹³ and received high praise from Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454-1530), the then Shaanxi Supreme Commander.⁴⁹⁴ Around 1528, he was appointed as the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander.⁴⁹⁵ Later, he was transferred to various positions in Songpan 松潘, Zhuanglang 莊浪, and other regions.⁴⁹⁶ In 1528, Peng Jun confronted a joint assault of over 2,000 cavalry led by the Moghul leader Kulı Nazar (Ch. Huli Naza’er 虎力納咱兒) and the Oirats, who were pillaging the outskirts of Suzhou.⁴⁹⁷ Leading 3,000 soldiers, he engaged with and successfully drove back the enemy.⁴⁹⁸ This case underscores his extensive experience in managing conflicts along the Western Region frontier.

Liu Yun’s background remains unclear. In 1525, he interrogated three messengers who were sent by Temüge (Ch. Tiemuge 帖木哥), a powerful leader of the Handong Left Guard in Shazhou who will be mentioned multiple times in the following chapters, to report information.⁴⁹⁹ In the same year, he questioned a Han woman surnamed Zhu, a Ganzhou native. This woman had been kidnapped by the Moghuls and taken to Hami, where she was sold as a

⁴⁹² *XZZ*, 659; *KXLZZ*, j. 2, 194.

⁴⁹³ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 14, 521; *XXZ*, 659; *BZK*, j.5, 187.

⁴⁹⁴ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 14, 638.

⁴⁹⁵ *SZZ*, j. 3, 64.

⁴⁹⁶ *MSIZSL*, j. 97, 2277; *SZZ*, j. 3, 64.

⁴⁹⁷ Hu Shining 胡世寧, *Shaobao hu duanmin gong zouyi* 少保胡端敏公奏議 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1540-1541), j. 10, 15a.

⁴⁹⁸ *MSIZSL*, j. 94, 2253-2257; j. 99, 2347-2348; *BZK*, j. 11, 280.

⁴⁹⁹ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 13, 485.

slave and tortured, and then managed to escape.⁵⁰⁰ Later, he interrogated four envoys who had returned from Shazhou, along with a man from Shazhou who came to visit his relatives.⁵⁰¹ Based on these duties, it can be inferred that Liu Yun was likely a non-Han individual from the Western Regions who was probably proficient in local languages such as Uyghur and had submitted to the Ming. He was trusted by Ming officials and appointed to specialize in questing envoys from the Western Regions, people who had surrendered to the Ming, and other related figures.

Table 3.1. *Statistical Information of the Northwestern Buffer after Their Submission*

Guard Name	Tribe/Division	Chieftains/Officials	Population
Hami Guard	Hami Guard	Four Commissioners: Bāgi Bulat (Ch. Biegao Bola 𐰽𐰇𐰏𐰤𐰠𐰆) held the seal, resided in the eastern district of Suzhou; Sayyid Ḥusayn's family was executed; Mollā Ḥasan (Ch. Manla Hasan 滿刺哈三) had no heirs; *Šibayanda (Ch. Shibaiyanda 失拜烟答)'s wife was in the northern district of Ganzhou, his second son Mīr Maḥmūd (米兒)馬黑木 was in Hami but had not inherited.	
	Uyghur	Inherited officials: One Imperial Preceptor of Universal Enlightenment and Pure Practice (Ch. <i>pujue jingxiu guoshi</i> 普覺淨修國師); seven officials, including the Regional Military Commissioner, Guard Commander, Guard Deputy Commander, Guard Assistant Commander, Battalion Judge). Not inherited: Battalion Commander (certificate plundered); nine officials, including the Regional Military Commissioner, Guard Commander, Battalion Commander, Company	370 men and women

⁵⁰⁰ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 12, 439.

⁵⁰¹ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 13, 484.

		Commander, Judge of the Prison (Ch. <i>zhenfu</i> 鎮撫); two Prefectural Buddhist Superiors (Ch. <i>senggang si dusi</i> 僧綱司都司).	
	Kara Koy	Inherited: One Guard Deputy Commander. Not inherited: Thirteen officials, including the Guard Deputy Commander, Guard Assistant Commander, Battalion Commander, Judge of the Prison).	510 men and women
Čikin Mongol Guard	Čikin Mongol Guard	Three Commissioners (none inherited). Shangbuda'er 賞卜達爾) held the seal (original imperial edict of Appointment (Ch. <i>shouzhi chishu</i> 授職敕書) plundered by Čayatai (Ch. Chatai 察台, i.e. the Moghul Khanate); his son *Bsod nams (Ch. Suo Nanshu 鎖南束) retained one edict of Announcement (Ch. <i>xiaoyu chishu</i> 曉諭敕書). Three Regional Military Commissioners, three Regional Military Assistant Commissioners, five Guard Deputy Commanders, five Guard Assistant Commanders, two Battalion Commanders.	Over 1,000 men and women
Anding-Aduan Guard	Anding-Aduan Guard	Former Imperial Preceptor Responsible for Guarding the Funerary Pagoda Bzang po lha pa (Ch. <i>yuan shou fenta guoshi</i> Zangbu Haba 原守墳塔國師藏卜哈巴) and ten monks and lay people including Wangchan 汪纏 were settled in Shatang River 沙塘川, 70 <i>li</i> north of Xining, for residence and pastoralism.	
Quxian Guard	Quxian Guard	Tuoti 脫啼 married Temüge's sister, held the Quxian Guard seal, traveled south to find his clan, and disappeared. His brother Yaglakır (Ch. Yalan 牙木蘭) surrendered.	

Handong Guard	Left Guard	Two Commissioners. First Commissioner: *Čiki (Ch. Zhike 知克) held the seal (deceased); his grandson Rigaola 日羔刺 inherited (1511), ⁵⁰² resided southeast of Suzhou.	53 men and women
		Second Commissioner-in-Chief: Pani *Pāni (Ch. Pani 帕泥), not inherited, submitted with the leader *Zhabs drung ⁵⁰³ (Ch. Shangbu shu 賞卜束) in 1497 and settled in Huangcao Dam 黃草壩, Qilian Mountain.	Pani: 270 men and women; Shangbushu: 817 men and women
		Leaders Temüge and Tuba 土巴 originally resided in Shazhou; in 1528, they moved to Baichengshan 白城山, southern Suzhou with Yaglakır.	5,418 men and women
	Right Guard	Two Regional Military Commissioners. First, Regional Military Commissioner *Tshong ya (Ch. Zongya 總牙), not inherited, resided to the north of Suzhou, later moved to Huangcao Dam in Qilian Mountain.	936 men and women
		Second, Regional Military Commissioner: founding ancestor Chos rje ⁵⁰⁴ (Ch. <i>shizu</i> Chuo Erjia 始祖綽爾加); his offspring Chos rje (Ch. Queshou Erjia 卻授爾加) ⁵⁰⁵ and 20 monks and lay people resided in Luoia Bend 羅家灣, 30 <i>li</i> east of Xining. ⁵⁰⁶	

⁵⁰² Jinfeng suggested that the name of today's Yugur ethnicity derives from the personal name "Rigaola." However, this cannot be true because in Tibetan those people were already called Yugur at least from the Yuan period. The real story was probably the reverse: inheriting the right to rule the Yugur people, this individual was then called Rigaola, a phonetic variation of Yugur, by the people. See Jinfeng 金峰, "lun si weilate lianmeng: (er) zhongqi si weilate (1502-1637) 論四衛拉特聯盟——(二) 中期四衛拉特 (1502-1637)," *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 西北民族研究, no. 2 (1989): 92.

⁵⁰³ Chen Guansheng 陳觀勝 and Ancaidan 安才旦 eds., *Changjian zangyu renmin dimin cidian* 常見藏語人名地名詞典 (Beijing: Waiwen chubanshe, 2004), 281.

⁵⁰⁴ "Chos rje," meaning "lord of the faith," is a position responsible for the books in a monastery. The Mongolian form of this word is Čorji. See H. A. Jäschke, *A Tibetan-English dictionary* (London: The Secretary of State for India, 1881), 164; Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol'*, 662.

⁵⁰⁵ This Chinese name is just another transliteration of "Chos rje." These two individuals' family may have inherited this position in the monastery.

⁵⁰⁶ GSZZSTL, 3a.

Source: SYZZL, j. 12, 412-j. 14, 480.

The result of Peng Jun and Liu Yun's investigation is shown in Table 3.1. "Inherited" in the table means the official had already succeeded to his ancestor's position while "Not Inherited" signifies the opposite. The result shows that the three guards that constituted the Xiyu buffer zone and served under the jurisdiction of Suzhou—the Hami Guard, Čikin Mongol Guard and Handong Left Guard—retained a considerable degree of population. At that time, the Hami Guard was then led by the Commissioner and Imperial Preceptor of Universal Enlightenment and Pure Practice and was stationed within or near the city of Suzhou while the Čikin Mongol Guard and Handong Left Guard had relocated into the Qilian Mountains.

In contrast, the four guards that constituted the Qinghai buffer zone and served under the jurisdiction of Xining—the Anding Guard, Aduan Guard, Quxian Guard and Handong Right Guard—diminished to only a small number of personnel. The Handong Right Guard still numbered around 1,000 population and had migrated into the Qilian Mountains, while the three Sarig Uygur guards were reduced to just a few individuals and had moved to the vicinity of Xining.

To manage these submissive groups, the Ming employed a dual approach, utilizing both *fuyi* officials and their chieftains. In terms of military missions, the Ming kept the institution of the joint Han and non-Han army. In 1528, the *fuyi* official Peng Jun led forces comprised of Guazhou and Shazhou soldiers to repel a joint invasion by the Moghul Khanate and the Oirats.⁵⁰⁷ Additionally, Rigola, the leader of Handong Left Guard was also once ordered to lead a force of troops from all the submitted groups to fight against the Mongols,⁵⁰⁸ which demonstrates his sovereignty over all the population who had went over to the Ming. *Fuyi* officials were also responsible for adjudicating disputes between these groups. By the Wanli era (1573-1620), when conflicts arose among the newly submitted groups, they would present their case to the *fuyi* officials to lodge a complaint. For instance, when *Shis rgya (Ch. Xishu Erjia 盼束尔加)—son of *Tshong ya, leader of the Handong Right Guard—wrongfully killed

⁵⁰⁷ SYZZL, j. 14, 473.

⁵⁰⁸ SZYYZ, j. 4, 284.

a commoner, the *fuyi* officials and interpreters came to address his crime and asked *Shisrgya to pay compensation for the taken life, detaining him in Suzhou.⁵⁰⁹

Initially, the chief of all the submitted groups remained the Commissioner of the Hami Guard, while the Uyghur Imperial Preceptor and Handong Commissioner served as assistants. For example, in 1550 or early 1552, due to *Tshong ya having plundered both the Han and non-Han people continuously, the Hami Commissioner Bāgi Bulat, the Imperial Preceptor Bayan Bugra (Ch. Baiyan Bula 拜烟卜刺), and the Handong Guard Commissioner Rigaola jointly campaigned against him to enact punishment.⁵¹⁰ However, since the influence of the Hami Guard declined subsequently and that of the Handong Left Guard grew stronger, Rigaola emerged as the chief of the submissive peoples. His descendants later became the hereditary Paramount Leader (Ch. *da toumu* 大頭目) of what would be known as the Yugur people. The Paramount Leader adopted the surname “An 安”, derived from the name of Rigaola’s ancestor, Engke (Ch. (Y)anke 奄克).⁵¹¹

Since the Handong Guard controlled the largest population, as shown in Table 3.1, and its leader served as the chief of all the submitted population, the Ming mainly relied on it to restore the buffer zone to combat the invaders of the Moghul Khanates and the Mongols. Specifically, the Ming requested that the Handong Guard select 400 robust individuals with horses and organize them into four squads of 100, which would rotate on a quarterly basis to defend the frontier. These soldiers were to be provided with ample logistics and stationed in the empty fortress north of Suzhou, commanded by Rigaola and supervised by the *fuyi* officials.⁵¹²

As the chief of the new Ming subjects, Rigaola had a good relationship with the *fuyi* officials and leveraged this connection to relocate his groups near the city of Suzhou, an action which was forbidden by the Ming court. Moreover, the *fuyi* officials also helped consolidate Rigaola’s power over these groups. As the majority of the Handong Left Guard had been under the management of Temüge and Tuba for over a decade, as shown in Table 3.1, they no longer recognized the authority of Rigaola, who was not only the Commissioner but also a senior

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., j. 4, 285.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., j. 4, 284-285.

⁵¹¹ Gao, *Jiaowang yu ronghe*, 54.

⁵¹² SYZZL, j. 14, 479.

relative of Temüge and Tuba. Therefore, the Suzhou officials established regulations, issued official directives, and proclaimed them to the people of Handong, ordering Temüge and the others to submit to Rigola's leadership.⁵¹³

However, due to their relatively weak military strength, the submitted Hami, Čikin and Handong people were largely unable to withstand external invasions and thus largely lost their function as a protective buffer zone for the Ming after their migration into Ming territory during the early sixteenth century. Nevertheless, they continued to play a crucial role—serving as a bridge for communication between the Ming and various Inner Asian powers. On the one hand, these groups maintained connections—including marital ties—with various Inner Asian forces, thereby attracting more groups to join the pro-Ming faction and even to be integrated into the *fuyi* system. In the meanwhile, these tribes consistently supplied the Ming with talented individuals who were multilingual, well-acquainted with Inner Asian affairs, and possessed personal connections with various powers in the region. These individuals served as *fuyi* officials, interpreters, and translators, facilitating Ming diplomacy and frontier management. A vivid case of such individuals will be given in Chapter 6.

3.3.2 Reestablishment of horse-tea relations with the Xifan tribes

As for the Qinghai buffer zone, the *fuyi* officials also played an important role, focusing on restoring the horse-tea trade between the Ming and Xifan tribes and thus further consolidating the buffer zone. As discussed in Section 2.3.1.2, in the early Ming period, the Ming established the Gold Medal Tribute System in Xining, Hezhou, Taozhou, and Minzhou, forming a horse-tea trade relationship with the surrounding Xifan tribes. However, over a century, both the Ming military system and the Xifan tribes underwent significant changes.⁵¹⁴ The Gold Medal Tribute System ceased operation around 1449, and the horse-tea trade declined,⁵¹⁵ leading to the nearly

⁵¹³ SZYYZ, j. 4, 284.

⁵¹⁴ See Xu, “Mingdai longwu he,” 122-130; Qu, “‘fan zu’ zhili yu shehui bianqian,” 110-125; Qu Bin 屈斌, “‘Fojiao bianjiang’ de xingcheng: mingdai ‘xifan’ diqu de zangchuan ojiao siyuan yu shehui bianqian: yi xining diqu wei li “佛教邊疆”的形成：明代“西番”地區的藏傳佛教寺院與社會變遷——以西寧地區為例,” *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 西域歷史語言研究集刊, no. 1 (2022): 153-188; Qu Bin 屈斌, “Siyuan da fatai yu 16-18 shiji ganqing shehui quanli jiegou de yanbian 寺院大法台與 16—18 世紀甘青社會權力結構的演變,” *Xizang yanjiu* 西藏研究, no. 2 (2025): 76-96.

⁵¹⁵ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 3, 73.

collapse of the buffer zone—the Four Guards migrated into Ming territory under the threat of the Moghul Khanate and the Qinghai Mongols as discussed previously, while the Thirteen Xifan Tribes remained in Qinghai but no longer obeyed Ming orders.

The decline of the horse-tea trade resulted in difficulties for the Ming border guards in replenishing their horses, making them increasingly powerless in the face of escalating frontier crises. In response, the Ming court dispatched Yang Yiqing to Shaanxi to reorganize the horse administration in 1503.⁵¹⁶ Although Morris Rossabi and other scholars have already elaborated on the administrative methods of Yang Yiqing to improve the horse administration,⁵¹⁷ this dissertation wants to emphasize here the importance of the *fuyi* officials in his policy implementation.

The main aim of Yang Yiqing was to restore the original Gold Medal Tribute System and the Qinghai buffer zone.⁵¹⁸ Upon arriving in Shaanxi, Yang Yiqing first issued orders to military officials in Xining and other areas to select and dispatch *fuyi* officials to separately convene the Xifan tribes to pay tea tribute for the exchange of horses.⁵¹⁹ Thereafter, he planned to implement his policy in two phases. First, between 1505 and 1507, by combining military force with reward benefits, he would demand that all the Barbarian officials among the Xifan tribes inherited their predecessors' positions. Those who disobeyed the rule of the Ming and refused to respond to summons were to be pacified through persuasion. If they remained obstinate and recalcitrant, the Ming would assemble a joint Han and non-Han army to suppress and punish them, serving as a warning to others. Ultimately, all Xifan officials should have successfully inherited their positions, thereby restoring the Ming's Qinghai buffer zone.⁵²⁰ Second, in 1507 or early 1508, the Gold Medal Tribute System should be reinstated. The *fuyi* officials and interpreters were ordered to convene all chieftains of Xifan tribes to distribute gold

⁵¹⁶ *MXIZSL*, j. 194, 3579.

⁵¹⁷ Morris Rossabi, "The Ming and Inner Asia," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 221-271; Morris Rossabi, "The Tea and Horse Trade with inner Asia during the Ming," in *From Yuan to Modern China and Mongolia: The Writings of Morris Rossabi*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, j. 3, 77.

⁵¹⁹ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 3, 73.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, j. 3, 77-78.

medals to them, and command them to pay horse tribute once every three years by using these medals as credentials.⁵²¹

Why was the planned time of the restoration of the Gold Medal Tribute System delayed until 1507 or 1508? It seems that it was very hard for the Ming to restore its management over the Four Guards and Thirteen Xifan Tribes. In 1506, the chieftains of Yaglakır, which was at that time nominally under the rule of the Prince of Anding, cooperated with Chos rje and other chieftains from the Čikin and other guards to attack the Xifan tribes such as the Bawa 巴哇, Xie 寫 (Ti. Zi na?), and Longben 隆奔,⁵²² plundering and killing their people and livestock, causing the people to flee. As a response, the Regional Military Commissioner in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi du zhihui* 撫夷都指揮) Rui Ning 芮寧 and others were sent outside the borders of the Ming realm to mediate these conflicts.⁵²³ In 1499, the tribe of Qiangza 羌師 under the jurisdiction of the Handong Guard attacked and plundered Longben 隆奔 and other tribes in Xining, seizing imperial edicts, seals, as well as people, livestock, and artifacts. The Ming court again ordered the Handong Commissioner to instruct his subordinates to return all plundered items in order to cease conflicts and resolve grievances.⁵²⁴ That same year, Lu Lin 魯麟, the Zhuanglang Assistant Commander of the Left Division, and a member of the Lu native official clan,⁵²⁵ reported that the “Thirteen Xifan Tribes” had grown increasingly rampant in recent years. They had toppled boundary markers, invaded and raided sentry camps and forts in Zhuanglang. As a response, Lu Lin requested troops to be dispatched to suppress them. The Ministry of War deliberated that since the Thirteen Xifan Tribes were “cooked Fan”, they could not be arbitrarily killed. Instead, it was advisable to send troops to drive them out of the territory.⁵²⁶

Overall, it is obvious that the Prince of Anding and the Handong Commissioner could not control the tribes under their jurisdiction, and the tribes began to fight each other or even invade

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² These three tribes were located between the Xining Guard and Qinghai Lake, see *GSZZSTL*, 3a.

⁵²³ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 7, 236.

⁵²⁴ *MXIZSL*, j. 153, 2729.

⁵²⁵ For an introduction to the Zhuanglang Lu native official Clan, see Serruys, “The Mongols of Kansu During the Ming,” 343-3466.

⁵²⁶ *MXIZSL*, j. 157, 2820-1; *GSZZSTL*, 4a-b.

the Ming territory to seek benefits, attributing to the postponement of recovery plan of the Qinghai buffer zone.

Information about the composition of the *fuyi* officials in Xining is very scarce. It is known that the Municipal Military Commander (Ch. *shoubei* 守備) and *fuyi* officials in Xining used to extort and exploit the Xifan people, causing the establishment of the Xining Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of a Military Defense Circuit in 1488. The main responsibility of the Surveillance Vice Commissioner was to pacify and capture rebellious non-Han people, prohibit the smuggling trade between Ming subjects and non-Han tribes, and supervise and prohibit the *fuyi* officials from harassing the non-Han people.⁵²⁷

Rui Ning, the only Xining *fuyi* official whom we know by name, was a Lanzhou native.⁵²⁸ Serving as the Regional Military Commissioner in Charge of Pacification in Xining in 1506,⁵²⁹ he was promoted to the position of the Yongchang Right Assistant Regional Commander in 1508.⁵³⁰ Being raised to the position of the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander in 1515 and registered at the Suzhou Guard,⁵³¹ he engaged in a fierce battle with the Moghul Khanate and was killed in action in 1517.⁵³² His activity underlines that the main frontier conflicts at the time were occurring in the Suzhou region. Therefore, experienced *fuyi* officials from Xining would be transferred to Suzhou to defend against invaders of the Moghul Khanate and the Qinghai Mongols.

Yang Yiqing's plan was ultimately not implemented. With the rise of the Qinghai Mongols, the Four Guards and the Thirteen Xifan Tribes either submitted to Mongol rule or came under the threat of Mongol invasion, which led to the collapse of the horse trade.⁵³³ The Ming then sought to transform the Qinghai Mongols into its new buffer zone, replacing the original frontier guards, a development that will be elaborated in Chapter 5.

⁵²⁷ *MXIZSL*, j. 16, 391-2

⁵²⁸ *SZZ*, j. 3, 64.

⁵²⁹ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 7, 236.

⁵³⁰ *MWZSL*, j. 37, 879.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, j. 119, 2405-6; *SZHYZ*, j. 4, 249; *WLGZZ*, 63.

⁵³² *MWZSL*, j. 145, 2842-4; *SZHYZ*, j. 2, 148-150.

⁵³³ Although the Ming lost control over the tribes in Qinghai, it still maintained its rule over the tribes in Taozhou, Hezhou and Minzhou, see Wang, *Wang qiong ji*, 45-49.

3.4 Conclusion

With the invasion of Hami and other frontier guards by the Moghul Khanate from 1473, the Ming's Xiyu buffer zone faced structural collapse. Ming China, adhering to its original policy, first attempted to mobilize the Xining native officials to resolve the conflict but ultimately declared failure. Subsequently, the Ming turned to support Hansheng, who established a powerful regime and consolidated his rule by forging marital alliances with the Oirats, the Prince of Anding, and even the Moghul Khan. However, his rule was eventually overthrown by a joint effort by the Moghul Khanate and an anti-Ming faction in Hami. Following these events, the Ming established the *fuyi* system centered on the *fuyi* officials to counterbalance the Moghul Khanate, manage the frontier guards who had migrated into Ming territory, and rebuild the northwestern buffer zone.

From the buffer system to the Hanshen system and then to the *fuyi* system, the Ming gradually moved away from its reliance on the previous Mongol Yuan forces, such as powerful Čayadaid descendants—the Prince of Zhongshun and the Prince of Anding—or Xifan tribes, and established its own specialized personnel for handling frontier affairs—the *fuyi* officials. These *fuyi* officials either came from frontier guards who had submitted to the Ming or from prominent local families within the Ming territories. Their common characteristic was proficiency in various Inner Asian languages and familiarity with communication methods among different Inner Asian ethnic groups. With the assistance of the *fuyi* officials, the Ming successfully incorporated groups belonged to the original northwestern buffer zone, as well as the Wild Mekrins and the Oirats, into the *fuyi* system, establishing numerous allies in Inner Asia.

The collapse of the buffer system also signified a transformation in the structure of the Ming's northwestern frontier. The originally complex and multi-layered buffer zone had now collapsed, with the population of those groups of the buffer zone relocating internally within the Ming or no longer obeying Ming commands. The frontier guards who relocated internally remained a protective buffer zone for the Ming, although they no longer possessed the complex hierarchical structure they had previously and could no longer protect and separate the Ming

from potentially hostile Inner Asian forces. They now followed the management of tribal leaders and *fuyi* officials, either joining the joint Han and non-Han army to resist invading forces or being responsible for guarding fortresses in the Ming territory.

Overall, the *fuyi* system signifies the establishment of a new Inner Asian order. It provided political recognition, economic support and military protection in exchange for the submission and obedience of frontier groups while integrating the former northwestern buffer zone and the Ming's allies into a novel buffer zone which was administrated now by the *fuyi* officials and no longer largely autonomous as before. This new order was attractive for numerous Inner Asian forces and thus facilitated their alliances with the Ming. In Chapter 4, this dissertation will discuss how the Ming utilized *fuyi* officials to reestablish the tributary relations with the Moghul Khanate and other Western Region forces. And in Chapter 5, the dissertation will examine how the Ming employed *fuyi* officials to communicate with the emerging Qinghai Mongols and incorporate them into the *fuyi* system.

Chapter 4: Reestablishment of “Tributary System” in Western Regions

Although Hami was annexed by the Moghul Khanate after 1529, the tribute and escort missions of Hami and the intelligence exchanges between the Ming and Hami endured during the sixteenth century. This was made possible based on two factors. Firstly, the rulers of Hami after 1529 were descendants of former officials of the Hami Guard who decided to remain in the city instead of migrating into Ming territory. Secondly, most of the *fuyi* officials, who were recruited in Suzhou and Ganzhou, were descendants of the original Hami Guard and shouldered the duty to communicate and negotiate with the missions from Hami and the Western Regions. Through the cooperation of both sides, they reestablished the tributary system and secured peace between the Ming and Moghul Khanate after the Hami Crisis. To depict this process of reestablishment, the following sections concentrate on the four primary aspects: the discussion of the Hami rulers in the sixteenth century, Hami’s tributary and escort missions, the *fuyi* officials’ role in receiving Western Regions missions, and, finally, the military intelligence exchange between the Ming and Hami.

4.1 Rulers of Hami during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Hami came under the control of the Moghul Khanate after 1529, and its fate became closely intertwined with the khanate’s political transformations in this period. This subsection will discuss the political change within the Moghul Khanate at first and then demonstrate the history of the real managers of the tribute and escort missions—the “Hami Order”.

The annexation of Hami by the Moghul Khanate occurred during the reign of Manṣūr Khan (r. 1501/1502-1543).⁵³⁴ During this period, Manṣūr Khan’s younger brother Sa‘īd seized the southern Tianshan region west of Čalıš and established the Yarkand Khanate in 1514, while Manṣūr Khan continued to control regions such as Čalıš, Turpan, and Hami (for the lineage of the Moghul Khanate and Yarkand Khanate, see Figure 3.1).⁵³⁵ Upon Manṣūr Khan’s death in

⁵³⁴ Wei Liangtao 魏良弢, *Ye'erqiang hanguo shigang* 葉爾羌汗國史綱 (Ha'erbing: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), 213.

⁵³⁵ Tian Weijiang 田衛疆, *Sichou zhi lu yu dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu* 絲綢之路與東察合台汗國史研 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1997), 111-115.

1543, his eldest son Shāh (r. 1545-1565/1566) succeeded him,⁵³⁶ while his second son Muḥammad occupied Shazhou and Hami, allied with the Oirats, and opposed Shāh Khan.⁵³⁷ In 1559, Shāh Khan's son Tūrāy seized Hami. Shāh Khan died in 1565 or 1566, and his cousin Mas'ūd Khan ascended to the throne. In 1570, another Muḥammad, the younger brother of 'Abd al-Karīm Khan of the Yarkand Khanate (See Figure 3.1) who was a grandson of Sa'id,⁵³⁸ took control of the Moghul Khanate, including Hami. In 1575, Shāh Khan's younger brother Muhammad 'Alī⁵³⁹ reclaimed sovereignty over the Moghul Khanate.⁵⁴⁰

Abū Naṣīr Aḥmad Khan⁵⁴¹ succeeded to the throne of the Moghul Khanate in 1579. In 1583, although the Moghul Khanate was still out of his control, the Yarkand Khan 'Abd al-Karīm granted territories of the Moghul Khanate, including Hami, to his nephew Muḥammad Khudābandah in 1583. Khudābandah promptly captured Hami and other surrounding regions, leading to the collapse of the Moghul Khanate as a unified entity. 'Abd al-Karīm died around 1593,⁵⁴² and his younger brother Muḥammad succeeded him. Muḥammad Khudābandah was then defeated by Muḥammad in 1594, with the eastern territories of the khanate, including Hami, being granted to Muḥammad's younger brother 'Abd al-Raḥīm. After 'Abd al-Raḥīm's death in 1634 or 1635, his son 'Abd Allāh succeeded him, maintaining control over the eastern territories of the khanate. Subsequently, 'Abd Allāh marched westward and reunified the Yarkand Khanate, assuming the title of khan in 1638.⁵⁴³

However, the transitions of khans and political regimes were not aligned with transformations in Hami's rulership. In fact, during the early sixteenth century, Hami was effectively governed by a Sufi order led by Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn (Ch. Huozhe Tazhiding 火者他

⁵³⁶ Manṣūr might have already transferred power to Shāh before his death, see Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 126-132.

⁵³⁷ Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 132; *MSIZSL*, j. 307, 5795-5797.

⁵³⁸ David Brophy, "The Oirat in Eastern Turkistan and the Rise of Āfāq Khwāja," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, no. 16 (2008/2009): 27.

⁵³⁹ Ming sources record his name as Maheima alibu badu'er 馬黑麻阿力卜把都兒, which might be a transliteration of Muḥammad 'Alp Bahādur, as argued by Qu Qiang. See Qu Qiang, "14-17 shiji xiyu difang zhengzhi shi yanjiu," 237.

⁵⁴⁰ Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 132-134; Shi Maohua 石茂華, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi* 毅菴總督陝西奏議 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming period (1368-1644)), j.6, 46b.

⁵⁴¹ Ming source records his name as Abunaxi'er heheima 阿卜納西兒呵黑麻, while the character "he 呵" might be a scribal error for "a 阿."

⁵⁴² René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 500.

⁵⁴³ Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 133-137; Wei, *Ye'erqiang hanguo shigang*, 136-138. For the most recent research on the political history of the Čayadaid Khanate and the Moghul Khanate, see Orhan Çinar, "Çağatay devleti zamanında türkistan'ın siyasî, askerî ve sosyal durumu" (PhD diss., Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2019).

只丁), whose ancestor Arshad al-Dīn had played a pivotal role in fourteenth century Čayadaid history by converting the Moghul Khan Tūghluq Tīmūr to Islam,⁵⁴⁴ and wielding immense influence over both religious and political affairs of the khanate at that time.⁵⁴⁵ By the time Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn inherited the religious authority, his family's power had already significantly declined, as Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn himself became affiliated with the Naqshbandī order and was dispatched to Turpan,⁵⁴⁶ where he received reverence from Aḥmad Khan and his son Maṣṣūr. The *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* records that both Aḥmad Khan and Maṣṣūr Khan were considered disciples of Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn.⁵⁴⁷ Chinese sources further attest to his elevated status, noting that after his death by Ming forces, “Prince Sulṭān Maṣṣūr and his three brothers led their massive army to revenge the Senior Commander Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn, who was same as their father.”⁵⁴⁸

Described as “not only an astute politician but also an erudite Sufi scholar,”⁵⁴⁹ Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn was known to have “occupied himself, also, with commerce and agriculture. And from these occupations there accrued to him, by the blessing of the Most High God, great wealth.”⁵⁵⁰ As will be discussed in the following section, Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn, along with his brothers Kh^vāja Maḥmūd (Ch. Huozhe Maheimu 火者馬黑木) and Kh^vāja Sājir (Ch. Huozhe Sazhe'er 火者撒者兒), controlled Hami's tributary missions and held the duty of escorting Central Asian tribute embassies to the Ming territory, which was a privilege since the escorts would receive generous awards from the Ming court.

Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn's assumption of control over Hami began in 1513. That year, as discussed in Section 3.2.2, Sulṭān Bāyazīd, the Ming-appointed Prince of Zhongshun, went to

⁵⁴⁴ Existing scholarship, largely based on Islamic sources, has portrayed rulers such as Tūghluq Tīmūr as devout Muslims. However, as Qu Qiang has demonstrated, Tūghluq Tīmūr also maintained significant engagement with Tibetan Buddhism, suggesting a more complex religious landscape than traditionally acknowledged. See Qu Qiang 曲強, “De cang liu fen tulufan mengguwen xingzheng wenshu zai yanjiu 德藏六份吐魯番蒙古文行政文書再研究,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1 (2025): 30.

⁵⁴⁵ Han Zhongyi 韓中義, *Xiyu sufei zhuyi yanjiu* 西域蘇非主義研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008), 44-47.

⁵⁴⁶ Han, *Xiyu sufei*, 51-52; Wei, *Yerqiang hanguo shigang*, 113; TIR, 372.

⁵⁴⁷ TIR, 127.

⁵⁴⁸ “有王子速壇滿速兒和兄弟三個的大軍馬隨後來，報他老子一般的大頭目火者他只丁讎。” Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 13, 486.

⁵⁴⁹ Han, *Xiyu sufei*, 51. The Naqshbandī order always involved in the political affairs deeply, see Joseph F. Fletcher, “Central Asian Sufism and Ma Ming-hin's New Teaching,” in *Proceedings of the Fourth East Asian Altaistic Conference*, ed. Ch'en Chieh-hsien (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1975), 81-82.

⁵⁵⁰ TIR, 127.

Turpan and surrendered to the Moghul Khanate, which prompted the Moghul Khanate to dispatch Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn and others to garrison Hami:

In the eighth year of Zhengde, Hami's Commanders of various ranks, including Burhan Kuli, Right Commander for Political Affairs Yexieke, and Left Commander Qutlugh Muḥammad, reported: "Sulṭān Bāyazīd harms the people... When the populace complained to Commander Engke Bulat, he became enraged and sought to kill Engke Bulat. In panic, [Engke Bulat] fled outside the city and remained on the tower for three days before escaping to Suzhou... [Sulṭān Bāyazīd] had turned against the Ming and defected to Turpan, intending to lead troops to raid Gansu. The prince [of the Moghul Khanate] recognized he would undermine the situation. Sayyid Ḥusayn requested Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn to jointly admonish [Sulṭān Bāyazīd]. They three were dispatched to hold Hami.

正德八年，哈密衛大小頭目卜兒罕虎力、參政右頭目也寫克、左頭目虎都六馬黑麻等番文：速檀拜牙即害人……眾人與都督奄克孛剌說了。他惱了，要殺奄克孛剌。[奄克孛剌]慌了，走出城外土剌上坐了三日，往肅州來了……[速檀拜牙即]不順中國，投土魯番去，要領人馬來搶甘肅。王子知他壞事，寫亦虎仙捫央火者他只丁勸正了，著他三人來守哈密。⁵⁵¹

The three individuals, who were dispatched to hold Hami by the Moghul Khanate, were Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn, and the Hami Commissioners Sayyid Ḥusayn and Mollā Ḥasan.⁵⁵² Possessing a dual identity of both leaders of the Hami Muslim community and Ming-appointed officials of the Hami Guard, Sayyid Ḥusayn and Mollā Ḥasan mediated between the Ming and the Moghul Khanate for personal gain.⁵⁵³ Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn's younger brother, Kh^vāja Maḥmūd, was

⁵⁵¹ Shen Maoshang 慎懋賞, *Si yi guang ji* 四夷廣記, in *Xuanlan tang congshu xiji* 玄覽堂叢書續集, ed. Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (Taipei: National Taipei University Library, 1947), vol. 98, 721a-b. The Uyghur correspondence of “*toumu* 頭目” in the *Gaochang guanke* and *Gaochang guan zazi* is “*tovmu*,” a direct transliteration of the Chinese word. However, in *Wei wu'er guan yiyu*, the corresponding word is “*bashila* 把失刺,” the transliteration of “*bašla-*,” a prefix in Old Uyghur meaning “to manage, to administer.” See GCGK, 66; GCGZZ, 338; Shōgaito, “‘Uiguru-kan yakugo’ no kenkyū,” 135; Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 148-149.

⁵⁵² BZK I, j. 11, 276.

⁵⁵³ For studies of Sayyid Ḥusayn, see Qian Boquan 錢伯泉, “Mingdai hami Huihui shouling xieyi huxian de panluan 明代哈密回回首領寫亦虎仙的叛亂,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1 (2008): 36-44; Liao Yuankun 廖元琨, “Cong xieyi huxian

married to Sayyid Ḥusayn's daughter and thus created a powerful alliance between the two factions.⁵⁵⁴

In 1516, through Sayyid Ḥusayn's mediation, the Moghul Khanate agreed to summon back Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn and return Hami to Ming control.⁵⁵⁵ In response, the Ming court dispatched Kh'āja Maḥmūd, Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn's brother, to bring gifts to Turpan and negotiate with the Moghul Khanate. As a result, the Ming succeeded in reclaiming the city of Hami and seal of the Prince of Zhongshun.⁵⁵⁶ However, it soon became apparent that Sayyid Ḥusayn and Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn conspired to request major rewards from the Ming in the name of the Moghul Khanate, a request that was refused and provoked great anger at the Ming court.⁵⁵⁷ Compounded by mishandling from Ming officials due to factional struggles in the court, the negotiations ultimately collapsed, allowing Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn to retain control of Hami.⁵⁵⁸ Subsequently, Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn brought his family to the city, transforming it into a base for his family's expansion and an outpost for "holy wars" against the Ming.⁵⁵⁹ In 1525, after the Ming executed his brothers Kh'āja Sājir and Kh'āja Maḥmūd, along with Sayyid Ḥusayn and his son, Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn launched a retaliatory assault on Suzhou, where he was ultimately killed by Ming troops.⁵⁶⁰

Following Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn's death, Sayyid Ḥusayn's father-in-law Ḥājī (Ch. Haji 哈即) took charge of Hami's defense,⁵⁶¹ while the Moghul Khanate commander Yaglakır (Ch. Yalan 牙蘭 or Yamulan 牙木蘭), a Quxian native who had been kidnapped by the Moghuls at a

zhi s ikan mingdai hami weiji de neiyin 從寫亦虎仙之死看明代哈密危機的內因," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 20, no. 4(2009): 66-71; Zhang, *Chaogong yu rufu*, 116-131.

⁵⁵⁴ Wang Qiong 王瓊, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou* 晉溪總兵敷奏, ed. Zhang Zhijiang 張志江 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018), j. 6, 223; *MDHM*, 395.

⁵⁵⁵ *MWZSL*, j. 13, 2703-2704.

⁵⁵⁶ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 6, 192, 197-198.

⁵⁵⁷ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 6, 193.

⁵⁵⁸ On the negotiation process between the Ming and the Moghul Khanate, and the connection between political struggles within the Ming court and the "Hami Crisis," see Shi, *Tulufan xue*, 201-215; Yao, *Mingdai tulufan*, 26-32; Tian Shu 田澍, "Peng ze yu gansu zhi bian 彭澤與甘肅之變," *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1(2004), 11-16.

⁵⁵⁹ TIR, 127. Tasaka Kōdō hypothesized that Kh'āja Tāj al-Dīn's military campaigns may have a link with the movements of "Muslim bandits (*hui zei* 回賊)," see Tasaka Kōdō 田坂興道, "Mindai kōki no kaikyōto ryūzoku: Chūgoku kaikyō shakai-shi no ichibu toshite 明代後期の回教徒流賊: 中国回教社会史の一部として," *Tōyō gaku* 東洋學報, no. 37(1954), 49-52.

⁵⁶⁰ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, 485; Wang, *Wang qiong ji*, 36-37.

⁵⁶¹ *MDHM*, 394.

young age,⁵⁶² led an army to occupy the city.⁵⁶³ Finally, by 1528, Yaglakır led his army to defect to the Ming.⁵⁶⁴

In 1529, the Ming and the Moghul Khanate reached an agreement that restored the tributary privileges of the khanate while the Ming claimed to abandon military efforts to reclaim Hami. The *Ming shi* comments: “Henceforth, [the Ming] gave up managing Hami’s affairs and permitted Turpan to pay tribute. This brought peace to the western frontier. From then, Hami came under the control of Mīr Maḥmūd (Ch. Mi’er Maheimu 米兒馬黑木), son of *Šibayanda (Ch. Shibaiyanda 失拜烟答),⁵⁶⁵ becoming a vassal of Turpan.”⁵⁶⁶

This historical development was much more complex than what the *Ming shi*’s depicts. Several Ministry of War reports preserved in the Fu Ssu-nien Library detail the negotiation process and subsequent political developments in Hami:

*In the twelfth month [of the Jiajing reign], Sulṭān Maṣṣūr dispatched his trusted envoy *Batı Mönkâ to Ganzhou, professing ignorance of the Suzhou border incursions. He returned captured populations and transferred control of the city of Hami to Mīr Maḥmūd, son of the deceased Hami Commander *Šibayanda, and withdrew garrison forces from Hami.*

⁵⁶² Gao Zihou 高自厚, “Shi shi ‘Mingshi xiyu zhuan’ zhong de ‘ya lan’ 試釋《明史·西域傳》中的“牙蘭”,” *Xibei minzu xueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 西北民族學院學報 (哲學社會科學版), no. 3 (1989): 47-53; Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 854.

⁵⁶³ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, 484.

⁵⁶⁴ *MSZSL*, j. 89, 2007.

⁵⁶⁵ Paul Pelliot reconstructed this name as Mo. Sabandara (a misreading of Šibandar-a) based on the *Erdeni-yin Tobči*, see Paul Pelliot, “Le Hōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l’Histoire des Ming,” *T’oung Pao* 5, no.2 (1948): 139-141; Ulayan 烏蘭, “*Menggu yuanliu*” *yanjiu* 《蒙古源流》研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2000), 797. Paul Pelliot also tried to reconstruct “Baiyanda 拜烟答” as Mo. Bayandar. However, considering contemporary linguistic conventions, the more probable reconstructions would be Bayandai or Buyandai. Moreover, since the Qing sources modified “Shibaiyanda 失拜烟答” as “Shabada 沙巴達,” this name may also refer to P. Shāh (meaning “king”) + Mo. Bayandai. See Paul Pelliot, “Le Hōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l’Histoire des Ming,” 139-140; Henry Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan* (‘S-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co, 1958), 37, 48; M. C. Imbault-Huart, *Le Pays De ‘Hami Ou Khamil Description, Histoire D’Après Les Auteurs Chinois* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1892), 39; Beijing daxue Dongfang yuyan wenxue xi bosi yu jiaoyanshi 北京大學東方語言文學系波斯語教研室 ed., *Bosi yu yan yu cidian* 波斯語漢語詞典 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1981), 1437; F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, reprint (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1998), 726.

⁵⁶⁶ *MS*, j. 329, 8526.

（嘉靖七年）十二月內，速檀滿速兒遣親信夷使把提滿可等來甘州，自叙不知肅州犯邊之情，又送還搶去人口，及將哈密城池交與已故哈密都督失拜烟答之子米兒馬黑木管理，將守哈密人馬取回。⁵⁶⁷

Nominally, Manṣūr returned captives and the city of Hami, a move that would suggest a diplomatic victory for the Ming.⁵⁶⁸ However, the returned captives numbered merely thirty-odd individuals, a fraction of the thousands originally seized.⁵⁶⁹ Moreover, the Ming court regarded Mīr Maḥmūd as a “descendant of a rebel (Ch. *panni zisun* 叛逆子孫),” who was unfit to inherit his father’s original title “Commissioner of the Hami Guard”.⁵⁷⁰

Mīr Maḥmūd’s father *Šibayanda was the Hami Commissioner in charge of the Kara Koy people.⁵⁷¹ He was believed to be allied to the rulers of Turpan through marriage,⁵⁷² which indicates that Mīr Maḥmūd’s mother was likely a member of the Moghul aristocracy. In 1517, Chen Jiuchou 陳九疇 (1471-?), the Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of Gansu Military Defense Circuit, accused *Šibayanda of colluding with the Moghul Khanate and plotting internal subversion,⁵⁷³ which resulted in his death under torture in prison and the confiscation of his family’s assets.⁵⁷⁴ Though Mīr Maḥmūd went to Beijing to plead his father’s innocence,⁵⁷⁵ he failed to secure rehabilitation and subsequently defected to the Moghul Khanate.

Mīr Maḥmūd’s tenure as Hami’s ruler proved brief and tenuous. His name was absent from the 1529 list of sixteen rewarded Hami leaders,⁵⁷⁶ while his authority was further undermined in 1530 when Manṣūr personally visited Hami to appropriate tribute textiles, usurping Mīr Maḥmūd’s economic privileges. By 1532, Manṣūr’s youngest son Muḥammad occupied Hami, stripping Mīr Maḥmūd of rule. Although Muḥammad once came back Turpan to fight against

⁵⁶⁷ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 6a.

⁵⁶⁸ *MSIZSL*, j. 99, 2348.

⁵⁶⁹ *Jindai mingchen*, c. 15, 13b.

⁵⁷⁰ *MSIZSL*, j. 98, 2319.

⁵⁷¹ *MDHM*, 418.

⁵⁷² *MWZSL*, j. 145, 2842.

⁵⁷³ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 7, 243.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 244; Wang, *Wang qiong ji*, 35.

⁵⁷⁵ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 7, 243.

⁵⁷⁶ Xia Yan 夏言, *Guizhou zouyi* 桂洲奏議 (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 1541), j. 18, 18a.

the Oirats in 1534, he left commander Mollā Darvīsh (Ch. Manla Dielimishi 滿刺迭力迷失) to garrison Hami,⁵⁷⁷ and returned to Hami later that year.⁵⁷⁸

Afterwards, although rumors suggested that Muḥammad might have transferred Hami's governance to Mīr Maḥmūd's mother,⁵⁷⁹ no evidence confirms her actual control. Given her Moghul lineage, such an arrangement would have still served the khanate's interests. By 1537, Mīr Maḥmūd's status had diminished to that of a mere tributary envoy from the Hami Guard. The *Ming shilu* reveals his final decline: in 1608, "Hami Guard Commissioner Mīr Maḥmūd petitioned to resume tribute missions. Having been expelled from Hami by Turpan, he sought resettlement in Gansu."⁵⁸⁰ This eventually marked his complete displacement from power.

Although Muḥammad ruled Hami from 1532 to 1559,⁵⁸¹ he was not in control of the crucial privileges of managing tribute and escort missions, as recorded in the Chinese sources. Hami's political structure during this period highly likely resembled the Yarkand Khanate's system, in which a governor (typically a khan's son, brother, or grandson) shared his power with *atālīq* (regent-tutor) and *ḥākīm* (administrator) who held real military and administrative power, effectively supervising and assisting the nominal governor.⁵⁸² While Muḥammad maintained political control over Hami, the rights to manage tribute and escort missions remained in the hands of non-Činggisid officials. This arrangement was evident when the Ming court criticized Muḥammad since he went to Jiayu Pass to present tribute on his own initiative, rather than traveling under the escort of the designated Hami envoys as required by the regulations.⁵⁸³

Now it is important to stress that the real ruler who enjoyed Hami's tribute and escort privileges was the leader of the local Sufi order, hereafter referred to as the "Hami Order". According to the *Ming shilu*, in 1554, the commander of Hami was Mollā Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥājī (Ch. Manla Maheima Dali Haji 滿刺馬黑麻打力哈即), hereafter abbreviated as Mollā

⁵⁷⁷ *Jindai mingchen*, c. 15, 45b.

⁵⁷⁸ *Jindai mingchen*, c. 15, 46a.

⁵⁷⁹ Xia, *Guizhou zouyi*, j. 18, 16b.

⁵⁸⁰ *MSIZSL*, j. 451, 7663.

⁵⁸¹ Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 132.

⁵⁸² Wei, *Ye'erqiang hanguo shigang*, 174. /

⁵⁸³ *MSIZSL*, j. 305, 5772.

Muḥammad) who sent missions to present tribute horses.⁵⁸⁴ The title Mollā, originally meaning protector or patron, was an honorific for Sufi masters.⁵⁸⁵ Mollā Muḥammad was also recorded as the “Hami chieftain Muḥammad” (Ch. Hami Qiuzhang Muhen 哈密酋長母恨) in a 1572 source,⁵⁸⁶ and the “Elder Mollā Muḥammad” (Ch. Laoren Manla Muhen 老人滿刺母恨) mentioned in a 1575 source,⁵⁸⁷ indicating his dominance over Hami for more than two decades.

Mollā Muḥammad and his successors are referred to in Wanli-era (萬曆, 1573-1620) documents as the “Hami Elder” (Ch. *hami laoren* 哈密老人). The term *laoren* (老人, “elder”) corresponds to the Sufi title “Pīr” (Persian for “elder”),⁵⁸⁸ which was traditionally used by the leaders of Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn’s order.⁵⁸⁹ This suggests a direct lineage between the “Hami Order” and Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn’s original Sufi network. In contrast, the Naqshbandī Kh^vāja of the Black Mountain faction, which was popular in the Yarkand Khanate during this period, used the title “Khalīfa” for their leaders responsible for regional affairs.⁵⁹⁰ Furthermore, it is recorded that Mollā Muḥammad’s “father and ancestor” (Ch. *fuzu* 父祖) included the “Hami commander Qutlugh Muḥammad”, who paid tribute to the Ming in 1548.⁵⁹¹ I believe that he was the certain Qutlugh Muḥammad, the Left Commander of the Hami Guard, who jointly sent the letter discussed above to the Ming court in 1513, as discussed above.⁵⁹² This indicates that the rights to pay tribute and escort the missions from the Western Regions remained throughout all this time in the hands of the original Hami Guard officials.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., j. 411, 7169; Zhang Tianfu 張天復, *Mingyu tang gao* 鳴玉堂稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), j. 9, 588. The *Ming shilu* always omitted the final consonant “d” in Persian names like Sayyid, Muḥammad, Maḥmūd. When the final consonant “d” was followed by “‘Alī”, it pronounce like “*dali* 打力.” Representative examples include: Sayyid ‘Alī 賽因打力, Sayyid ‘Alī 寫亦打力, Sayyid ‘Alī 賽亦打力, Muḥammad ‘Alī 馬黑麻打力, Maḥmūd ‘Alī 馬哈麻打力.

⁵⁸⁵ Han, *Xiyu sufei*, 418. It is worth mentioning that Ulamas always served as the envoys of the tributary missions because they were seen as respectful, trustful and able to collect intelligence about China during their missions. See Michal Biran, “Diplomacy and Chancellery Practices in the Chagataid Khanate: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *Oriente Moderno* 88, no. 2 (2008): 376-377; M. Kutlukov, “K istorii vzaimootnosheniy Yarkendskogo khanstva i Kitaya v XV—XVII vv,” in *Novoe v izuchenii Kitaia: istoriia i istoriografiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 40.

⁵⁸⁶ *WLWGL*, j. 14. 371. Qu Jiusi, the author of the *Wanli wugong lu*, deliberately imitated the ancient style and changed the official titles of Chinese and foreign officials to ancient names. The so-called “Hami chieftain 哈密酋長” should be a change from “Hami Elder 哈密老人”. Meng, “*Wanli wugong lu*” *yanjiu*, 46.

⁵⁸⁷ Shi, *Yi’an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 40b. The reason why the 1572 and 1575 sources transliterated the individual’s name as “Manla Muhen 滿刺母恨” rather than “Manla Maheima 滿刺馬黑麻” is probably because there are too many people from the Western Regions named Mollā Muḥammad so they made a deliberate distinction.

⁵⁸⁸ *Huihui guan zazi* 回回館雜字 translated “Pīr” into “lao 老,” see Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝, “*Huihui guan zazi*” *yu* “*Huihui guan yiyu*” *yanjiu* 《回回館雜字》與《回回館譯語》研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2008), 92.

⁵⁸⁹ Han, *Xiyu sufei*, 46, 49-50, 54.

⁵⁹⁰ Han, *Xiyu sufei*, 70.

⁵⁹¹ Zhang, *Mingyu tang gao*, j. 9, 588; *MSIZSL*, j. 338, 6175.

⁵⁹² Shen, *Siyi guang ji*, 721a-b.

The tribute mission sent by Mollā Muḥammad in 1554 not only represented his own interests but also requested rewards for the other leaders of Hami:

One memorial of [the mission] stated: The Hami commander Mollā Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥājjī and others kowtowed before the Great Ming Emperor and, following the old precedent of their fathers and ancestors, prepared horses and dispatched the escort envoy-in-chief Muḥammad ‘Alī Su ‘ūd to request two bolts of gold-woven satin, one hundred catties of tea. Additionally, sixteen commanders, including Shenlenla from the city of Lapčuk, dispatched their envoy Helilunla and others to request varying quantities of gold-woven satin, tea, silk-blended fabric, and woolen thread.

一道奏稱：哈密頭目滿刺馬黑麻打力哈即等，大明皇帝前叩頭，今照父祖舊例，各備馬匹，差伴送正使馬黑麻阿力撒兀，求討織金段子二疋，茶一百斤，并捨嫩刺自刺木革城等頭目一十六名，各差正使黑里倫刺等，求討織金段子、茶葉、三梭布、絨線各多寡不等。等因。⁵⁹³

Alongside Mollā Muḥammad, the memorial also mentioned commanders from various subordinate cities of Hami, including four individuals such as Shenlenla 捨嫩刺 from the city of Lapčuk, four individuals such as Pīr Dāryūsh Mīrzā (Ch. Pi’er De’eryueshi Mi’erzan 皮兒得兒月失米兒咱) from the city of Taš Balık, four individuals including Yasīn Mīrzā (Ch. Yexi Yin mi’erzan 野西尹米兒咱) from the city of Bir Hatun Tam 哈吞台城,⁵⁹⁴ and four individuals from Chunnan City 春南城 like ‘Alī Mīrzā (Ch. Eli Mi’erzan 俄力米兒咱).⁵⁹⁵ These city leaders, most of whom bore Muslim names, likely constituted the highest power group in Hami and together enjoyed the benefits of paying tribute.

⁵⁹³ Zhang, *Mingyu tang gao*, j. 9, 588.

⁵⁹⁴ Namely the “Bir Hatun Tam 一箇女人城” recorded in *Weiwu’er yiyu*, located to the north of today’s Xingxingxia, see Shōgaito, “Uiguru-kan yakugo,” 118; Zhang Kun 張坤, “Mingdai wenxian ‘weiwu’er yiyu diming’ kaoshu 明代文獻《委兀兒譯語·地名》考述,” *Sichou zhilu kaogu* 絲綢之路考古, no. 10 (2025): 206-208.

⁵⁹⁵ The source doesn’t mention the number of the commanders from Chunnan City, however, there should also be four people by calculation. The specific location of this city is unknown. M. C. Imbault-Huart and Saguchi Tōru once analyzed the various regions under Hami’s jurisdiction, without finding any place name similar to Chunnan. See Huart, *Le Pays De ‘Hami Ou Khamil*, 12-15; Saguchi, *Xinjiang musulman yanjiu*, 137-160.

Thereafter, nominal sovereignty over Hami repeatedly alternated between the Yarkand Khanate and the Moghul Khanate, as discussed earlier, yet Mollā Muḥammad maintained his subordinate rule in the city. When another Muḥammad ‘Alī, who is mentioned before as the younger brother of Shāh, regained his lineage’s control of the Moghul Khanate, Mollā Muḥammad jointly dispatched tribute and escort missions to the Ming with him.⁵⁹⁶ It is evident that if the new leaders of the khanate wanted to gain Ming recognition, they had to send a mission, which was to be accompanied by Hami envoys during its journey from Hami to the Jiayu Pass. The “Hami Order” maintained control over Hami until the mid-Wanli period. A 1578 source mentions a “Hami Elder who was responsible for garrisoning the city” (Ch. *Hami shoutu laoren* 哈密守土老人),⁵⁹⁷ but does not provide his name. Another source written in 1589 refers to a “Hami Elder Maduli” (Ch. *Hami laoren* Maduli 哈密老人馬都力). “Maduli” could be a transliteration of the Arabic *mudarris*, meaning “teacher”,⁵⁹⁸ or more probably an abbreviation of Muḥammad ‘Alī,⁵⁹⁹ an abbreviation of Mollā Muḥammad’s full name “Mollā Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥājī.” If the latter assumption is correct, it suggests that Mollā Muḥammad’s rule over Hami’ tributary and escort duties endured until at least 1589.

After 1589, however, the title “Hami Elder” disappeared in the sources, indicating a transformation in both the political and religious leadership of Hami. Firstly, Hami, along with other eastern regions of the khanate, was granted to the Yarkand Khan Muḥammad’s son ‘Abd al-Raḥīm in 1594, following the defeat of Hami’s original ruler Muḥammad Khudābandah.⁶⁰⁰ Secondly, the Naqshbandī order attempted to spread its teachings into Turpan, Hami, and their adjacent regions, eventually replacing the original Sufi order controlled by the “Hami Elder”.

⁵⁹⁶ Shi, *Yi’an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 39b-40b.

⁵⁹⁷ *HMJLSC*, j. 21, 145, 148.

⁵⁹⁸ Beijing daxue waiguoyu xueyuan alabo yu xi 北京大學外國語學院阿拉伯語系 ed., *Alabo yu han yu cidian* 阿拉伯語漢語詞典 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2008), 357; Beijing daxue alabo-sisilan wenhua yanjiusuo alabo yuyan wenhua jiaoyanshi 北京大學阿拉伯—伊斯蘭文化研究所阿拉伯語言文化教研室 ed., *Han yu alabo yu cidian* 漢語阿拉伯語詞典 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1989), 1462. For the role the mudarris played in Islamic education, see I. F. Kasmar et al., “The Concepts of Mudarris, Mu’allim, Murabbi, Mursyid, Muaddib in Islamic Education,” *Khalifa: Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 3 (2019): 111-112.

⁵⁹⁹ Similar to how “‘Abd al-” is often pronounced “‘Abd ul-”.

⁶⁰⁰ Tian, *Dong chahetai hanguo shi yanjiu*, 133-137; Wei, *Ye’erqiang hanguo shigang*, 136-138.

Although the Naqshbandī Black Mountain faction had already achieved great success in the Yarkand Khanate,⁶⁰¹ the eastern regions of the khanate, such as Turpan and Hami, retained their own religious traditions and resisted the new influence for a long time.⁶⁰² To counter this, the Naqshbandī order launched multiple attacks on Hami. These events were recorded in the *Hami huiwang shiliao* 哈密回王史料, which records the history of the Qing-appointed “Hami Muslim Prince” (Ch. *Hami hui wang* 哈密回王), who ruled over Hami during the Qing period. The *Hami huiwang shiliao* was produced during the mid twentieth century, thus reflecting the perception of history of the people at that time to a large extent.⁶⁰³ Moreover, as will be shown below, its account is marked by contradictions and confusion. For instance, it even confuses Bukhara with Mecca. However, since it is the only source recording the history of Hami around 1600, it is still of great importance. According to the *Hami huiwang shiliao*, in 1592, a Muslim scholar named Nūr Ākhūnd (Ch. Nu Ahong 奴阿洪) traveled from Xining to Arabia, the birthplace of Islam, to study the scriptures and stayed there for five years. After completing his studies, he was sent back to “Xinjiang” (i.e. the Yarkand Khanate in the context of seventeenth century) by religious organizations, which should be the Naqshbandī order, to proselytize and lead around eighty Muslim soldiers to Hami, where he clashed with Hami’s forces and was killed. Two years after his death, the Bukharan Khan further dispatched ‘Arsh al-Dīn Khān (Ch. Ai’erxi Ding Han 艾爾西丁汗) to Xinjiang to proselytize. He brought over a hundred Muslim soldiers but was defeated and killed by Mongol troops. The Mongol troops mentioned here should be the Moghul people of Hami or the Oirats who had formed an alliance with Hami. Several years later, around 1605, the so-called “highest Islamic organization in Arabia” sent a third pioneer, Muḥammad Shaykh Jān (Ch. Muhanmaiti Xiahejia 木罕买提夏禾加), to Hami. Learning from previous failures, this time he led over a thousand Uyghur soldiers in holy war. They fought Mongol troops for over a year, resulting in heavy casualties

⁶⁰¹ For an introduction to the Naqshbandī Black Mountain faction, see Liu Zhengyin 劉正寅 and Wei Liangtao 魏良弢, *Xiyu hezhuo jiazu yanjiu* 西域和卓家族研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 105-145; Joseph F. Fletcher, “The Naqshbandiyya in Northwest China,” in *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, ed. B. F. Manz (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), XI: 3-11.

⁶⁰² Liu and Wei, *Xiyu hezhuo jiazu yanjiu*, 123-124.

⁶⁰³ *Hami huiwang shiliao* 哈密回王史料, quoted in Chen Zhigang 陳志剛, “Cong zangchuan fojiao dao yisilanjiao: 14 zhi 17shiji zongjiao zhuanbian xia de hami shehui 從藏傳佛教到伊斯蘭教——14 至 17 世紀宗教轉變下的哈密社會,” *Lishi renleixue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 18, no. 2 (2020): 17.

on both sides. Ultimately, Muḥammad Shaykh Jān defeated Hami's defenders, and the Mongols and Uyghurs united to support Muḥammad Shaykh Jān's entry into the city, proclaiming him as Hami's Ḥakīm Beg (Ch. Aqimu Boke 阿奇木伯克) to lead its people.⁶⁰⁴ Afterwards, Muḥammad Shaykh Jān's descendants successively submitted to the Dzungar Khanate in 1678 and the Qing in 1697, becoming the "Hami Muslim Prince" during the Qing period.⁶⁰⁵

The *Hami Huiwang shiliao* appears to contain numerous inconsistencies and errors. Firstly, it describes the three Muslims sent to Hami as having been dispatched both by a religious organization in Arabia and by the Bukharan khan, two claims that are clearly incompatible. Secondly, its narrative is evidently influenced by contemporary accounts of conflicts between Muslims and the Buddhist Oirats, a narrative pattern that can also be found in other sources.⁶⁰⁶ Thirdly, Muḥammad Shaykh Jān was in fact more likely a hereditary local leader of Hami rather than an envoy sent from Arabia or Bukhara.⁶⁰⁷ Overall, the *Hami Huiwang shiliao* may be regarded as a text that deliberately portrays Muḥammad Shaykh Jān as an exalted Islamic saint, and its account therefore diverges from historical reality.

Nevertheless, The *Hami Huiwang shiliao* still reflects the religious conflict between Hami and the western regions of the khanate, as well as the spread of Naqshbandī influence and power

⁶⁰⁴ *Hami huiwang shiliao* 哈密回王史料, 18-20. Aili Yidayi suggests that Mahamat Shaykh was the eighth-generation descendant of Tūghluq Tīmūr, the first khan of the Moghul Khanate. He also offers a different account of Mahamat Shaykh's conquest of Hami, though without citing any sources. See Aili Yidayi 艾里·伊達依, "Hami huiwang xianshi kaolüe 哈密回王先世考略," in *Hami shi wenshi ziliao* 哈密市文史資料, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi hami shiweihui wenshi ziliao gongzuo weiyuanhui 中國人民政治協商會議哈密市委員會文史資料工作委員會, vol. 2 (Hami: Hami shi zhengxie wenshi ziliao gongzuo weiyuanhui, 1988), 62-64. For the political communication between China and Bukhara in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Chu Ning 褚寧, "16, 17 shiji zhongya yu zhongguo guanxi yanjiu siti 16、17 世紀中亞與中國關係研究四題" (master's thesis, Guangzhou: Jinan University, 2014), 7-30.

⁶⁰⁵ Cai Jiarui 才家瑞, "Yisilan jiao zai hami de chuanbo yu hami huiwang 伊斯蘭教在哈密的傳播與哈密回王," *Zhongnan minzu xueyuan xuebao* 中南民族學院學報, no. 2 (1985): 81.

⁶⁰⁶ The narrative of the *Hami Huiwang shiliao* is heavily infused with Islamic overtones, reducing the opposing sides in the conflict to simply "Muslims" and "Buddhist Mongols". This is clearly an oversimplification, since the majority of Hami's population consisted of Uyghurs and Turkicized Mongols who practiced Islam. The account in the *Hami Huiwang shiliao* was evidently influenced by the contemporary religious conflicts between the Yarkand Khanate and the Oirats. For an introduction to the missionary activities and disputes of the Black Mountain faction among the Oirats and other Mongol tribes in the late sixteenth century, see Joseph F. Fletcher, "Confrontations Between Muslim Missionaries and Nomad Unbelievers in the Late Sixteenth Century: Notes on Four Passages from the 'Dīyā' al-qulūb'," in *Tractata Altaica*, ed. W. Heissig (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 167-174.

⁶⁰⁷ Secondly, Muḥammad Shaykh Jān was the father of Abdullah 額貝都拉, the first Hami Muslim Prince in the Qing period. It is more likely that he was a local leader who had long lived in Hami, rather than a missionary who came from the west. See Wang Xilong 王希隆, "Lun Hami daerhan boke ebeidula 論哈密達爾漢伯克額貝都拉," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 3 (1997): 74-75; Li Gang 李剛 and Chen Haiming 陳海鳴, "Guanyu qingdai hami huiwang Xianzu de liangdian kaoshi 關於清代哈密回王先祖的兩點考釋," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexueban)* 新疆大學學報 (人文社會科學版) 36, no. 3 (2008), 63-65.

from Bukhara.⁶⁰⁸ According to a Chaghatay source, around 1620, Hami's ruler was Mīr Sayyid Jalīl, who was "of both Kh^vāja and Sultān lineage", which implied his exalted religious and secular status, and had migrated from Kashgar.⁶⁰⁹ At that time, Yūsuf of the Naqshbandī White Mountain faction arrived in Hami, developed a friendship with Mīr Sayyid Jalīl, and began spreading White Mountain teachings.⁶¹⁰ By this time, the dominant Islamic tradition in Hami had already shifted to the Naqshbandī order introduced from the Yarkand Khanate.

4.2 The tribute and escort missions of Hami

In the early Ming period, during tribute missions' journey from the Western Regions traveled to the Ming court, the Chinese authorities would sequentially register the names of envoys and provide them with imperial banquets and rewards at Turpan, Hami, the Shule River basin, Jiayu Pass, Suzhou, and Ganzhou.⁶¹¹ Among these, Hami bore the crucial responsibilities for the managing of the Western Regions' tributary duties, translating the tribute documents, reporting the detailed composition of the tribute mission and the goods they carried with to the Ming, and escorting tribute missions to the Jiayu Pass.⁶¹²

Morris Rossabi once remarked that after the Ming lost control of Hami, it became difficult to regulate tribute missions and border trade, leading to the rising misconduct among envoys and the collapse of frontier commerce.⁶¹³ Nevertheless, addressing Rossabi's research, I would like to demonstrate how the Ming implemented a series of measures to address the issues which emerged after the loss of Hami. This section will show that both during the crisis of Hami and after, the Ming court continued to recognize Hami's rights to send tribute and escort missions, using this as a means to regulate Western Regions' tribute relations. And in the following

⁶⁰⁸ De Renzi, "Un Esempio di Teocrazia Islamica in Asia Centrale," 156; Devin De Weese, "Bâbâ Kamâl Janî and the Kubravî Tradition Among the Turks of Central Asia," *Der Islam. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients*, no. 71 (1994): 58.

⁶⁰⁹ *Da hezhuo zhuan* 大和卓傳, trans. Asika Junusi 阿斯卡·居努斯 and Chen Xia 陳霞, in *Qingdai chahetai wenxian yizhu* 清代察合台文獻譯註 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2013), 229-230. This account contradicts the *Hami Huiwang shiliao*, which states that Mahamat Shaykh ruled Hami from 1605. Although Mahamat Shaykh was also known as a "descendant of Muḥammad," his family lineage is completely different from that of Mīr Sayyid Jalīl, proving that the two were not the same person. Chen, "Cong zangchuan fojiao dao yisilanjiang," 20.

⁶¹⁰ Liu and Wei, *Xiyu hezhuo jiazuo yanjiu*, 155-156.

⁶¹¹ Bellér-Hann, *A History of Cathay*, 159-163.

⁶¹² *DMHD*, j. 170, 93; Ma, *Xingfu hami*, 208.

⁶¹³ Morris Rossabi, "The Ming and Inner Asia," in *From Yuan to Modern China and Mongolia: The Writings of Morris Rossabi*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 180-181, 185-186.

section, I will elaborate in detail how after Hami's annexation by the Moghul Khanate, the management of tribute missions and the translation of tribute documents were transferred to the *fuyi* officials, interpreters, and translators stationed in Suzhou and Ganzhou.

Beginning in 1465 or 1466, the Ming stipulated that Hami could pay tribute once a year, with entry into the Jiayu Pass permitted after verification in the eighth month of the year.⁶¹⁴ From 1473 to 1529, the Ming and the Moghul Khanate repeatedly contested control over Hami. During this period, the people of the Hami Guard, whether seeking refuge in Kuyu and Suzhou or briefly retaking Hami, continued to send tribute missions to the Ming court. In contrast, the city of Hami as a “territory” (Ch. *dimian* 地面) itself left no records of tribute, though this does not mean it never organized any tribute missions.

Evidence of Hami's tribute can be found in the *Ming shilu*. In 1476, Grand Secretary Shang Luo 商輅 (1414-1486) noted: “When foreigners from Hami and other regions come to the capital, they often bring jade. Many of them are lured by unscrupulous individuals to present it as tribute.”⁶¹⁵ In 1489, the Ministry of Rites reported: “Now, envoys from Turpan and Hami are both violating regulations by purchasing excessive amounts of consumable tea, fargesia,⁶¹⁶ and other goods.”⁶¹⁷ The following year, Ying Duke 英國公 Zhang Mao 張懋 (1441-1551) memorialized: “Recently, jade and other goods brought by foreigners from Hami and other states have been sold on credit by deceitful merchants, with payment long delayed.”⁶¹⁸ Although these records do not directly document the tribute mission from Hami or how the Ming court received it, they nonetheless indicate that Hami envoys did in fact pay tribute to Beijing. It is highly likely that these Hami envoys were identified as envoys of Turpan—that is, the Moghul Khanate—so that Ming sources did not record the Hami tribute mission as a distinct entity.

A clearer case is that of Muḥammad ‘Alī (Ch. Maheima Dali 馬黑麻打力), who was a “long-term resident of Hami” (Ch. *Hami jiuzhu zhi ren* 哈密久住之人) and had previously

⁶¹⁴ *DMHD*, j. 170, 93.

⁶¹⁵ “哈密等處番人來京，俱帶玉石，多被細人誘引進貢。” *MXZSL*, j. 155, 2831.

⁶¹⁶ Fargesia is a type of bamboo that can be used to make arrows.

⁶¹⁷ “今土魯番及哈密使者各違例收買食茶、箭竹等物過多。” *MXZSL*, j. 29, 661.

⁶¹⁸ “近哈密等國夷人帶來玉石等貨又為姦人賒賣，久不還價。” *Ibid.*, j. 35, 760.

been dispatched by Hanshen to present tribute in the capital. He “went on a mission to Turpan, defected and submitted. Soon after, he led the Turpan forces in an invasion, killed Hanshen, and seized the city [of Hami].”⁶¹⁹ In 1490, the Ministry of Rites stated: “The jade and other goods presented by Hami envoy Muḥammad ‘Alī and others often differ from the originally declared items.”⁶²⁰ The *Ming shilu* also accuses Muḥammad ‘Alī of “posing as a foreign envoy to pay tribute, then returning to collude with the people of Hami, submit to Turpan, and destroy his own country.”⁶²¹ Another envoy accompanying Muḥammad ‘Alī on the mission was Mollā Tūr, identified as “Hanshen’s father-in-law”. The *Ming shilu* condemns him as a “heartless, treacherous man who betrayed his lord and defied the principles of heaven”,⁶²² indicating that he too had defected to the Moghul Khanate and participated in Hanshen’s murder. The cases of Muḥammad ‘Alī and Mollā Tūr suggests that the envoys or merchants sent by Hami at the time were those who had already submitted to the Moghul Khanate.

After Khvāja Tāj al-Dīn took control of Hami in 1513, tributary affairs fell under his and his Sufi order’s authority. For Sufi orders, economic activities such as trade were of a central concern.⁶²³ Khvāja Tāj al-Dīn himself engaged in both commerce and agriculture, amassing considerable wealth through tributary trade and other ventures.⁶²⁴ In 1515, when the Moghul Khan Manṣūr sent a tribute mission, Khvāja Tāj al-Dīn dispatched his younger brother Khvāja Sājir to escort the mission to the Ming court.⁶²⁵ The following year, the Moghul Khanate sent a large delegation to the Ming, including 4 chief envoys, 4 deputy envoys and 33 *darqans* 打刺罕 from Turpan,⁶²⁶ 10 chief envoys, 10 deputy envoys, and 40 *darqans* from Hami, along with 2 chief envoys, 2 deputy envoys and 6 *darqans* responsible for escorting the Turpan

⁶¹⁹ “使土魯番，因叛附之。尋率番眾入寇，戕殺罕慎，奪據城池。” Ibid., j. 56, 1643.

⁶²⁰ “哈密等處貢使馬黑麻打力等所貢玉石等物，多與原報名色不同。” Ibid., j. 44, 896.

⁶²¹ “冒充番使入貢，歸則糾合哈密諸夷，投順土魯番，殘滅其國。” Ibid., j. 56, 1643.

⁶²² “忍心害理、忘主事讐、實逆天無道之人。” Ibid., j. 44, 896.

⁶²³ Mark J. Sedgwick, *Sufism: The Essentials* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 75-77.

⁶²⁴ *TIR*, 127.

⁶²⁵ Wang, *Jinxi benbin fuzou*, j. 6, 227; j. 7, 240.

⁶²⁶ “Darqan” is a title with a long history among steppe regimes. During the Yuan period, *darqan* was an honorific title for senior officials granting them tax breaks. During the Ming period, however, it became a low-level title for people with special skills or who served in lower status offices in the steppe. Nevertheless, in Central Asia, *darqan* was a certification sent to the merchant, while being a *darqan* “meant that one was freed from paying taxes on one’s own land and obtained a number of other advantages.” See *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 5, *Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, ed. Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003), 39-40; Zhang, *Chaogong yu guifu*, 93.

mission.⁶²⁷ Simultaneously entering the Ming border with this delegation was a group of 12 Hami envoys led by Commander Kh^vāja Maḥmūd, another brother of Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn and originally sent by Ming official Peng Ze 彭澤 (1459-1530) to “deliver imperial instructions, distribute rewards, and retrieve Hami’s city and seal.”⁶²⁸ In addition to the task sent by Peng Ze, Kh^vāja Maḥmūd was also described as a “Regional Military Commissioner and tribute envoy dispatched by Sultān Maṣṣūr”,⁶²⁹ which demonstrates his dual identity as a Ming official and Moghul envoy. The fact that Kh^vāja Maḥmūd was granted the Ming military rank of Regional Military Commissioner, identical to officials of the Hami Guard, and was entrusted with tasks by Peng Ze, further demonstrates that the Ming recognized the Hami regime led by Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn as the legitimate successor to Hami’s traditional privileges and was willing to cooperate with it.

In 1517, Ming officials discovered that a certain Maḥmūd (Ch. Maheimu 馬黑木), “a foreigner from the Hami Guard who was under arrest, fraudulently posed as an envoy from Samarkand, Mecca, and other states”.⁶³⁰ However, the record here is misleading since this Maḥmūd probably did not belong to the Hami Guard, which was already relocated to Suzhou by this time, but rather was a merchant from Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn’s Hami, since he had to come from outside the Jiayu Pass to pose as a Western Region envoy.

In 1523, “Kechun 可春 and others, the barbarian kings and commanders of Samarkand, Turpan and the Hami Guard, dispatched Mollā Nieshen (Ch. Manla Nieshen 滿刺捏慎 and others to present horses and local products as tribute.”⁶³¹ This record likely contains an error. As said, at this time, the Hami Guard had already migrated into Suzhou and its tribute records should not have been grouped with those of the Western Regions missions. The envoys accompanying the Samarkand and Turpan tribute missions were most likely from the city of Hami. This is corroborated by a later entry in the *Ming Shilu*: “A banquet was held for envoys from Samarkand and other regions, including Kh^vāja Muḥammad (Ch. Huozhe Maheima 火

⁶²⁷ Ibid., j. 6, 197.

⁶²⁸ “傳諭夷情、送賞撫、取城印。” Wang, *Wang qiong ji*, 42.

⁶²⁹ “速壇滿速兒差來進貢夷使都指揮。” Wang, *Jinxi benbin fuzou*, j. 6, 227.

⁶³⁰ “哈密衛在官夷人馬黑木詐充撒馬兒罕、天方國等項夷使。” Wang, *Jinxi benbin fuzou*, j. 7, 240-241.

⁶³¹ “撒馬兒罕并土魯番、哈密衛番王頭目可春等遣滿刺捏慎等來貢馬及方物。” *MSIZSL*, j. 33, 850.

者馬黑麻), Sayyid Aḥmad (Ch. Xieyida Heima 寫亦打黑麻), Mollā Nie (Ch. Manla Nie 滿刺捏), as well as the Turpan and Hami envoys, such as Sultān Ḥalīm (Ch. Sutan Huli 速壇虎力), totaling 134 individuals.”⁶³² The designation “Hami envoys” rather than “Hami Guard envoys” is the correct formulation. This also demonstrates the close relationship between the Turpan and Hami missions, which is why they were deliberately separated from those of Samarkand and other regions in the text.

The *Ming shilu* also notes that in 1526, “30 currently detained Hami barbarians such as Milisilan 米力思藍, 14 individuals such as Shīr Muḥammad (Ch. Shili Maheima 失里馬黑麻), along with 28 Turpan envoys such as Mollā ‘Abd Allāh (Ch. Manla Adula 滿刺阿都刺) and 22 Hami envoys such as *Bayandai (Ch. Baiyada 拜牙答), who had paid tribute but not yet returned, are all to be temporarily held and not dispatched until the intentions of the barbarians become clear.”⁶³³ This proves that there were also return Hami tribute envoys in 1526. This specific group of envoys was not allowed to pass through the Jiayu Pass until 1528.

In 1532, the tribute mission dispatched by Mīr Maḥmūd arrived at the capital.⁶³⁴ However, that same year, Hami was occupied by Manṣūr’s son Muḥammad. Faced with this, the Ming court could only acknowledge Hami’s annexation by the Moghul Khanate and decided to adjust Hami according to the precedent for Western Regions missions, setting its tribute frequency at once every five years, just as was the case for the others.⁶³⁵ The *Ming shilu* contains intermittent records of Hami’s tribute activities thereafter. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that Hami’s tribute missions occurred only during periods of relative political independence from the Moghul Khanate for its local rulers.

As discussed in the first section, Muḥammad occupied Hami from 1532 to 1559, contending with Shāh Khan. During this period, Hami paid tribute to the Ming in 1537, 1548, 1554 and 1559. From 1575 to 1583, Manṣūr’s descendants regained control of the Moghul

⁶³² “宴撤馬兒罕等地面夷使火者馬黑麻、寫亦打黑麻、滿刺捏等、土魯番并哈密夷使速壇虎力等一百三十四名。” Ibid., j. 34, 875.

⁶³³ “見監哈密夷人米力思藍等三十人、失里馬黑麻等十四人、并進貢未回土魯番滿刺阿都刺等二十八人、哈密拜牙答等二十二人、俱暫留勿遣、待虜情向背已定、然後處分。” Ibid., j. 63, 1463.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., j. 135, 3191.

⁶³⁵ *DMHD*, j. 170, 93; Yang Bo 楊博, *Yang bo zoushu ji* 楊博奏疏集, annotated by Zhang Zhijiang 張志江 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018), 17.

Khanate, establishing a separate polity from the Yarkand Khanate. During this period, Hami paid tribute in 1576 and 1581. From 1607/1608 to 1634/1635, when ‘Abd al-Raḥīm governed Hami and other eastern regions of the khanate, Hami paid tribute in 1618.

Among the aforementioned periods, detailed records survive for the tribute activities of 1554 and 1575. As discussed in the previous section, in 1554, Mollā Muḥammad, the “Hami Elder”, dispatched Mollā Kh^vāja Muḥammad (Ch. Manla Huozhe Maheima 滿刺火者馬黑麻) to pay tribute and request rewards on behalf of himself and sixteen other Hami commanders. Mollā Muḥammad sought “iron pots, garments, Korean cloth,⁶³⁶ *sansuo* cloth,⁶³⁷ tea, silk floss, woolen thread, medicinal pills, medicinal decoction bottles, tea jars, porcelain bowls, mutton carving platters, and other items,”⁶³⁸ while the other commanders, each sending envoys such as Khalīl Allāh 黑里倫刺, requested varying quantities of “gold-woven satin, tea, *sansuo* cloth, and woolen thread.”⁶³⁹ Facing these requests, the Ministry of Rites deliberated and claimed that the annual precedent allowed only one commander of the tribute mission and one commander of the escort mission to request the rewards. However, the petition memorial now lists seventeen names, among whom some seek one or two items per person, while others jointly request two or three items. Though each demand appears modest, the aggregate far exceeds previous quotas. The Ming court believed that if such a trend went unchecked by the Ministry, future missions may have exploited this precedent to make endless demands. As a result, the Ministry of Rites proposed the following: For the lead chieftain Mollā Muḥammad, the authorities were to maintain the previous year’s standard: two bolts of Korean cloth, thirty *jin* of fine tea, one set of *linglong* saddle ornament;⁶⁴⁰ for Shelanen and three others from Lapčuk: two bolts of Korean cloth each; for Pīr Dāryūsh Mīrzā and three others from Taš Balık: one set

⁶³⁶ “Korean cloth” refers to fine ramie fabric imported by the Ming from Korea through tribute missions and private trade. Renowned for its superior quality, it was often bestowed by Ming emperors as a gift to tributary envoys and civil or military officials. In the fifteenth century, one bolt of Korean cloth was worth approximately four to five *dou* 斗 of rice. See Sun Yumiao 孫雨苗, “Mingqing shiqi de ‘gaoli bu’ 明清時期的“高麗布”,” *Gudai wenming* 古代文明 17, no. 4 (2023): 134-138; Liu Yonglian 劉永連 and Liu Anqi 劉安琪, “Chaoxian chaogong shen kao 朝鮮朝貢參考,” *Dongjiang xuekan* 東疆學刊 37, no. 1 (2020): 60.

⁶³⁷ *Sansuo* cloth (Ch. *sansuo bu* 三梭布) is a kind of fine, densely woven ramie cloth produced in the Songjiang 松江 region.

⁶³⁸ “鐵鍋、衣服、高麗布、三梭布、茶葉、絲綿、絨線鞋、熱藥錠子、藥湯瓶茶、罐磁碗、割羊盤.” Zhang, *Mingyu tang gao*, j. 9, 587.

⁶³⁹ “金段子、茶葉、三梭布、絨線.” Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ “*Linglong* saddle ornament” (Ch. *linglong tie* 玲瓏鞋) was a kind of exquisite ornament for a saddle. The Chinese 玲瓏鞋 could also be read as *linglong die*, which is a type of belt adorned with hanging ornaments. Here, both possibilities exist.

of *linglong* saddle ornament each; for Yasīn Mīrzā and three others from Bir Hatun Tam: one *jin* of woolen thread each; for ‘Alī Mīrzā and three others from Chunnan: thirty *jin* of fine tea each.⁶⁴¹ This reveals that Hami’s tribute missions consistently comprised of two groups: tribute missions and escort missions. By regulation, only one commander per mission could submit reward petitions. In sum, the court augmented the standard two-commander quota while reaffirming the two-commander limit for future missions.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the items requested by Mollā Muḥammad and other commanders—primarily culinary utensils, medical tools, clothing, and tea—reflect Hami’s material dependence on the Ming. Their particular demand for “Korean cloth” (Ch. *gaoli bu* 高麗布) further exemplifies the circulation of both material goods and their reputation across Eurasia under the influence of the Ming tributary system.

We also have detailed records about the 1575 tribute mission:

The four regions of Turpan, Mecca, Samarkand, and Rum sent 250 permitted envoys, each presenting one horse, plus four horses on behalf of the barbarian king, totaling 254 horses, along with 400 knives and files, with other goods unrestricted. Hami sent 40 escort envoys and 80 regular tribute envoys, totaling 120, presenting 121 horses for themselves and their ruler. The five regions thus sent 370 envoys and 375 horses... Later, an additional 47 Hami tribute envoys, including Mawlānā and Kh’āja ‘Abd al-Vāhid, arrived separately due to disruptions by the Mongols.

土魯番、天方國、撒馬兒罕、魯迷四地面，准貢夷使二百五十名，每名自進馬一匹，并帶進番王馬四匹，共馬二百五十四匹，刀鏗各四百把，餘物無拘。哈密伴送夷使四十名，年例進貢夷使八十名，共一百二十名，自進并帶進馬共一百二十一匹。五地面共該夷使三百七十名，馬共三百七十五匹……續來哈密進貢夷使卯刺納、火者阿都瓦黑等四十七名……因達虜驚擾，未得一同前來。⁶⁴²

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 588.

⁶⁴² Shi, *Yi’an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 37b, 39a.

These Hami missions were again dispatched by the “Hami Elder” Mollā Muḥammad. They arrived at different times, suggesting that they departed from different locations, likely the other four cities under the rule of Hami as mentioned before, and thus represented not only the interests of the “Hami Elder” but also those of the sixteen commanders from the four cities mentioned earlier. Moreover, the names of those envoys indicate they were members of the “Hami Order”.⁶⁴³ The Mongols who disrupted the mission belonged to the Mongols of the Right Wing, which will be analyzed in detail in the fourth section.

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that in addition to presenting tribute, Hami consistently fulfilled its role in escorting missions from the Western Regions.⁶⁴⁴ As recorded in a 1532 memorial by Xia Yan 夏言 (1482-1548), the Minister of Rites: “Now that the Prince of Zhongshun has long been left without investiture, Hami merely follows the escort protocol by dispatching personnel to accompany foreign envoys when they arrive.”⁶⁴⁵ He also stated: “Tribute missions from Turpan and other regions are only permitted to come jointly with Hami at designated times.”⁶⁴⁶ This demonstrates that the Ming maintained cooperative relations with Hami, and that Hami’s escort role served as an important criterion for verifying the legitimacy of tribute missions.

According to the *Ming shilu*, in 1586, “46 envoys from Turpan and four other regions, led by Shaykh Yāsir (Ch. Shayiheī Yasi 沙亦黑牙思), along with 12 Hami escorts, including Maideke 買得克, and twelve others, including ‘Abd al-Vāhid (Ch. Adu Wahei 阿都瓦黑), came to the capital to present tribute and received banquets and rewards as customary.”⁶⁴⁷ This indicates that Hami escorts entering the capital were also eligible for rewards from the Ming court.

Tribute missions and their escorts frequently engaged in illegal trade with Han Chinese during their journey to the capital, activities that were likely organized well beforehand. The

⁶⁴³ Shi, *Yi’an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 39a, 41b.

⁶⁴⁴ Additionally, the *Ming shilu* notes a tribute mission from the “Five Western Regions” in 1627, which likely included Hami. The *Ming shi* further records a Hami tribute in 1643 or early 1644. These records fall outside this study’s temporal scope and are thus not discussed here. *MIXZSL*, j. 86, 4171; *MDHM*, 366.

⁶⁴⁵ “今忠順王年久缺封，哈密止照伴送之例遇夷使到日，差人伴送。” Xia, *Guizhou zouyi*, j. 11, 38b-39a.

⁶⁴⁶ “其土魯番等處來貢，止許與哈密依時同來。” *Ibid.*, j. 12, 18a-b.

⁶⁴⁷ “土魯番等五地面夷使頭目大者沙亦黑牙思等四十六名，哈密伴送買得克等一十二名、阿都瓦黑等一十二名，各赴京進貢，宴賞如例。” *MSZSL*, j. 178, 3327.

1554 mission dispatched by the “Hami Elder” Mollā Muḥammad ultimately saw nine tribute envoys and six escorts, two each for Turpan and Rum missions and one each for Mecca and Samarkand missions, granted entry to the capital.⁶⁴⁸ Their illegal trade was recorded:

In the thirty-fourth year of Jiajing (1555 or 1556), Case File on Illegal Activity. Interrogation of: Liu Jingchun, aged 60, a commoner of Jingzhao li, Changan County, Xian Prefecture, currently residing in the provincial capital. Confession: In the eleventh month of the thirty-second year of Jiajing (1553), twenty-six envoys from Turpan and other regions, including Muḥammad Shadi, Manquan and Xianding, and five Hami escorts, including Kh^vāja ‘Alī, passed through the provincial capital on their way to present tribute. While lodging at Jingzhao Post Station, Jingchun and others unlawfully colluded with the envoys to trade tea, incense, and furs. At that time, Muḥammad Shadi and others gave Jingchun six taels of silver for two jin of musk and twenty otter pelts, while Manquan and others gave thirty taels to La Daqi for twelve and a half jin of musk... agreeing to settle the transaction upon their return. Jingchun, along with Gao Luan, La Daqi and Ma Yan, Hua En, further negotiated with the envoys to purchase additional goods...

嘉靖叁拾肆年。壹起違法事。壹問得。壹名劉景春，年陸拾歲，西安府長安縣京兆里民，見在省城居住。狀招：嘉靖叁拾貳年拾壹月內，土魯番等地面夷使馬黑麻沙的、滿全、鮮定等貳拾陸名，并哈密伴送夷使火者阿力（P. Khvāja ‘Alī）等伍名，赴京進貢，經過省城，在於京兆驛支應間，景春等各不合約，通各夷易買茶香、皮貨。彼時，馬黑麻沙的等，將銀陸兩，與景春作麝香貳斤、水獺皮貳拾張，滿全等，銀叁拾兩與刺大其，作麝香壹拾貳斤半，憑高鸞□□□，待候回還取要。景春又同高鸞、刺大其、馬彥花恩，與各夷言定，再買（後缺）。⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁸ Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 40a.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ming Jiajing zhong anjuan* 明嘉靖中案卷 (Tōkyō: Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Ming period (1368-1644)), 875.

Notably, the Han Chinese involved in this trade were residents of Jingzhao *li* in Xi'an. The *Huihui guan zazi* 回回館雜字 transliterates “Shaanxi” as “kinjānfū” in Persian, while the *Weiwu'er guan yiyu* 畏兀兒館譯語 gives “kinčañfu” in Old Uyghur, both words being phonetic renderings of “Jingzhao Prefecture” (the former name of Xi'an Prefecture).⁶⁵⁰ This likely reflects that the Muslim and Turkic tribute envoys from the Western Regions primarily communicated with the Han residents of Jingzhao, the very people engaged in illegal trade with them.

4.3 *Fuyi* officials' duty

After the loss of Hami, the Ming state was compelled to recruit officials within its borders to handle the translation of tributary memorials, along with the management and escorting of foreign envoys. As mentioned in Section 3.2.1, in 1475, Gansu Grand Coordinator Zhu Ying repaired the previously abandoned foreign guesthouse inside Ganzhou and recruited officials, interpreters and translators to receive tribute envoys.⁶⁵¹ Simultaneously, the *fuyi* officials were recruited in Suzhou (including around the Jiayu Pass), Ganzhou, and other locations. These officials were responsible for inspecting, receiving, and escorting tribute envoys, as well as supervising and managing the envoys and their families who resided in these areas.⁶⁵²

A 1575 source reflects the entire process by which these *fuyi* officials received tribute missions, while also revealing their position and role within the administrative system: When a tribute mission arrived at the Jiayu Pass, the Chinese authorities under the supervision of the Gansu Surveillance Vice Commissioner, the Suzhou Assistant Commander and the Supervising Officer (Ch. *dusi* 都司)—the Assistant Prefect (Ch. *tongpan* 通判), the Seal-Holding Officer (Ch. *zhangyin guan* 掌印官), the Suzhou Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs and the Municipal Military Commander—inspected and admitted the envoys along with their horses and tribute goods into the pass. Subsequently, the officials jointly recorded the number of envoys to be sent to the capital and the tribute goods to be presented, compiled detailed

⁶⁵⁰ Shōgaito, “Uiguru-kan yakugo,” 119; Liu, “*Huihui guan zazi*” *yu* “*Huihui guan yiyu*” *yanjiu*, 65.

⁶⁵¹ *MXZSL*, j. 141, 2624.

⁶⁵² *MXZSL*, j. 89, 1643.

registers and dispatched accompanying officials. The Auxiliary Shaanxi Regional Military Commission (Ch. *Shanxi xing dushi* 陝西行都司) then determined the number of envoys to proceed to the capital, while the rest were detained at the border to await rewards and were accommodated in Suzhou and Ganzhou.⁶⁵³ Among them, the envoys assigned to Ganzhou were handed over to the Ganzhou Supervising Officer in Charge of Seal-Holding and Pacification (Ch. *ganzhou wei zhangyin jian fuyi dushi* 甘州衛掌印兼撫夷都司), who collaborated with the Xining Surveillance Vice Commissioner (Ch. *fenxun xining dao* 分巡西寧道) to manage their affairs. Additionally, the Seal-Holding Officer and the Suzhou Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs were responsible for translating the tribute documents submitted by the envoys and forwarding them according to established procedures to the Regional Commander.⁶⁵⁴ In this process, two *fuyi* officials—the Suzhou Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs and the Ganzhou Supervising Officer in Charge of Seal-Holding and Pacification—were directly engaged in communication, interaction, and translation with the envoys, serving as the primary executors of administrative duties.

Beyond the standard procedures for receiving tribute missions, the *fuyi* officials were also responsible for handling various affairs related to Western Regions missions and envoys, wielding considerable authority and initiative. In the following section, this dissertation examines the origins, duties and specific activities of *fuyi* officials through the examples of Hājjī Ḥasan, (already mentioned in Section 3.2) Mani Bulat (Ch. Mani Bulat 馬你卜剌) and Mei Ji 梅濟.

Most of the *fuyi* officials were recruited from Hami officials who had already submitted to Ming authority. Hājjī Ḥasan serves as a vivid example. As a Hami exile who defected to the Ming, he was appointed as a Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification. Around 1493, he received envoys from the Moghul Khanate, including Sara Baš (Ch. Sala Bashi 撒剌把失) and Kh^vāja Muḥammad (Ch. Huozhe Maheima 火者馬黑麻).⁶⁵⁵ Driven by resentment over the Moghul Khanate's annexation of Hami, Hājjī Ḥasan treated these envoys harshly, prompting

⁶⁵³ Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 9, 41b-42a.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 37a-44b.

⁶⁵⁵ Sara Baš was either transliterated into “撒剌把失” or “撒剌巴失”, see *MXIZSL*, j. 74, 1380.

their complaints to the Ming court that: “Hājī Hāsan and others falsely claimed provisions meant for the envoys, left them starving and forced them to flee. When pursued, some were killed, and their possessions were seized through deception multiple times.”⁶⁵⁶ However, Hājī Hāsan faced no punishment and retained his post.⁶⁵⁷

After the Ming briefly recaptured Hami in 1499, Hājī Hāsan returned to Hami as a Hami Battalion Commander.⁶⁵⁸ Alongside other *fuyi* officials, he escorted the Prince of Zhongshun and other Ming-affiliated Hami exiles back to Hami.⁶⁵⁹ In 1504, when internal strife erupted in Hami and *Šamba fled to Kuyu, the Ming dispatched Hājī Hāsan, then titled Battalion Commander in Charge of the Barbarian Soldiers,⁶⁶⁰ along with the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification Dong Jie and Hami Guard leaders to escort *Šamba back to Hami and execute the rebels.⁶⁶¹ Historical records do not document his activities thereafter.

Mani Bulat was a Uyghur descendant of the Hami Guard officials who had submitted to Ming authority and resettled in Suzhou, who will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Here, this dissertation mainly focuses on his activities of receiving tribute missions. In the early Wanli period, Mani Bulat served as a Barbarian Commander (Ch. *fan guan Zhihui* 番官指揮).⁶⁶² As a Buddhist monk proficient in Central Asian illusionism, such as sword-swallowing, fire-breathing, and Tibetan esoteric practices, he gained favor among Mongol tribal leaders and Ming officials.⁶⁶³ Around 1579, he adopted the Chinese name Ma Yingshi 馬應時 and became a *fuyi* official. In 1587, he was promoted to the position of Suzhou Right Assistant Commander,⁶⁶⁴ assuming responsibility for managing Suzhou’s tribute affairs.

In 1588, Qolači (Ch. Huoluochi 火落赤), a leader of the Tümed Mongols, led his forces to camp outside the Jiayu Pass with intentions to attack the Oirats and plunder tribute

⁶⁵⁶ *MXZSL*, j. 69, 1311.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁸ *MXZSL*, j. 167, 3030.

⁶⁵⁹ Ma, *Xingfu hami*, 211.

⁶⁶⁰ *MWZSL*, j. 10, 309; *MDHM*, 395.

⁶⁶¹ *MDHM*, 424.

⁶⁶² Wang Chonggu 王崇古, *Shaobao jianchuan wang gong dufu zouyi* 少保鑒川王公督府奏議, ed. Zhang Zhijiang 張志江, in *Shanyou congshu* 山右叢書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2021), vol.3, j. 10, 398.

⁶⁶³ Lu Xingyu 陸星宇, “‘Taohe zhi bian’yu ‘longqing heyi’ hou neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe “洮河之變”與“隆慶和議”後內亞諸勢力的重新整合,” *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, no. 46(2023), 135-136.

⁶⁶⁴ *MSZSL*, j. 190, 3673.

missions.⁶⁶⁵ Subsequently, a Western Regions tribute mission comprising thirty men including *Mu'min (Ch. Moming 莫明), who might be the leader of the mission, broke through the blockade with Oirat assistance and successfully reached Suzhou. To curry favor with Qolači, Ma Yingshi ordered the mission to trade with Qolači, exchanging one hundred horses and one thousand head of cattle and sheep.⁶⁶⁶ This demonstrates the considerable control *fuyi* officials exercised over tribute missions.

The third example, Mei Ji, the Suzhou Commander in Charge of Pacification, bore a Chinese name but likely had non-Han ethnic origin. He served for many years in Suzhou and Jiayu Pass, receiving tribute envoys. In 1574, at Jiayu Pass, he received Turpan's tribute envoys, interrogated the envoys and had their memorials translated by the translator Pīr Muḥammad. After sealing and storing the memorials, he inspected and admitted the envoys, their horses and their goods, settled them in the district for foreigners, and assigned troops for their supervision.⁶⁶⁷ Later, together with other unnamed *fuyi* officials and envoys, he negotiated with Muslim envoys to determine the number of envoys proceeding to the capital.⁶⁶⁸ He also participated in Suzhou's city wall repairs and received commendations.⁶⁶⁹ In 1589, Mei Ji still served as the Suzhou Commander in Charge of Barbarian Affairs, examining the testimonies of envoys sent by the "Hami Elder" Maduli.⁶⁷⁰

Overall, the three examples above demonstrate the prominent role of the *fuyi* officials in receiving the Western Regions missions and communicating with foreign envoys. With their assistance, the Ming establish a new approach to manage the Western Regions tributary affairs, thereby reestablishing the tributary system in the Western Regions after the loss of Hami. By shifting from reliance on the autonomous Hami regime to appointing *fuyi* officials in Suzhou, the Ming also took a more proactive role in managing relations with various powers in the Western Regions.

⁶⁶⁵ Temule 特木勒, "Yuejing yu jiaotong: mingmeng jiaoseh renwu shiji kaoshu 越境與交通——明蒙交涉人物事蹟考述," *Qinghua yuanshi* 清華元史, no. 5 (2020): 317.

⁶⁶⁶ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 176-177.

⁶⁶⁷ Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 6, 46b, 48a, 49b, j.9, 39a.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, j. 6, 51a-b.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 73b-74b.

⁶⁷⁰ Cui, "Chushu gao," vol. 3, 10.

4.4 Intelligence exchanges between Hami and the Ming

After the Ming's decision to abandon Hami in 1529, no further military conflicts occurred between the Ming and Hami. Instead, owing to Hami's strategic location, the Ming frequently engaged in military intelligence exchanges with Hami, hoping it could serve as a check against the Mongols of the Right Wing of Southern Mongolia and the Oirats.

During the Jiajing period (1522–1566), the Mongols of the Right Wing, mainly the Tümed and Ordos Mongols—the most powerful force in Inner Asia during the late Ming period—began expanding westward, invading Oirat territories.⁶⁷¹ Due to Inner Asian geography, these campaigns required the Mongols of the Right Wing to depart from northern Gansu, pass through Hami, and then turn northward across the mountains located in the north of Hami (recorded in Mongolian sources as Ĵalaman Qan or referred to by the name of Lake “Bars Köl” within the mountain),⁶⁷² before reaching Oirat grazing lands. Consequently, maintaining friendly relations with the Moghul forces controlling Hami to ensure unimpeded passage along this expedition route became a critical factor in the success of the Mongols of the Right Wing's western campaigns.

With this objective in mind, in the late Jiajing period, Altan Khan of the Tümed sent envoys to Shāh Khan of the Moghul Khanate, “recounting ancient legends and the kinship ties between their lineages since the time of his ancestor Čayatai”. Shāh Khan was “greatly pleased and presented him with *aryumay* horses and jewels as tribute”.⁶⁷³ According to a source dating to 1572, Sečen Qung Tayiji (1540–1586) of the Ordos Mongol also established friendly relations with the “Hami elder” Mollā Muḥammad:

Although Sečen Qung Tayiji and other Mongol chieftains counted no less than several thousands, and they often claimed to lead tens of thousands. Reports indicate that during

⁶⁷¹ For an introduction to the expedition of the Mongols of the Right Wing to the Oirat, see Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, “Anda han zheng weilate shishi 俺答汗征衛拉特史實,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), no. 4 (1983): 25-37; Qinggeli 青格力, “Si weilate lianmeng de xingcheng 四衛拉特聯盟的形成,” *Ouya xuekan* 歐亞學刊, no. 6 (2007): 247-249.

⁶⁷² Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 54, 127; Elverskog, 108; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 266; Ulayan, “*Menggu yuanliu*” yanjiu, 779, 764; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 141.

⁶⁷³ *Aryumay* denotes a kind of “fine, larger horses from the West,” see Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 55; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 110.

their incursions against the Oirats, several chieftains were killed by the various barbarians, with casualties likely numbering in the thousands. Recently, they have been lurking near the Jiayu Pass frontier, cultivating alliances with the Hami chieftain Muhammad [Muhen 母恨] while simultaneously rallying the Prince of Shunyi [顺义王, the Altan Khan's title] and other Ordos leaders to launch large-scale raids against the Oirats.

切盡諸酋雖不下數千人，而所統領動稱數萬。頗聞出寇瓦剌，各番夷殺死酋長數人，兵馬物故者亡慮數千人。頃者，潛伏加峪關外邊，而與哈密酋長母恨等（給）〔結〕歡，而複鳩順義王及河套諸部酋會集，以大搶瓦剌為務。⁶⁷⁴

During this period, despite the Ming and the Mongols of the Right Wing reaching the Longqing Peace Treaty, conflicts persisted along the frontier as Mongol forces frequently traversed Gansu for western campaigns, sometimes raiding Ming territory. To counter this, Ming officials established communication with Hami to monitor and obstruct Mongol westward movements.

In 1578, Altan Khan used his journey to Qinghai to meet the Third Dalai Lama as a cover to attack the Oirats. As a reaction, the Shaanxi Supreme Commander Gao Guangxian 鄧光先 (1534-1589) sought assistance from the “Hami Elder” to halt the Mongol campaign:

It is true that the tribes have repeatedly dispatched scouting parties to probe the Oirats, maintaining constant movement as they seek alliances with Hami to secure passage. Under the Governor's directive, our office secretly dispatched envoys to the one who garrisoned Hami to sow discord... The Prince of Shunyi's letters profess a desire to reconcile with Hami and borrow its route to avenge themselves upon the Oirats. Should such deceitful schemes succeed, when will the Hexi Corridor ever know peace? Our office has reported to the Grand Secretariat, proposing coordinated military measures to forcefully prevent this. Yet for these tribes, revenge remains their paramount strategy. We have therefore

⁶⁷⁴ WLWGL, j. 14, 371.

covertly rewarded a Muslim formerly attached to the Mongol camps to serve as a spy, secretly relaying messages to the Hami Elder who garrisoned the territory, explaining the stakes to thwart these plans and requesting him to obstruct (the Mongols) quietly.

果有諸部落屢差驍騎，窺視瓦剌，往來不斷，及欲結好哈密，以圖假道。該本道蒙督撫示諭，密遣人於哈密守土者以離間之……順義書稱欲求和哈密，假道復仇瓦剌。譎圖得肆，河西尚有息肩期邪？該職揭報閣部，示以會同軍門，當為力止，但諸部落復仇，以此為上策。乃先陰犒原在虜帳回夷，借為間諜，密傳哈密守土老人，諭以利害，默為禁遏。⁶⁷⁵

While many Muslims from Central Asia resided in Ganzhou and Suzhou, making direct Ming–Hami communication theoretically straightforward, the Mongols of the Right Wing’s occupation of grazing lands between Hami and the Jiayu Pass had severed this link.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, employing the “Muslim formerly attached to the Mongol camps”, who was likely a merchant familiar with the Mongols, as an intermediary became a pragmatic solution. Beyond Hami, the Ming also leaked intelligence to the Oirats, ultimately contributing to the Mongols’ disastrous defeat during their campaign against the Oirats in 1578.⁶⁷⁷

Thereafter, as the Mongols of the Right Wing frequently plundered tribute missions, Hami severed ties with them and allied with the Oirats to launch counterattacks.⁶⁷⁸ In 1589, the third Prince of Shunyi Čürüge (Ch. Chelike 扯力克, ?-1607) and his wife Erketü Qatun (known as the “Third Wife” (Ch. *san niangzi* 三娘子) in Chinese sources, 1550-1612) lingered in Gansu, intending to attack the Oirats and raid Tibetan tribes. At that time, the Ming received intelligence from the “Hami Elder” Maduli:

⁶⁷⁵ *HMJLSC*, 145, 148.

⁶⁷⁶ At the time, the Mongols had already occupied the vital nodes along the Ming–Hami transportation route, such as Čikin Lake and the Shule River, see Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 133.

⁶⁷⁷ See Temule 特木勒, “Mingdai zhongguo yu neilu yazhou: yi 16 shiji mingchao-wala guanxi wei Zhongxin 明代中國與內陸亞洲——以 16 世紀明朝—瓦剌關係為重心,” *Menggu shi yanjiu* 蒙古史研究, no. 11 (2013): 121.

⁶⁷⁸ See Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 129-137.

On the twenty-first day of October this year, according to a report from Cha Yong, the Jiayu Pass Municipal Military Commander: At dawn, scout Zhu Youcai from Shiguan'er reported that three Muslim envoys riding unburdened horses arrived from the north near Xinyushu Spring, heading toward the pass. The envoys were brought outside the western gate, where interpreters questioned them. They identified themselves as Ḥāfīz and others, sent by the Hami Elder Maduli to deliver urgent military intelligence to the Surveillance Vice Commissioner and the Assistant Commander: "The Oirats have gathered a massive force to raid the Ordos Mongols. Their vanguard of over 1,000 men has already reached the northern mountains of Hami, with the main army following. Once assembled, they will attack. On the fourteenth, Maduli prepared a memorial in barbarian script and sent us three riders with four horses and light baggage to deliver this intelligence. However, at Lake Bohesi, we encountered several Mongol tents at night. In panic, we abandoned our baggage and the original memorial, fleeing here to report... The Oirats demanded our muslims join their raid and we came ahead to inform you."

本年十月二十一日，據嘉峪關守備查勇塘報，本日寅時，據石關兒夜不收朱友才報稱：從北新榆樹泉地方，前來騎空馬回夷三名，奔關行走。當被各夷到於西門外，令通事審得來夷名叫哈非子等。供系哈密老人馬都力差來，在兵參老爺處報事的人。如今黃毛達子收拾了多多人馬，要來搶殺套達子，頭哨人馬已到哈密北山狸屯歇，後邊陸續行走，還未到齊，待等齊了，務要前來搶殺。馬都力於本月十四日具了番文，差我三個人騎了四匹馬，帶了不多些行李，前來稟報。行至鉢和寺湖，夜晚撞著幾頂達子帳房，我們慌了，將行李並原拿番文盡行丟了，逃命前來……供稱：黃毛達子頭哨有一千多先到哈密了，後頭大眾人馬陸續來了，叫我們回子同他來搶套裏達子，今我先來通報等情。⁶⁷⁹

The envoy Ḥāfīz, dispatched by Maduli, was clearly a member of the "Hami Order". The communication between the Ming and Hami likely occurred in either Persian or Uyghur,

⁶⁷⁹ Cui, "Chushu gao," vol. 2, 10.

facilitated by Suzhou's *fuyi* officials, interpreters and translators who were originally from the Hami Guard and thus fluent in these languages.⁶⁸⁰ The remarkable speed of the envoy's journey, covering the distance in just seven days compared to the usual nine to fourteen days for tribute missions,⁶⁸¹ more than one month for a captive,⁶⁸² and forty-eight days for major army,⁶⁸³ demonstrates the urgency of the intelligence being conveyed. Their dangerous encounter with Mongol tents along the way confirmed the Mongols of the Right Wing's control beyond the Jiayu Pass, underscoring the need to use Muslim intermediaries familiar with Mongol camps to maintain Ming–Hami communication.

This coordinated Oirat offensive, which involved not just Hami but also Ming-aligned merchants and local elites, successfully pressured Čürüge to redirect his forces toward Qinghai. The subsequent Taohe crisis resulted in heavy casualties and led to Ming restrictions on Mongol westward movements, significantly reducing conflicts in the region.⁶⁸⁴ By 1605, the political landscape shifted decisively when the “Hami Order” fell and ‘Abd al-Raḥīm and the Black Mountain faction took control. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm's strategy focused on claiming the Yarkand Khanate throne, thus leading to sustained peaceful relations with both Ming China and the Oirats.⁶⁸⁵

4.5 Conclusion

Although Hami was annexed by the Moghul Khanate in the early sixteenth century, Hami's administrative affairs, including tributary missions and escort duties, were managed by local Hami leaders who were not members of the Golden Clan. In 1513, the Sufi order of Kh^vāja Tāj

⁶⁸⁰ Most of the Western Region missions used Persian to communicate with the Ming while some documents were written in “Gaochang Language in Muslim script 高昌話回回字,” namely Chaghatay. Liu Yingsheng suggests that the Chaghatay documents would have required the cooperation of Persian and Uyghur translators to be understood. Nevertheless, in Suzhou, the *fuyi* official, interpreter or translator originating from Hami could accomplish this mission alone. Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝, *Huayan yu fanyin: zhonggu shidai houqi dongxi jiaoliu de yuyan qiaoliang* 華言與蕃音：中古時代後期東西交流的語言橋樑 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), 80–84.

⁶⁸¹ Wang, *Wang qiong ji*, 33; Matteo Ricci, *China in the sixteenth century: the journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), 513. The early Ming period mission of Chen Cheng 陳誠 took 26 days to travel from Suzhou to Hami, while the mission of the Timurid ruler Shāhrukh took 25 days. See Yang Linkun 楊林坤, *Xifeng wanli jiao hedao: mingdai xiyu sichou zhi lu shang de shizhe he shanglü yanjiu* 西風萬曆交河道——明代西域絲綢之路上的使者和商旅研究 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 2014), 31.

⁶⁸² Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, 439–440.

⁶⁸³ *MDHM*, 414.

⁶⁸⁴ See Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 137–144.

⁶⁸⁵ Wei, *Ye'erqiang hanguo shigang*, 136.

al-Dīn took control of Hami, collaborating with local Hami leaders—Sayyid Ḥusayn and Mollā Ḥasan—to govern the city. In 1525, Kh^vāja Tāj al-Dīn was shot and killed by Ming troops, with the rule of Hami being transferred to Yaglakır, who surrendered to the Ming in 1528. Afterwards, authority over Hami was passed to the Commissioner Mīr Maḥmūd of the Hami Guard. In 1532, Muḥammad seized control of Hami. Thereafter, Hami came under the control of the Hami Elder, who combined religious authority with tributary rights. The Hami Elder was not only the leader of local religious groups but also was a descendant of former Hami Guard officials. His control over Hami lasted until the end of the sixteenth century, after which the city was occupied by the Yarkand Khan Muḥammad and the Naqshbandī order.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Hami consistently held the rights to tributary missions and escort duties. After 1532, Hami's tribute frequency changed from annual to once every five years, the same as Turpan and other regions. Each Hami mission consisted of two groups: one for tribute and one for escort. Both groups were allowed to submit one document and request rewards for one leader respectively. Tributary missions from Turpan and other Western Regions were only recognized as legitimate by the Ming if they were escorted by Hami envoys.

To manage and receive tributary missions, as well as to translate the documents they brought, the Ming recruited submitted Hami Guard officials as *fuyi* officials, interpreters, and translators. The *fuyi* officials exerted strong control over the tributary missions, often bullying the missions and profiting from them.

Morris Rossabi argues that the Ming allowed Turpan and Hami to continue their tributary missions because the Ming coveted their products and could obtain economic and military intelligence from the missions.⁶⁸⁶ This dissertation, furthermore, shows that the Ming permitted the Moghul Khanate to continue its tributary privilege as a means of trading economic benefits for peace in the northwestern frontier. The intelligence exchange between the Ming and Hami was indeed crucial for the Ming, enabling it to mediate between the Oirats, Mongol, and Moghul Khanate, thereby effectively mitigating conflicts in the northwestern frontier.

⁶⁸⁶ Morris Rossabi, "Ming China and Turpan, 1406-1517," in *From Yuan to Modern China and Mongolia: The Writings of Morris Rossabi*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 55.

In summary, for most of the sixteenth century, Hami's tributary and escort activities were still managed by the former Hami Guard leaders and their descendants. On the Ming side, the reception of tributary missions was also handled by *fuyi* officials, interpreters, and translators originating from the Hami Guard which had submitted to the Ming. Thus, the tributary affairs and information exchange between Hami and the Ming were processed through communication and coordination among former Hami Guard officials. In this way, after the fall of Hami, the Ming reconstructed the Western Regions' tributary system and the intelligence exchange network between the Ming and Hami.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁷ In this chapter, the dissertation primarily focuses on the political, economic, and military exchanges between Hami and the Ming in the sixteenth century. Regarding other aspects of Ming-Hami interactions, sources are even scarcer. Hoong Teik Toh discovered that Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 recorded a Buddhist monk who traveled from Hami to China, demonstrating that personnel and religious exchanges between the Ming and Hami persisted even after the crisis of Hami. See Hoong Teik Toh, "Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2004), 218.

Chapter 5: The Rising Influence of the “*Fuyi* System”: Peace Negotiations with the Qinghai Mongols

Although the *fuyi* system failed to repel the invasion by the Moghul Khanate, it had already demonstrated significant benefits to the various ethnic groups situated between the Ming and powerful Inner Asia forces. These groups not only gained access to commercial privileges from the Ming but could also seek military protection. As a result, the influence of the *fuyi* system rapidly extended across Inner Asia. This chapter changes the focus from the Ming state itself to the frontier groups between the Ming and the powerful Inner Asian forces (i.e. the Moghul Khanate, the Oirats, etc.), exemplifying their choice between joining the *fuyi* system or allying with various Inner Asian forces.

The Qinghai Mongols discussed in this dissertation were a complex ethnic-territorial entity that included Mongols, Oirats and Mekrins and was led by Ibarai (= Ch. Yibulai 亦不剌 < P. Ibrāhīm) and Burqai (= Ch. Burqai 卜兒孩 < P. Burhān). The group was formally established when Ibarai led his followers to occupy Qinghai in 1509. In the next 50 years, it faced invasions of the Moghul Khanate, the Oirats and the Mongols led by Dayan Khan.⁶⁸⁸ To survive the situation, they sought to establish marital alliances with the groups already under the *fuyi* system while repeatedly sending envoys to the Ming to request joining the *fuyi* system. In response, several *fuyi* officials were then dispatched to negotiate the terms of the Qinghai Mongols' submission. Although the Qinghai Mongols were gradually conquered by the Eastern Mongols just before they had finished their negotiations with the Ming in 1524 and 1532, their example shows the growing reputation and rising prestige of the *fuyi* system outside of Ming domains.

5.1 The rise of the Ibarai group

The core component of the Qinghai Mongols was the Mekrin tribe, whose rulership changed from Begersen (= Ch. Beijiasilan 衮加思蘭 < OU. Bäg Arslan) to Isman, then to Ibarai. The

⁶⁸⁸ Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, “Dayan Khan as a Yuan Emperor: The Political Legitimacy in 15th Century Mongolia,” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, no. 81 (1994): 52-53. Cai Meibiao argues that Dayan is not a transliteration of Chinese *dayuan*, but a Mongolian word means “entire country,” see Cai, “Mingdai menggu yu dayuan guohao,” 468-472.

Mekrin tribe had been nomadic in the area north of Hami since the Yuan period.⁶⁸⁹ Parts of this tribe were subject to Hami and the Moghul Khanate respectively,⁶⁹⁰ while another part lived adjacent to the Oirats and was often regarded as an Oirat tribe.⁶⁹¹ In the mid-fifteenth century, Begersen plundered the residents, herders, and tributary missions in the Turpan and Hami areas, gradually conquering or recruiting various groups of the Oirats, Hami, Čikin, and Handong, and increasingly becoming a powerful force in the northern mountains of the region of Hami.⁶⁹² During the Tianshun 天順 period (1457-1465), Begersen once submitted to the Ming, at least nominally, while the Ming dispatched envoys to bestow on him an imperial edict to acknowledge his status as a Ming official and reward him and his tribe.⁶⁹³ However, apart from one instance in 1460, when he submitted a memorial to the Ming requesting clothing and large pots and gained approval, no further interactions between him and the Ming were recorded.⁶⁹⁴ In 1470, he led his followers into the Hetao region, incorporated local tribes, and eventually became the ruler of the Yüngšiyebü Tümen.⁶⁹⁵

Begersen was killed by Isman (~ Mo. Ismal⁶⁹⁶ = Ch. Yisimayin 亦思馬因 < P. 'Ismā'il) in 1479.⁶⁹⁷ Regarding Isman's identity, the *Ming shilu* refers to him as a younger cousin of Begersen, which would also make him a member of the Mekrin tribe. However, the same source also identifies him as a son of Moliqai 毛里孩, the Mongol Taiši and leader of the Ongliyud Yeke Tümen,⁶⁹⁸ which would make him a member of the Ongliyud Tümen.⁶⁹⁹ A possible

⁶⁸⁹ Temule, "Yuanming shiqi mekrin," 83-86. For the history of the Mekrin before the Ming period, see Henry Serruys, "A Note on the 'Wild Mekrid,'" *Monumenta Serica* 22, no. 2 (1963): 434-45; Wada Sei 和田清, *Mingdai menggu shi lunji* 明代蒙古史論集, trans. Pan Shixian 潘世憲 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2014), 707-715. Jürungy-a suggests that this tribe of "Miekeli 乜克力" was not the Mekrin but the Onigur, see Jürungy-a 珠榮噶, "'Ye miekeli' shi: jian yu hetianqing boshi de mekrin shuo shangque '野乜克力釋' ——兼與和田清博士的 Mekrin 說商榷," *Neimenggu shehui kexue* 內蒙古社會科學, no. 5 (1981): 85-87.

⁶⁹⁰ Temule, "Yuanming shiqi mekrin," 83-86; Mano, *Baburu Nāma no Kenkyū*, 292-293, 298-299.

⁶⁹¹ Buyandelger, "Yingshaobu wanhu," 167.

⁶⁹² Ibid, 160-162.

⁶⁹³ *MXZSL*, j. 190, 3382; Wada, *Mingdai menggu shi lunji*, 332-336.

⁶⁹⁴ *MYZSL*, j. 311, 6529; Wada, *Mingdai menggu shi lunji*, 332-336.

⁶⁹⁵ Buyandelger, "Yingshaobu wanhu," 162. For the composition of the Yüngšiyebü Tümen, see Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, *Kalaqin wanhu yanjiu* 喀喇沁萬戶研究 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2005), 21-25.

⁶⁹⁶ Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 245.

⁶⁹⁷ After Begersen's death, his son Nemekü Čuyang still lived and mourned him. Begersen also had another son named Bayabai, see *Menggu huangjin shigang* 蒙古黃金史綱, trans. and annotated by Zhu Feng 朱風 and Jia Jingyan 賈敬顏 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2014), 53, 60-61; Jägčid Sečen 札奇斯欽, *Menggu huangjing shi yizhu* 蒙古黃金史譯註 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi, 1979), 255.

⁶⁹⁸ Ongliyud means "the ones with princes," see B. Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols: le féodalisme nomade*, trans. Michel Carsow (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1948), 178; Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, 535.

⁶⁹⁹ For the history of Ongliyud Yeke Tümen, see Buyandelger 寶音德力根, "Wangliu, abaga, alu menggu—yuandai dongdao zhuwang houyi buzhong de tongcheng, wanhu ming, wanghao 往流、阿巴噶、阿魯蒙古——元代東道諸王後裔部眾的統

explanation is that Moliqai, having once allied with the Oirats,⁷⁰⁰ may have married a woman and that Isman was born of that marriage.

After Isman killed Begersen, he immediately became the ruler of the Yüngšiyebü Tümen and enthroned Dayan Khan.⁷⁰¹ In 1483, a conflict broke out between Isman and Dayan Khan, prompting Isman and his followers to flee to Shanhou and Hami, where he allied with Kešig, the Oirat Taiši active in the northern mountains of Hami, to fight against Dayan Khan.⁷⁰²

Three factors facilitated Isman's actions. First, the northern mountains of Hami were the homeland of the Mekrin tribe, the core of the Yüngšiyebü Tümen, so it was a logical choice for them to return to this area for refuge. Second, the Mekrin tribe had long been on friendly terms with the Oirats, while Isman's father, Moliqai, had also allied with the Oirats, indicating a long-standing friendship between the two sides. Third, the Oirats were at odds with the Moghul Khanate at that time, while Isman had fallen out with Dayan Khan. An alliance between the two could strengthen their ability to resist their respective enemies. However, the alliance between Isman and Kešig not only failed to achieve victory in the war against Dayan Khan, but even Isman's wife Šikir (also the mother of Dayan Khan) and his son Burqai were captured by Dayan Khan,⁷⁰³ with some of his followers also being subjugated.⁷⁰⁴

Isman died in 1486, with his tribe subsequently coming under the rule of the two brothers, Ilyās and Ibarai. They were the sons of the Oirat Taiši Esen and Makhtüm Khānīm, the sister of the Moghul Vaīs Khan. In the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, Ibarai's name appears before Ilyās, suggesting he may have been the elder brother, which also accords with the fact that Ibrāhīm was a more ancient prophet than Ilyās in Islam. However, in Chinese sources Ilyās's name always precedes that of Ibarai and occupies the dominant position, indicating that Ilyās likely held a higher status than Ibarai.

稱、萬戶名、王號,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報(人文社會科學版), no. 4 (1998): 3, 7, 9.

⁷⁰⁰ Aodeng 奧登, “Dayan han jiwei qianxi menggu shehui de zhengzhi xingshi 達延汗即位前夕蒙古社會的政治形勢,” *Neimenggu shehui kexue (wenshi zhe ban)* 內蒙古社會科學(文史哲版), no. 5 (1989): 53. Wada Sei argues that Isman was not son of Moliqai, see Wada, *Mingdai menggu shi lunji*, 338.

⁷⁰¹ Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 251; Li Wenjun 李文君, *Mingdai xihai menggu shi yanjiu* 明代西海蒙古史研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2008), 23.

⁷⁰² Buyandelger, “Yingshaobu wanhu,” 163.

⁷⁰³ Ulayan, “*Menggu yuanliu*” *yanjiu*, 797; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 192, 254; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 118-119, 122; *Menggu huangjin shigang*, 54, 59-60; Jägčid, *Menggu huangjing shi yizhu*, 256, 270-272.

⁷⁰⁴ Buyandelger, “Yingshaobu wanhu,” 164.

As for the cause of the migration of Ilyās and Ibarai to the area north of Hami and eventually taking control of the Mekrin tribe, the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* records:

*This conversion to Islam was the cause of a conflict between Ibrāhīm Ūng [i.e. Ibarai] and Ilyās Ūng, on the one hand, and Umāsānchī Tāyshī on the other... These two, however, quarreled with the Khān of the Qālīmāq (ie. the Oirat), and therefore fled from that country into Khiṭāy with 10,000 men. The rupture between the brothers took place before the death of Dūst Muḥammad Khān, which occurred in 873 (1468-9). The flight of Ibrāhīm Ūng and Ilyās Ūng into Khiṭāy took place, probably, in 910 (1504-5). These two both died in Khiṭāy. Ibrāhīm left one son, Bābūlāy by name, whose descendants are still to be met with in that country, and who still bear the same name of Bābūlāy. Manṣūr Khān made a holy war against Khiṭāy and came in contact with that very tribe.*⁷⁰⁵

The *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* indicates the existence of conflicts between brothers Ilyās and Ibarai and the Oirats. The “Khiṭāy” Ilyās and Ibarai fled to was more likely the Hami and Yijinaï region rather than China proper, since, as argued in Chapter 2, the “Khiṭāy” in Bābur’s work was actually Tupan and its surrounding region. The brothers first appeared in Ming sources in 1492, when they took the lead in facilitating the marriage between the daughter of *Nutuq Buqa Taibu⁷⁰⁶ (Ch. Nutu Buhua Taibu 奴秃卜花台卜) of the Mekrin and *Šamba, the Prince of Zhongshun.⁷⁰⁷ By this time, they were already active in the region around Hami. By 1495, they had formally become the leaders of the Mekrin tribe along with Prince Möngke (滿可王, probably also a son of Esen according to his title), *Nutuq Buqa Taiši and Mandulai, who was called the “Aqalaqu Bingjang” (Ch. Halahu Pingzhang 哈剌忽平章) at the time.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ The translation is based on *TIR*, 91; Qu, “Bosi wen ‘lashide shi’,” 57.

⁷⁰⁶ Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 638. “Taibu” is a title transliterated from Chinese “Taifu 太傅, ‘Grand Tutor’,” see Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols*, 179-180; Ho Kai-lung 何啟龍, “The Office and Noble Titles of the Mongols from the 14th to 16th century, and the study of the “White History” *Čayan Teiuke*,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 59, no. 1-2 (2016): 143-144.

⁷⁰⁷ *MXIZSL*, j. 68, 1296-1297.

⁷⁰⁸ Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 587. “Aqalaqu Bingjang” means “Head Overseer of Military Affairs,” see Ho, “The Office and Noble Titles of the Mongols,” 147-149.

The Mekrin tribe allied with the Little Ögeled (the predecessor of the later Jëgünyar tribe) and Ayulyaytau's tribe (the predecessor of the later Dörbed tribe),⁷⁰⁹ as described in Section 3.1.2.2, along with the Great and Little Čayan Tuq (Ch. Chahan Tuke 察罕圖克) tribes,⁷¹⁰ to resist the Moghul Khanate and the Great Ögeled led by Oš Taiši in the west, while also engaging in warfare against Dayan Khan in the east.

In the western campaigns against the Moghul Khanate, *Yangqan of the Little Ögeled and the Great and Little Čayan Tuq contributed the most. *Yangqan succeeded in conquering the tribe of the Great Ögeled and assumed the title of Taiši. Afterwards, when he died in the battle with the Moghul Khanate in 1495, his son Abidbolu (Ch. Adaibuliu 阿歹卜六) inherited the title of Taiši and ruled the Oirat together with his uncle Boroqal (Ch. Boluohan 孛羅罕) and brother *Bolu Saiqan (Ch. Buliu Saihan 卜六賽罕).⁷¹¹ It is recorded that the Ming once asked Engke Bulat of the Hami Guard to establish a marital alliance with the Abidbolu, but we do not know whether this goal was ever achieved.⁷¹² On the eastern front, those who fought against Dayan Khan were primarily the brothers Ilyās and Ibarai and their followers, who dwelled at the time in the Yijinaï area. Due to attacks by Dayan Khan, they requested permission from the Ming to pasture near the border, pay tribute and conduct trade. As discussed in Section 3.2.2, the Ming granted their request, allowing them to pay tribute like Hami and conduct mutual trade with the Ming once each season like the people of Čikin and Handong.⁷¹³

At this time, Ilyās, as the leader of the Mekrin tribe, was compelled by Dayan Khan to meet him and present 1,000 horses, 200 camels, and 1,000 sheep as tribute.⁷¹⁴ After this, Ilyās

⁷⁰⁹ Nashundalai, "Weilate du'erbote bu yanjiu," 6-7.

⁷¹⁰ Čayan Tuq is an important component of the tribe of Qoid of the Oirats, see Morikawa Tetsuo 森川哲雄, "Guanyu 'si weilate shiji' zhong suojian zhu jituan 關於《四衛拉特史記》中所見諸集團," *Menggu xue ziliao yu qingbao* 蒙古學資料與情報, no. 1 (1986): 2, 5. For the history of the Qoid, see Li Zhiyuan 李治遠, "Cong woyila dao huite: shiwu zhi shiliu shiji huduhe bieqi jiazhu ji shubu yanjiu 從斡亦剌到輝特——十五至十六世紀忽都合別乞家族及屬部研究" (master's thesis, Huhehaote: Inner Mongolia University, 2018). Jinfeng and E'erdeni suggest that the Great and Little Čayan Tuq originated from the tribes of Dūghlāt, see Jinfeng and E'erdeni, "Lun si weilate lianmeng," 25, 42-43. According to the Oirat sources, the tribe of Qoid engaged in the war with the Moghul Khanate, which was always called "White Hat" (Mo. Čayan Malay-a) in the Mongolian sources. See Danbi and Ge, *Menghan duizhao tuote wenzi*, 250; Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 55, 127-130; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 258; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 127. According to the Oirat tales, the tribe of Jëgünyar and Dörbed evolved from the tribe of Qoid. Although it is not true, but it still reflects the close connection of those three tribes. See P. S. Pallas, *Sammlungen historischer Nachrichten über die mongolischen Völkerschaften in einem asuführlichen Auszuge* (Frankfurt: Johann Georg Fleischer, 1779), 47-54.

⁷¹¹ Jinfeng and E'erdeni, "Lun si weilate lianmeng," 50; Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 675.

⁷¹² Xu, *Pingfan shimo*, 593-594.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 588.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 587; *MXIZSL*, j. 101, 1847-9.

disappeared, likely being killed by Dayan Khan. Subsequently, Ibarai and Mandulai led their subordinates to submit to Dayan Khan, while the other leaders of the Mekrin tribe,⁷¹⁵ however, stayed in their pasture in Shanhou, north of Hami. This also marks a growth in Ibarai's personal power and the rise of the Ibarai group.

5.2 The occupation of Qinghai by the Ibarai group

After their submission to Dayan Khan, the Ibarai group gained great power. They ruled over the Mongols of the Right Wing, with Ibarai and Mandulai governing the Yüngšiyebü and Ordos Tümens respectively. Later, in 1508, the three Tümens of the Right Wing led by Ibarai, however, rebelled against the rule of Dayan Khan and engaged in warfare with the three Left-wing Tümens. The conflict continued until 1509, when Ibarai was ultimately defeated and led his followers westward in retreat.⁷¹⁶

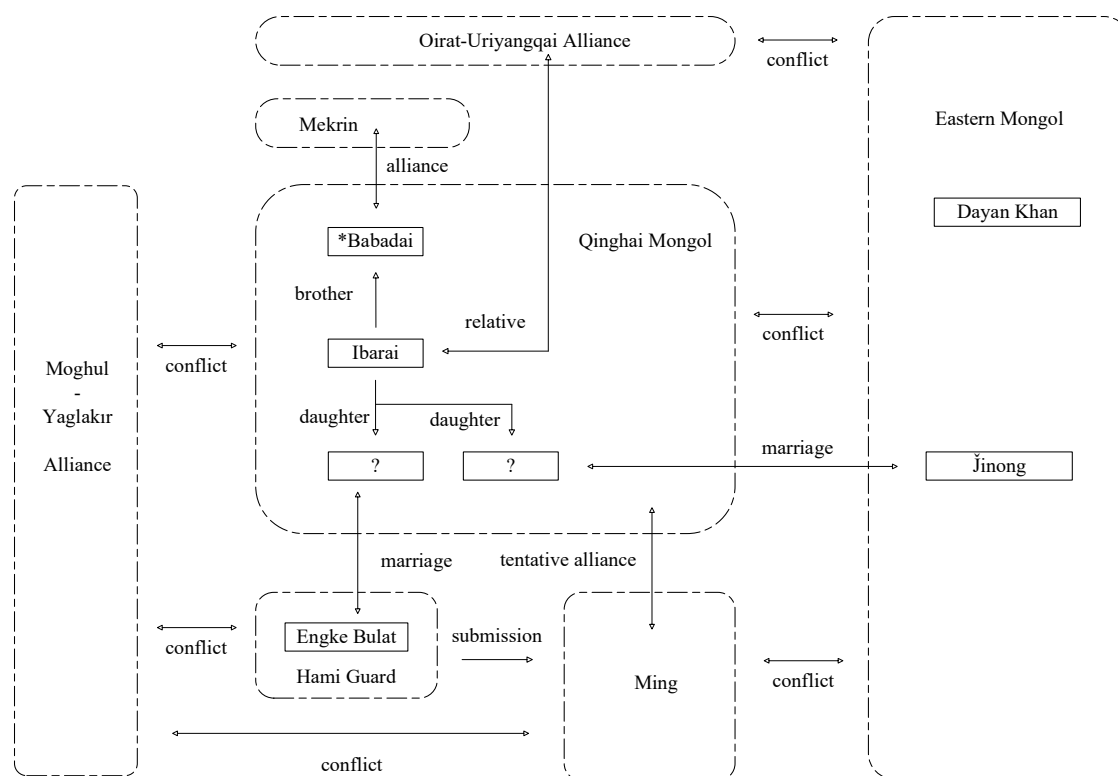


Figure 5.1. Power Relations in Inner Asia Centering on the Qinghai Mongols during Ibarai's Rule.

⁷¹⁵ Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 31; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 272, 276; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 264. The Mongolian sources record that both Ibarai and Mandulai came from the tribe of Uigud, see Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 20, 216; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 79.

⁷¹⁶ Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 32-34.

Thereafter, Ibarai first remained in the Shanhou region, and then advanced into Qinghai from beyond the Jiayu Pass in 1512, defeating the Four guards of Anding, Aduan, Quxian, and Handong, and invading the Xining area.⁷¹⁷ The Ibarai group's conquest of Qinghai marked the establishment of the Qinghai Mongols.

The reason why Ibarai entered Qinghai instead of returning to the traditional territories of the Mekrin tribe in Shanhou or north of Hami, as Isman had done, has not been discussed by previous scholars. A plausible explanation is that the area from the northern mountains of Hami to Shanhou was inhabited by a large number of tribes from the Uriyangqai Tümen, known then as the "Yellow-Haired Tatars" (Ch. *huangmao dazi* 黃毛達子).⁷¹⁸ These tribes allied with the Oirats and jointly opposed the Eastern Mongols.⁷¹⁹ As a result, Dayan Khan repeatedly dispatched troops to campaign against the Oirat-Uriyangqai alliance.⁷²⁰ To avoid the main battlefield of their conflict, Ibarai chose not to return to his homeland but instead advanced into Qinghai, where no powerful forces were present.

In order to evade pursuit by Dayan Khan, Ibarai considered collaborating with the Ming. In 1512, he sent envoys to Suzhou requesting to settle in the Taolai area and also married his daughter to the Hami Commissioner Engke Bulat.⁷²¹ In 1513, he again dispatched envoys, including his younger brother *Babadai 把巴歹, to Suzhou, requesting the bestowal of ceremonial robes, brocades, and silks, and asking permission to present tribute. Worried that he may betray the Ming after gaining benefits, the Ming officials rewarded him but denied his application for further privileges.⁷²²

Subsequently, *Babadai joined forces with the remaining Mekrin in Shanhou, gaining control over Čikin, Kuyu and Shanhou, resisting the Moghul Khanate from the west, while

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 37; Chu Ning 褚寧, "Mingdai zhongye yibulai yu Mandulai ahalahu ruqian Qinghai ji qi Dongxiang xin kao 明代中葉亦不剌與滿都來・阿哈刺忽入遷青海及其動向新考," *Jinan shixue* 暨南史學, no. 14 (2017): 87.

⁷¹⁸ Henry Serruys, "Yellow Hairs and Red Hats in Mongolia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 15, no. 2 (1971): 131-155.

⁷¹⁹ The Oirat sources record that after this Onggoča, the son of Abidbolu, succeeded to his father's throne. The Mongolian sources, moreover, record that Onggoča was conquered and submitted to the Altan Khan during his expedition to the Uriyangqai. Based on this information, Jinfeng argues that the Oirat and Uriyangqai had allied at the time. Jinfeng, "lun si weilate lianmeng: (er)," 93-94, 97; Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 39; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 92.

⁷²⁰ Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, "The Fall of the Uriyangqan Mongols," *Mongolian Studies*, vol. 10 (1986-87): 49-57.

⁷²¹ *MWZSL*, j. 91, 1938

⁷²² *MWZSL*, j. 100, 2072. At the same time, the Ming also manufactured many weapons to help defend against Ibarai's attack, see Xue Yangjing 薛仰敬 ed., *Lanzhou gujin beike* 蘭州碑刻 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 2002), 30.

making alliance with the Ming.⁷²³ Meanwhile, Ibarai and Mandulai led their followers to migrate to the area around Qinghai Lake, Taozhou and Songpan, engaging in conflicts with both the Ming and Dayan Khan's forces.⁷²⁴ During this period, Ibarai also invaded the territories of Yaglakır, the ally of the Moghul Khanate, as discussed in Chapter 3.⁷²⁵ Ibarai died around 1522.⁷²⁶ Thereafter, the term "Ibarai" that appeared in the sources generally referred to the Qinghai Mongols. The remaining tribes were inherited by Ibarai's sons, such as Bābūlāy and Ordos (Ch. Woerdusi 斡耳篤思), as well as Mandulai and Burqai, Isman's son.⁷²⁷

Since the original Xiyu buffer zone had been devastated by the Moghul Khanate and the Qinghai buffer zone had been destroyed by the Qinghai Mongols, as discussed in Section 3.3, the original northwestern buffer zone had been completely dismantled. At this point, the Ming court seemed to believe that since the Qinghai Mongols now occupied the territories of the former buffer zone and were requesting to submit tribute, why not incorporate them into the *fuyi* system to establish a new northwestern buffer zone? Based on this idea, in 1524, the Shaanxi Supreme Commander Jin Xianmin 金獻民 (1460-1541) proposed to follow the early precedent of the Čikin, Handong, Hami, and other frontier guards, dispatching *fuyi* officials to negotiate with the Qinghai Mongols, establishing guards based on their tribes and allowing them to pay tribute to the Ming court.⁷²⁸

Jin Xianmin's proposal soon was approved. However, just as an agreement was about to be reached, the Moghul Khanate launched an attack on the Qinghai Mongols. Regarding this campaign, the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* records that when Manṣūr Khan initiated a holy war against China, he also engaged in battle with Bābūlāy, a son of Ibarai.⁷²⁹ The Ming sources, on the other hand, indicate that after the defeat by the Moghul Khanate, half of the Qinghai Mongols fled towards Gansu, where many were killed by Ming troops, while the other half continued to pasture in the Lala Mountains 刺刺山 and at Jiangling Pass 江零口 near the Qinghai

⁷²³ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 6, 186, 188, 195-196; Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 13, 486.

⁷²⁴ Chu Ning, "Mingdai zhongye yibula," 89.

⁷²⁵ Wang, *Jinxi zongbing fuzou*, j. 6, 184.

⁷²⁶ SYZZL, j. 14, 475.

⁷²⁷ Li, *Mingdai xihai mengu*, 43-45.

⁷²⁸ SYZZL, j. 12, 430.

⁷²⁹ TIR, 91; Qu, "Bosi wen 'lashide shi'," 57.

Lake.⁷³⁰ Later, the Ordos and Tümed Mongols sent three expeditions to Qinghai, greatly weakening the Qinghai Mongols. As a result, Ibarai's daughter was forced to marry Jinong of the Ordos Mongols.⁷³¹ Due to the heavy losses suffered by the Qinghai Mongols, the Ming then abandoned its plan to incorporate them into the *fuyi* system.

5.3 The peace negotiation with Burqai

Following the attack by the Moghul Khanate, Ibarai's sons' power was largely diminished, while Burqai, the son of Isman, became the leader of the Qinghai Mongols. Once captured by Dayan Khan, he fled to Qinghai in the late Zhengde 正德 period (1506-1522), joined the Ibarai group, and subsequently became a leader of the Qinghai Mongols.⁷³² After entering Qinghai, Burqai used it as a base to expand outward, maneuvering between the Moghul Khanate, the Uriyangqai Mongols, Xifan tribes, the Ordos Mongols and the Ming. To consolidate his own power, he negotiated marriage alliances with multiple Inner Asian forces and twice requested to present tribute to the Ming and join the *fuyi* system in 1532 and 1541. From Burqai's choices, we can observe the intertwining and confrontation between the *fuyi* system and the Inner Asian power network.

Until recently, we knew very little about Burqai's negotiation with the Ming. However, I was able to find a document kept in *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao* which recorded the negotiation progress in extensive detail.⁷³³ This document not only could serve as a crucial source to understand the *fuyi* system but also provides a valuable record about Mongol customs at the time.

⁷³⁰ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 12, 462. Lala Mountain, also called Jin'e Mountain 金娥山 or Niangniang Mountain 娘娘山, is located near today's Qiaotou Town, Datong County. Jiangling Pass, also called Jiangling Pass 江陵口, is located near today's Jinshan Town, Liangzhou District. See Liang Ruoyu 梁若愚, "Mingdai xihai menggu shouling yibula de shiji ji qi zhumu di 明代西海蒙古首領亦卜剌的事蹟及其駐牧地," in *Xixue yu hanxue: Zhongwai jiaoliu shi ji aomen shi lunji* 西學與漢學: 中外交流史及澳門史論集, ed. Lin Guangzhi 林廣志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 438-441.

⁷³¹ Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 41-42.

⁷³² Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 59-63.

⁷³³ A heavily censored version could also be found in Wang Shaoquan 汪少泉 and Sun Weicheng 孫緯城, eds., *Huangming zoushu leichao* 皇明奏疏類鈔, in *Siku jinhui shu congkan bubian* 四庫禁毀書叢刊補編, vol. 21 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005), 239-241.

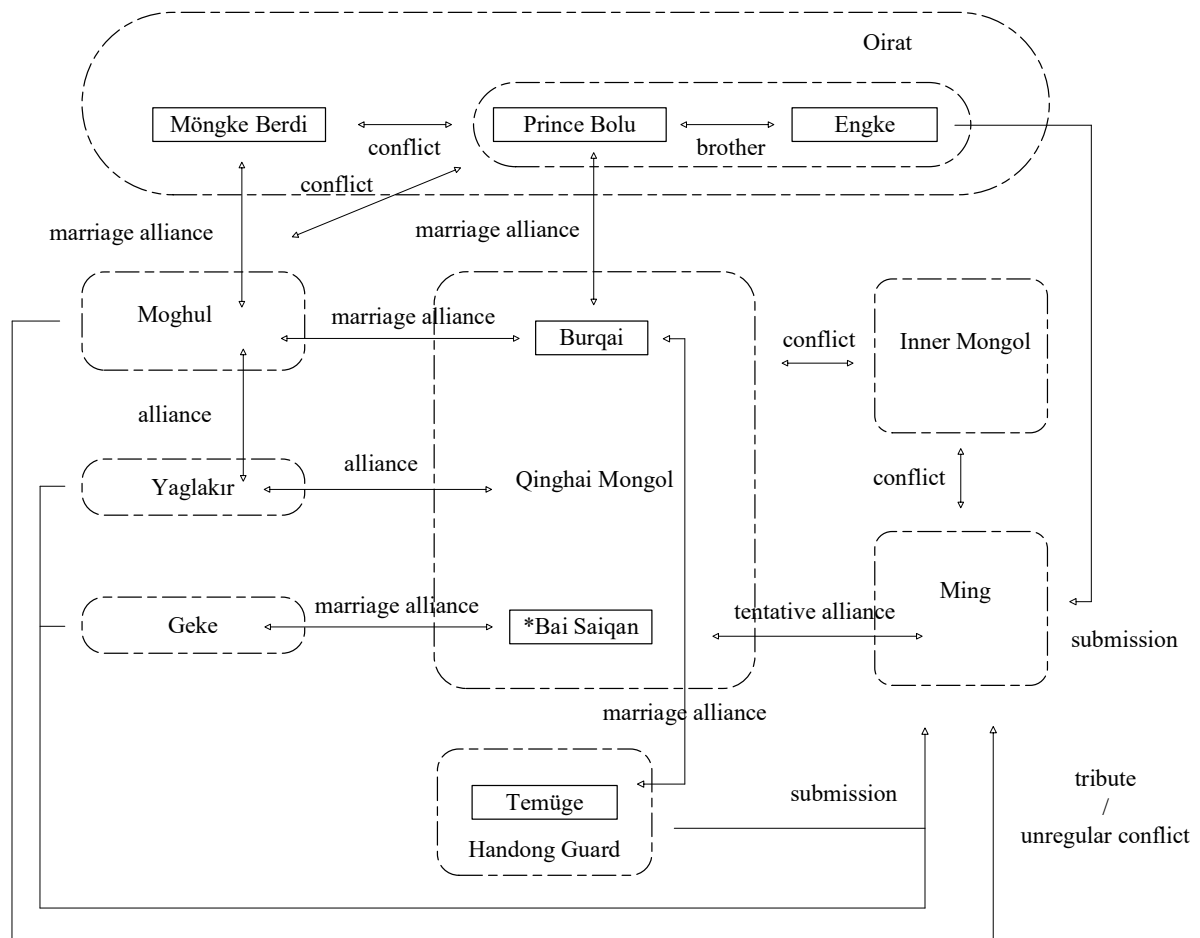


Figure 5.2. Power Relations in Inner Aisa Centering on the Qinghai Mongols during Burqai's Rule.

Before 1532, Burqai repeatedly raided the Ming and attacked the Moghul–Yaglakır alliance, which had existed at least since the Moghul's conquest of Hami from 1473, as discussed in Chapter 3.⁷³⁴ However, as his power later declined, he began to consider easing relations with both the Ming and the Moghul–Yaglakır alliance. At the time, the Moghul Khanate had already reestablished peaceful relations with the Ming, and Temüge, the leader of the Handong Guard, had also led his followers to migrate into Ming territory. Upon hearing that they had joined the *fuyi* system and gained both economic and political benefits such as tribute privilege, Burqai, on the one hand, sought to establish friendly ties with the Moghul Khanate

⁷³⁴ *MSIZSL*, j. 134, 3173.

and Temüge, and on the other hand, requested Temüge to petition on his behalf for inclusion in the *fuyi* system, as well as asking to make marital alliance with Temüge. For this purpose, he sent envoys in 1532, bringing “a document written in barbarian letters” (Ch. *fanwen* 番文), horses, tiger skins, cattle-hair tassels, and other gifts to Gansu, stating: “I only wish to seek alliance and will comply with your decisions.”⁷³⁵

After receiving Burqai’s proposal to join the *fuyi* system, Gansu officials, including the Grand Coordinator and the Regional Commander, displayed an extremely positive attitude. They believed that, following the Moghul Khanate’s submission and the proper resettlement of the frontier guards within the Ming territory, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, incorporating Burqai into the *fuyi* system—thereby transforming all previous enemies in the region into the Ming’s buffer zone—was an opportunity not to be missed. They immediately dispatched two envoys to Qinghai for negotiations. A crucial point of discussion was the marriage issue between Temüge and Burqai. Temüge claimed that such an agreement was up to the Ming officials to decide, but the marriage could bring peace to both the Xifan tribes and the Han Chinese. However, fearing that their marital alliance might lead to collusion detrimental to the Ming, the Ming officials dispatched *fuyi* officials to clearly instruct Temüge that he must firmly uphold his duties as subjects and was not permitted to rashly agree to any marriage proposal.⁷³⁶

On the other hand, the Gansu officials submitted a proposal to Beijing about three possible ways to incorporate Burqai into the *fuyi* system: Firstly, following the precedent of Xifan tribes, Burqai could have been allowed to present horses in exchange for payment. Secondly, following the precedent of Western Region tribute missions, Burqai could have been allowed to pay tribute to Beijing personally or send his son or brother as a hostage, receiving generous rewards from the Ming court. Finally, following the precedent of Quxian and other frontier guards, the Ming could have bestowed official titles upon Burqai and other Qinghai Mongol leaders by inheritance, issuing them seals of authority, and establishing guards or battalions based on their tribes.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁵ “只欲求通，听從區處。” Ibid.; *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 8a-b.

⁷³⁶ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 9a-10a.

⁷³⁷ Ibid., 9a.

Regarding the proposal submitted by the Gansu officials, the Minister of War Wang Xian 王憲 (1467-1537) offered his opinion. He believed that Gansu was so far away from the capital that it is difficult for the ministry to make remote judgments. Therefore, the best approach was to have the Shaanxi Supreme Commander Tang Long 唐龍 (1477-1546), along with the Gansu officials, dispatch suitable *fuyi* officials, interpreters and scouts to the settlements of Burqai, Yaglakır, and Temüge to conduct extensive interviews, and, based on the three previously proposed plans, negotiate a specific solution.⁷³⁸

Subsequently, after multiple negotiations with Burqai, the Ming court came to the conclusion that Burqai's objectives were to "submit allegiance, present tribute and engage in trade".⁷³⁹ Thereafter, a specific plan was formulated: Firstly, once again verifying that Burqai harbored no hidden malicious intentions, Shaanxi officials could make an alliance with Burqai according to "local customs on taking oaths" (Ch. *tusu mengshi* 土俗盟誓), which was the Mongolian way to make an alliance and will be depicted in detail soon later. Secondly, specific regulations for tribute presentation and mutual trade were refined, while Burqai was required to return the Ming subjects he had captured; Finally, regarding Burqai's request to form a marriage alliance with Temüge, Gansu officials, worried that further opposition from the Ming might breed resentment, were instructed to handle the matter appropriately as the situation dictates, ensuring, that the marriage would, at the very least, serve Ming interests.⁷⁴⁰

In order to reach a final agreement, under the command of the Jiajing 嘉靖 Emperor (1507-1567) and the Minister of War, Chen Gang 陳剛, the Suzhou Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, and Bao Xiang 保祥, the Ganzhou Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, were dispatched to Burqai's yurt.⁷⁴¹ Chen Gang and Bao Xiang reached the resettlement site of the Handong Guard in the Qilian Mountains in the seventeenth day of the fifth month, and were received by Tuba, *Tshong ya and other leaders of the guard (introduced in Section 3.3). They then marched further into Qinghai. On the way, they encountered a submitted non-Han person (likely the envoy of Temüge) with three Qinghai Mongols, who,

⁷³⁸ Ibid., 10b-11a.

⁷³⁹ "納款、進貢、買賣." Ibid., 18b.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., 19a-20a.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 20a-b.

after receiving rewards from the envoys, led two representatives from Xifan, who were likely the submitted people from the former frontier guards and served under the *fuyi* officials, to see *Čayan Toyan (Ch. Chahan Dahan (义)[叉]罕打罕),⁷⁴² one leader of the Qinghai Mongols. Upon receiving the message, *Čayan Toyan led his men to greet the *fuyi* officials and their mission, asked for rewards, slaughtered a sheep to entertain them, brought out “fermented mare’s milk” (Ch. *mania jiu* 馬奶酒, OU. *kıms*, Mo. *üsük* or *esük*)⁷⁴³ to host them, and had them stay for the time being, while he sent envoys to inform Burqai. The next day, *Qoridai (Ch. Hulidai 虎力歹),⁷⁴⁴ Burqai’s nephew, arrived with his men from the Moghul region and happened to reach *Čayan Toyan’s yurt at that very moment. Thereupon, *Qoridai led the *fuyi* officials to Burqai. On the way, they met the wives of Burqai and his son, who carried fermented mare’s milk to receive them and escorted them to stay at Burqai’s place.⁷⁴⁵

Two days later, Burqai gathered the Qinghai Mongol leaders to his tent to speak with Chen Gang and Bao Xiang. Burqai declared: “Now, we are settled within the territory of the Great Ming Khan (Ch. Daming han 大明罕). Let us submit to the Great Ming Khan.”⁷⁴⁶ After the negotiations, Burqai assembled the crowd, took fermented mare’s milk, and swore an oath to the sky: “As long as we live in this lifetime, may we enjoy peace for several years. After we die, the later things are unknown. Since we have made peace, if we then act treacherously, may we die by the sword.”⁷⁴⁷

After the ceremony was completed, both sides began to discuss some historical grievances. Burqai claimed that the scouts, whom he had sent to the Han territory of Liangzhou to monitor Mongol forces, had plundered the Han people, which resulted in Ming troops capturing thirteen

⁷⁴² Chinese “yi 义” could be another form of writing “cha 叉,” thus the name of this individual could be reconstructed as Čayan Toyan, meaning “white falcon.” See Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 360.

⁷⁴³ Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1959), 240; Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 629. In Modern Mongolian, the “fermented mare’s milk” is called *airay* or *čege*. See Neimenggu daxue, *Menghan cidian*, 6; 1240. In Mongolian society, fermented mare’s milk is often used to entertain guests and for sacrificial ceremonies, see David Sneath, “Everyday Hospitality in Mongolia: Obligation, Enaction and Projects of Governance,” *L’Homme*, no. 231-232 (2019): 76; Yang Xiaochun 楊曉春, “Meng yuan shiqi manai jiu kao 蒙·元時期馬奶酒考,” *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 西北民族研究, no. 1 (1999): 37-40. During the Ming period, fermented mare’s milk played an important role in ceremonies. Ulayán translated “sačuli sačuyu” into “strewed the fermented mare’s milk libation,” while Johan Elverskog translated it to “strewed the libation.” See Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 193, 257; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 126.

⁷⁴⁴ Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 520.

⁷⁴⁵ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 23a-25a.

⁷⁴⁶ “如今我大小在大明罕地方上坐著裏，歸了大明罕根前去罷。” Ibid., 25a-26a.

⁷⁴⁷ “有我們這一輩子或者時，太平過幾年。我們若還四卜，後頭事不知道。我們既和了，卻為歹時，在刀劍上死。” Ibid., 26b.

of his men. Chen Gang and Bao Xiang replied that those scouts not only refused to communicate but also shot and injured Ming soldiers, thus the Ming troops had already killed them.⁷⁴⁸

*Čayan Toyan then said that when he led his tribe past Suzhou, they had run out of food, so he sent men to Suzhou to request supplies, only to be driven out. Chen Gang and the interpreter Zhang Hong 張洪 explained that this was because they had killed a Ming scout, and when the chieftain was summoned to enter the city for a meeting, he did not come. Hence, no rewards were given.⁷⁴⁹

Since Chen Gang and Bao Xiang had encountered envoys sent by Burqai and Temüge to the Moghul Khanate on their way, Burqai further explained his ambiguous relationship with the Moghul Khanate. He explained that the Moghul Khanate had once sent twenty men to his yurt to propose a marriage alliance. These envoys had remained there for two months, after which Burqai escorted them back. He stated that, having now submitted to the Great Ming Emperor (Ch. Daming Huangdi 大明皇帝), both his own leaders and Temüge had advised against forming a marriage alliance with the Moghuls, a position with which he agreed. He further requested that, should the Moghuls act in a hostile way toward Han territories, the Ming court should dispatch interpreters to inform him, upon which he would assemble his troops to attack them from the Taolai River.⁷⁵⁰

At the same time, Burqai also proposed that if the forces of the Eastern Mongols were to come, he requested the Ming court to send scouts and inform him, so that he could organize his troops to attack them.⁷⁵¹ Burqai also brought up his grievances with the Xifan tribe of the Geke 革課, who was a submitted tribe of the Ming and always stole horses from the Qinghai Mongols. Now, since Burqai also submitted to the Ming, he asked Ming officials to forbid the Geke's behavior.

On the eighteenth day of the sixth month, Burqai formally dispatched a mission led by his brother Zhengke 整克 to visit Gansu. The mission firstly followed the *fuyi* officials to the

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 26b-27b.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 27a-b.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 27b-28a.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 28a-b.

settlement of the Handong Guard, who reported that there were still around 250 cavalymen of Yaglakır within Burqai's territory. The leaders of the Handong Guard also claimed that they had a past feud with Burqai, but they had already reconciled.⁷⁵²

The mission of Zhengke soon arrived in Ming territory and began to conduct negotiations.⁷⁵³ The central issue at hand remained the proposed marriage alliance between the Qinghai Mongols and the submitted tribes under the Ming. Zhengke reported that: First, Temüge's brother *Zhabs rgyal (Ch. Shangbu Erjia 賞卜尔加) promised to marry his daughter to Burqai's son *Arsai (Ch. A'ersai 阿尔赛) after their submission; Second, *Bai Saiqan (Ch. Bai Sanhan 拜三罕), one leader of the Qinghai Mongols had married the daughter of the leader of the Geke; Third, they have refused Moghul's proposal to make a marital alliance. Satisfied with their promise, Gansu officials reward them and let them await the final decision from the Ming court.⁷⁵⁴

5.4 End of the Qinghai Mongols

Just as the negotiations were nearing completion, the Ordos Mongols suddenly launched an attack on Burqai. They surrounded Burqai's camp and then killed nearly half of his forces. Burqai and *Bai Saiqan subsequently surrendered,⁷⁵⁵ while other remaining tribes fled in all directions as refugees. Some went to seek assistance from the tribe of Geke, requesting troops to seek revenge. However, the Geke tribe refused them, stating that they were subjects of the Ming and thus had no troops.⁷⁵⁶

Seeing this situation, the Ming officials believed that Burqai's power had weakened, thus losing his value, so they immediately halted negotiations with him.⁷⁵⁷ In 1533, Wang Xian, the Minister of War, even proposed that if Burqai were to enter Ming territory, he should be suppressed and driven out by exploiting his recent defeat by the Mongols of the Right Wing.

⁷⁵² Ibid., 28b-29a. Here, the leaders of the Handong Guard refer to Burqai as a "Black Tatar" (*hei dazi* 黑達子), which is often a common appellation for the Oirats, see John F. Baddeley, *Mongolia Russia China*, vol.2 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 46, 60; Liu Tianhe 劉天和, *Dufu zouyi* 督府奏議 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Jiajing period (1522-1567)), j. 8, 6b. Burqai may be called as "Black Tatar" according to his Mekrin origin.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 20b-21a.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 32a.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 29a-31b; Jürungy-a, *Altetan han zhuan*, 29; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 84-85.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 17a-b, 32b.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., 32b.

Furthermore, directives were issued to submitted tribes such as Temüge and Geke, instructing them that if Burqai sought their assistance, they should have captured and executed him.⁷⁵⁸ The Ming court's shift to a hostile attitude signified the complete collapse of the peace negotiations with Burqai.

Burqai's faction still was not completely destroyed after the conquest from the Eastern Mongols and the betrayal of the Ming. He soon broke free from the rule of the Eastern Mongols and subsequently attempted to form an alliance with the Moghul Khanate to strengthen his forces. Sending two envoys with two horses, a silver basin, and a silver axe to Turpan, he first requested permission to settle in the Shazhou region. Later, ten more envoys were dispatched to seek peace, as the Moghul Khanate subsequently sent envoys to Qinghai for further negotiations.⁷⁵⁹ By 1534, Manşūr Khan of the Moghul Khanate sent 23 envoys to Burqai's yurt, bringing five *chi* 尺 satin fabrics to propose a marriage alliance. Bao Xiang, who was sent to gather intelligence in Qinghai, witnessed this development and soon reported the situation to Ming officials.⁷⁶⁰

At the time, the Moghul Khanate's circumstances were also precarious. Previously, relying on the military strength of a part of the Oirats through alliances, the khanate began to launch invasions into Ming territory after 1529. Then, having become at odds with the Oirats, it lost their support, which was the urgent reason for the khanate to make an alliance with Burqai.⁷⁶¹ According to intelligence from escorting official Zhang Duo 章鐸, the Moghul tribute envoys also planned to persuade their rulers to collude with the Qinghai Mongols to invade Ming territory.⁷⁶²

In light of these developments, the Ming court began reconsidering the possibility of establishing peaceful relations with Burqai. They proactively reached out to Burqai, but the negotiations yielded no results, likely attributed to Burqai's disappointment with the Ming's former betrayal.⁷⁶³ By 1536, Burqai led his remaining forces to plunder Songpan and other

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., 34b-35b. MSIZSL, j. 147, 3407-8.

⁷⁵⁹ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 46a.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 45a.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 46b.

⁷⁶² Ibid., 45b-46a.

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 50b.

regions in Sichuan. Concerned about the potential for further incursions, the Ming once again cautioned Temüge and the Geke against allying with Burqai.⁷⁶⁴

By 1537, the situation underwent another shift. At the time, Manşūr Khan allied with the Oirat leader Möngke Berdi (Ch. Manke Bie'erde 滿可兒的),⁷⁶⁵ subsequently cementing their relationship through marriage,⁷⁶⁶ and jointly engaged in conflict with the Oirat Prince Bolu 卜六王.⁷⁶⁷ Engke (Ch. (Y)anke 奄克), Prince Bolu's younger brother, under pressure from this attack, fled to the vicinity of the Ming border.⁷⁶⁸ He both petitioned the Ming court for rewards, and sought to form marital ties with Burqai, who had already established marital alliance with Temüge.⁷⁶⁹ With the support of both Engke and Temüge, Burqai's power increased dramatically, repeatedly marching eastward to Helan Shanhou to raid the Ordos Mongols.⁷⁷⁰ Intelligence regarding his activities was relayed to the Ming court by the Xifan tribe of Ge'erjia 革爾加 and Temüge.⁷⁷¹

By 1539, Prince Bolu also sent envoys to the Jiayu Pass. After conducting a review, Wang Jie 王節, the Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs, learned that Sultān Muḥammad, Manşūr Khan's son, had lured over a hundred of Prince Bolu's men into the city of Hami and killed them. Suffering significant losses, Prince Bolu moved his yurt to the Taolai River, settling in the same area as Engke. He, along with other Oirat chieftains with him, requested rewards from the Ming and complained that the submitted tribes of the Ming had stolen their horses.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁴ MSIZSL, j. 183, 3892-3.

⁷⁶⁵ His name is a combined form with Mongolian *mōngke*, meaning “eternal”, and Old Uyghur *berdi*, meaning “(someone) has given (him),” which is a typical ending of many Turkic theophoric names. See Pelliot, “Le Hōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l’Histoire des Ming,” 146.

⁷⁶⁶ It is recorded that Sultān Muḥammad, Manşūr Khan's son, married Möngke Berdi's daughter in 1545. See *BZK I*, j. 5, 188.

⁷⁶⁷ According to his title, it is easy to associate this individual with Abidbolu or *Bolu Saiqan. However, it is recorded that Prince Bolu's name is Tongbolihu 桶孛力忽 or Tongbodaohu 桶孛刀忽, a name not recorded in any Oirat sources. Nevertheless, I believe it is still safe to suggest that this individual was, at least, a relative of Abidbolu and *Bolu Saiqan.

⁷⁶⁸ Oyunbilig and Jinfeng equate him to a certain Engke of Üjiyed, a precedent of the Qošud people. However, Engke of Üjiyed actually served under Qung Tayiji, Altan Khan's son, at the time. The Engke mentioned here, based on his identity as Prince Bolu's brother, should be a descendant of Esen. See Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, “Heshuote de qiyuan yu mingcheng 和碩特的起源與名稱,” *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no. 5 (1988): 106; Jinfeng, “lun si weilate lianmeng: (er),” 94; Temule 特木勒, “Duoyan wei zuoyou liang dudu de shixi gouchen 朵顏衛左右兩都督的世系鉤沉,” *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, no. 34 (2018): 175; Buyandelger 寶音德力根 and Yuzhi 玉芝, “Shanyang huo lingnan wanhu de jieju: dayanhan zisun guafen duoyan-wuliangha sanwei kao 山陽或嶺南萬戶的結局——達延汗子孫瓜分朵顏一兀良哈三衛考,” *Menggu shi yanjiu* 蒙古史研究, no. 13 (2020): 56; Jürungγ-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 43-44; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 96; *WLWGL*, j. 8, 114.

⁷⁶⁹ Liu, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 3a.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, j. 10, 7a.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17b.

⁷⁷² Liu, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 1b-2a; *MSIZSL*, j. 238, 4842-3.

As a response, *fuyi* officials were sent to first reward the Oirats and then issued directives to the submitted tribes, prohibiting them from stealing further horses.⁷⁷³

Following this, Bao Xiang, then the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, was requested to negotiate with Suzhou *fuyi* officials and select skilled scouts familiar with foreign affairs to be sent to the Oirat camps to gather intelligence on their numbers and movements.⁷⁷⁴ Combined with the intelligence they brought back, the Shaanxi Supreme Commander Liu Tianhe 劉天和 (1479-1546) proposed to generously reward Prince Bolu and Engke, relying on them to check the power of Moghul Khanate while forbidding them from allying with the Qinghai Mongols.⁷⁷⁵ Later, Prince Bolu even submitted to the Ming and migrated into Ming territory. He requested to leave in 1547 and returned through the Jiayu Pass.⁷⁷⁶

Burqai also tried to submit or conduct trade with the Ming at various moments in the following years. However, this time, he wasn't as sincere as before. It seems like he only wanted to gain some short-term benefits, but didn't want, or no longer believed, that a long-term relationship could be established, same as the Ming officials felt. In 1541, Burqai sought to pay tribute,⁷⁷⁷ but without success. The next year, Zhengke, *Čayan Toyan, Datong 大同 and other Qinghai Mongol leaders once again gathered around Burqai, accepting his leadership. Together, they requested tribute and trade with the Ming, only to be refused.⁷⁷⁸ In 1545, Zhengke sought to offer tribute. As a response, the Ming court ordered him to remain stationed in Qinghai, and to request rewards from the Ming only after achieving merit by attacking and killing the Ordos Mongols.⁷⁷⁹ In 1547, Datong requested to be able to present tribute, only to get a similar response from the Ming court.⁷⁸⁰ Evidently, regarding the weakened Qinghai Mongols, the Ming no longer held out hope for them to serve as the new buffer zone. Simultaneously, they also posed no further threat to the Ming. Not long after, all the Qinghai Mongol tribes were

⁷⁷³ Liu, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 2b.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., 4b.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., 6b-8b.

⁷⁷⁶ *MSIZSL*, j. 319, 5933-4; Xing, "Zhungaer bu Xingcheng kaobian," 64.

⁷⁷⁷ *MSIZSL*, j. 245, 4925-6.

⁷⁷⁸ *WLWGL*, j. 7, 43.

⁷⁷⁹ *MSIZSL*, j. 301, 5729-30.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid, j. 321, 5963-4.

completely conquered by the Mongols of the Right Wing,⁷⁸¹ which were then ruled by the descendants of Dayan Khan and will be mentioned in next chapter.

5.5 Conclusion

The Ibarai group played a vital role in Inner Asia for a long time, as shown in the previous chapters. Since its occupation of Qinghai in 1512, it soon grew to become the most influential power among the various Inner Asian forces. During Ibarai's rule, the Qinghai Mongols fought against the Eastern Mongols led by Dayan Khan in the east, the Ming forces in the north and the Moghul–Yaglakır alliance in the west. During Burqai's rule, the Qinghai Mongols continued to have conflict with the Mongols of the Right Wing, the Ming and the Moghul–Yaglakır alliance.

To survive, the Qinghai Mongol leaders continually sought alliances in Inner Asia. Ibarai formed a marital alliance with the Hami Guard and attempted to submit to the Ming, while the Qinghai Mongols led by Burqai achieved greater success: they established marital ties with Temüge of the Handong Guard, the Xifan tribe of Geke, the Moghul Khanate and the Oirats; and after prolonged negotiations with Ming officials, especially the *fuyi* officials, they nearly entered the *fuyi* system. This reveals that the Ming's northwestern buffer zone, though weakened from its originally multi-layered frontier into a much narrower zone, could still draw Inner Asian powers into the *fuyi* system through their networks, enabling the Ming to engage more deeply in Inner Asian power rivalries.

During this period, *fuyi* officials still played a critical role, as they were responsible for negotiating with the Qinghai Mongols and gathering intelligence from Inner Asia. With their assistance, the Ming not only ensured the loyalty of the Handong Guard and Xifan tribes but also established connections with forces such as Burqai, bringing them close to constructing a more robust buffer zone. It was due to the communication efforts of the *fuyi* officials that Burqai and other Qinghai Mongol leaders once abandoned their possible alliance with the Moghul Khanate and chose to join the *fuyi* system.

⁷⁸¹ Li Wenjun 李文君, "Mingdai xihai menggu shouling Burqai shiji kaobian 明代西海蒙古首領卜兒孩事蹟考辨," *Neimenggu shehui kexue (hanwen ban)* 內蒙古社會科學 (漢文版) 26, no. 2 (2005): 23.

For the Ming, the Inner Asian marital alliance system appeared to be detrimental to Ming interests, as it could theoretically strengthen ties among non-Han groups, increasing the potential for opposition to or defection from the Ming. This was why the Ming rejected Hansheng's proposed marriage with *Yangqan and remained wary of the proposed marriages of Temüge and Burqai. However, if utilized effectively, the Ming could also employ marital alliances to bring Inner Asian powers into its sphere of influence. For instance, the Ming once urged Engke Bulat to marry into Adibolu's family, thus allowing them to utilize Oirat forces, and the marriages of Temüge and Geke with the Qinghai Mongols indeed restrained the Qinghai Mongols from harming Ming interests.

In summary, through the mediation of *fuyi* officials and by leveraging the Inner Asian marital alliance system, the Ming established the *fuyi* system in the Inner Asian world, reshaping its northwestern frontier. The new frontier structure was two-layered, including non-Han groups which had come under Ming control, such as the Handong Guard, the Hami Guard, and Xifan tribes, as well as peripheral groups like the Oirats and various Qinghai Mongol tribes that maintained good relations with these groups. However, when the Mongols of the Right Wing, mainly led by Altan Khan of the Tümed, expanded westward, the situation changed completely. Due to the formidable power of the Mongols of the Right Wing, the previously complex network of Inner Asian power and marital alliances dissolved, with all forces submitting to the rule of the Mongols of the Right Wing. Faced with this new situation, the Ming once again needed to rely on *fuyi* officials to reconstruct relations with the Mongols of the Right Wing and establish a new Inner Asian frontier structure.

Chapter 6: Longqing Peace Treaty and Subsequent Development

After a long process of transformation, the Mongol tribes, which had retreated to the steppe after the collapse of the Yuan in the mid-fourteenth century, were finally reunified under Dayan Khan at the end of the fifteenth century and were divided into the three Tümens of the Left Wing and three Tümens of the Right Wing. Among them, the three Tümens of the Left Wing, which included the Čaqar, the Qalq-a, and the Uriyangqai, were commanded by the Great Khan of the Mongols. In the meanwhile, the three Tümens of the Right Wing, which included the Ordos, the Tümed and the Yüngšiyebü (which later evolved into the Qaračin Tümen), were commanded by Dayan Khan's third son Barsubolod, who served as Ĵinong.⁷⁸² Within the three Tümens of the Right Wing, the Ordos Tümen were commanded by successive generations of Ĵinong, the Tümed Tümen were commanded by Barsubolod's son Altan Khan, while the Yüngšiyebü Tümen were commanded by Barsubolod's son Bayisqal Köndelen (see Figure 6.1).⁷⁸³

In the sixteenth century, the Mongols of the Right Wing, under the command of successive generations of Ĵinong and Altan Khan, expanded westward and eventually entirely encircled Gansu and Ningxia. Thereafter, after long negotiations, the Mongols and the Ming finally reached the Longqing Peace Treaty in 1571. According to its conditions, Altan Khan was granted the title Prince of Shunyi 順義王 by the Ming, the Mongols sent tribute to the Ming, the Ming issued rewards to the Mongols (which, in the Mongols' perception, was tribute from the Ming court), and the two sides decided to conduct mutual trade in the frontier under the administration of the *fuyi* officials. After the death of Altan Khan in 1582, the Mongols of the Right Wing fell into internal disorder, leading to the intensifying of Ming–Mongol conflicts, and the Xining Crisis, Taohe Crisis and Ningxia Crisis successively. Thereafter, the Ming rebuilt peace with the Tümed Mongols but wavered between war and peace with the Ordos Mongols.

⁷⁸² The Mongolian *Ĵinong* was derived from the Chinese *Jin wang* 晉王. During the Yuan period, the Ĵinong was the guardian of the Mongolian steppes and the Great Ordo. At the time of discussion, the Ĵinong was the leader of the Tümens of the Right Wing. See Gombojab Hangin, "The Mongolian Titles Ĵinong and Sigejin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100, no. 3 (1980): 255–60.

⁷⁸³ For the Mongol societal structure at the time, see Morikawa Tetsuo 森川哲雄, *Monggu zhu buzhu yu mengguwen wenxian yanjiu* 蒙古諸部族與蒙古文獻研究, trans. Bai Yushuang 白玉雙 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2014), 136.

The final year of the Ming period saw great political transformations in the northwestern frontier, as Čoytu Qung Tayiĭji and Gūüši Khan invaded Qinghai successively. In response, the Ming court relied heavily on the native officials and the Xifan tribes to resist these invasions. Facing the collapse of the Ming and the invasion of the Qing in the mid-seventeenth century, those groups, which once served as the buffer zone of the Ming, this time, however, all surrendered to the Qing and became Qing officials. Moreover, the *fuyi* system was also inherited by the Qing, with the positions of the *fuyi* officials established widely in the frontier, representing an inheritance of the Ming's pacification strategy.

This chapter examines the overall transformation of the Ming's northwestern frontier from the early sixteenth century to early seventeenth century, while Chapters 7 and 8 present two complex and illuminating case studies of the *fuyi* officials during this period, further exploring related dimensions such as religion and the incorporation of submitted populations.

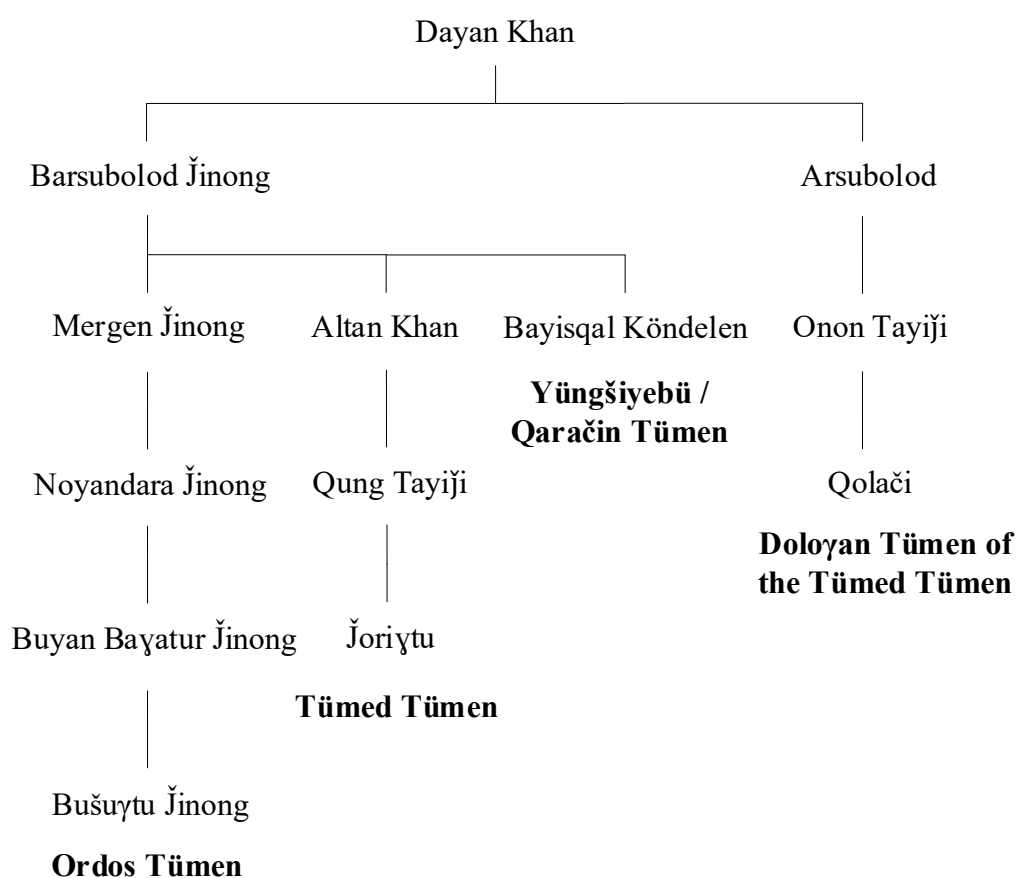


Figure 6.1. Genealogy of the Mongol Leaders of the Right Wing.

6.1 Expansion of the Mongols of the Right Wing and Longqing Peace Treaty

From the early sixteenth century onward, the Mongols of the Right Wing expanded westward, first under the leadership of the Mergen Ĵinong (1506-1542 or 1543) of the Ordos Tümen,⁷⁸⁴ and subsequently under the leadership of Altan Khan of the Tümed.⁷⁸⁵ They ultimately annexing the Uriyangqai Tümen, establishing friendly agreements with the Moghul Khanate and the Yarkand Khanate, conquering the Oirats, the Qinghai Mongols, Xifan tribes and Šira Uiyur, establishing a priest-patron relationship with the Third Dalai Lama, reaching a peace agreement with the Ming China, and, ultimately once again establishing Mongol hegemony in Inner Asia (see Figure 6.2).

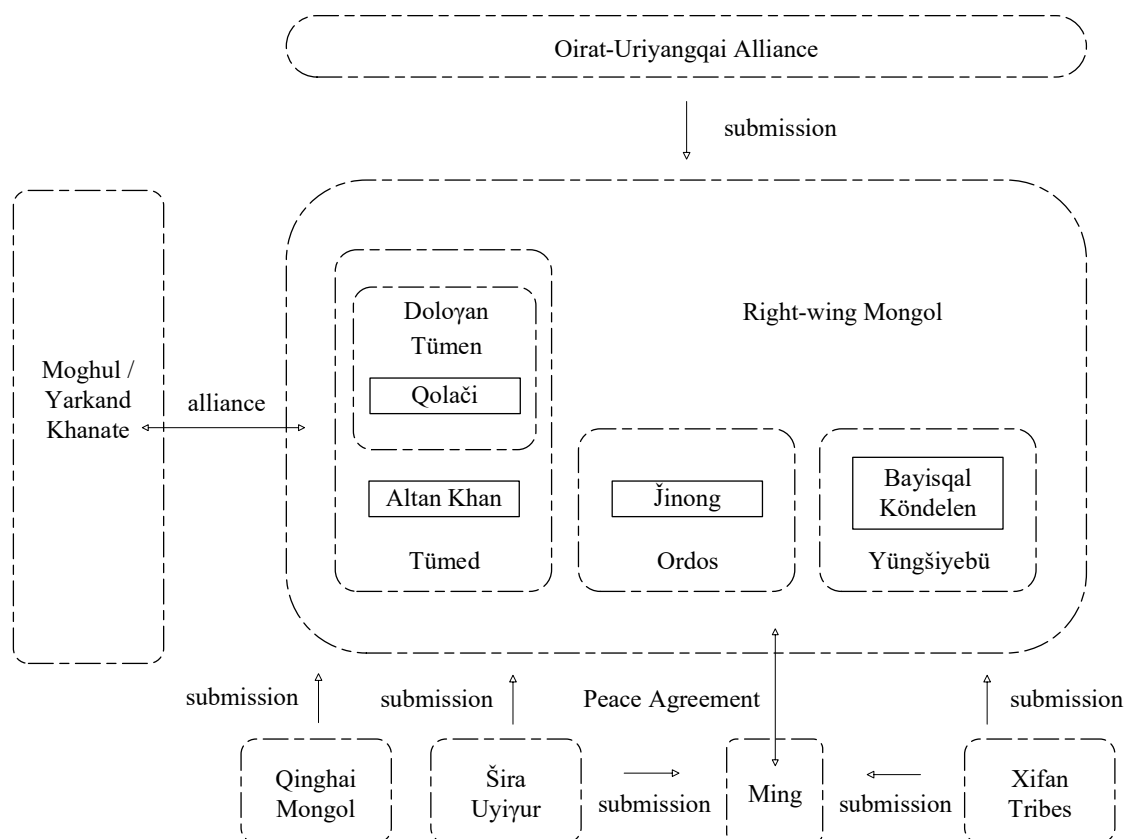


Figure 6.2. The Westward Expansion of the Mongols of the Right Wing.

⁷⁸⁴ For a concise biography of him, see Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan*, 40.

⁷⁸⁵ For the birth and death year of Altan Khan, see Yang Shaoyou 楊紹猷, "Anda han deng shengzu nian kao 俺答汗等生卒年考," *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究, no. 2 (1994): 57-64.

The expansion of the Mongols of the Right Wing completely shattered the Ming's frontier system and thoroughly encircled Ganzhou and Ningxia Town. Continuing the approach used toward the Qinghai Mongols, the Ming concluded that rather than supporting frontier groups to counter the Mongols, it was more effective to directly win over the Mongols with monetary means. To this end, under the direction of the Longqing Emperor and the Grand Secretariat, an unprecedented peaceful relationship, known as the Longqing Peace Treaty, was established between the Ming and the Mongols. Within the framework of the Longqing Peace Treaty, which was a great extension of the original *fuyi* system, the Ming established more *fuyi* officials to manage mutual trade, solve conflicts, and communicate with the Mongols.

6.1.1 The western conquests of the Mongols of the Right Wing

The Uriyangqai and Oirat regions were the initial aims of the western conquest of the Mongols of the Right Wing. The Uriyangqai people lived between the Kentei Range and the Kerülen River since the ninth century.⁷⁸⁶ They were conquered during the rise of the Mongols in the twelfth century and were then responsible for guarding the reservation where Činggis Khan's "magnificent bones" were laid to rest.⁷⁸⁷ When Dayan Khan reunified the Mongolian steppes, they were established as the Uriyangqai Tümen.⁷⁸⁸ During the Ming period, at least a portion of the Uriyangqai tribe gradually moved southward, reaching the Qaraqorum region and even south of the Gobi desert.⁷⁸⁹ In Ming sources, they were often referred to as "Yellow-Haired Tatars". Since Uriyangqai was the natal tribe of Dayan Khan's mother, this Tümen enjoyed a particularly favored status during the khan's lifetime.⁷⁹⁰ However, after Dayan Khan's death

⁷⁸⁶ Buyandelger 寶音德力根, "Wuliangha wanhu mudi kao 兀良哈萬戶牧地考," *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報 (人文社會科學版) 32, no. 5 (2000): 7. For a concise introduction to the Uriyangqai tribe, see Rashīd al-Dīn, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 75-77.

⁷⁸⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 76; Jürungy-a 珠榮嘎, "Dayan han xizheng mingling xin yi: jian suo altan hümürge yi ci de benyi 達延汗西征命令新譯——兼索 altan hümürge 一詞的本義," *Neimenggu shehui kexue* 內蒙古社會科學, no. 4 (1982): 59-62.

⁷⁸⁸ Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, "Dayan han liu wanhu de qiyuan 達延汗六萬戶的起源," tran. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, *Menggu xue ziliao yu qingbao* 蒙古學資料與情報, no. 2 (1985): 11.

⁷⁸⁹ Bo Yinhu 薄音湖, "Mingdai menggu de huangmao yu hongmao wuliangha 明代蒙古的黃毛與紅帽兀良哈," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 5 (2002): 80.

⁷⁹⁰ Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, "The Fall of the Uriyangqan Mongols," *Mongolian Studies*, no. 10 (1986-87): 53.

in 1516,⁷⁹¹ the Uriyangqai Tümen gradually developed conflicts with Dayan Khan's grandsons—Bodi Khan, who was the Mongol Khan and leader of the Čaqar Tümen, Mergen Ĵinong and Altan Khan. Taking advantage of the conflicts between the other Mongols and Ming China, the Uriyangqai Mongols repeatedly plundered other Mongols' people, livestock, and property.⁷⁹² In 1524, a united Mongol force formally launched a war against the Uriyangqai Tümen and finally conquered and annexed it in 1538.⁷⁹³

During their struggle against other Mongol groups, the Uriyangqai Tümen formed an alliance with the Oirats. Due to their close cooperative relationship, the Oirats were also subsequently referred to as “Yellow-Haired Tatars” in Chinese sources. This perception must have been transmitted to the Ming people through the Eastern Mongols, via Ming scouts or Chinese captives and Mongol individuals who surrendered to the Ming. In 1541, when Altan Khan once again campaigned against the “remaining Uriyangqai”, he won the submission of Onggoča, the Oirat Khan.⁷⁹⁴ Subsequently, Bübei Mirzai of Qošut was elected as the Oirat Khan and continued to lead the Oirats in battle against the Mongols.⁷⁹⁵

During the conquest of the Oirat-Uriyangqai alliance, the Mongols of the Right Wing also established friendly connections with the Moghul Khanate and subjugated the Qinghai Mongols, Šira Uyγur, and Xifan tribes. As discussed in Section 4.2.2, in order to attack the Oirats located in the northern mountains of Hami, Altan Khan needed to pass through Hami, which was at that point in time under the control of the Moghul Khan. Due to this reason, Altan Khan sent envoys to meet Shāh Khan and established a cooperative relationship. Nevertheless, Mongol tribes still plundered tribute missions and Muslim merchants who resided in Suzhou, who were either sent or protected by the Moghul Khanate, or later, the Yarkand Khanate.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹¹ Okada Hidehiro argues that Dayan Khan died in 1524 while Buyandelger argues that the khan actually died in 1516. See Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, “Dayan Hagan no nendaiki (Jō) ダヤン・ハガンの年代（上）,” *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋学報 48, no. 3: 301-326; “Dayan Hagan no nendaiki (Ge) ダヤン・ハガンの年代（下）,” *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋学報 48, no. 4: 464-485; Buyandelger 寶音德力根, “Dayan han shengzu nian, jiwei nina ji benming kaobian 達延汗生卒年、即位年及本名考辨,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報（人文社會科學版）33, no. 6 (2001): 1-9.

⁷⁹² Wada, *Mingdai menggu shi lunji*, 369-372; Saγang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 259; Saγang, *The Precious Summary*, 128; Jürungγ-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 34-36; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 88-89.

⁷⁹³ Okada, “The Fall of the Uriyangqan Mongols,” 53.

⁷⁹⁴ Jürungγ-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 39; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 92; Jinfeng, “lun si weilate lianmeng: (er),” 93-94.

⁷⁹⁵ Jinfeng, “lun si weilate lianmeng: (er),” 97; Sanchirov, *Pismennye pamiatniki po istorii oiratov XVII–XVIII vekov*, 26.

⁷⁹⁶ *Bingbu zouzhu* 兵部奏疏 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming period (1368-1644)), 310a.

At the same time as their conquest of the Oirat-Uriyangqai alliance during the early fifteenth century, the Mongols of the Right Wing marched towards the Qinghai area in order to plunder the Qinghai Mongols, as discussed in Chapter 5, along with the Šira Uiyur and Xifan tribes. Distinguished from the Sarig Uyghur mentioned in the previous chapters, Šira Uiyur, a Mongolian term derived from the Old Uyghur Sarig Uyghur, is the general designation for all the frontier groups who submitted to the Ming and were located in the Qilian Mountains. The corresponding word in Tibetan is Yugur, while in Chinese it is Shila guo 師刺國 during the Ming period,⁷⁹⁷ Xila gu'er 西喇古爾 during the Qing period,⁷⁹⁸ and Yugu 裕固 nowadays. The Šira Uiyur group contained many previous Sarig Uyghur tribes who had been driven from their homeland by the Qinghai Mongols and the Mongols of the Right Wing, along with the Handong Guards and other Xifan tribes. Its specific components remain an issue for further research.

According to the Mongolian sources, in 1542, when Altan Khan conquered Burqai, he also defeated Šira Uiyur—at the time, the group described by this term should have at least included the forces of Temüge, Burqai's alliance, and other Handong and Čikin submitted populations—and then annexed them and compelled them to pay tribute.⁷⁹⁹ In 1558, Altan Khan collected land taxes from the Šira Uiyur.⁸⁰⁰ In 1573, Altan Khan dispatched troops to Qinghai and conquered both the upper and lower divisions of the Šira Uiyur, along with numerous Xifan tribes.⁸⁰¹ In 1591, Čürüge, Altan Khan's grandson, defeated the Han-Tibetan-Šira Uiyur allied forces,⁸⁰² a point that will be discussed later. In 1596, Bušuytu Ĵinong (1565-1626) of the Ordos conquered the Šira Uiyur led by Gürü bsodnam rjal.⁸⁰³ The name Gürü bsodnam rjal, which never appeared in Chinese sources, was clearly derived from Tibetan Gu ru bsod nams rgyal, indicating a Tibetan Buddhist lama.

⁷⁹⁷ *Wanli di chiyu guoshi labuer deng you* 萬曆帝敕諭國師刺卜等由 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1596).

⁷⁹⁸ Ulayan, "Menggu yuanliu" yanjiu, 364.

⁷⁹⁹ Ĵürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 40-42; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 93-94.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸⁰¹ Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 264; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 137. Little is known about how the Šira Uiyur were divided into upper and lower divisions. The most probably answer is that one of the divisions spoke a Mongolic language while the other spoke a Turkic language.

⁸⁰² Ĵürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 167-168; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 96.

⁸⁰³ Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 351; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 166.

The Xifan tribes were also conquered during the Mongols of the Right Wing's invasion of Qinghai. These tribes were either regularly plundered or compelled to submit “*tianbai* 添白”, a tax in kind equivalent to 10% of their grain, livestock, cloth, or whatever they produced, to the Mongols.⁸⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Xifan tribes successfully influenced the Mongol leaders through religion. Under the influence of Aśing Lama (< Ti. A seng bla ma, fl. 1570s), Altan Khan developed an interest in Tibetan Buddhism in 1571.⁸⁰⁵ Shortly thereafter, he began organizing missions to Tibet to invite the Gelug Buddhist school master Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543-1588), later known as the Third Dalai Lama, to visit the residence of the Tümed Mongols in modern-day Hohhot. To this end, he dispatched numerous Mongol tribes to travel between Tibet and the residence of the Tümed Mongols, presented vast quantities of treasures, and constructed the Yanghua Temple (Ch. Yanghua si 仰華寺, Ti. Theg chen chos 'khor gling, Mo. Čabčiyal süm-e) at the shores of Qinghai Lake, where the khan and the Lama met in 1578. Both Tibetan and Mongolian historians regarded the meeting between the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan as a revival of the “priest-patron relationship” such as between 'Phags pa and Qubilai Khan, thereby establishing the “two systems” (Ti. Lugs Gnyis, “two systems”; Mo. Engke Gilber, “peace and tough”)—the Buddhist government. In this framework, Altan Khan was recognized as a Dharma King, sovereign of the world, and an incarnation of a bodhisattva, which compensated for his lack of legitimate claim to the status of a Great Khan, a role exclusively reserved for the leader of the Čaqar Mongols of the Left Wing.⁸⁰⁶ His efforts ultimately led to the conversion of most Mongols to Tibetan Buddhism, an event known as Mongolia's “Second Conversion” after the Yuan period.⁸⁰⁷ It is notable that Altan Khan's wife Erketü Qatun, who wield great power within the Mongol tribes and played a vital role in

⁸⁰⁴ Hu, “Unruly Mountains: Competing Visions for China's Inner Asian Highland, 1368-1600,” 214; Qian Ping 錢萍, “Zhen luo yanjiu 鄭洛研究” (PhD diss., Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue, 2020), 75, 78-82.

⁸⁰⁵ For the life story of Aśing lam-a and his connection with Altan Khan, see Inoue Osamu 井上治, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū* ホトクタイ=セチェン=ホンタイジの研究 (Tōkyō: Kazama Shobō, 2002), 312-318; Čoyji 喬吉, *Menggu fojiao shi: beiyuan shiqi (1368-1634)* 蒙古佛教史: 北元時期 (1368-1634) (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2008), 7-20.

⁸⁰⁶ Peter Shwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China: A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 31-35. For recent research on the “two systems”, see Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, *Qince jinman: menggu buzhu yu wenhua shi yanjiu* 青冊金鬘: 蒙古部族與文化史研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017), 143-169.

⁸⁰⁷ However, the complete conversion of the Mongols did not occur until the late Ming and early Qing period, which is what Elverskog referred to as the “third conversion,” see Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the state in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 126.

Ming – Mongol communications,⁸⁰⁸ was also bestowed by the Dalai Lama the title “Ārya Tāra,” the incarnation of “Budhisattva Tāra.”⁸⁰⁹

6.1.2 The Longqing Peace Treaty

During its westward expansion, the Mongols of the Right Wing also continuously became involved in conflicts with the Ming. At the time, the Mongols placed greater emphasis on expansion in the nomadic regions, while their need for agricultural areas was, apart from plundering properties, more about establishing long-term peaceful relations with the Ming to secure supplies. They sought tribute and mutual trade in 1532, 1534 and 1541, but all requests were rejected. In this vein, Altan Khan launched an attack against the Ming in 1550, advancing as far as Beijing. Under the pressure of Altan Khan’s threat, the Ming had no choice but to agree to open markets in 1551. However, opposition from the Ming officials to mutual trade quickly resurfaced, and the markets were closed the following year, plunging the Ming and the Mongols into prolonged conflict once again.⁸¹⁰

The situation took a turn in 1570. That year, Altan Khan’s grandson, Bay-a Ači (Ch. Bahan Naji 把漢那吉) surrendered to the Ming due to his conflict with the khan,⁸¹¹ leading to immediate negotiations between the two sides. Ultimately, through the strong demand from the Mongols and the determined impetus of the Grand Secretariat and the decisive action of the Longqing Emperor, the Ming and the Mongols of the Right Wing successfully concluded the peace agreement, known as the Longqing Peace Treaty.⁸¹² During the Ming–Mongol negotiations, the talks between the Tümed and Yüngšiyebü tribes and the Xuanda 宣大 officials proceeded smoothly. From the Ming side, driven forcefully by the Grand Secretariat and the Xuanda officials, the terms of the agreement were quickly settled. However, in the

⁸⁰⁸ For her life story, see Henry Serruys, “Two Remarkable Women in Mongolia: The Third Lady Erketü Qatun and Dayičing-beyiji,” in *The Mongols and Ming China: Customs and History*, ed. Françoise Aubin (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), VIII, 191-245; Johan Elverskog, “What Happened to Queen Jönggen?” in *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society*, ed. Vesna A. Wallace (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3-22.

⁸⁰⁹ Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 121; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 161.

⁸¹⁰ Yu Moying 于默穎, *Mingmeng guanxi yanjiu: yi mingmeng shuangbian zhengce ji mignchao dui menggu de fangyu wei zhongxin* 明蒙關係研究：以明蒙雙邊政策及明朝對蒙古的防禦為中心 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2015), 60-63.

⁸¹¹ Bay-a Ači means “little grandson,” see Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan*, 102-105

⁸¹² Henry Serruys, “Four Documents relating to the Sino-Mongol Peace of 1570-1571,” *Monumenta Serica* 19 (1960): 1-66.

northwestern frontier—the focus of this dissertation—negotiations with the Ordos Mongols reached a deadlock due to opposition from the Shaanxi officials.

During the Jiajing period (1522-1567), the Shaanxi region suffered from invasions by the Ordos Tümen and fell into a difficult situation. However, with the rise of forces such as the Ningxia Submitted Army, which will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 8, the Ming shifted from weakness to strength in Shaanxi, frequently launching attacks against the Mongols, “attacking their home base and stealing the horses (Ch. *daochao ganma* 搗巢趕馬)”,⁸¹³ and achieving a series of military successes. At the same time, the focus of the Ordos Mongols during this period was on the western campaigns against the Oirats. During these western expeditions, most men were away on campaign, leaving only women and children to manage the captured Han Chinese, Tibetans, Oirats and Mongols from other tribes to tend the livestock. Due to the Ming’s policy of encouraging surrender, a large number of slaves fled to the Ming, leading to a labor shortage in the Ordos regions.⁸¹⁴ The Ming’s dominant relationship with the Ordos tribe formed the background for the Ordos Mongols’ efforts to seek peace, which the Ming officials in Shaanxi persistently refused.

In early 1571, Noyandara Ĵinong, son of the Mergen Ĵinong, dispatched his subordinates along with Jin Feng 金奉 and other Ming scouts, who had been sent by the Xuanda officials to facilitate the negotiation between the Mongols and Shaanxi officials, to the city of Yulin to request tribute. He promised that all Ordos chieftains would cease raiding and put forward four specific requests from the Ming: to cease “attacking their home base (Ch. *daochao* 搗巢)”, to repatriate surrendered individuals, to open markets for trade, and to bestow annual rewards to the Mongols.⁸¹⁵

In response to Noyandara Ĵinong’s requests, although the Grand Secretariat expressed agreement, Shaanxi officials, led by Supreme Commander Wang Zhigao 王之誥 (1512-1590), clearly opposed them—particularly those points that concerned to “cease attacking their home

⁸¹³ *Daochao* and *ganma* were two main methods used by the Ming to attack the Mongols, which achieved significant results. For the specific content of these two military actions, see Temur Temule 特木勒, “The Great Wall as Perilous Frontier for the Mongols in 16th Century: Reconsidering Nomadic-Sedentary Relations in Premodern Inner Asia,” *International Journal of Korean History* 21, no. 1 (2016): 131-133.

⁸¹⁴ *Bingbu zoushu*, 232a-233a. For specific research on the lack of labor and resources in Ordos Mongol, see Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji*, 221-247.

⁸¹⁵ *Bingbu zoushu*, 230a.

base”, and to “open markets for trade”. The primary reason for the Shaanxi officials’ opposition was their belief that during the period of the existence of the mutual markets of 1551, Ming merchants had secretly smuggled wrought iron artifacts to the Mongols, who then melted these down to cast weapons, thereby transforming their weakness into strength.⁸¹⁶ Wang Zhigao, who had expressed opposition, was soon promoted in name but effectively demoted to the position of Nanjing Minister of War.⁸¹⁷ His post was taken over by Dai Cai 戴才 (1514-1586), who served as Gansu Grand Coordinator and Shaanxi Grand Coordinator during 1561-1567.⁸¹⁸ At this time, the Mongol side sent Tugči (Ch. Tuhuchi 土忽赤), who was of Han ethnicity, as their negotiator, while the Ming side appointed Li Hua 李花 and others—ethnic Mongols who had surrendered to the Ming—to handle the discussions. Lacking belief and confidence in them due to their non-Han background, the Ming further dispatched the Regiment Commander (Ch. *qianzong* 千總) Zheng Yang 鄭陽 to lead a mission to negotiate with the Ordos Mongols.⁸¹⁹

It is worth noting that Zheng Yang was a Han Chinese who had been captured by the Mongols, later surrendered to the Ming and served as a leader of the Ningxia Submitted Army. Compared with Tugči, who served under the Mongols, and Li Hua, who was ethnically Mongolian, Zheng Yang, as a Chinese, was somewhat more trustworthy. However, it was not entirely sufficient. The primary reason he gained the trust of the Ming court was that, after his surrender, he had fought alongside other leaders of the Ningxia Submitted Army against the Mongols and achieved illustrious military successes, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Following this, despite opposition from Dai Cai, Gu Zhongxu 谷中虛, the Vice Minister of War,⁸²⁰ and others,⁸²¹ the Longqing Emperor ultimately decided to approve the establishment of the mutual markets in Shaanxi.⁸²²

⁸¹⁶ Ibid., 230a-b.

⁸¹⁷ *MMZSL*, j. 52, 1291-1292.

⁸¹⁸ *MSIZSL*, j. 497, 8232; *MMZSL*, j. 15, 411.

⁸¹⁹ *Bingbu zoushu*, 296b.

⁸²⁰ Gu Zhongxu 谷中虛, *Shao sima gu gong wenji* 少司馬穀公文集 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1621), j. *hou* 後, 52b.

⁸²¹ For a list of the officials who opposed the mutual trade agreement, see Jōchi Takashi 城地孝, “Anda fenggong yu longqing wunian (1571) sanyue de Tingyi: jian tan ‘bingbu zoushu’ de shiliao jiazhi 俺答封貢與隆慶五年（1571）三月的廷議——兼談《兵部奏疏》的史料價值,” in *Di shisan jie mingshi guoji xueshu yantao hui lunwen ji* 第十三屆明史國際學術研討會論文集 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2011), 553-554.

⁸²² For the timetable of the negotiations for the Longqing Peace Treaty, see Takashi, “Anda fenggong,” 547-8. For the internal debate within the Ming court regarding the peace agreement with the Ordos Mongols, see Jōchi Takashi 城地孝, *Chōjō to*

Under the framework of the Longqing Peace Treaty, Altan Khan was bestowed the title “Prince of Shunyi”, the Mongols of the Right Wing submitted tribute to the Ming court, while the Ming granted rewards (Serruys refers to them as subsidies) to Mongol leaders. Moreover, regular mutual markets were established along the borders of Shaanxi and Xuanda,⁸²³ with one major market each year and a smaller market each month.⁸²⁴ During these occasions, the Mongols exchanged livestock such as horse, cattle, and sheep with the Ming people for items like preserves, rice, salt, and other foodstuffs, as well as handcrafted goods like textiles, silks, and sewing materials.⁸²⁵ This mutual trade satisfied the Mongols’ need to obtain essential goods from China, thereby neutralizing the motivation for the Mongol invasions of China. Hence, it became instrumental in ensuring peace between the Ming and the Mongols.

Although the Longqing Peace Treaty marked the establishment of peaceful relations between the Ming and the Mongols, pro-war factions within the Ming court did not disappear,⁸²⁶ while frictions and conflicts along the Ming–Mongol border never ceased.⁸²⁷ To maintain this hard-won peace, both sides had to continue investing significant efforts.

Due to major differences in language, culture, and governance systems, both the Ming and the Mongols employed a large number of “intermediary groups”, including monks, merchants, interpreters, as well as defectors and refugees,⁸²⁸ to facilitate communication, negotiations, and the resolution of day-to-day disputes. Among these intermediary figures, the most prominent and strategically crucial were the Ming-appointed *fuyi* officials.

Pekin no chōsei — Mindai naikaku seiji no tenkai to hen'yō 長城と北京の朝政——明代内閣政治の展開と変容 (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2012), 257-288.

⁸²³ For the studies on the tribute and mutual trade, see Henry Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, II. The Tribute System and Diplomatic Missions* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1967); Henry Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, III. Trade Relations: The Horse Fairs (1400-1600)* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1975).

⁸²⁴ *DMHD*, j. 107, 91.

⁸²⁵ Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, III.*, 202-211.

⁸²⁶ Echoing the calls of the pro-war faction, the Ming court introduced the “Nine Frontier Inspection System 九邊閱視制” and implemented Military Reforms in the capital and frontier regions following the Longqing Peace Treaty, aiming to prepare for potential conflicts with the Left- and the Mongols of the Right Wing, see Liu Yong 劉勇, “Mingdai longqing heyi yu jiubian yueshi zhi de sheli ji yunxing 明代隆慶和議與九邊閱視制的設立及運行,” *Zhongguo lishi yanjiuyuan jikan* 中國歷史研究院集刊, no. 6(2022), 153-223; Li Huayan 李華彥, “Longqing zhi wanli chuqi (1567-1583) de jingbian junshi gexin 隆慶至萬曆初期 (1567-1583) 的京邊軍事革新,” *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 52, no. 3 (2022): 471-506.

⁸²⁷ After the Longqing Peace Treaty, the fiercest conflict between the Ming and the Mongols of the Right Wing was the Taohe Crisis, see Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 128-145.

⁸²⁸ Henry Serruys, “Chinese in Southern Mongolia during the Sixteenth century,” *Monumenta Serica* 18 (1959): 35-66, 81-86; Temule, “Yuejing yu jiaotong,” 294-324; Li Qipu 李勤璞, *Houjin shidai he qingchao chuqi zangchuan fojiao *Šamba shi yanjiu* 後金時代和清朝初期藏傳佛教傳播史研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020), 167-217.

Managing mutual trade was the core responsibility of *fuyi* officials, which were established in all four military towns in Shaanxi. According to the provisions of the peace agreement, the Ming successively opened markets at Zhongwei 中衛, Pinglu 平虜, and Qingshui 清水 in Ningxia Town,⁸²⁹ as well as Yulin 榆林 in Yansui Town. These markets were established on the side of the Great Wall closer to the Mongols and were enclosed by walls (see Figure 6.3 and 6.4). However, in response to Mongol demands, especially after the 1573 departure of Dai Cai, who had fiercely opposed the opening of the mutual markets, the Ming sometimes also opened markets in other locations at Ningxia and Yansui, as well as at Suzhou, Biandu Pass, and Zhuanglang of Gansu, and Huangzhou of Guyuan.⁸³⁰

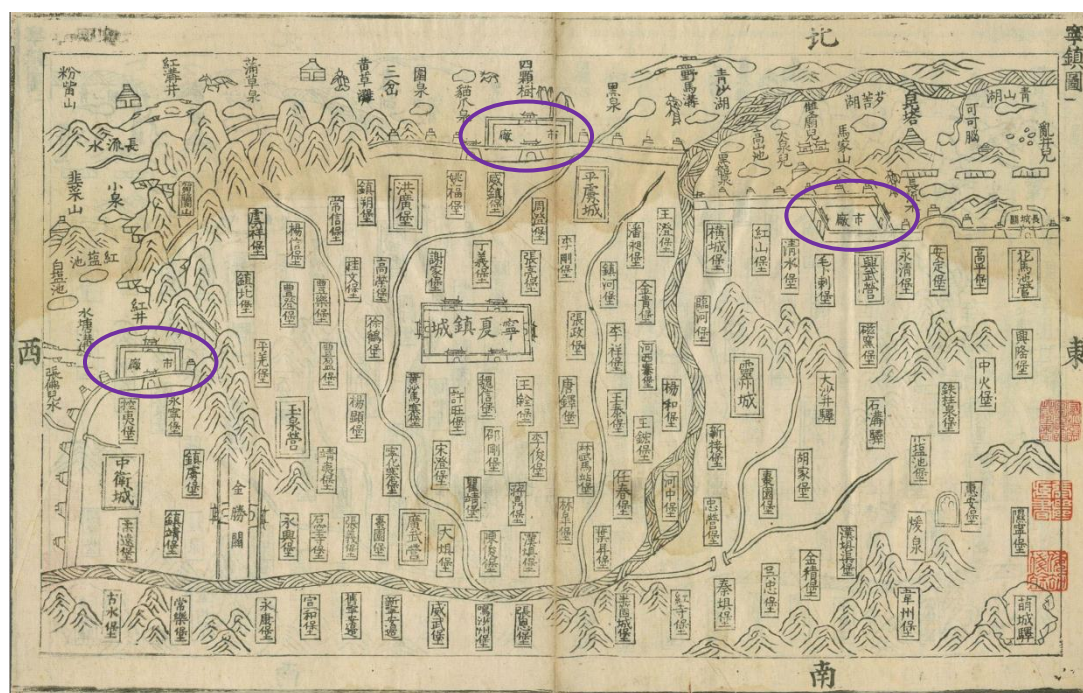


Figure 6.3. “Ningzhen tu 寧鎮圖,” in *Shanxi sizhen tushuo* 陝西四鎮圖說. National Central Library of Taiwan, Ming Period (1368-1644).

⁸²⁹ For detailed information about these three markets, see Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming*. III., 169, 177, 180.

⁸³⁰ Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji*, 182-191; Hu, “Unruly Mountains,” 207-211; Long Ying 龍鷹, *Long ying ji* 龍鷹集, annotated by Liang Songcheng 梁頌成 and Liu Mengchu 劉夢初 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2011), 142; Yu Tongyuan 余同元, “Ming houqi changcheng yanxian de minzu maoyi shichang 明後期長城沿線的民族貿易市場,” *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, no. 5 (1995): 55-70; Cao, *Mingdai menggu shi congkao*, 113-126; Qu Rushuo 瞿汝說 ed., *Huangming chenlüe zuanwen* 皇明臣略纂聞, in *Siku jinhui shu congkan bubian* 四庫禁毀書叢刊補編, vol. 17 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2001), j. 6, 67.

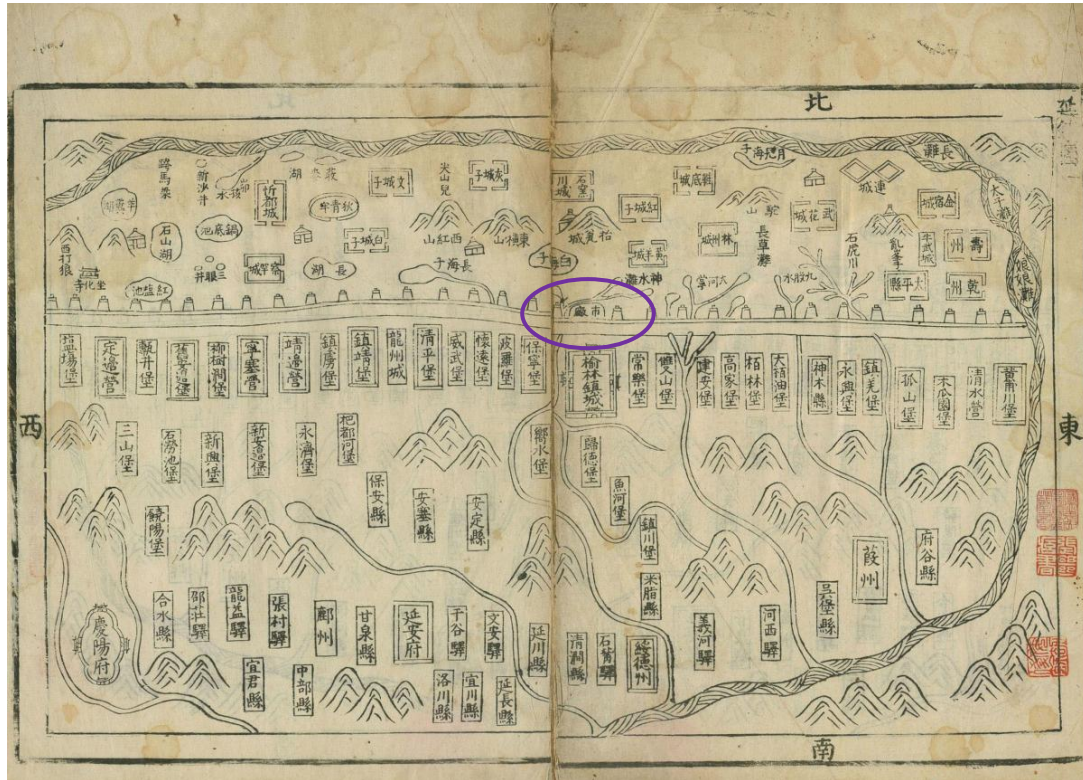


Figure 6.4. “Yanzhen tu 延鎮圖,” in *Shanxi sizhen tushuo* 陝西四鎮圖說. National Central Library of Taiwan, Ming Period (1368-1644).

Each town established *fuyi* officials to manage the mutual markets. In Ningxia, the generals of the Ningxia Submitted Army were designated to serve as the *fuyi* officials, holding positions such as the Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs (Ch. *zongli yiqing youji* 總理夷情遊擊), Municipal Military Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs (Ch. *zongli yiqing shoubei* 總理夷情守備) and Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi shoubei* 撫夷守備), which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8. As a supporting facility, an office for the *fuyi* officials was also set up.⁸³¹

In Yansui, the local government also established number of official positions, such as the Assistant Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi canjiang* 撫夷參將), the Military Official in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi dushi* 撫夷都司), and the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification and Regiment Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi qianzong* 撫夷千總). Additionally, a Pacification Rewards Storehouse (Ch. *fushang ku*

⁸³¹ WLSFXZ, j. 2, 179

撫賞庫) and a Barbarian Goods Storehouse (Ch. *yihuo ku* 夷貨庫) were created to store rewards, tribute and commodities for the mutual trade. A Pacification Reception Hall (Ch. *fuyi ting* 撫夷廳) was also built to host Mongol chieftains arriving for tribute missions, and a specialized military force was organized to oversee the markets.⁸³²

The mutual markets in Gansu were not initially scheduled under the original peace framework but were instead opened later in reaction to the requests from the Mongols. These markets were managed by a newly established position—the Military Official in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi dushi* 撫夷都司), along with other previously established Gansu *fuyi* officials.⁸³³

Similarly, the markets in Guyuan operated without fixed schedules or locations. Guyuan Town originally established *fuyi* officials such as the “(Barbarian) Buddhist Official in Charge of Pacification” (Ch. *fuyi guanseng* 撫夷官僧 or *fuyi fanseng* 撫夷番僧) to administer Xifan affairs,⁸³⁴ and set up a “market for Xifan” (Ch. *fanchang* 番廠) to conduct trade with them.⁸³⁵ It is likely that the markets with the Mongols were also managed by these *fuyi* officials.

A memorial from Zhang Jiuyi 張九一 (1533-1598), the Ningxia Grand Coordinator from 1583 to 1586,⁸³⁶ provides a comprehensive account of Ming–Mongol trade from a Ming perspective, shedding light on the responsibilities of the *fuyi* official throughout the trade proceedings:

I dispatched official envoys to areas like Hetao and Shanhou to coordinate and summon the Mongol chieftains for mutual trade. Moreover, I asked Commissioners and Assistant Prefects to transport tributary rewards, banquet supplies and commodities to the market, allowing people to trade. Furthermore, they were instructed to strictly warn merchants and civilians

⁸³² WLYSZZ, j. 2, 108, 128; j. 3, 184; j. 8, 635; Liu Minkuan 劉敏寬, *Dingyuan ji* 定園集 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1612), j. 31, 70b-71a.

⁸³³ Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 6, 55b; j. 9, 39a; j. 11, 44b, 51a; j. 12, 16a.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., j. 12, 36a. 1. Those *fuyi* positions were appointed to the Buddhists. For example, it is recorded that both Great and Little Bao Dbon po (Ch. *da xiao Bao Wan Bu* 大小包完卜) served as Buddhist Officials in Charge of Pacification, while Dbon po in Tibetan means “monastery supervisor.” It reveals that the manager of the monastery was same as, or at least had relations with, the chieftain of the Xifan tribes. See Zhang, *Yuandai tubo difang xingzheng tizhi yanjiu*, 304; Du Changshun 杜常順, “Lüe lun zangchuan fojiao qianqi jiaotuan de jiatinghua tezheng yu jiazuxing zhengjiao heyi tizhi 略論藏傳佛教前期教團的家庭化特徵與家族性政教合一體制,” *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究, no. 1 (1999): 280-285.

⁸³⁵ KXGCFZ, j. 16, 400.

⁸³⁶ MSZSL, j. 134, 2493; j. 171, 3111.

against smuggling prohibited items such as saltpeter and steel. Additionally, Vice Regional Commander Liu Zi, along with Assistant Commanders and Mobile Corps Commanders like Tang Yaofu, Chen Tianfu, Feng Dazhu, and Jiang He, managed their respective troops and positioned them at vital locations. Mobile Corps Commanders and other officials like Zhang Xin and Cui Zhangming, along with their retainers equipped with firearms, maintained vigilance day and night to protect the market. Yang Chao, the Commander of the Army of the Centre of the Main Military Camp and the original Regional Military Commander, and others, were in charge of the troops, positioned near the fortress and taking precautions for unexpected situations. Zheng Yang, the Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs, and others frequently visited the enemy camps, discussing market conditions and evaluating the value of goods. Yong Shu, the Commander and the Imperial Agent of the Supreme Commander of Military Affairs, and Sha Yang, the Battalion Commander and the Imperial Agent of Ningxia, regularly inspected, ensuring fair trade between the Chinese and Barbarians without disputes or provocations. I, along with the Regional Commander Liu Chengsi, the Administration Vice Commissioner in Charge of a Tax Circuit in Ningxia and Hexi, and Zhao Weiqing, the Vice Minister of Branch Courts of the Imperial Stud and the Administration Vice Commissioner Guo Ru, coordinated and managed ... I commanded the Mobile Corps Commander Zheng Yang and others to bring chieftains into the market, proclaiming the grace and power of the imperial court. They then proceeded to bow and express gratitude before the altar of "Long Live the Emperor". As per tradition, they were hosted with a banquet, discussions on horse trading took place, and all laws were meticulously adhered to, ensuring peace and tranquility throughout. After the market concluded, they were once again treated to a banquet, expressing their gratitude towards the benevolence of the imperial court, joyfully receiving and thanking for the kindness [of the court]. They were then directed to return to their homes.

臣即選差官通小廝漢等分投前去河套、山後等處，傳調酋夷互市。仍行該道並通判等官，各將應市撫賞、宴待、貨物僸運市廩，聽其交易，及出示嚴禁商民不許夾帶硝黃、

銅鐵等項違禁之物。仍調副總兵劉滋、參遊等官唐堯輔、陳天福、馮大柱、姜河等各統兵馬，設伏要害，遊擊等官張昕、崔張名等各帶家丁、火器，日夜防範護市。正兵營中軍原任都司楊朝等各統兵馬，分布臨近城堡，設奇以防不虞。總理夷情遊擊鄭賜等往來虜營，講說市情，評品價值。總督軍門原差旗牌官指揮雍綬，本鎮旗牌官千戶沙楊不時巡察，務令華夷兩平交易，不許爭擾啟釁。臣會同總兵官劉承嗣、督同寧夏河西兵糧副使趙惟卿、行太仆寺少卿兼理河東兵糧副使郭汝綜理調度……嚴令遊擊鄭賜等將各酋延入夷廠，宣諭朝廷恩威，即詣萬歲台香案前叩頭謝恩。照例宴待，講易馬價，謹守法度，自始至終，安靜無擾。市畢之後，仍各宴賞，感戴朝廷撫賚，歡呼領受謝恩。遣諭歸巢。⁸³⁷

It is evident from this report that besides the *fuyi* officials, other officials were primarily responsible for managing Han merchants and ensuring safety during trade. In contrast, the *fuyi* Official Zheng Yang, titled the Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs, was responsible for negotiating prices with the Mongols, addressing disputes in trade, hosting Mongol chieftains, and explaining a series of rituals imposed upon them by the Ming court. It indicates that interactions between the Ming and the Mongols were almost entirely overseen by the *fuyi* officials and their subordinates.

Beyond managing the mutual markets, another vital role of the *fuyi* officials laid in communicating with the Mongols and resolving day-to-day conflicts. Two notable examples include Mani Bulat, a *fuyi* official of Suzhou, and the group of Ningxia *fuyi* officials who originated from the Ningxia Submitted army, which will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively.

6.2 The crises of Xining, Taohe and Babai

After the conclusion of the Longqing Peace Treaty, the Mongols of the Right Wing led by Altan Khan accelerated their expansion into the present-day Xinjiang region, and around 1574, they incorporated the Oirats into their rule, enfeoffing them to Budaširi, son of Altan Khan and

⁸³⁷ Zhang Jiuyi 張九一, *Lübo lou ji* 綠波樓集, in *Ming bieji congkan* 明別集叢刊, ser. 3, vol. 21 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2016), j. 10, 334.

Erketü Qatun.⁸³⁸ Simultaneously, Altan Khan converted to Tibetan Buddhism in 1571, thereafter accelerating connections with the Tibetan region, and in 1578, he met with the Third Dalai Lama in Qinghai, establishing the “two systems” of governance and religion, as discussed before.

Altan Khan’s westward expansion triggered a westward migration of Mongol tribes. As the result, Qolači, a nephew of Altan Khan and the leader of the Doloyan Tümen tribe of the Tümed Tümen,⁸³⁹ and Bingtū, son of Altan Khan and the leader of the Uiyürčün tribe of the Tümed Tümen,⁸⁴⁰ occupied areas of Qinghai, while Bintü (~ Bingtū), grandson of Mergen Jīnong,⁸⁴¹ occupied Song Mountain 松山, located to the south of Ningxia and north of Qinghai, seizing the crucial passageways for the Mongols’ entry into Tibet. The westward expansion movement of the Mongols led to the westward relocation of the mutual trade markets, a troublesome problem for the Ming officials.⁸⁴² At the same time, the Mongols repeatedly demanded rewards, imposing a considerable economic burden on the Ming.⁸⁴³ Nevertheless, overall, the Ming–Mongol peace agreement functioned normally during 1571-1582, and although occasional friction arose, they were properly resolved under the management of Altan Khan. The exchanges between the Ming and the Mongols during this time were primarily in the religious sphere, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

After the death of Altan Khan in 1582, the geopolitical landscape of Inner Asia underwent significant changes. Firstly, following his death, the Mongols of the Right Wing lacked a leader who could command universal allegiance. Within the Tümed Mongols, Erketü Qatun seized the right to manage the mutual trade with the Ming, which led to her conflicts with successive rulers of Tümed Tümen holding the title of Prince of Shunyi.⁸⁴⁴

⁸³⁸ Čoyji, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 113.

⁸³⁹ For an introduction to his life, see Wakamatsu Hiroshi 若松寛, “Bumatsu Naimōko Tūmettojin no Kōkai chiku shinshutsu: Horochīnoyan no jiseki 明末内蒙古土默特人の青海地区進出-ホロチーノヤンの事跡,” *Kyōto Furitsu Daigaku Gakujutsu Hōkoku “Jinbun”* 京都府立大學學術報告「人文」, no. 37 (1985): 87-96.

⁸⁴⁰ Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan*, 88; Morikawa, *Monggu zhu buzū*, 136.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

⁸⁴² Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming. II.*, 308-332.

⁸⁴³ Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming. III.*, 176-186.

⁸⁴⁴ See Yu Moying 于默穎, “Mingdai menggu Prince of Shunyi de cefeng yu sifeng 明代蒙古順義王的冊封與嗣封,” *Neimenggu shehui kexue (hanwen ban)* 內蒙古社會科學（漢文版）, no. 5 (2008): 50-54.

Secondly, the Doloyan Tümen tribe and the Ordos Tümen also ceased to obey the commands of the Tümed leader and began to act independently. The previous model of communication and interaction under which the Prince of Shunyi, namely Altan Khan, who personally conducted overall negotiations with the Ming on daily matters and punished the Mongol chiefs who violated the rules of the treaty, no longer existed. Instead, the Ming had to deal directly with the leaders of various tribes, which will be discussed in detail later.

Thirdly, while the westward-moving Mongols of the Right Wing plundered the Oirats, they also raided tribute missions escorted by the Yarkand Khanate, triggering conflicts in the Western Regions every five years. Furthermore, the Oirat tribes detached themselves from the control of the Right-ring Mongols, formed an alliance under the leadership of Bübei Mirzai, and united with the Yarkand Khanate to jointly resist the Mongols of the Right Wing.⁸⁴⁵

The pressure from the Oirats and the Yarkand Khanate confined the Mongols of the Right Wing to the Shule River area, making it difficult for them to advance further toward Hami. As a result, the Mongols had no choice but to expand their influence into Qinghai. After large numbers of Mongol tribes migrated into Qinghai, conflicts with the local Xifan people gradually intensified, which, furthermore, brought about Ming–Mongol conflicts.

Among all the conflicts, what were called the crises of Xining, Taohe and Ningxia by Ming sources were the fiercest and destroyed the trust between the Ming and the Mongols. In 1588, the so-called Xining Crisis occurred. Li Kui 李魁, the Gansu Vice Regional Commander, had managed Ming–Mongol relations in Xining since 1587.⁸⁴⁶ He was said to be exceptionally brave, earning the admiration of the most powerful Mongol leader in Qinghai—Qolači, who “swore brotherhood” (Ch. *jie wei xiongdi* 結為兄弟) with him.⁸⁴⁷ In 1588, the Oirat Tabunang, a leader of Yüngšiyebü tribe,⁸⁴⁸ cooperated with Li Kui in pursuing a tribal leader named “White Monk (Ch. Bai Heshang 白和尚),” who had stolen horses from the Mongols. However, during the process, Li Kui concealed the best horses for himself, which caused deep resentment from both Oirat Tabunang and White Monk. Later, when Oirat Tabunang came to raid the Xifan

⁸⁴⁵ See Lu, “‘Taohe zhi bian’ yu ‘longqing heyi,’” 129-140.

⁸⁴⁶ *MSZSL*, j. 190, 3565.

⁸⁴⁷ Cui, “Chushu gao,” vol. 2, 23-24.

⁸⁴⁸ Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 131-135.

tribes, he was attacked by Li Kui, on the pretext of protecting the Xifan tribes. Although Oirat Tabunang had already agreed to return the captured people and livestock and performed the oath-swearing ritual by drilling a sword, Li Kui refused to let him off easily and pursued him relentlessly. This led Li Kui into an ambush, resulting in his death and the complete annihilation of his forces.⁸⁴⁹

In 1590, another crisis, this time the so-called Taohe Crisis occurred. Early in 1589, Čürüge, a grandson of Altan Khan and the third Prince of Shunyi, was invited by Qolači to the Gansu region under the pretext of seeking revenge against the Oirats. Along the way, he repeatedly demanded rewards from the Ming. The Ming, unable to meet these demands, shifted the costs of the mutual trade to merchants from Shanxi and Shaanxi. Dissatisfied, these merchants eventually joined forces with the Oirats and Yarkand Khanate to fight against Čürüge. Ming soldiers, whose salaries were frequently used to reward the Mongols, also set off to repel the invading Mongols. Frustrated, Čürüge abandoned the western expedition against the Oirats and instead moved into Qinghai, joining Qolači in plundering the local Xifan peoples. To expand his influence, Qolači launched a direct attack on the Ming's Taohe area, causing huge casualties on both sides. Following this incident, large numbers of forces from Ordos set out, attempting to reach Qinghai to support Qolači. In response, the Ming's strategy was to station troops at the strategic passes to block the Mongol forces from entering Qinghai, while externally allying with the Oirats and the Yarkand Khanate to secure the Ordos forces. As a result, pursued by the Ming army, Qolači withdrew from the Taohe area and fled far into Qinghai and then the Central Tibet. Meanwhile, Bušuytu Ĵinong, who had come to provide support, was decisively defeated in a joint attack by the Ming forces, the Oirats, and the Yarkand Khanate.⁸⁵⁰

Finally, in 1592, the Ningxia Crisis occurred, during which rebel Chinese soldiers cooperated with the leaders of the Ningxia Submitted Army, killing the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Dang Xin 党馨 and other officials because of their abuse of subordinates. While the detail of this crisis will be discussed in Chapter 8, here I would like to mention that during the crisis, the leaders of the Ningxia Submitted Army tried to communicate and cooperate with

⁸⁴⁹ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 159-160. For an extensive depiction of this crisis, see Lu, "Fu wei shi er zhan bu xiu," 70-77.

⁸⁵⁰ See Lu, "'Taohe zhi bian'yu 'longqing heyi'," 137-144.

the Tümed Mongols and the Ordos Mongols. Čürüge and Sečen Beyiǰi (Ch. Qiejin Biji 切盡妣吉) of the Ordos Tümen refused their proposal, while Bušuytu Ĵinong agreed and engaged in the situation.⁸⁵¹ In the end, the rebel of the Chinese soldier and the Ningxia Submitted Army was repelled while the peace agreement between the Ordos Mongols and the Ming totally broke up. In conclusion, the crises of Xining, Taohe and Babai caused heavy casualties on both the Ming and Mongol sides, dimming the prospects for peace agreement. To rebuild the peace relations, both sides needed again to make great efforts, even though its upkeep was in the mutual interest of both sides.

6.3 The reestablishment of peace

After the Taohe Crisis, Čürüge gained the Ming's forgiveness by capturing and presenting Shi Er'guan 史二官, a subordinate tribal leader who had betrayed the Ming and submitted to the Tümed Mongols, thus enabling him to continue mutual trade with the Ming.⁸⁵² Later, during the Ningxia Crisis, he insisted on the peace agreement and refused the request for assistance from the rebel army.⁸⁵³ The later trade between the Ming and the Tümed Mongol remained generally stable.⁸⁵⁴

The Ordos Tümen, however, on the one hand, no longer obeyed the orders of the Prince of Shunyi, and on the other hand, the authority of the Ĵinong had significantly declined and he had lost the ability to control the tribes.⁸⁵⁵ Therefore, the negotiation between the Ming and the Ordos Mongols become more and more difficult. Since their participation of the crisis of Ningxia, the Ordos Mongols were refused the right to pay the tribute and trade in the border markets. In 1596 and 1600, the Ordos Tümen sought to resume peace relations, but continued raids and incursions carried out by its subordinate tribes prevented any lasting settlement.⁸⁵⁶ In 1601, the Ordos Tümen once again requested the restoration of the trade agreement. Then in

⁸⁵¹ Mei Guozhen 梅國楨, *Xizhengji* 西征集 (Tōkyō: National Archives of Japan, 1638), j. 3, 3a-b; *WLWGL*, j. 1, 10-13.

⁸⁵² Temur Temule 特木勒, "Jiafeng Zhong de jueze: duoyan biebu zai mingmeng zhijian de bianqian 夾縫中的抉擇: 朵顏別部在明蒙之間的變遷," *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, no. 26 (2014): 171.

⁸⁵³ *WLWGL*, j. 1, 10-13.

⁸⁵⁴ *MSZSL*, j. 436, 8241-2.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, j. 369, 6909.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, j.369, 6900-6901

the following year, under the strong impetus of the Grand Secretariat, the Wanli Emperor finally approved their request, opening the markets in Yansui and Ningxia.⁸⁵⁷

To conduct the mutual trade and resolve the conflicts between the Ming and the Ordos Tümen, in the Yansu Town, the Ming transferred the experienced *fuyi* official Mani Bulat (or Ma Yingshi 馬應時, an Uyghur from the Hami Guard, see details in Chapter 7) to the position of Assistant Commander in Charge of Pacification.⁸⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Li Rong 李榮, the Municipal Military Commander of Dabaiyou Fort 大柏油堡, who was known for his resourcefulness, courage and experience, was reassigned as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification.⁸⁵⁹

In Ningxia, following the Ningxia Crisis, Wu Jilü 吳繼呂, an in-law of the leader of the Ningxia Submitted Army (to be further discussed in Chapter 8), succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification. However, he was soon impeached for colluding with the Mongols to demand additional rewards from the Ming.⁸⁶⁰ His position of the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification was then filled by other officers who had rendered meritorious service during the Ningxia Crisis.⁸⁶¹ Additionally, another position of the Judge in Charge of Pacification Envoys and Retainers (Ch. *zhuan guan fuyi tongding zhenfu* 專管撫夷通丁鎮撫) was established to divide the authority of the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification.⁸⁶² These *fuyi* officials again attempted to rebuild peace agreements with the Mongols and pursue rebel forces that had fled to Mongol territories after the Ningxia Crisis. However, due to a series of subsequent conflicts, these efforts ultimately failed.⁸⁶³ This situation illustrates an inherent contradiction in the *fuyi* system: those *fuyi* officials capable of resolving Ming–Mongol disputes often became, as the Ming saw it, too closely affiliated with the Mongols, even to the point of collusion, while those without prior

⁸⁵⁷ Shen Yiguan 沈一貫, *Jingshi cao* 敬事草 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming period (1368-1644)), j. 2, 16a-18a.

⁸⁵⁸ MSZSL, j. 369, 6910-1; Zheng Rubi 鄭汝璧, *Yougeng tang ji* 由庚堂集, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書, *ji bu* 集部, vol. 1356 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 674-675.

⁸⁵⁹ Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j. 29, 5-6. Li Rong came from Suide 綏德, for an introduction to his life, see WLYSZZ, j.3, 242; j.4, 366; MAZSL, j.444, 8438; j.494, 9307; KXYSSZ, 382.

⁸⁶⁰ See details on this in Chapter 8.

⁸⁶¹ They were Liu Jijue 劉繼爵, Xiong Yanji 熊彥吉 and Jiang Tingfu 江廷輔, see WLSFXZ, j. 2, 124.

⁸⁶² Zhou Guanggao 周光鎬, *Ming nongshan tang ji* 明農山堂集 (Hongkong: Boshi yuan chubanshe, 2013), j. 31, 491.

⁸⁶³ Ibid., j. 27, 427-428.

connections to the Mongols lacked the necessary rapport to communicate effectively and achieve peace.⁸⁶⁴ In 1602, when the Ming reestablished peace relations with the Ordos Mongols, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Huang Jiashan 黃嘉善 (1549-1624) proposed to elevate the position of the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification to Regional Military Commander in Charge of Pacification.⁸⁶⁵ However, this proposal was not approved. Subsequently, Ningxia successively appointed the *fuyi* officials Zhao Weihan 趙維翰,⁸⁶⁶ and Zhang Shu 張曙 responsible for the tribute trade,⁸⁶⁷ which ensured the smooth operation of the tribute trade in the Ningxia region.

In 1602, the first year of the reopening of the border market, the Ordos Tümen duly presented their horse tribute and were awaiting the imperial rewards at the border when seven Tayiji (noblemen) suddenly demanded additional rewards equal to that accorded to their nominal leader, the J̄inong. After the refusal of their demands from the Chinese side, these seven Tayiji, who ignored the advice of Bušuytu J̄inong and Sečen Beyiji, immediately launched raids on Yansui, engaging in fierce battles with the Ming forces.⁸⁶⁸ Apart from the rebellious Tayiji, Bušuytu J̄inong and other chieftains were also observing the situation, ready to request additional rewards if the opportunity arose.⁸⁶⁹ In response, Ming officials decided that those who remained compliant would be allowed to continue mutual trade under the supervision of the *fuyi* officials as usual while others will be punished.⁸⁷⁰

At this time, three powerful tribal groups were most responsible for the raids in the Ordos region: in the west, Qolači (Ch. Huoluochi 火落赤), nephew of Sečen Qung Tayiji;⁸⁷¹ in the central region, Buyantai (Ch. Baiyantai 擺言太); and in the east, Saji (Ch. Shaji 沙計).⁸⁷² They alternated between seeking peace and rebelling, continuously inciting conflicts in Yansui. Additionally, Sečen Beyiji, a powerful leader in Ordos who overtook the command after the death of her husband Sečen Qung Tayiji (Ch. Qiejin Huangtaiji 切盡黃台吉) in 1587, was a

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid., j. 28, 427-428.

⁸⁶⁵ Huang Jiashan 黃嘉善, *Fuxia zouyi* 撫夏奏議 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming dynasty), j. 1, 16b.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid., j. 1, 3, 15; j. 2, 37, 50; j. 3, 64, 90.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., j. 4, 107; j. 5, 145; j. 6, 164, 190.

⁸⁶⁸ Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j. 29, 4.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid., j. 30, 21-22.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., j. 29, 1-2.

⁸⁷¹ He is not the Qolači of the Doloyan Tümen mentioned before.

⁸⁷² For the lives of those three individuals, see Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 108-113.

key figure in Ming–Mongol communication. The aforementioned three leaders all communicated with the Ming through Sečen Beyiji, relying on her to seek redemption, offer tribute, conduct mutual trade, and accept penalties on their behalf.⁸⁷³ Furthermore, in the Shanhou region, the tribes of Yeldeng and Dayičing were also powerful forces, maintaining an ambiguous relationship with the Ming, and similarly oscillating between peace and war.⁸⁷⁴

The conflicts between these groups and the Ming primarily stemmed from the two sides' inability to reach an agreement on the amount of "pacification rewards (Ch. *fushang* 撫賞)". On the one hand, due to the increase in the number of Mongol nobles, the Mongols demanded higher rewards.⁸⁷⁵ On the other hand, Ming officials in Charge of Pacification often increased the rewards to expedite agreements.⁸⁷⁶ However, the Ming court, suffering from a collapse in the salt administration and other financial issues, found it difficult to secure more funds, as the Shanxi merchants involved in the tribute trade were already overburdened and unable to provide additional financial support.⁸⁷⁷ Furthermore, when purchasing and preparing market goods, Ming officials only supplied products of medium or inferior quality, which provoked dissatisfaction among the Mongols.⁸⁷⁸

Afterwards, relations between the Ming and the Ordos Tümen broke down again, with Qolači, Buyantai, and Sajī continuing to raid the border. In response, the Ming implemented two countermeasures. Firstly, aiming to counteract the invading Mongol tribes, the Ming utilized Mongols who had gone over to them to gain detailed intelligence on their movements and plans, and pre-arranged ambushes with Mongolian retainers who served the Ming and were effective in open combat, achieving a series of victories. Secondly, to check the invading

⁸⁷³ *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4915; Gu Qizhi 顧其志, *Gu da sima choushan cundu leichao* 顧大司馬籌陝存牘類抄 (Beijing: National Library of China, 1671), j. xia 下, 100a-101a. The Sečen Beyiji family maintained close relations with the Ming. In her interactions with Ming officials, Sečen Beyiji often recalled the positive relationship her husband, Sečen Qung Tayiji, had with the Ming court. The Mongolian word *sečen* or *cečen* means "wise" or "intelligent." Ming officials interpreted this title as "one who comprehends all principles." See Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j.37, 86-87,89.

⁸⁷⁴ Huang, *Fuxia zouyi* 撫夏奏議, annotated by Hu Yubing 胡玉冰 and Yao Yuting 姚玉婷 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2022), j.5, 129. For research on the tribes of Yeldeng and Dayičing, see Li Tiefu 李鐵夫, "Guanyu mingdai gansu beibu de menggu 'yinding, daicheng buluo' 關於明代甘肅北部的蒙古'銀定、歹成部落'," *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, forthcoming.

⁸⁷⁵ Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j.29, 1. Huang, *Fuxia zouyi*, j. 1, 9-10.

⁸⁷⁶ Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j.29, 1-2; *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4917.

⁸⁷⁷ *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4919-4921. For the financial issues of the Ming in pacification activities, see Qiu Zhonglin 邱仲麟, "Mingdai de wuliangha san wei fushagn ji qi jingfei zhi choucuo 明代的兀良哈三衛撫賞及其經費之籌措," *Mingdai yanjiu* 明代研究, no. 27 (2016): 1-69.

⁸⁷⁸ Huang, *Fuxia zouyi*, j. 3, 68-71.

Mongols, the Ming decided to establish a separate market with ǰangtulai in the east to contain Saǰi; simultaneously, they summoned Sečen Dayičing from the central region of Ordos, appointing him as the “Market Supervisor” (Ch. *jianzhi guan* 監市官), while also recruiting Bumbai from the central region to negotiate peace, thereby dividing and restraining Buyantai. As for Qolači in the western region, Sečen Beyiji was tasked with persuading him to not invade the Ming territory. This strategy soon proved effective in splitting the Ordos forces.⁸⁷⁹

Later, in 1606, when Qolači, Buyantai, and Saǰi invaded Yansui, the Ming were able to defeat them. Subsequently, they followed Sečen Beyiji in admitting their faults and accepting punishment. Thereupon, the Ming acted in accordance with the agreement of 1602, sending the annual rewards to the Mongol leaders depending on whether they raided or kept the peace since 1602. For the additional rewards demanded by the Mongol tribes, the Ming dispatched a *fuyi* official Li Rong and others to negotiate.⁸⁸⁰ Furthermore, the *fuyi* officials were instructed to strictly control the quality of horses.⁸⁸¹ Following this, the fundamental strategy of the Ming was as follows: if any chieftain rebelled, his rewards and trade privileges would be revoked, while those of other chieftains remained unchanged; if a chieftain submitted in spring but rebelled in autumn, he would be appeased with rewards in spring and suppressed in autumn; if he submitted one year and rebelled the next, he would be rewarded in the first year and attacked in the next.⁸⁸²

Thereafter, tribes such as those of Qolači and Saǰi continued to frequently request excessive rewards and launch incursions, especially after the death of Sečen Beyiji around 1611.⁸⁸³ After the Ming cut off their rewards, they would send envoys to seek reconciliation, admit their offenses, and accept punishment. Once the Ming forgave and rewarded them, they would

⁸⁷⁹ *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4909-11.

⁸⁸⁰ *MSZSL*, j. 432, 8469-82; *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4915-18.

⁸⁸¹ *MJSWB*, j. 448, 4930.

⁸⁸² *MJSWB*, j. 447, 4918; Huang, *Fuxia zouyi*, j.1, 8.

⁸⁸³ Liu, *Dingyuan ji*, j. 18, 49a-49b.

repeatedly invade again.⁸⁸⁴ This cycle was repeated until the Ordos tribes were attacked by Ligdan Khan around 1630 and later conquered by the Qing state.⁸⁸⁵

Another two towns of Shaanxi—Gansu and Guyuan—saw a sustained confrontation with Qolači of the Doloyan Tümen. After the Taohe Crisis, Qolači was active near Xining, north of the Yellow River. He consistently sought connections with Tibetan Buddhist elites, striving to gain support from the upper echelons of the Gelug school to expand his religious and social influence.⁸⁸⁶ In 1594, he invited the Stong 'khor Tulku to his yurt and presented him with a large quantity of livestock, treasures, and valuables.⁸⁸⁷ Thereafter, his influence gradually extended back to the Mangla River 莽刺川, and the Niegong River 捏工川 and areas south of the Yellow River. In 1605, his family established a patron-priest relationship with Rong bo Monastery, one of the most influential monasteries located in today's Longwu Town 隆務鎮.⁸⁸⁸ In 1606, his family led pilgrims and troops into Central Tibet.⁸⁸⁹

As Qolači gradually returned to the areas south of the Yellow River, numerous conflicts arose again between him and the Ming. In the spring of 1604, Qolači led his men across the frozen Yellow River, plundering various Xifan tribes.⁸⁹⁰ Subsequently, he actively courted Cuoha 挫哈 and Sidaling 思打令, two Ming-aligned Xifan tribes. The tribe of Cuoha had previously been in conflict with the tribe of Langjia 郎家, which led the Ming court to send officials to conduct mediation. However, the tribe of Cuoha refused to comply with the Ming officials' judgement, and even escalated to armed clashes with Ming troops. The incident ultimately ended with Cuoha leaders "repenting of their crimes and accepting punishment", as well as handing over three ringleaders.⁸⁹¹ However, the seeds of discontent had already been sown in the tribe of Cuoha. Therefore, when Qolači invaded in 1604, people from the tribe of

⁸⁸⁴ MSZSJ, j.484, 9121; j.495, 9313; j.537, 10183; j. 546, 10350; j.553, 10447; j.557, 10513; j.558, 10536; j.559, 10547; MXZSL, j.11, 552; j.11, 571; j.35, 1827; j.73, 3526; Gu, *Gu da sima choushan*, j. xia 下, 96b-11b; Liu, *Dingyuan ji*, j, 31, 95b-96a

⁸⁸⁵ Walther Heissig, *Die Zeit des letzten mongolischen Großkhans Ligdan (1604–1634)* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 1979), 33-40.

⁸⁸⁶ Cairang 才讓, "'Di ba fawang zhuan' suo zai mingmo mengzang gaunxi shishi kaoshu 《第巴法王傳》所載明末蒙藏民族關係史事考述," *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學, no. 3 (2023): 47-50.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁸⁸⁸ Xu, "Mingdai longwu he," 129.

⁸⁸⁹ Wushi dalai lama, *Yishi–sishi dalai lama zhuan*, 307.

⁸⁹⁰ Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 62a.

⁸⁹¹ MSZSL, j.416, 7832; Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 65a-66b.

Cuoha served as his guides in the region.⁸⁹² As for the Sidaling tribe, they had already cooperated with the Mongols as early as 1596. At this time, they falsely claimed to the Ming that they have been plundered and many tribesmen have been taken away, while in reality, their chieftain had voluntarily led half of the tribe to defect to the Mongols.⁸⁹³

Faced with this situation, Ming officials considered the reestablishment of peace with Qolači in Guyuan, but the proposal was rejected by Gu Qizhi 顧其志 (1546-1612), the Shaanxi Grand Coordinator 陝西巡撫 from 1603 to 1609.⁸⁹⁴ Indeed, Qolači had begun seeking a peace agreement as early as 1599, but the Ming court maintained an ambiguous attitude of “agreeing to a truce is acceptable, but not agreeing is also acceptable.”⁸⁹⁵ Later in 1608, in response to Qolači’s request for a peace agreement, Gu Qizhi denied him again, arguing that the Ming had never agreed to establish a mutual market with the Mongols in Guyuan Town or to reward Mongol leaders in the region, and that it lacked the personnel and facilities required for such arrangements.⁸⁹⁶

Qolači then constructed a fortress north of the Yellow River and built a large temple inside, continuously strengthening his religious influence, while he also erected a bridge over the Yellow River to facilitate travel.⁸⁹⁷ In response to Qolači’s expansion, the Ming prepared to use frontier tribes to resist him. Therefore, *fuyi* officials were assigned to manage both the submitted non-Han people and the Xifan tribes.⁸⁹⁸ In 1608, Gu Qizhi decided to burn the bridge to cut off Qolači’s route to the south of the river. He tasked the *fuyi* officials with mobilizing the Xifan tribes to fight alongside Han Chinese troops.⁸⁹⁹ A group of Xifan people, who were considered loyal and courageous, was then sent to scout the bridge, learning that a thousand elite troops were guarding it.⁹⁰⁰ After assessing the situation, Gu Qizhi commanded the Regiment Commander Han Dbon po (Ch. Han Wan Bu 韓完卜) to select five hundred Han Chinese soldiers, along with submitted non-Han people and the Xifan tribes, and to launch an

⁸⁹² Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 66b.

⁸⁹³ Ibid., 67b-68b.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid., 69b.

⁸⁹⁵ MSZSL, j. 484, 9123.

⁸⁹⁶ Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 84a-b.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., 89a-b.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., 83b.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., 90a.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid.

expenditure to the bridge in early 1609. Han Dbon po mobilized 200 Xifan soldiers to serve as the vanguard and attacked the Mongols, ultimately taking 61 enemy heads and successfully destroying the bridge.⁹⁰¹

Later serving as the Supreme Commander of Shaanxi from 1609 to 1610, Gu Qizhi continued to oppose any peace agreement between Guyuan Town and the Mongols. However, at this time, Gansu officials were very eager to reach a peace agreement with Qolači in Xining in order to maintain stability along the Xining frontier, a proposal that Gu Qizhi continued to oppose. Gu Qizhi's primary worry was that if peace was established in Xining, Qolači would be able to focus entirely on developing his influence in the Guyuan region.⁹⁰² Nevertheless, under pressure from an unspecified source—likely the Grand Secretariat—Gu Qizhi ultimately consented to the peace agreement in Xining in 1610.⁹⁰³ The Ministry of War was highly satisfied with the proposals from Gu Qizhi and the Gansu officials. They believed that Qolači would no longer dare to attack Xining, as he coveted Han wealth and hoped to restore the mutual markets. The final decision of the Ministry was: “Qolači will be tasked with guarding the five Routes west of the river [i.e. the Gansu region]. If no incidents occur at the end of each autumn, he shall be granted rewards worth five hundred taels. If he remains peaceful for five years, further tribute rewards may be considered.”⁹⁰⁴

Although the peace agreement between the two sides was reached, Gu Qizhi's primary concern—the security of Guyuan, a military town with only limited strength—remained unresolved. Gu Qizhi sent an envoy to Qolači, demanding that, while the peace in Xining was in effect, Qolači must not encroach on Guyuan, only to receive the reply: “Regarding matters in Guyuan, there is no such rule. Gansu officials cannot manage affairs in Guyuan. If Lintao, Taozhou, Hezhou and Guide in Guyuan permit me to make peace, I will then personally negotiate with them.”⁹⁰⁵ Facing such a situation, Gu Qizhi still believed that they should not

⁹⁰¹ “Dbon po” means “monastery supervisor,” see Zhang, *Yuandai tubo difang xingzheng tizhi yanjiu*, 304. For the history of the Han native family in Hezhou, see Gtso boi rtam lo, “Hezhou zhenzhu han tusi shixi kaoshu 河州珍珠族韓土司世襲考述,” accessed December 26, 2025, http://www.360doc.com/content/24/0828/13/47519792_1132520038.shtml.

⁹⁰² Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 95b-96a.

⁹⁰³ Ibid., 101b.

⁹⁰⁴ *MSZSL*, j. 469, 8861-2.

⁹⁰⁵ Gu, *Gu da sima*, j. xia 下, 103a.

easily agree to establish peace with Qolači in Guyuan. The reason behind this was threefold: first, Guyuan had never conducted mutual trading with the Mongols before, thus lacking a foundation for such an agreement; second, since Qolači had frequently invaded Guyuan in the past, the Ming court resolved never to make peace with him in Guyuan;⁹⁰⁶ third, Guyuan's military strength was extremely weak, and they could not let Qolači become aware of this, lest it tempt him to invade the city.⁹⁰⁷

The agreement between the Ming and Qolači lasted until 1615, when Qolači broke the alliance, prompting the Ming to reestablish defensive buffer zone against him. The Ming first registered approximately six to seven thousand generally obedient Xifan people, providing rewards and incentives to them, and tasking them with guarding of the strategic passes and fortifications. They specified that if the Mongols attacked one tribe, other tribes should provide assistance and if the Mongols invaded Ming territory, all tribes would be mobilized to resist and block their advance.⁹⁰⁸ At this time, a Xifan tribesman who had originally submitted to the Ming, defected and attempted to lure other subordinate tribes to join the Mongols. As a response, members of these subordinate Xifan tribes informed the Ming forces, who subsequently captured the rebellious tribesman.⁹⁰⁹ Overall, during the late Ming period, the Ming and the Tümed Mongols kept peaceful relations, while the Ming becoming entangled in prolonged negotiations and seemingly endless petty conflicts with the Ordos Mongols and the tribe of Doloyan Tümen.

6.4 Last years of the Ming era and the Qing's inheritance of the *fuyi* system

Since the seventeenth century, the mutual trade and pacification activities between the Ming and the Mongols of the Right Wing continued, while conflicts and contradictions between the two sides never ceased.⁹¹⁰ Hami, Handong and other frontier guards still traveled to Beijing to

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid., 103b-104a.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., 107b-108a.

⁹⁰⁸ MSZSL, j. 523, 9842-9844. For the distribution of the Xifan tribes and the correspondence between the Xifan tribes and the passes or fortifications, see *Gansu zhen zhanshou tulüe* 甘肅鎮戰守圖略 (Taipei: Taipei National Palace Museum, 1544-1566) and *Gansu zhen tushuo* 甘肅鎮圖說, in *Shaanxi sizhen tushuo* 陝西四鎮圖說 (Taipei: Taipei National Palace Museum, 1613).

⁹⁰⁹ Liu, *Dingyuan ji*, j. 31, 70b-71a.

⁹¹⁰ Yin Botao 尹波濤, "Lüebian yu hushi: e'erdusai wanhu yu mingchao guanxi lüelun 掠邊與互市: 鄂爾多斯萬戶與明朝關係略論," *Xibei minzu luncong* 西北民族論叢, no. 14 (2016): 159-180; *XNWZ*, j.3, 85-86.

pay tribute and received food supplies from Suzhou and Ganzhou.⁹¹¹ Although this imposed a significant burden on the Ming, the court did not reduce these provisions.⁹¹² As mentioned in Chapter 4, tributary trade was maintained between the Ming and the Yarkand Khanate. Although the Oirats sought to gain Ming goods through the Mongols of the Right Wing, they appeared to have no direct contact with the Ming in this period.⁹¹³

This existing order was soon challenged by both the entry of the Qalq-a and Qoşut Mongols into Qinghai, and the civil unrest within the Ming realms during the early seventeenth century. In responding to the turmoil caused by these emerging forces, the northwestern buffer zone of the Ming still continued to play a pivotal role in Ming attempts to control their borders. Among these groups of the buffer zone, the Ye native official and the tribe of Zi na (Ch. Xi na 西納) were the most prominent.

Due to the substantial benefits that derived from tribute and trade, Qolači of the Ordos carefully weighed his options and refrained from launching any large-scale attacks on Ming territory thereafter.⁹¹⁴ Qolači of the Doloyan Tümen passed away in 1515, after which his power was inherited by his sons, Qung Tayiji (Ch. Huang Taiji 黃台吉) and others.⁹¹⁵ Their influence soon faced challenges from the Qalq-a Mongols.⁹¹⁶

The background of these events is that in 1627, Ligdan Khan (1588-1634), the Great Khan of the Mongols, made an attempt, in response to the rise of the Qing power in the Manchu domains in the east, to strengthen his own control over the Mongol tribes. He thus launched a war against the Mongols of the Right Wing, seizing their lands and populations.⁹¹⁷ This war caused many Mongols from both the Left- and Right-wings to flee to the Qalq-a Mongols, who dwelt in northern Mongolia. Competition over the control of these refugees led to internal

⁹¹¹ MSZSL, j.534, 8680, MSZSL, j.41, 929; j.124, 2312; j.459, 8673.

⁹¹² MSZSL, j.502, 9515.

⁹¹³ Maurice Courant, "Asie centrale aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: empire Kalmouk ou empire Mantchou?" (PhD diss., Université de Lyon, 1912), 9; Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China*, vol.2, 83. Bai Cuiqin, *Wala shi*, 117-118. Du Rongkun 杜榮坤 and Bai Cuiqin 白翠琴, *Xi menggu shi yanjiu* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008), 98.

⁹¹⁴ CZCB, j.2, 40.

⁹¹⁵ Yan Tianling 閻天靈, "Mingmo Tianqi chognzhen jian Qinghai menggu xitong de lianxu zhuanhuan 明末天啟崇禎間青海蒙古系統的連續轉換," *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 30, no. 4 (2019): 116.

⁹¹⁶ GSZKJL, j.1, 11a

⁹¹⁷ Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, *Wuse sifan: duoyu wenben zhogn de neiya minzu shidi yanjiu* 五色四藩——多語文本中的內亞民族史地研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2021), 57.

conflict within the Qalq-a Mongols,⁹¹⁸ and the defeated side migrated in large numbers to the Gansu, Qinghai, and Hami regions during the Tianqi 天啟 era (1621-1628).⁹¹⁹

Čoytu Qung Tayiji (1581-1637), a third-generation descendant of Dayan Khan, was one of the leaders of the defeated Qalq-a Mongols.⁹²⁰ He first led his tribe to the Xuanda region, then around 1625, moved to Hami, where he was defeated by the Yarkand Khanate. He then entered Qinghai and sought refuge in the domains of Qung Tayiji, the son of Qolači.⁹²¹ After migrating to Qinghai, Čoytu Qung Tayiji also sought to join the *fuyi* system and demand rewards from the Ming. Due to this intention, he led his tribe to the Jiayu Pass to request rewards around 1627, only to find that Xu Jiashou 徐家壽, the Gansu Regional Commander, not only refused the rewards but also set an ambush, killing many of his followers.⁹²² In 1633, Čoytu Qung Tayiji killed Qung Tayiji and his brothers, taking control of the Mongols in Qinghai,⁹²³ and further occupying the Shanhou Region.⁹²⁴ At this point, he once again requested to pay tribute, and this time his request was granted by the Ming.⁹²⁵

Čoytu Qung Tayiji was a supporter of the Nyingma Tibetan Buddhist school, the major opponent of the Gelug school. Starting in 1634, he dispatched troops to eliminate forces supporting the Gelug sect.⁹²⁶ In response, the Gelug school sought assistance from the Oirats. Güüši Khan of the Qošut tribe of the Oirats answered their call and formed an alliance with the Jëgünyar tribe and the Qalq-a Jäsaytu Khan, assembling in Hami.⁹²⁷ They arrived in the Shule River basin by 1636 and entered the Qinghai region in 1637, where they defeated Čoytu Qung Tayiji's forces. After Güüši Khan occupied Qinghai, he advanced into Tibet and established the

⁹¹⁸ Ibid.

⁹¹⁹ Darijab 達力扎布, *Mingdai monan menggu lishi yanjiu* 明代漠南蒙古歷史研究 (Haila'er: Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 1997), 74-76; Li, *Mingdai xihai mengu*, 184-189.

⁹²⁰ Oyunbilig, *Wuse sifan*, 54. For the biography of Čoytu Qung Tayiji, see Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, "Čoytu Qung Tayiji について," *Ajia Afurika gengo bunka kenkyū* アジア・アフリカ言語文化研究, no. 1 (1968): 111-125.

⁹²¹ *MXZOSL*, j. 72, 3477-8.

⁹²² *CZSL*, 27-28.

⁹²³ Cairang, "Di ba fawang zhuan," 48-51.

⁹²⁴ *GSZKJL*, 7b.

⁹²⁵ *XNWZ*, j.3, 86; *GSZKJL*, 19a-b.

⁹²⁶ Oyunbilig, *Wuse sifan*, 59.

⁹²⁷ *GSZKJL*, 19b; Yan, "Qinghai menggu xitong de lianxu zhuanhuan," 118.

rule of the Qoşut in the whole Tibetan region.⁹²⁸ His subordinates also reached the Xuanfu market, seeking mutual trade for the Qalq-a Mongols and the Oirats.⁹²⁹

The successive entries of Čoytu Qung Tayiji and Güüşī Khan into Qinghai continuously impacted the northwestern frontier of the Ming. In the face of this situation, the Ming military struggled to respond effectively and had to rely on its defensive buffer zone. At that time, there were several powerful groups of the buffer zone in the region. The first of these was a group of tens of thousands of tribesmen led by two native officials of the Xining Guard, Li and Qi. Another political factor was the Zi na tribe, centered around monks from Zi na Monastery in Xining, who could leverage religious influence to restrain various Mongol tribes, and whose affiliated monastic tribes collectively fielded 3,150 Xifan soldiers, all self-equipped with weapons and horses. Furthermore, an unspecified group of nearly 1,000 “Chinese Muslims” and “militia” was also active on the political map of the Ming northwestern border.⁹³⁰

It is important to note that the term “Chinese Muslims” refers to the followers of the religious leader Ye Bingqian 冶秉乾.⁹³¹ Ye Bingqian was very likely a member of the Ye native official clan in Xining. The family’s ancestor, *Şadr al-Dīn (Ch. Xuedu Er’ding 薛都爾丁), was a Muslim from the Western Regions who served as an Assistant Official of Gansu (Ch. Gansu *xingsheng qianshi* 甘肅行省僉事) during the Yuan period. In 1371, he surrendered to the Ming and was appointed as a Squad Commander (Ch. *xiaoqi* 小旗).⁹³² From the second generation onward, the family adopted the surname Ye 也. Over time, the family’s fifth-generation descendant, Ye Xiang 也祥, inherited the position in 1472, was promoted to Assistant Commander, and changed the family surname to Ye 冶.⁹³³ The family rose to prominence in the late Ming period and, by the Qing period, had achieved influence comparable

⁹²⁸ Qi Guang 齊光, *Daqing diguo shiqi menggu de zhengzhi yu shehui: yi alashan heshuote bu yanjiu wei zhongxin* 大清帝國時期蒙古的政治與社會——以阿拉善和碩特部研究為中心 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2013), 26-65.

⁹²⁹ *Mingqing shiliao* 明清史料 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), vol. *ding* 丁, no. *zhong* 中, 509-511.

⁹³⁰ *GSZKJL*, 19b-20a, 70b.

⁹³¹ *GSZKJL*, 100b.

⁹³² Gong, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu*, 1340.

⁹³³ Ma Zhong 馬忠 and Ma Xiao 馬小琴, “Qinghai huizu tusi: ye tusi pingshu 青海回族土司——冶土司評述,” *Huizu yanjiu* 回族研究, no. 3 (1992): 30.

to that of the Li and Qi native official clans.⁹³⁴ Ye Guoqi 冶國器, the last native official of this clan of the Ming period, died in the battle with a rebellious army in 1638 or 1639.⁹³⁵

A notable instance of those forces' effectiveness occurred during the rebellion of Ma Anbang 馬安邦. During the Chongzhen 崇禎 era (1628-1644), the last days of the Ming Dynasty, popular uprisings in Shaanxi had already surged. In 1634, Zhang Zhongli 張種禮, a eunuch, forcibly seized horses from the Xifan merchant Ma Anbang,⁹³⁶ who then rebelled in anger and invited Čoytu Qung Tayiji to jointly attack the city of Xining. Subsequently, some Ming soldiers and civilians also joined the rebel forces.⁹³⁷ At that time, none of the local Ming officers wished to suppress the rebellion, as many had relatives among the rebels.⁹³⁸

This rebellion was ultimately suppressed by the religious leader Ye Bingqian and the State Preceptor Dpal 'byor rin chen (Ch. Ban zhe er ling zheng 班著爾領正) of the tribe of Zi na.⁹³⁹ Dpal 'byor rin chen lured Čoytu Qung Tayiji away with economic incentives, cutting off the rebels' external support. Meanwhile, Ye Bingqian dispatched his followers to recapture Xining.⁹⁴⁰ During the conflict between the Qoşut and Čoytu Qung Tayiji, the Zi na State Preceptor devised strategies to eliminate Čoytu Qung Tayiji and collaborated with Ming forces, ultimately destroying Čoytu Qung Tayiji's power.⁹⁴¹ Subsequently, the tribe of Zi na, the Ye family of religious leaders, and the Li and Qi native officials continued to resist invasions by the Qoşut Mongols.⁹⁴² In 1643, when Li Zicheng's forces captured Xining, the Li and Qi native

⁹³⁴ NBSZ, 399

⁹³⁵ NBSZ, 422

⁹³⁶ Although he was called a "Xifan", he might be one of the Muslim merchants, who acted as a trade agent between the Ming and the Xifan groups, see Louis M. J. Schram, "The Monguors of the Kans-Tibetan Frontier. Their Origin, History, and Social Organization," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, no. 44 (1954): 114-116.

⁹³⁷ Liang Yan 梁妍 and Du Changshun 杜常順, "Mingmo xining wei ma anbang shibian shishi ji xiangguan wenti xintan 明末西寧衛馬安邦事變史事及相關問題新探," *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學, no. 4 (2022): 205.

⁹³⁸ GSZKJL, 100b.

⁹³⁹ XNWZ, j.3, 86. Dpal 'byor rin chen inherited the position of State Preceptor in 1616, see Zhang Yuxin 張羽新 and Zhang Zhuangzhi 張雙志, "Mingchao fengzeng da chongjiao si xiasi he xinan si da lama xizhi shengzhi shidu 明朝封贈大崇教寺下寺和西納寺大喇嘛襲職聖旨釋讀," *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物, no. 2 (2007): 18. For his life story, see Brag dgon pa dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 智觀巴·貢卻乎丹巴饒吉, *Anduo Zhengjiao shi* 安多政教史, trans. Wu Jun 吳均, Mao Jizu 毛繼祖 and Ma Shilin 馬世林 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), 269; Brag dgon pa dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Mdo smad chos 'byung* (lan kro: kan su'u mi rigs dbe skrun khang, 1982), 167-168.

⁹⁴⁰ Song Zhengyu 宋征興, *Linwu wengao* 林屋文稿, in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibin* 清代詩文集彙編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), vol. 58, 178.

⁹⁴¹ GSZKJL, 19b; Ling Yiqu 凌義渠, *Zoudu* 奏牘, in *Suxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. shi 史, no. 493, 118; Li Guangtao 李光濤, ed. *Mingqing shiliao* 明清史料, vol. gui 癸 (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1975), 276b.

⁹⁴² GSZKJL, 19b-20a.

officials resisted fiercely. Some eventually surrendered and continued to serve as native officials under the Qing Dynasty, while others fled to Tibet.⁹⁴³

The *fuyi* officials were not involved in the activities of the Ye native officials and the tribe of Zi na. Records of the *fuyi* officials from this period are scarce, with only one clearly documented individual: Cui Chongyin 崔崇胤. As a Yulin native, Cui Chongyin was promoted to be to the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *gansu fuyi youji* 甘肅撫夷遊擊) in 1622.⁹⁴⁴ Due to the scarcity of historical sources from the late Ming period, Cui Chongyin's specific deeds remain unclear, and the exact responsibilities of the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander in Charge of Pacification are also not well-defined. The position may have been responsible for managing the submitted non-Han groups in Ganzhou and Suzhou. Additionally, one late Ming source mentioned that there was one *fuyi* official in Suzhou, however, this source did not depict any specific information of this position.⁹⁴⁵

The Qing occupied Gansu in the mid-seventeenth century.⁹⁴⁶ Inheriting the Ming's *fuyi* system, the Qing also established various *fuyi* officials in its frontier regions. Unlike the Ming system, the Qing changed and incorporated the Gansu guards into prefectures and counties: Ganzhou Guard became Zhangye County 張掖縣, Suzhou Guard became Suzhou Subprefecture 肅州廳, and Xining Guard became Xining County 西寧縣, etc.⁹⁴⁷ Correspondingly, *fuyi* officials transitioned from military titles such as Commander in Charge of Pacification, Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, Company Commander in Charge of Pacification to civil administrative titles like Vice Prefect in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi tongzhi* 撫彝同知) and Assistant Prefect in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi tongpan* 撫彝通判), as discussed below. Nonetheless, their fundamental responsibilities remained unchanged: managing non-Han ethnic groups within their respective regions.

⁹⁴³ Song, *Linwu shugao*, 179.

⁹⁴⁴ *MXZSL*, j. 23, 1160; j. 33, 1743-1744.

⁹⁴⁵ *GSZKJL*, 53a

⁹⁴⁶ Jia Chenliang 賈陳亮, "Qingdai Zhongyang zhengfu dui ganqingning minzu diqu de zhili yanjiu 清代中央政府對甘青寧民族地區的治理研究" (PhD diss., Lanzhou: Lanzhou University, 2018), 60-65.

⁹⁴⁷ Mao Yike 毛亦可, *Qingdai weisuo guibing zhouxian yanjiu* 清代衛所歸併州縣研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2018), 363-365.

The Šira Uiyur group is an outstanding example of these developments, as some of its members continued to be governed by the Qing Fuyi officials. After the fall of the Ming, the Šira Uiyur came under the rule of Galdan, the Ĵegün̄yar Khan, for a period. Following Galdan's defeat, they submitted to the Qing in 1696.⁹⁴⁸ During the Qianlong era (1736-1796), the Qing specifically established the position of the Pacification Subprefecture (Ch. *fuyi ting* 撫彝廳), appointing an Assistant Prefect in Charge of Pacification to administer them.⁹⁴⁹ The classification of the tribes under the jurisdiction of the Pacification Subprefecture were: the five tribes of the Šira Uiyur (Ch. Xila Gu'er 西喇古兒), descendants of the Handong Left Guard (who are the predecessors of the modern Eastern Yugur people speaking a Mongolic language); the three tribes of the Tangut; the eight tribes of the Šira Uiyur (Ch. Xila Gu'er 西喇古爾) located near the city of Suzhou, (who are partly the predecessors of the Western Yugur people speaking a Turkic language).⁹⁵⁰ These groups, together with another two tribes of the Šira Uiyur under the jurisdiction of Gaotai 高臺, people of whom also spoke a Turkic language, formed the foundation of the modern Yugur ethnicity.⁹⁵¹

This institutional design effectively ensured that the Šira Uiyur people were integrated within a unique political structure, thereby fostering a strong sense of collective identity. During the ethnic identification and administrative divisions of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China, despite linguistic differences between their eastern and western branches, the Šira Uiyur people were designated as the same ethnic group, reflecting the long-term influence of the Ming's pacification policies.⁹⁵²

⁹⁴⁸ Saguchi Tōru 佐口透, "Historical Development of the Sarigh Uyghurs," *The Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko*, no. 44 (1986): 4.

⁹⁴⁹ The "Subprefecture 廳" was a unique institution employed by the Qing to govern the northwestern frontier, see Qu Bin 屈斌, "'Ting' yu qingdai zhongqi ganbian fandi zhili zhengce de yanbian" "廳"與清代中期甘邊番地治理政策的演變," *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 37, no. 1 (2022): 100-111; Du Changshun 杜常順 and Xu Ruobing 許若冰, "Qingdai ganbian diqu de fufan ting yu difang zhili 清代甘邊地區的撫番廳與地方治理," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 2 (2022): 123-137.

⁹⁵⁰ Saguchi, "Historical Development of the Sarigh Uyghurs," 4-7; *XTGSXTZ*, j.42, 87b-89b.

⁹⁵¹ *XTGSXTZ*, j.42, 89a.

⁹⁵² Yan Tianling 閻天靈, "Zizhi yu xianxia de 'malasong zhi zheng': 1942-1954 nian yugu zu diqu xingzheng gaizhi yanjiu 自治與縣轄的"馬拉松之爭"——1942-1954年裕固族地區行政改制研究," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究 no. 1 (2009): 92-102; Yan Tianling 閻天靈, "Yugu zu de 'qi zu huangfan' yu da toumu 裕固族的"七族黃番"與大頭目," *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究 no. 5 (2019): 98.

6.5 Conclusion

After the Mongols of the Right Wing's westward expansion and annexation of all other non-Han groups in the region, the complex structure of the original northwestern frontier of the Ming disappeared. Instead of it, the Ming only needed to manage its relations with the Mongols, which, finally, led to the Longqing Peace Treaty.

Rather than an institutional innovation, the Longqing Peace Treaty was the extension of the *fuyi* system, centering on the management of the "Ming–Barbarian" relations led by the *fuyi* officials. According to the original clauses of the peace treaty, the Mongols were expected to pay tribute and conduct trade in the frontier markets on a fixed schedule while the Ming should have granted various rewards to them. However, as Mongol leaders made increasingly frequent demands for rewards and continued their westward expansion, tensions between the two sides intensified. In response, the Ming decided that commercial exchanges and the granting of the rewards would take place only when Mongol chieftains complied with imperial commands at specified times and places; whenever they rebelled, these privileges were suspended. In this way, the Ming and the Mongol leaders of the northwestern frontier remained locked, as shown above, in a fluctuating pattern of intermittent conflict and peace.

Despite its significant decline, the Ming's northwestern buffer zone—now composed largely of native officials and Xifan tribes—continued to serve as an important intermediary in the empire's interactions with the Inner Asian world. The Ming relied on their military strength and expected them to exert the influence of Tibetan Buddhism to help restrain Mongol groups.

To maintain communication with the Mongols, the number of the *fuyi* officials stationed in the northwestern areas increased substantially during this period. Their primary responsibility was to manage frontier trade between the Ming and the Mongols, while also handling a wide range of disputes between the two sides. Chapters 7 and 8 will examine two complex cases that illustrate the activities of *fuyi* officials during this era.

Chapter 7: Mani Bulat: An Uyghur *Fuyi* Official

In Chapters 7 and 8, this dissertation examines the case studies of Mani Bulat, an Uyghur *fuyi* official from Suzhou, and the Ningxia Submitted Army, whose generals served as *fuyi* officials in Ningxia, to illustrate the personal identities and specific duties of the *fuyi* officials after the Longqing Peace Treaty. Through an analysis of their histories, this dissertation demonstrates the operational dynamics of the *fuyi* system in managing affairs concerning the Mongols of the Right Wing and further reveals the attitude of Ming officials towards the *fuyi* officials. A final synthesis analyzing the *fuyi* system and the *fuyi* officials will then be given in Chapter 9, the conclusion.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Ming–Mongol interactions following the Longqing Peace Treaty can be divided into two periods. The first period spanned from 1571 to 1581 and was characterized by a focus on religious exchanges, primarily due to the devotion of Altan Khan to Tibetan Buddhism. During this phase, a Barbarian official named Mani Bulat (Ch. Mani Bula 馬你卜剌) played a pivotal role in the Ming–Mongol relations. Thus, he was repeatedly dispatched as an envoy to Altan Khan and provided assistance for his religious pursuits. The second period, extending from Altan Khan’s death in 1581 to the late Ming period (early seventeenth century), saw the Mongol power structure plunged into chaos and the escalation of border conflicts.⁹⁵³ As a result, the focus of Ming–Mongol interactions shifted toward the negotiation of frontier disputes. During this period, a *fuyi* official named Ma Yingshi 馬應時 maintained close ties with various Mongol leaders, effectively mitigating tensions between the two sides.

Although existing scholarships have examined both Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi,⁹⁵⁴ significant ambiguities remain. A critical issue is that Mani Bulat disappeared from the sources after switching his allegiance to Altan Khan in the early Wanli reign (1573–1620), while Ma

⁹⁵³ Centering on the battle of “Grand *baising* 大板升,” Xiaoke examined the power struggles and internal conflicts within the Mongols of the Right Wing following the death of Altan Khan, see Xiaoke 曉克, “‘Da bansheng zhi zhan’ ji qi yingxiang ‘大板升之戰’ 及其影響,” *Neimenggu shehui kexue (hanwen ban)* 內蒙古社會科學 (漢文版), no. 6 (2009): 43–46.

⁹⁵⁴ For studies on Mani Bulat (Mani Bula 馬你不剌), see Satō Hisashi 佐藤長, “Daisan-dai Darai-Rama to Arutan-Han no kaiken ni tsuite 第三代ダライラマとアルタンハンの會見について,” *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 42, no. 3(1983): 104; Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū*, 333–336; Čoyiji, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 30–32; Fang Fengshi 方逢時, *Dayin lou ji* 大隱樓集, ed. Li Qipu 李勤璞 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2009), 215–216. For studies on Ma Yingshi, see Henry Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming, III*, 245; Temule, “Yuejing yu jiaotong,” 316–321.

Yingshi's activities with clear chronological documentation only began in 1581, leaving his earlier career obscure. This dissertation proposes that Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi were, in fact, the same individual. This identification not only resolves numerous puzzles surrounding these two alleged personalities' respective histories but also clarifies this one person's crucial role in mediating Ming–Mongol relations in the later Ming period.

This chapter first elucidates Mani Bulat's ethnic origins, name, and religious background and then details his contributions to Ming–Mongol religious exchanges between 1573 and 1581. Subsequently, based on a comparison of the activities of Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi, this dissertation claims that they were the same individual, providing a detailed justification of this proposition, and further explores how he mediated frontier conflicts between the Ming and Mongols during the mid-to-late Wanli period.

7.1 Mani Bulat's role in promoting Ming–Mongol religious exchanges

Under the influence of Aśing Lama (< Ti. A seng bla ma), Altan Khan developed an interest in Tibetan Buddhism in 1571.⁹⁵⁵ Shortly thereafter, he began organizing missions to Tibet to invite the Third Dalai Lama (1543-1588) for a meeting. Simultaneously, due to a shortage of Tibetan Buddhist monks, scriptures and artisans, Altan Khan repeatedly requested the Ming court to dispatch monks and bestow Buddhist scriptures and statues to his domains. For the Ming court, agreeing to Altan Khan's request could not only show the Ming's "Grace (Ch. *en* 恩)" to him,⁹⁵⁶ but also, in their conception, encourage the Mongols to convert to Buddhism and refrain from killing and plundering, thus ensuring long-term peace on the Ming–Mongol border.

Due to these reasons, fulfilling Altan Khan's religious needs became a shared focus for both sides in the early stages of the Longqing Peace Treaty. Mani Bulat was one of the monks dispatched by the Ming to assist Altan Khan. Originally an Uyghur from the Hami Guard, he

⁹⁵⁵ For Aśing lam-a and his connection with Altan Khan, see Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji*, 312-318; Čoyiji, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 7-20.

⁹⁵⁶ For the spread of the idea of "Grace" in Mongolia, see Christopher Pratt Atwood, "'Worshipping Grace': The Language of Loyalty in Qing Mongolia," *Late Imperial China* 21, no. 2 (2000): 86-139.

alternately followed Ming directives or served Altan Khan, skillfully mediating Ming–Mongol relations while simultaneously pursuing his own interests.

7.1.1 Mani Bulat's appearance in historical sources and his background

Immediately after the initial successes of the first Ming–Mongol mutual trade in 1571, Altan Khan submitted a request for Buddhist scriptures and lamas from the Ming court. The Xuanda Supreme Commander Wang Chonggu 王崇古 (1515-1588) promptly relayed this request to the imperial court. In response, the Senior Grand Secretariat (Ch. *neige shoufu* 內閣首輔) Gao Gong 高拱 (1513-1578) advocated complying with Altan Khan's request.⁹⁵⁷ However, regarding the specific selection of monks, the Grand Secretariat (Ch. *gechen* 閣臣) Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582) expressed reservations, stating: "The Tibetan monks currently in the capital are all morally corrupt individuals unfamiliar with Buddhist scriptures. Sending them might invite contempt from the barbarians."⁹⁵⁸

Despite these concerns, Altan Khan's request was ultimately approved in 1572.⁹⁵⁹ The Buddhist Registry (Ch. *senglu si* 僧錄司) selected two principal lamas Seng ge bzang po (Ch. Xingji Zangbu 星吉藏卜) and Rgyal mtshan grags pa (Ch. Jiancan Zhaba 堅參扎巴), along with their disciples Rin chen padma (Ch. Lingzhan Banma 領占班麻) and Seng ge rgya mtsho (Ch. Xingji Jiancuo 星吉堅剎) for this mission. They carried several important Buddhist scriptures, such as the Heart Sutra (Ch. *xin jing* 心經), the Avatamsaka Sutra (Ch. *huayan jing* 華嚴經), the Diamond Sutra (Ch. *jingang jing* 金剛經) and the Guanyin Sutra (Ch. *guyin jing* 觀音經). The delegation was accompanied by the interpreters Cai Jiang 蔡江, Jin Feng 金奉 and Shan Hu 珊瑚 and was promptly dispatched to Altan Khan's yurt.⁹⁶⁰

Regarding these four lamas sent to Mongolia, Henry Serruys, Čoyiĭi and Satō Cho consider them as Tibetan,⁹⁶¹ Inoue Osamu identifies them as Tibetan Buddhist lamas without specifying

⁹⁵⁷ Gao Gong 高拱, *Gao gong quanji* 高拱全集, ed. Yue Jinxi 岳金西 and Yue Tianlei 岳天雷 (Zhenzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2006), 495-496.

⁹⁵⁸ "今在京番僧，皆溷濁淫濫之流，不通釋典，遣去恐為虜人所輕耳。" Zhang Juzheng 張居正, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji* 張文忠公全集 (Tianjin: Tianjin Library, 1901), j. 16, 16b.

⁹⁵⁹ Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū*, 315-317; Čoyiĭi, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 22-24.

⁹⁶⁰ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 273-274; *WLWGL*, j. 8, 99. Among those interpreters, Jin Feng has a close relationship with Altan Khan, who requested a higher official position for Jin Feng afterwards. See *WLWGL*, j. 8, 97.

⁹⁶¹ Henry Serruys, "Early Lamaism in Mongolia," *Oriens Extremus* 10, no. 2 (1963): 204-205; Čoyiĭi, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 24; Satō, "Daisan-dai Darai-Rama," 103.

their ethnic origin.⁹⁶² In contrast, Hoong Teik Toh proposed that despite their Tibetan names, these individuals were more likely Han Chinese and may have served as spies.⁹⁶³ Li Qinpu also argued that Rgyal mtshan grags pa and Seng ge bzang po were lamas with Han ethnicities, though he did not provide reasons for this conclusion.⁹⁶⁴

Here, I agree with Hoong Teik Toh and Li Qinpu. Rgyal mtshan grags pa had previously been sent to Tibet by the Ming court to study Tibetan Buddhism, and his mastery of Buddhist scholarship surpassed that of his three companions. While in Tibet, he was prohibited from studying the so-called “heretical methods (Ch. *pangmen xiefa* 旁門邪法)”, which likely referred to Tantric rituals, due to the Ming court’s requirement,⁹⁶⁵ which indicates that he was actually a Ming envoy dispatched to learn Buddhism rather than an indigenous Tibetan lama. The doctrines propagated by these four lamas at Altan Khan’s court were not pure Tibetan Buddhism, but rather a syncretic “Confucian-Buddhist philosophy” (Ch. *rufo daoli* 儒佛道理) that combined Confucian learning with Buddhist teachings, nominally centered on guiding the Mongols to “escape the sea of suffering and delusion, ultimately reaching the realm of heavenly truth”,⁹⁶⁶ and to establish Altan Khan as the “Buddha of the Northern Barbarians” (Ch. *beifan fozu* 北番佛祖).⁹⁶⁷ The underlying objective, however, was to “transform their violent nature by fostering compassion”,⁹⁶⁸ encouraging Mongol tribes to “abstain from slaughter, seek blessed karma, and forsake their cruel ways”.⁹⁶⁹ This approach aimed to eliminate the possibility of renewed conflict between the Ming and Mongols by fundamentally altering Mongol behavior through religious conversion.

However, this mission failed to fully satisfy Altan Khan’s demands. After returning the mission in the seventh month of 1572, Altan Khan submitted another request: “Since His Majesty and I are of one mind, please bestow upon me more translators and Tatar scriptures (Ch. *dada jing* 韃靼經, i.e. scriptures in Mongolian), that I may study them well. Though I

⁹⁶² Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū*, 319.

⁹⁶³ Hoong Teik Toh, “Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China” (PhD diss., Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004), 209-210.

⁹⁶⁴ Li, *Fojiao *Samba shi yanjiu*, 16.

⁹⁶⁵ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 275.

⁹⁶⁶ “共脫苦海迷津，永歸諸天真境。” Ibid., 274.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid., 274.

⁹⁶⁸ “化凶殘興慈悲之念。” Ibid., 276

⁹⁶⁹ “痛戒殺戮，自求福果，不敢復事凶殘。” Ibid., 277.

possess both Tibetan and Chinese scriptures, I cannot recognize a single character.”⁹⁷⁰ This new request, therefore specifically sought translation personnel and Mongolian sutras. At the time, despite the fact that the Ming court did employ translators like Cong Wenguang 叢文光 and Ma Jizhi 馬繼志, who were already well-versed in foreign affairs and highly thought of by Altan Khan and other Mongol leaders,⁹⁷¹ their primary responsibility was to serve the duty of rotational border services rather than to provide dedicated translation assistance for Altan Khan.⁹⁷² Furthermore, according to an investigation conducted by Ming officials, since the Mongolian sutras stored in Beijing had already been destroyed in an accidental fire and the Tibetan lamas in Beijing had never learned Mongolian. It was therefore impossible to provide Mongolian sutras or any qualified lama from Beijing.⁹⁷³

At this critical juncture, Mani Bulat, a multilingual “Translation official” (Ch. *yizi guan* 譯字官) who could speak four languages—Chinese, Old Uyghur, Mongolian and Tibetan—and comprehend three scripts—Chinese, Tibetan and Old Uyghur (Mongolian uses the Old Uyghur script), emerged as the ideal solution to the Ming court’s predicament. He was dispatched to Altan Khan’s yurt bearing Buddhist scriptures in “Tatar script” (Ch. *dada fan zi* 韃靼番字) in 1573, perfectly addressing the immediate political and religious needs both of Altan Khan and the Ming.⁹⁷⁴

Mani Bulat had been recruited by Wang Chonggu from Gansu Town.⁹⁷⁵ Wang’s prior experience as Shaanxi Supreme Commander during 1567 to 1570 proved crucial—during his tenure, he had strategically utilized non-Han defectors to the Ming and Ming subjects who had

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid., 275.

⁹⁷¹ Ibid., 280.

⁹⁷² In addition to translating Buddhist scriptures, Altan Khan also needed translators to collaborate with the *bičigči* 筆寫契, the writer, in verifying the meaning of imperial edicts and preparing the drafting and submission of official documents to the Ming court. See Ibid., 279. For the function of the *bičigči*, see Jägčid Sečen 札奇斯欽, “Shuo yuanshi zhong de ‘bishechi’ bing jian lun yuan chu de zhongshu ling 說元史中的“必闡赤”並兼論元初的中書令,” in *Menggu shi luncong* 蒙古史論叢 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1980), 365-463.

⁹⁷³ *WLWGL*, j. 8, 100. Notably, some Mongolian sutras produced by the Ming have survived to this day. For instance, Oyunbilig discussed a collection of Buddhist sutras printed in 1431, parts of which were written in Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Mongolian. See Oyunbilig 烏雲畢力格, *Qince jinman: menggu buzu yu wenhua shi yanjiu* 青冊金鬘：蒙古部族與文化史研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017), 301-319. Apart from the possibility that no Mongolian sutras were found at that time, another reason the Ming court had not sent Mongolian sutras could be related to the requirement put forward by Grand Senior Secretary Zhang Juzheng: “Only those Buddhist sutras that include a preface written by our imperial ancestors may be granted to them.” See Zhang, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji*, j. 16, 16b.

⁹⁷⁴ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 396-397.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.

escaped captivity in Mongolia to strengthen frontier defenses.⁹⁷⁶ His most notable achievement was the establishment of the Ningxia Submitted Army under Zheng Yang and Babai, composed of troops who had surrendered to the Ming state, which will be discussed in next chapter. It is highly possible that Wang Chonggu already knew of Mani Bulat's talents during his tenure in Shaanxi.

The current scholarship has barely explained Mani Bulat's ethnic origins, name, and religious background, which we shall analyze sequentially. As the *Ming shilu* identifies him as a "Barbarian official", it led Henry Serruys to erroneously conclude he was Tibetan. However, in fact, Wang Chonggu's memorials clarify his designation as a "Barbarian Commander", providing some biographical information:

[Mani Bulat] petitioned declaring himself a Commander of the Suzhou Guard, whose ancestor originally served as Commander in Hami. Following the rebellion of the Barbarian king [i.e. the Moghul Khan], Bulat missed our emperor and sought to demonstrate loyalty, by bringing his imperial edict to Suzhou [and submitting]. For three generations his family commanded troops, campaigned against the barbarians, and received imperial rewards. Now, having been entrusted with instructing the barbarians in scriptures and facilitating their submission through tribute missions, Bulat declines to return to his ancestral registry of Hami for administrative duties, instead requesting official reassignment to the Suzhou Guard to continue his service.

（馬你卜刺）投狀告係肅州衛指揮，有祖原係哈密指揮，後因番王酋奴造叛，卜刺思我國王以圖報效，奉敕投至肅州，三輩管領兵馬，征戰酋奴，蒙賞恩典。今思卜刺見蒙委遣教虜夷經、歸順進貢稱臣有勞，不願回往哈密原籍管事，告乞題請改討勘合，准在肅州衛管事以勵圖報。⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid, j. 12, 524.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid., j. 10, 398.

As we see in this text, Mani Bulat requested to change his affiliation from the Hami Guard to the Suzhou Guard in order to change his identification from a “Barbarian official” to a general within Ming military institution. In Chapters 3 and 4, we demonstrated that after Hami’s annexation by the Moghul Khanate, the Uyghur and Kara Koy populations of the Hami Guard migrated to Suzhou and Ganzhou.⁹⁷⁸ Following their incorporation, the Uyghurs came under the supervision of the Uyghur Imperial Preceptor who oversaw their religious practices, while the Kara Koy were administered by the Uyghur Commissioner,⁹⁷⁹ and converted gradually to Islam.⁹⁸⁰ Their followers became integrated into the Ming military system, serving as *fuyi* officials, interpreters, soldiers, and in other capacities. Since Mani Bulat was proficient in Buddhist scriptures, he would more likely be an Uyghur commander rather than of the Kara Koy or Muslim background.

Until now, the dissertation uses the name Mani Bulat, which is my reconstruction of how Chinese sources transcribe his name, “Mani Bula 馬你卜喇”. Here, I will explain the reason for the reconstruction. Satō Hisashi reconstructed the individual’s name as Sk. Maṇi Bhadra (meaning “precious and auspicious”),⁹⁸¹ while Li Qipu proposed a Mongolian reading Mani Bulay (meaning “precious spring”).⁹⁸² Both reconstructions are semantically and phonetically plausible but do not align with his alleged Uyghur identity. There is no doubt that “Mani” corresponds to OU. Mani (= Mo. Mani < Sk. Maṇi), meaning “jewel” or “precious”.⁹⁸³ The second element, “Bula”, if interpreted as OU. Bulak (= Mo. Bulay), meaning “spring” or “fountain”, would also be a prevalent common name among various Turkic groups.⁹⁸⁴ This phonetic connection is supported by sources such as the *Gaochang guan zazi* 高昌館雜字, which records the pronunciation of “spring” in Old Uyghur as *bula* 卜喇,⁹⁸⁵ and the *Weiwu’er yiyu* 畏兀兒譯語, which gives the pronunciation *bula* 卜喇 for the same meaning.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁷⁸ Yan Tianling 閔天靈, “Mingqing shiqi hexi zoulang de jizhu minzu, jizhu chengbao and jizhu zhengce 明清時期河西走廊的寄住民族、寄住城堡與寄住政策,” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究, no. 4 (2009): 33-46.

⁹⁷⁹ *SZHYZ*, j. 4, 281, 283.

⁹⁸⁰ *SZHYZ*, j. 4, 275.

⁹⁸¹ Satō, “Daisan-dai Darai-Rama,” 494.

⁹⁸² Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 216.

⁹⁸³ Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 466-467.

⁹⁸⁴ Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 197.

⁹⁸⁵ *GCGZZ*, 34.

⁹⁸⁶ Shōgaito, “‘Uiguru-kan yakugo’ no kenkyū,” 113.

However, Bulak was a highly common name and does not reflect the individual's identity as a nobleman or commander.

There were also two Mongol princes recorded as “Nali Bula 納力不剌” and “Nali Bulai 那力不賴” in Chinese sources at the time.⁹⁸⁷ Henry Serruys argues that “Bula 不剌” and “Bulai 不賴” “can only be a corruption from the Mongol *blood* [meaning “steel”], probably in its older form *bolad*, *bulad*”. I believe that his argument is also applicable to the case of Mani Bulat, with OU. Bulak representing the Old Uyghur form of Mo. Bolod, a name commonly borne by Uyghur noblemen.⁹⁸⁸

Moreover, one can find more noblemen with the name “Bula 卜剌” in *Suzhen huayi zhi* (肅鎮華夷志, “The Gazetteer of the Chinese and Non-Chinese of Suzhou”), such as the Uyghur Imperial Preceptors Bayan Bulat (Ch. Baiyan Bula 拜言卜剌), Batı Bulat (Ch. Badi Bula 把的卜剌), as well as military officials like Engke Bulat (Ch. (Y)anke Bula 奄克卜剌), Bāki Bulat (Ch. Bieji Bula 卮吉卜剌).⁹⁸⁹ Fu Ma has proposed that at least during the twelfth to fourteenth century, Uyghur men already shared elements in their personal names to signify the families which they came from.⁹⁹⁰ Therefore, in our cases, “Bulat” in those Uyghur noblemen may also have functioned as an indicator of familial affiliation. It is also worth mentioning that, in most sources, including the *Ming shilu* and official memorials, the names of Engke Bulat and Bāki Bulat, two Uyghur commanders active in an earlier period, were written as Ch. (Y)anke Bola 奄克孛剌 and Ch. Bieji Bola 卮吉孛剌 respectively, with “Ch. Bola 孛剌” used in place of “Ch. Bula 卜剌”. The form “Bola 孛剌” should represent a transcription of Mo. Bolad, the Mongolian form corresponding to the above-mentioned OU. Bulat. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the earlier Uyghur noblemen were administered by the *fuyi* officials and interpreters who were primarily of a Mongolian linguistic background. By the time of Mani Bulat and the compilation of the *Suzhou Huayi zhi* in 1617, however, individuals of an Uyghur linguistic background—particularly those who had come from Hami and neighboring regions—

⁹⁸⁷ Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan*, 152. Cf. Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 241-242.

⁹⁸⁸ Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 197; László Rásonyi and Imre Baski, *Onomasticon Turcicum: Turkic Personal Names* (Bloomington: Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2007), 174-175.

⁹⁸⁹ *SZHYZ*, j. 4, 275, 281, 283, 289.

⁹⁹⁰ Fu Ma 付馬, “12-14 shiji huihu renming zhong de jiazu biaoshi chegnfen jiqi chasnehgn yuanyin 12—14 世紀回鶻人名中的家族標識成分及其產生原因,” *Minzu Yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 5 (2019): 81-93.

had gradually assumed the roles of interpreters and *fuyi* officials. This shift may account for the change in transcription from “Bola 孛剌” to “Bula 卜剌”.⁹⁹¹

Overall, we can ascertain that Mani Bulat was an Uyghur Buddhist monk from the Hami Guard, which had already migrated into Gansu. However, Fang Fengshi 方逢時 (1522-1596), who succeeded Wang Chonggu as the Xuanda Supreme Commander in 1573, expressed skepticism about Mani Bulat’s identity as a Buddhist monk:

Gansu Grand Coordinator Liao also sent the previously dispatched Mani Bulat. I intended to have him accompany [the mission] but observed discord in both emotion and intent. This cunning monk, greedy for profit and ignorant of proper decorum, might provoke disputes and create suspicions if sent there, potentially disgracing our mission and causing trouble that would invite ridicule from the barbarians. Moreover, Mani Bulat is neither monk nor layman, but rather one of those Western Region magicians. His skills in sword-swallowing, fire-breathing, and yandie⁹⁹² are particularly deceptive and heretical, incompatible with the Celestial Empire’s methods for civilizing barbarian customs.

甘肅廖撫院亦將原送馬你卜剌遣來。某欲使之偕去，見其情意俱各不和。蓋狡僧貪利，不知大體，恐其到彼有所忿爭構嫌，辱命生事，取笑夷虜。又馬你卜剌非僧非俗，乃西域幻人之流。所習吞刀吐火演渌之術，尤屬妖妄，非天朝所以訓化夷俗之道。⁹⁹³

Fang Fengshi’s judgment that Mani Bulat was a Western Region magician was based on his mastery of “sword-swallowing, fire-breathing, and *yandie*”, which Fang deemed “particularly

⁹⁹¹ Another possible form of “Bula 卜剌” is “OU. Bugra”, meaning “male camel (uncastrated)”. This is also a prevalent personal name in the Turkic-speaking world, particularly in regions such as East Turkestan. Among the Turkic nobility, “Bugra” often served as an honorific title, conveying connotations of size, strength, and virility. See Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 196; Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, XLVI-XLVII, 317; V. M. Nadeljaev et al., eds., *Drevnetjurkskij slovar’* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969), 120; Rásonyi and Baski, *Onomasticon Turcicum*, 169-170. Maḥmūd al-Kāšyarī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Luyāt al-Turk)*, translated by Robert Dankoff and James Kelly, Part I (Cambridge: Harvard University Printing Office, 1982), 319; Golden and Halasi-Kun, *The King’s Dictionary*, 166; Abulikemu Yassen 阿不里克木·亞森 and Shen Shuhua 沈淑花, “‘Tujue yu da cidian’ suojian kala han chao de guanzhi chenghao 《突厥語大詞典》所見喀喇汗朝的官職稱號,” *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, no. 1 (2003): 30. 120.

⁹⁹² See below.

⁹⁹³ Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 211-212.

deceptive and heretical”. However, these skills, especially the first two, are actually common methods employed by Western Region Buddhist monks to preach.

Sword-swallowing and fire-breathing were common performances done by Western Regions magicians who came to the area since the Han period.⁹⁹⁴ During the early stages of the dissemination of Buddhism, such magical arts already served as important proselytization tools.⁹⁹⁵ Beginning in the medieval period, Western Region monks arriving in China frequently employed illusionism to attract followers. When the Third Dalai Lama propagated Buddhism in Mongolia, he similarly utilized certain esoteric marvelous techniques to demonstrate the power of the Gelug school.⁹⁹⁶ This evidence confirms that magical arts constituted a significant missionary method during this period. Mani Bulat’s proficiency in “magic” further demonstrates that he shared a greater affinity with those Tibetan monks in the Mongol camps who specialized in esoteric rituals, markedly differing from Rgyal mtshan grags pa and his companions who expounded Confucian-Buddhist philosophy and dared not practice esoteric rituals, which was the “heterodox methods” in the perception of the Ming court.⁹⁹⁷

The term *yandie* (演朶, also known as *yandie'er* 演朶兒), according to Hoong Teik Toh’s research, is a phonetic rendering of OU. *yandir* ~ *yantir* (< Sk. *yantra*), meaning “machine” or “contraption.”⁹⁹⁸ As recorded in the *Gengshen waishi* 庚申外史, *yandie* was described as a breath-control technique capable of causing the human body to either diminish or expand, extend or contract.⁹⁹⁹ It is therefore unsurprising that Ming officials categorized it as a Western Region magical art. However, research by Hoong Teik Toh, Shen Weirong, and An Haiyan has established that *yandie* corresponds to the “magical wheel” practice in Tibetan Buddhist tantra, which aims to heal diseases, prolong life, and even enable practitioners to achieve Buddhahood

⁹⁹⁴ Shang Yongqi 尚永琪, “Xiyu huanshu yu jiumo luoshi zhi chuanjiao 西域幻術與鳩摩羅什之傳教,” *Shanxi daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 山西大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), no. 5 (2012): 26.

⁹⁹⁵ For the relations between the spread of Buddhism and magical arts, see Shang, “Xiyu huanshu,” 26-34; Yang Fuxue 楊富學 and Zhang Tianfang 張田芳, “Cong sute senglü dao zhongtu zhizun: sengjia dashi xinyang xingcheng neizai yuanyin tanxi 從粟特僧侶到中土至尊——僧伽大師信仰形成內在原因探析,” *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, no. 3 (2018), 70-72; Zheng Nan 鄭楠, “Xiyu Huanshu yuanliu ji qi dui wenxue xushi de yingxiang 西域幻術源流及其對文學敘事的影響” (master’s thesis, Xi’an: Shaanxi Normal University, 2016), 11-12.

⁹⁹⁶ Cōyǐjī, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 69.

⁹⁹⁷ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 275.

⁹⁹⁸ Hoong Teik Toh suggests that this term in Uyghur may have been borrowed from the Tocharian *yantār* ~ *yāntār*, see Hoong Teik Toh 卓鴻澤, *Lishi yuwen xue luncong chubian* 歷史語文學論叢初編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 135, 162; Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 860-861.

⁹⁹⁹ Ren Chongyue 任崇岳, *Gengshen waishi jianzheng* 庚申外史箋證 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1991), 70.

rapidly.¹⁰⁰⁰ Shen Weirong has recently further refined this interpretation, suggesting that *yandie* may refer to a specific practice to enter “blissful meditation” (Sk. *sukha-samādhī*).¹⁰⁰¹ This method had already spread throughout the Western Regions and the Central Plains during the Xi Xia period (1038–1227), making it entirely plausible that Mani Bulat, originating from the Hami Guard, would have been trained in this practice.

It seems that Fang Fengshi’s criticism of Mani Bulat stemmed primarily from the latter’s propagation of methods that deviated from the Confucian-Buddhist philosophy envisioned by the Ming court as the proper means to “civilize barbarian customs” (Ch. *xunhua yisi* 訓化夷俗). Besides this, unlike Wang Chonggu, Fang Fengshi never served in Shaanxi, thus lacking direct knowledge about Uyghur Buddhist monks and their practices. Moreover, Mani Bulat’s character of “greedy for profit”, which will be thoroughly examined soon after, was also not welcomed by Fang Fengshi.

In summary, Mani Bulat was most probably an Uyghur Buddhist registered in the Hami Guard who was professional at Western Region magical acts and the esoteric Tibetan practice of *yandie*.

7.1.2 The “Tatar-script” sutras brought by Mani Bulat

As stated before, Altan Khan is alleged to have requested the Mongolian sutras from the Ming. In 1573, Mani Bulat presented the so-called “Tatar-script” sutras to Altan Khan during his mission, alleviating the urgent needs of the Ming court. However, the content of these sutras was highly problematic. Wang Chonggu’s memorial listed the names of these sutras:

The barbarian Commander Mani Bulat, originally a native official of the Hami Guard, brought with him six volumes of “Tatar-script” sutras: The Sutra of Confucius’ Teachings, The Yuanliu Sutra, The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, The Sutra of the Big

¹⁰⁰⁰ Toh, *Lishi yuwen xue luncong chubian*, 126-167; Shen Weirong 沈衛榮 and An Haiyan 安海燕, “Qing ‘gongting yujia,’ xixia ‘daoguo jilun’ ji yuandai ‘yandi’er fa’ kaozheng 清《宮廷瑜伽》、西夏「道果機輪」及元代「演揲兒法」考證,” *Wenshi* 文史, no. 1 (2017): 51-100, 144.

¹⁰⁰¹ Shen Weirong 沈衛榮, “Shi zhuohuo huanlun, mimi daxile chanding he yandier fa 釋拙火幻輪, 秘密大喜樂禪定和演揲兒法,” *Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化, no. 53 (2021): 194.

Dipper Seven Stars, The Yuanliu Sutra of Śakyamūṇi Buddha, and The Ten Kings Tatar Sutra.

番官指揮馬你卜刺，原係哈密衛土官，隨帶韃靼番字《孔夫子講書經》《元留經》
《文殊菩薩經》《北斗七星經》《釋迦牟尼佛元留經》《十王韃靼經》共六卷。¹⁰⁰²

Table 7.1. *Sutras Brought by Mani Bulat*

Sutra Title	Existing Versions	Source of Thought	Apocryphal or not
<i>The Sutra of Confucius' Teachings</i>	—	Confucianism	Yes
<i>The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars</i>	Chinese, Uyghur, Mongolian, Tibetan	Fusion of Daoist Big Dipper worship and Buddhist merit ideology	Yes
<i>The Ten Kings Tatar Sutra</i>	Chinese, Uyghur, Tangut, Tibetan	Fusion of Indian intermediate state concepts and Chinese mortuary practices	Yes
<i>The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva</i>	—	—	No
<i>The Yuanliu Sutra</i>	—	—	—
<i>The Yuanliu Sutra of Śakyamūṇi Buddha</i>	—	—	—

Note: The order of the sutras is first arranged based on whether they are Apocrypha, and then according to the sequence listed in Wang Chonggu's memorial. "—" indicates that the information for that item is currently unavailable.

Regarding these sutras, Johan Elverskog, apparently unaware of the memorial submitted by Wang Chonggu cited above, identified them as Tibetan Buddhist texts brought back by envoys of Altan Khan from Tibet, which is, however, evidently incorrect.¹⁰⁰³ Čoyiĭi regards

¹⁰⁰² Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 397. The translation of the sutra names refer to "Digital Dictionary of Buddhism: English Text Titles Index," accessed December 8, 2025, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/indexes/text-en.html>.

¹⁰⁰³ Johan Elverskog, "The Mongolian Big Dipper Sūtra," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 1 (2006 (2008)): 102.

them as Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist sutras,¹⁰⁰⁴ while Inoue Osamu considers them “Mongolian-language scriptures”,¹⁰⁰⁵ and Li Qinpu describes them as “Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist scriptures” written in Mongolian.¹⁰⁰⁶ However, considering Mani Bulat’s identity as an Uyghur monk and his characteristic of being a “cunning monk greedy for profit”, it can be inferred that the so-called “Tatar-script” sutras were more likely Uyghur-script sutras passed off as Mongolian texts, which are also written in Uyghur characters, to curry favor and rewards from the Ming court.

Specifically, in order to support this assumption, there are three key pieces of evidence. Firstly, according to the memorial of Wang Chonggu, Mani Bulat was “capable of understanding the speaking languages of four countries and comprehending the scripts of three traditions”.¹⁰⁰⁷ The “languages of four countries” refers to Chinese, Tibetan, Old Uyghur and Mongolian, while the “scripts of three traditions” refers to Chinese characters, Tibetan script and, very tricky here, the Uyghur script, which could be used to write both Old Uyghur and Mongolian. The discrepancy between “four languages” and “three scripts” indicates that within the conceptual framework of Ming officials like Wang Chonggu, there was either an inability or no perceived need to distinguish whether a document written in the Uyghur script was in the Uyghur or the Mongolian language. Thus, there exists a possibility that the so-called “Tatar script” sutras were in Old Uyghur rather than Mongolian.

Secondly, among the various sutras brought by Mani Bulat, only *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* and *The Ten Kings Tatar Sutra* correspond to texts known today. As shown in Table 7.1, between these two scriptures, only *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* has a surviving Mongolian translation, while no Mongolian version of the *Scripture of the Ten Kings* has been discovered to date. In contrast, both texts have extant Old Uyghur versions.

Thirdly, an indirect but nonetheless important piece of evidence is that the earliest known Mongolian translation of *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* among the Mongol tribes

¹⁰⁰⁴ Čoyiji, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 31.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū*, 330.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 215.

¹⁰⁰⁷ “能知四國番語，曉三家字意。” Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 396-397.

during the Northern Yuan period dates to 1624 and was translated from a Tibetan version.¹⁰⁰⁸ This suggests that the copy of *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* brought by Mani Bulat was either not in Mongolian or, if it was, did not become an influential version among the Mongols.

Overall, the sutras Mani Bulat brought to Altan Khan were actually written in Old Uyghur. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that several of the sutras brought by Mani Bulat were not authentic Buddhist sutras but rather apocrypha popular in Uyghur Buddhism.

Firstly, *The Sutra of Confucius' Teachings* does not exist in the orthodox Buddhist canon and may have been deliberately fabricated by Mani Bulat to align with the Ming court's promotion of a "Confucian-Buddhist philosophy". Although the exact origin of this sutra remains unclear, the fusion of Confucian and Buddhist elements in Uyghur Buddhism is undeniable. Peter Zieme has pointed out that the apocryphal *Sutra on the Profound Kindness of Parents* 父母恩重經, which reflects Confucian filial piety, was translated into Uyghur at the latest during the Yuan period and was quite popular among Uyghur people.¹⁰⁰⁹ Additionally, the phenomenon of Confucian-Buddhist syncretism was particularly prominent in the Dunhuang region, where the Uyghurs were long active. Another apocrypha, *The Sutra of the Pure Dharma Conduct Spoken by the Buddha* (Ch. *foshuo qingjing faxing jing* 佛說清淨法行經), identifies Confucius as the "Light-Pure Boy" (Ch. *guangjing tongzi* 光淨童子) or "Learned-youth Bodhisattva" (Ch. *rutong pusa* 儒童菩薩), a disciple of the Buddha sent to China to propagate the Dharma and teach the "Five Classics" (Ch. *wu jing* 五經).¹⁰¹⁰ This apocryphon was also widespread in Dunhuang.¹⁰¹¹ It is possible that *The Sutra of Confucius' Teachings* was a variant of this text.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Elverskog, "The Mongolian Big Dipper Sūtra," 103.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Peter Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft im Uigurischen Königreich von Qocho: Kolophone und Stifter des alttürkischen buddhistischen Schrifttums aus Zentralasien* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), 36-38. Regarding the introduction to the manuscripts and contents of the *Sutra on the Profound Kindness of Parents* discovered in Dunhuang, see Pan Wenzhu 潘文竹, "Dunhuang xiaoqin lei shuochang wenxian yanjiu 敦煌孝親類說唱文獻研究" (PhD diss., Jinan: Shandong daxue, 2022), 15-43.

¹⁰¹⁰ Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, ed., Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典 comp., *Chūgoku Senjutsu Kyōten* 中國撰述經典, vol. 2 (Tōkyō: Daitō Shuppansha, 1996), 13-14; Zhao Qingshan 趙青山, "Hujiao lei weijing 'qingjing faxing jing' zai yanjiu 護教類偽經《清淨法行經》再研究," *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊, no. 3 (2019): 80, 88.

¹⁰¹¹ Yu Xiaohong 俞曉紅 and Zhan Xuzuo 詹緒左, "Dunhuang bianwen jiaozhu' jiaobu 《敦煌變文校註》校補," *Ligeng xuetan (yuyan juan)* 勵耘學刊 (語言卷), no. 11 (2010): 98.

The Biography of the Third Dalai Lama records that in 1584, the Third Dalai Lama “paid homage to the 100,000 Maitreya Buddha images carved into a cliff by the Chinese sage Confucius (Ti. Kong rtse) through his divine power”.¹⁰¹² Chen Qingying has identified this site as the present-day Bingling Temple 炳靈寺 in today’s Gansu.¹⁰¹³ This indicates that during the Wanli period, the ideology of Confucian-Buddhist syncretism remained prevalent among Buddhist communities in Gansu and its surrounding regions.

At the time, the Ming placed particular emphasis on disseminating “Confucian-Buddhist philosophy”, especially the “doctrines of loyalty and filial piety” (Ch. *zhongxiao da yi* 忠孝大義), in its efforts to propagate this ideology among the Mongols. For instance, Cong Wenguang 叢文光, a translator from the Tatar Bureau (Ch. *dada guan* 韃靼館), carried the “barbarian script *Classics of Loyalty and Filial Piety*” (Ch. *fan zi zhong xiao er jing* 番字忠、孝二經) on a diplomatic mission to the Mongol camps. Similarly, the tribal officials Naji 那吉 and Baiyao 擺腰 were commended by Wang Chonggu for “studying barbarian script and transmitting the *Classics of Loyalty and Filial Piety*”.¹⁰¹⁴ Precisely because of this, listing *The Sutra of Confucius’ Teachings* at the forefront of the presented sutras aligned most closely with the values the Ming sought to propagate.

The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars, fully titled *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars for Prolonging Life Spoken by the Buddha* (Ch. *foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經), is an apocryphal text formed through the fusion of Tang-era Big Dipper worship and Buddhist merit ideology.¹⁰¹⁵ Li Qipu identifies the version brought by Mani Bulat as a Daoist scripture,¹⁰¹⁶ while Xiao Dengfu, through detailed textual comparison, points out that the content of this sutra is entirely Daoist, merely modifying the Daoist “Seven Lords of the Big Dipper” (Ch. *beidou qixing jun* 北斗七星君) as the incarnations of the “Seven

¹⁰¹² Wushi dalai lama, *Yishi-sishi dalai lama zhuan*, 245; Rgyal dbang lnga pa chen po sogs, *Rgyal dbang sku pheng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam/ sku phreng dang po nas bzhi pa 'i par gyi rnam thar*, 568.

¹⁰¹³ Wushi dalai lama, *Dalai lama zhuan*, 245. “Bingling 炳靈” is a shortened transliteration of T. *byams pa 'bum gling*, meaning “One Hundred Thousand Maitreya Island.” For more on the Bingling Temple and photos, see Gansu bingling si wenwu baohu yanjiu suo 甘肅炳靈寺文物保護研究所 ed., *Bingling si* 炳靈寺 (Nanjing: Jiangsu fenghuang meishu chubanshe, 2015).

¹⁰¹⁴ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 279-280.

¹⁰¹⁵ Wang Hongmei 王紅梅, “Yuandai weiwu'er beidou xinyang tanxi: yi huihu wen ‘fo shuo beidou qixing yanming jing’ wei li 元代畏兀兒北斗信仰探析——以回鶻文《佛說北斗七星延命經》為例,” *Minzu luntan* 民族論壇, no. 5 (2013): 76.

¹⁰¹⁶ Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 215.

Buddhas” (Ch. *qi fo* 七佛).¹⁰¹⁷ *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* was deeply revered by Buddhist followers among Inner Asian groups and exists in Uyghur, Mongolian and Tibetan translations.¹⁰¹⁸ Johan Elverskog notes that since the Big Dipper was a shared object of worship among the Chinese, Mongols and Tibetans, veneration of the Big Dipper served as a perfect medium for constructing a multi-ethnic imperial system.¹⁰¹⁹ Thus, this sutra could assist Altan Khan in establishing an imperial enterprise that integrated Mongolian, Tibetan and Han peoples.¹⁰²⁰ As previously discussed, the earliest known Mongolian translation of *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* from the Northern Yuan period dated to 1624 and was derived from a Tibetan version. This confirms that the influence of the sutras brought by Mani Bulat on Altan Khan must have been rather limited.

Further on, the *Ten Kings Tatar Sutra*, namely the *Ten Kings’ Sutra* (Ch. *shi wang jing* 十王經) or the *Ten Kings’ Sutra spoken by the Buddha* (Ch. *foshuo shi wang jing* 佛說十王經), is an apocryphal sutra composed by Chinese monks during the Tang period,¹⁰²¹ embodying the fusion of Indian intermediate state concepts and Chinese mortuary practices.¹⁰²² Unlike doctrinal texts, it served primarily as a practical ritual manual.¹⁰²³ In addition to the Chinese version, extant translations of this sutra include Uyghur, Tangut and Tibetan renditions.¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰¹⁷ Xiao Fudeng 蕭福登, *Daojiao shushu yu mijiao dainji* 道教術數與密教典籍 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1994), 347-350; *Daojiao dao jiao yingxiang xia de fo jiao jingji* 道家道教影響下的佛教經籍 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2005), 928-929; Yang Fuxue reckoned this sutra as a Tantric Buddhist text, failing to find its relation with Daoist texts, see Yang Fuxue 楊富學, *Huiwu zhi fo jiao* 回鶻之佛教 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1998), 151-175.

¹⁰¹⁸ Wang, “Yuandai weiwu’er beidou xinyang tanxi,” 76; There are currently four Uyghur translations of *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars*, including both manuscripts and printed editions, see Niu Ruji 牛汝極, *Huihu fo jiao wenxian: fodian zonglun ji bali suo cang dunhuang huihu wen fo jiao wenxian* 回鶻佛教文獻——佛典總論及巴黎所藏敦煌回鶻文佛教文獻 (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang daxue chubanshe, 2000), 169-172. Regarding the details about the Uyghur translation editions, see Peter Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen der Uiguren* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 160-162; Johan Elverskog, *Uygur Buddhist Literature* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 93.

¹⁰¹⁹ Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 99, 101.

¹⁰²⁰ Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 102.

¹⁰²¹ For the discussions on the authenticity and content of the *Ten Kings’ Sutra*, see Du Mencheng 杜門城, *Dunhuang ben “fo shuo shi wang jing” jiaolu yanjiu* 敦煌本《佛說十王經》校錄研究 (Lanzhou: Ganshu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1989); Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

¹⁰²² Zhang Zong 張總, “Dunhuang tulufan deng zhu minzu jina sangyi zangsu zhi jiaoliu: yi han zang huihu xixia ‘shiwang jing’ cunben tanqi 敦煌吐魯番等諸民族間喪儀葬俗之交流——以漢藏回鶻西夏《十王經》存本談起,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, no. 2 (2024): 2. In addition, Lin Haisheng pointed out that the images in the *Ten Kings’ Sutra* also reflect the veneration of the Big Dipper, see Lin Haisheng 林海生, “Lun Dunhuang ben ‘shiwang tu’ yu beidou xinyang 論敦煌本《十王圖》與北斗信仰,” *Dunhuang xieben yanjiu yanbao* 敦煌寫本研究年報, no. 13 (2019): 167-179.

¹⁰²³ Zhang, “‘shiwang jing’ cunben tanqi,” 2.

¹⁰²⁴ For an introduction to the extant translation editions, see Zhang, “‘shiwang jing’ cunben tanqi,” 2-9.

According to the *Wanli wugong lu*, Sečen Qung Tayiji once requested the *Tibetan Ten Kings' Sutra* (Ch. *xifan shiwang jing* 西番十王經) from Ming officials. Thus, Mani Bulat's inclusion of this sutra may have aimed to meet the demands of Sečen Qung Tayiji and other Mongol leaders. Li Qinpu notes that the Mongols already practiced a “seven-week mourning ritual 祭七” during this period, for which the *Ten Kings Sutra* could provide doctrinal and ceremonial support. Notably, when Rgyal mtshan grags pa and other envoys visited Altan Khan's yurt, they also carried the “statues of Ten Kings” (Ch. *dizagn shiwang shenxiang* 地藏十王神像)¹⁰²⁵

Regarding the *Tibetan Ten Kings Sutra*, Li Qinpu suggests it was a Tibetan translation of the original Chinese text compiled in the Gansu-Qinghai region or Beijing at the time.¹⁰²⁶ However, a Tibetan version of this sutra had long existed. The Tangut translation, for instance, was derived from the Tibetan version, and both contained additional content absent in the Chinese *Ten Kings' Sutra*.¹⁰²⁷ Li Qinpu further posits that the *Ten Kings Tatar Sutra* was a Mongolian rendition,¹⁰²⁸ yet no Mongolian version has been discovered to date, whereas numerous Uyghur copies survive.¹⁰²⁹ Given Mani Bulat's identity as an Uyghur monk and the shared script between Uyghur and Mongolian, it is far more plausible that the so-called *Ten Kings Tatar Sutra* was, in fact, the Uyghur *Ten Kings' Sutra*.

The *Yuanliu Sutra* and *The Yuanliu Sutra of Śākyamuni Buddha* do not appear in the orthodox Buddhist canon nor among extant Uyghur Buddhist texts,¹⁰³⁰ leaving their origins unclear. It is also very hard to predict their content through their titles.

As for *The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, it may correspond to *The Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī* and *The Mañjuśrī Accomplishment Practice*, two surviving Uyghur Buddhist

¹⁰²⁵ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 8, 274.

¹⁰²⁶ Li, *Fojiao *Šamba shi yanjiu*, 16.

¹⁰²⁷ Zhang Jiuling 張九玲, “Yiwei jing wenben goucheng de fuza he qite: yi ‘shiwang jing’ wei zhongxin de kaocha 疑偽經文本構成的複雜和奇特——以《十王經》為中心的考察,” *Baoji wenli xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 寶雞文理學院學報（社會科學版）, no. 1 (2023): 26-32. For the study on the Tibetan translation, see Daniel Berounský, *The Tibetan Version of the Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Quest for Chinese Influence on the Tibetan Perception of the Afterlife* (Prague: Triton, 2012).

¹⁰²⁸ Li, *Fojiao *Šamba shi yanjiu*, 14.

¹⁰²⁹ For the studies on the extant Uyghur *Ten Kings' Sutra*, see Ma Xiaohu 馬小鶴 and Wang Juan 汪娟, “Huihu wen yu hanwen ‘shiwang jing’ tujian 回鶻文與漢文《十王經》圖卷,” *Dunhuang xue* 敦煌學, no. 38 (2022): 111-146; Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 235-236.

¹⁰³⁰ For a catalogue of extant Uyghur Buddhist Literature, see Niu, *Huihu fojiao wenxian*, 11-17.

texts.¹⁰³¹ The worship of Mañjuśrī was a central element in Uyghur Buddhism, with Mount Mañjuśrī (Ch. Wenshu Shan 文殊山) in Suzhou revered as the bodhisattva's bodhi-site (Ch. *daochang* 道場).¹⁰³² Given that Mañjuśrī was also a crucial deity in the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, which Altan Khan favored, Mani Bulat's inclusion of *The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* likely aimed to cater to the khan's religious inclinations.

In summary, apart from the unidentifiable *Yuanliu Sutra*, *The Yuanliu Sutra of Śākyamuni Buddha*, and *The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva*, the remaining texts—*The Sutra of Confucius' Teachings*, *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars*, and the *Ten Kings' Tatar Sutra*—were all apocrypha prevalent in Uyghur Buddhism. These three apocrypha share a common feature that they all reflect to a degree Han Chinese customs and beliefs: *The Sutra of Confucius' Teachings* incorporates Confucian thought, *The Sutra of the Big Dipper Seven Stars* embodies Daoist astral worship, and *The Ten Kings' Tatar Sutra* mirrors Chinese mortuary practices. Additionally, *The Sutra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* served to align with Altan Khan's devotion to the Gelug tradition.

However, although Mani Bulat gained the favor of Altan Khan after he visited the yurt and presented the sutras, which Wang Chonggu describes as “delighting the barbarian king and greatly pacifying the sentiments of the tribesmen”¹⁰³³, along with the fact that many other Uyghur monks were highly active in the Gansu region at the time,¹⁰³⁴ they did not exert a profound influence on Altan Khan's religious convictions. By this period, Altan Khan had already developed a strong inclination toward the Gelug school. In 1573, he dispatched a delegation consisting of Mongolian and Tibetan monks, “spiritual friends” (Ch. shanyou 善

¹⁰³¹ Niu, *Huihu fojiao wenxian*, 15; Elverskog, *Uyghur Buddhist Literature*, 114-117

¹⁰³² For an introduction to the veneration of Mañjuśrī in Uyghur Buddhism, see Peter Zieme, “Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī in Old Uigur Buddhism,” in *The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen and Guang Kuan (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), 223-237; Yang Fuxue 楊富學, *Dunhuang yu xingcheng qi de yugu zu* 敦煌與形成期的裕固族 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2020), 119-135.

¹⁰³³ “歆服虜王，大慰夷情。” Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 399.

¹⁰³⁴ At that time, Uyghur monks actively copied sutras, left numerous inscriptions in Buddhist caves, and enthusiastically participated in the missionary activities of the Third Dalai Lama, see Yisilaawen'er and Zhang, “Wenshu shan wanfo dong huihu wen tiji,” 94-106; Hamada Masami 浜田正美, “Shukushū jō Tōkan Kikaiji: Mārofubon Uiguru-yaku Konkōmyō saishō ō okugaki chūshaku issoku 肅州城東関帰華寺: マーロフ本ウイグル訳金光明最勝王奥書注釈一則,” in *Min-Shin jidai no seiji to shakai* 明清時代の政治と社会, ed. Ono Kazuko 小野和子 (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1983), 701-706; Sayang, *Menggu yuanliu*, 321; Ulayan, “*Menggu yuanliu*” *yanjiu*, 805; Sayang, *The Precious Summary*, 150; Wushi dalai lama, *Dalai lama zhuan*, 239; Rgyal dbang lnga pa chen po sogs, *Rgyal dbang sku pheng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam/ sku pheng dang po nas bzhi pa'i par gyi rnam thar*, 560.

友), and Kiy-a Tayiji's son *Qurqai (Ch. Qia Taiji zi Hu'erhai 恰台吉子虎兒害), who was sent to Tibet to procure scriptures, with instructions to "seek out scriptures and adhere to their teachings".¹⁰³⁵ By 1576, envoys sent by Altan Khan to meet the Third Dalai Lama in Tibet returned with "pure Buddhist sutras" (Ch. *qingjing fojing* 清淨佛經).¹⁰³⁶ These cases indicate that the Altan Khan focused on gaining sutras from Tibet.

It is true that Altan Khan also requested sutras from the Ming, as discussed above. For instance, Altan Khan had previously requested *The Sutra of Golden Light* 金光明經 from the Ming court,¹⁰³⁷ which led to the dispatch of Mani Bulat to deliver a Chinese version of the sutra in 1574.¹⁰³⁸ However, the Mongolian *Sutra of Golden Light*, later commissioned by Altan Khan for printing, was not translated from the Chinese text or any other intermediary language. Instead, it was a "recopied or revised version of the Yuan-period translation by Širab Sengge 錫喇卜僧格."¹⁰³⁹ Given that this Yuan-era translation was not introduced to the Mongols by the Ming or Mani Bulat, it must have been obtained by Altan Khan's envoys from Tibet. This demonstrates that the sutras presented by the Ming court and Mani Bulat had only a limited impact on Altan Khan's religious policies.

7.1.3 Mani Bulat's opportunism and mediation between the Ming and Mongols

Although Mani Bulat did not exert a significant influence on Altan Khan's religious beliefs, he nevertheless won the khan's favor and was entrusted with important missions. Consequently, he began serving Altan Khan and gradually lost the trust of Ming officials.

In 1573, Rgyal mtshan grags pa and three others, who have been mentioned before in Section 7.1.1, embarked on their second diplomatic mission to Altan Khan. By the fourth month

¹⁰³⁵ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 399.

¹⁰³⁶ Jürungy-a, *Aletan han zhuan*, 101; Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 146; Baoligao suggests that the "pure Buddhist sutras" mentioned here are the Kanjur and Tenju, see Baoligao 寶力高, *Menggu wen fojiao wenxian yanjiu* 蒙古文佛教文獻研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2012), 178.

¹⁰³⁷ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 397.

¹⁰³⁸ *WLWGL*, j. 8, 103.

¹⁰³⁹ For the translation progress of *The Sutra of Golden Light*, see Hasibateer 哈斯巴特爾, "Menggu wen 'jin guangming jing' shouchao ben bayu yanjiu (3) 蒙古文 29 品《金光明經》手抄本跋語研究 (三)," *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan* 元史及民族與邊疆研究集刊, no. 40 (2020), 192. For other sutras translated during this period, see Čoyiji, *Menggu fojiao shi*, 127-135; Walther Heissig, "Zur geistigen Leistung der neubekehrten Mongolen des späten 16. und frühen 17. Jhdts," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, no. 26 (1954): 101-116; Walther Heissig, *Beiträge zur Übersetzungsgeschichte des mongolischen buddhistischen Kanons* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 19-42.

of that year, Mani Bulat met Wang Chonggu and was subsequently dispatched as an envoy to Altan Khan. In the seventh month, Altan Khan escorted both Rgyal mtshan grags pa's delegation and Mani Bulat back to the border, bestowing generous rewards upon them. To Rgyal mtshan grags pa and other three envoys, the khan gifted 29 horses, 2 oxen, 10 sheep, 5 bolts of *gaiji* satin (Ch. *gaiji daunzi* 改機段子), 15 bolts of *sansuo* fabric, 2 sets of saddles and trappings (Ch. *anchan* 鞍轡), and 10 taels of silver. In contrast, Mani Bulat alone received 26 horses, an overcoat with red satin shoulders, a sable collar and otter-fur trim (Ch. *hongduan guojian diaoshu ling shuita bian pi'ao* 紅段過肩貂鼠領水獺邊皮襖), a silver-gilding belt (Ch. *wanyin ting dai* 鍍銀鞵帶), a pair of five-colored Tatar boots, a lambskin coat, and a set of a saddle and its trappings.¹⁰⁴⁰ Thus the rewards bestowed upon Mani Bulat far exceeded those given to Rgyal mtshan grags pa and his three companions, both in quantity and quality.¹⁰⁴¹

Realizing Altan Khan's favor towards Mani Bulat, Wang Chonggu was delighted and spoke highly of Mani Bulat, praising him as one who "excelled in writing various barbarian scripts, was fluent in the languages of different nations, made the Mongol king delightful and obedient, and greatly pacified the sentiments of the tribesmen".¹⁰⁴² As a result, Wang provided generous travel expenses to Mani Bulat, dispatched several envoys to escort him back Suzhou, and also made an agreement with him that he should travel to the Mongol camp once every spring, along with Rgyal mtshan grags pa's mission, to guide and enlighten the Mongols.¹⁰⁴³

Mani Bulat's mission extended beyond addressing Mongol demands for monks, Buddhist sutras, and translators—it also involved assisting Ming officials in addressing the problems caused by the western expansion of the Mongols and their harassment of border regions during the sixteenth century. As discussed in Chapter 6, following the Longqing Peace Treaty, the Mongols of the Right Wing aggressively expanded westward, occupying territories such as Songshan, Qinghai, the Western Regions stretching from the Jiayu Pass to the Shule River, and Shanhou. This expansion encircled the entire Gansu corridor, with numerous Mongol groups

¹⁰⁴⁰ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 398.

¹⁰⁴¹ It is worth pointing out that the equivalent price paid by the Ming court for horses granted to Mani Bulat and others was ten taels of silver per horse, see Ibid.

¹⁰⁴² “尤能書寫諸家番字，諳曉各國譯語，歆服虜王，大慰夷情。” Ibid., j.10, 399.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid.

grazing their herds inside Gansu itself. While primarily raiding the Oirats and tributary missions from the Western Regions, these tribes also periodically plundered Ming military and civilian settlements.¹⁰⁴⁴

Faced with this situation, Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng pragmatically acknowledged: “If we attempt to bind their hands and feet by forbidding their western raids, they will likely refuse to submit.”¹⁰⁴⁵ With resignation, he decided to “pacify those who submit, suppress those who rebel. If rebels submit again, pacify them once more; if the pacified rebel again, suppress them anew”.¹⁰⁴⁶ Given that forceful Ming intervention to block Mongol westward movements risked undermining the hard-won peace agreement, the preferable alternative was to have the Prince of Shunyi, Altan Khan, rein in his subordinates. It was under these circumstances that Mani Bulat was tasked with negotiating this delicate matter with Altan Khan.

Mani Bulat’s diplomatic efforts were evidently successful. He took the written orders from the Gansu Coordinator and expressed the Ming’s desires, which requested the prohibition of western raids on the Xifan tribes and harassment of Ming territories, to Altan Khan. The khan, in turn, agreed with the request, issued a Mongolian decree, and dispatched four envoys to accompany Mani Bulat to Ming territory to announce the prohibition to those Mongolian groups residing at Gansu.¹⁰⁴⁷

In the ninth month of the first year of the Wanli reign (1573), Wang Chonggu was promoted as Assistant Administrator of Military Affairs in Capital Training Divisions (Ch. *xieli rongzheng* 協理戎政). His successor as Xuanda Supreme Commander was Fang Fengshi, the former Datong Grand Coordinator, who had just concluded a period of mourning. Unlike Wang Chonggu—who trusted and actively employed surrendered tribal figures—Fang Fengshi adopted a far more cautious approach, maintaining deep skepticism toward the loyalty of these Mongol and Uyghur intermediaries.¹⁰⁴⁸

¹⁰⁴⁴ Temule, “Mingdai zhongguo yu neilu yazhou,” 116-124; Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 128-145.

¹⁰⁴⁵ “若令縛其手足，不令西搶，恐彼亦未肯服也。” Zhang, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji*, j. 22, 8a.

¹⁰⁴⁶ “順者撫，逆者剿；逆而又順，則又撫之；順而又逆，則又剿之。” Zhang, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji*, j. 22, 8a.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 398.

¹⁰⁴⁸ For example, he considered it highly inappropriate for the Datong Grand Coordinator to recommend Jie Sheng 鮮生, a “barbarian 夷人,” for the position of Municipal Military Commander 守備, because he was illiterate and knew nothing about administrative affairs, and if he was employed, the barbarians would think that the Ming lacked consistent strategies in managing both internal and external matters. See Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 210.

As mentioned before, Fang Fengshi complained that Mani Bulat was a Western Regions magician rather than a Buddhist, who did not propagate Confucian-Buddhist philosophy as planned and was in conflict with Rgyal mtshan grags pa and his companions. Therefore, in early 1574, Fang Fengshi decided to detain Mani Bulat and not send him to the Mongols again, and then secretly dispatched an envoy to advise Altan Khan not to employ him. He also wrote to the Senior Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng and Gansu Grand Coordinator Liao Fengjie 廖逢節 (1519–?, in office 1571–1574), stating that Mani Bulat should be sent back to Suzhou and not permitted to serve an envoy again.¹⁰⁴⁹

However, Fang Fengshi's desires were left unfulfilled.¹⁰⁵⁰ In 1574, Mani Bulat was once again dispatched to Altan Khan's yurt, this time bearing *The Sutra of Golden Light*, and was subsequently rewarded by the Ming court. According to the *Ming shilu*, Fang Fengshi had by then reversed his earlier stance and personally recommended rewards for Mani Bulat.¹⁰⁵¹ It is highly likely that Fang Fengshi changed his mind through the persuasion of Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng.¹⁰⁵² The reason was simple: Mani Bulat had successfully gained Altan Khan's trust and had become a crucial intermediary in Ming–Mongol relations. Discarding him would have necessitated the arduous task of finding a replacement—an impractical choice.

Mani Bulat soon proved his worth again. At that time, Bintü of the Songshan region, grandson of Mergen Jinong discussed in Chapter 6, and his son Ačitu led over a thousand cavalry to raid Tibetan tribes, threatening to breach the frontier. The Gansu Coordinator thus issued a directive to Altan Khan, who promptly dispatched Mani Bulat (written here as a shortened form “Mani 馬你”) and another five Mongolian envoys to admonish Bintü.¹⁰⁵³ His mission

¹⁰⁴⁹ Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 211–212, 219.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Li Qinpu thought that Mani Bulat had been sent back Gansu, what doesn't align with the the following discussion. See Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 216.

¹⁰⁵¹ *MSZSL*, j. 30, 732–733.

¹⁰⁵² Through letters with local officials, Senior Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng held ultimate authority over frontier affairs at the time and vigorously promoted the implementation of the Longqing Peace Treaty. As Wei Qingyuan noted, during Zhang Juzheng's tenure as Senior Grand Secretary, he directed generals through letters and drafted edicts. Furthermore, it is noted by Jōchi Takashi that the power of the Grand Secretariat expanded extremely by seizing the opportunity presented by the Longqing Peace Treaty. See Wei Qingyuan 韋慶遠, *Zhang juzheng he mingdai zhonghou qi zhengju* 張居正和明代中後期政局 (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 880; Jōchi Takashi 城地孝, *Chōjō to Pekin no Chōsei—Mindai Naikaku Seiji no Tenkai to Hen'yō* 長城と北京の朝政——明代内閣政治の展開と変容 (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2012), 281; Jōchi Takashi 城地孝, “Zhang juzheng zhengzhi de shengcheng guocheng—ming longqing shiqi neige zhengzhi yu beibian fangwei zhengce de zhankai 張居正政治の生成過程——明代隆慶時期内閣政治與北邊防衛政策的展開,” *Beida shixue* 北大史學, no. 1 (2008): 166–192+526–527.

¹⁰⁵³ *WLWGL*, j. 8, 104; Inoue, *Hotokutai=Sechen=Hontaiji no kenkyū*, 334.

was successful and even gained praise from Zhang Juzheng.¹⁰⁵⁴ This case also indicates that Mani Bulat's role had gradually shifted from that of a Ming envoy to one as Altan Khan's representative.

Mani Bulat's diplomatic efforts to dissuade the western Mongols from raiding not only aided the Ming in stabilizing the frontier but also likely sought to alleviate the plight of his own people. At the time, the Mongols of the Right Wing were frequently launching expeditions into the Western Regions to fight against the Oirats, encroaching on the Gansu frontier and plundering the Xifan tribes, even reaching the outskirts of Suzhou, where local residents complained of them burning and looting.¹⁰⁵⁵ Protecting the remnants of the Hami Guard in Suzhou was thus likely another of Mani Bulat's objectives.

Subsequently, as Li Qinpu observed, Mani Bulat effectively became a trusted advisor to Altan Khan.¹⁰⁵⁶ He provided Altan Khan with detailed advice on how to request sutras, statues of Buddha and dye from China to decorate the Yanghua Temple, where Altan Khan would later meet the third Dalai Lama in 1578.¹⁰⁵⁷ It is very conspicuous that Mani Bulat's name was absent from the list of Ming envoys who were sent to accompany Altan Khan to Qinghai in 1578, confirming that by this time he no longer served the Ming but had transitioned into the role of strategic advisor to Altan Khan.¹⁰⁵⁸

The final appearance of "Mani Bulat" in the sources occurs in a memorial by Gao Guangxian 郅光先, the Shaanxi Supreme Commander (serving 1578–1581 and 1583–1589), likely written between 1578 and 1579, stating:

Former Xuanda Supreme Commanders Wang [Chonggu] and Fang [Fengshi] annually dispatched Suzhou Sutra-transmitting monk Mani Bulat, who is currently holding the rank

¹⁰⁵⁴ Zhang, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji*, j. 19, 18a.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Zhang Siwei 張四維, *Zhang siwei ji* 張四維集, ed. Zhang Zhijiang 張志江 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018), 1056.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Fang, *Dayin lou ji*, 216.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *WLWGL*, j. 8, 105-106.

¹⁰⁵⁸ The Ming court dispatched a large number of escorts to accompany Altan Khan on his westward journey, including interpreters, monks, military officers from Xuanda and Shaanxi, and a *fuyi* official Xue Ruyu 薛如玉. For a detailed list of the escorts' names, see *WLWGL*, j. 8, 108; *HMJLSC*, j. 4, 146-147.

of Commander, and Tongchi Bulat, who sought to inherit his ancestor's post as Commander, to the Mongols to propagate Buddhist sutras.

前宣大總督王、方每年行本鎮將肅州經僧馬你卜刺，見授指揮，童赤卜刺，¹⁰⁵⁹欲復指揮祖職，每年遣送入虜傳教經典。¹⁰⁶⁰

Tongchi Bulat was presumably another Uyghur monk-official from the Hami Guard, who succeeded Mani Bulat's original role as annual envoy to Altan Khan.

While the name “Mani Bulat” vanishes from the records after this point, numerous questions about him remain unresolved: Did he successfully secure an official post in the Suzhou Guard? What specific actions lay behind Fang Fengshi's accusation of him as a “cunning monk driven by greed” in his letter to Zhang Juzheng? How did Mani Bulat navigate the transition from Ming envoy to Altan Khan's advisor? What was his ultimate fate? These puzzles find a compelling resolution once we recognize that Mani Bulat was none other than the later prominent *fuyi* official Ma Yingshi 馬應時.

7.2 Mani Bulat's mediation of Ming–Mongol border conflicts after 1581

Altan Khan passed away in 1581, plunging Mongol internal power dynamics into chaos. Uncontrolled Mongol tribes started frequently encroaching upon Ming borders, plundering both Han and non-Han military and civilian populations. Concurrently, Rgyal mtshan grags pa and his mission ceased their annual visit to Mongolia after Altan Khan's death, bringing the once-frequent religious exchanges between the Ming and Mongols to a standstill. Thereafter, the focus of Ming–Mongol interactions shifted from meeting Mongol religious demands to preventing Mongol incursions into Ming territories. In this background, the *fuyi* official Ma Yingshi was entrusted with more important responsibilities.

¹⁰⁵⁹ A possible reconstruction of “童赤” is OU. Tončī, the meaning of which is unclear. Another possible is OU. Tonči ~ Torče < Ti. Rdo rje, meaning “diamond,” the pronunciation of which is slightly different, but the meaning makes sense. Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, pp.731-733.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *HMJLSC*, j. 4, 164.

Ma Yingshi abruptly appeared in the sources in 1581 when he was dispatched as an envoy to Altan Khan's yurt. In Ming official memorials, his name was listed ahead of long-serving interpreters such as Shi Guoxun 師國勲 from the Xuanda region, indicating his elevated status. This suggests that he must have held an important position prior to 1581. This dissertation will argue that "Ma Yingshi" was, in fact, the Chinese name of Mani Bulat. For narrative convenience, he will continue to be referred to as "Ma Yingshi" in this section. Ma Yingshi served in various posts across Xuanfu, Suzhou, Yansui, and other regions, assisting the Ming in "pacifying the barbarians" while simultaneously advancing his own interests. This section will discuss his activities and further demonstrate his image in the eyes of high-class Ming officials.

7.2.1 Ma Yingshi was Mani Bulat

Current scholarship remains unclear and contains misunderstandings regarding Ma Yingshi's birthplace, ethnicity, religion, and early career, which I will discuss as following.

Firstly, we must clarify Ma Ying's homeland or adoptive homeland. *Suzhen huayi zhi* recorded that Ma Yingshi was a "native of the [Suzhou] guard".¹⁰⁶¹ This suggests two possibilities: He was born in a military family of the Suzhou Guard, or he initially served the Ming in other places before being registered in the Suzhou Guard due to merit. It is worth mentioning that Mani Bulat was a native official in the Hami Guard, an affiliated institution of the Suzhou Guard, and pursued to reassign himself in the Suzhou Guard so that he could serve in military positions outside Suzhou. It is therefore possible that Mani Bulat was successfully reassigned to the Suzhou Guard and changed his name to a more Han Chinese style: "Ma Yingshi".

Secondly, Ma Yingshi's ethnicity and religion also remained unclear. The Grand Secretary Shen Shixing (1535–1614) 申時行 explicitly stated that "Ma Yingshi was originally of barbarian descent".¹⁰⁶² Based on this record, Temule suggests that Ma Yingshi might have

¹⁰⁶¹ SZHYZ, j. 3, 226.

¹⁰⁶² "馬應時本夷種." Shen Shixing 申時行, *Lunfei jiandu* 論扉簡牘, in *Siku jinhui shu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊, *ji bu* 集部, vol. 161 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), j. 9, 348.

been a Muslim,¹⁰⁶³ but there is some evidence that may suggest otherwise. It is true that many Muslims adopted the family name “Ma 馬”. However, Ma Yingshi once excluded the Muslim merchants from the tribute missions organized by the Yarkand Khanate to trade with the Mongols,¹⁰⁶⁴ and colluded with Sečen Beyiji to plunder Muslims’ horses, cattle, sheep, and provisions.¹⁰⁶⁵ This suggests he was unlikely to have been a Muslim but more likely a descendant of the former Xiyu buffer zone people who had resettled in Suzhou and harbored grievances against the Moghul Khanate, the predecessor of the Yarkand Khanate.

Ma Yingshi was described as having “traversed barbarian lands and mastered their tongues”,¹⁰⁶⁶ demonstrating fluency in at least Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan. The *Wanli wugong lu* was the only source which recorded Ma Ying’s activities before 1581. It recorded that Ma Yingshi once served as a translator with the identity of a “barbarian monk” (Ch. *yi seng* 夷僧), and taught the Mongol leader Erketü Qatun, Altan Khan’s wife, a “barbarian script” (Ch. *fan zi* 番字, i.e. Tibetan).¹⁰⁶⁷ Although he was sent to the yurt as a “barbarian monk”, he actually served in the Suzhou Guard as a Commander at the time.¹⁰⁶⁸ While many Mongol and Tibetan lamas served as intermediaries between the Ming and Mongol courts at the time, they generally received monastic titles from the Ming government rather than military positions.¹⁰⁶⁹ The only reasonable explanation of Ma Yingshi’s career is that he was firstly a Suzhou native official who came from non-Han origin and served in the military and then became a monk due to needs of the Ming court. And as mentioned before, there were no native officials in Suzhou before the Xiyu buffer zone groups moved there. Therefore, Ma Yingshi should be a descendant of a member of the Xiyu buffer zone groups, which corresponds to Mani Bulat’s identity again.

¹⁰⁶³ Temule, “Yuejing yu jiaotong,” 318.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Lu, “Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe,” 136.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *WLWGL*, j. 14, 374.

¹⁰⁶⁶ “身經虜地，口習番言.” *MSZSL*, j. 369, 6910.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 176.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Ming ducha yuan you qiandu yushi zhangong ji yuanpei wang gongren muzhi ming (xingzhuang fu)* 明都察院右僉都御史張公暨元配王恭人墓志銘（行狀付）（Beijing: National Library of China, Wanli period (1573-1620)), j. 2, 10b-11a.

¹⁰⁶⁹ The two most notable examples are Shaqi 沙乞 and Wanchong 宛冲 (Ti. Dbang phyug or Dpon chen?), both multilingual lama who were also dispatched to Mongolia to propagate scriptures and translate texts, but were promoted to monastic positions as the reward by the Ming court. *WLWGL*, j. 14, 373. Despite some lamas to request to be transferred to military positions, they were lamas serving in the Mongol yurt rather than the Ming lamas register in Ming Guards or other institutions. Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 10, 399.

Moreover, Ma Yingshi's brother-in-law bore the Turkic name "Hulali 虎刺力", which should be a transliteration of OU. Kulaklıg ~ Kulkaklıg (modern Turkish Kulaklı), a common name among Turkic peoples meaning "eared".¹⁰⁷⁰ Hulali's son, also notably, carried a Tibetan Buddhist name "Bla ma shAkya" (Ch. Lama Shijia 刺麻失加).¹⁰⁷¹ Taken together, this evidence suggests that Ma Yingshi's wife came from an Uyghur family that practiced Buddhism.

Thirdly, we also should look at Ma Yingshi's early career. Ma Yingshi was sent to Mongolia as a translator and taught Erketü Qatun Tibetan during the early Wanli reign. He once forged the seal of the Grand Coordinator and sold it to the Mongols for financial gain, which was a capital crime.¹⁰⁷² When his crime was discovered, Ma Yingshi sought refuge from the Tümed leaders Altan Khan and Qolači, who interceded for him with the Ming authorities. Ultimately, he was allowed by the Ming authorities to leave with Qolači, avoiding penalty from the Chinese side.¹⁰⁷³

Afterwards, Ma Yingshi served in the yurts of Altan Khan, Erketü Qatun, and Qolači. In 1577, Altan Khan and his wife Erketü Qatun set out from Tümed to meet the Third Dalai Lama in Qinghai. As their route passed through Ming territory and involved the stationing of a large number of Mongol tribes in Gansu, it caused significant concern among Ming officials.¹⁰⁷⁴ At this time, according to the biography of Zhang Jiuyi, the Vice Surveillance Commissioner of Shaanxi (Ch. *shanxi ancha fushi* 陝西按察副使) stationed in Ganzhou at the time, Ming officials reported that Ma Yingshi was having an affair with Erketü Qatun.¹⁰⁷⁵ In an effort to

¹⁰⁷⁰ Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 421.

¹⁰⁷¹ *WLWGL*, j. 14, 374. The corresponding term in Uyghur is Lama Šaki, which does not correspond phonetically to "lama shijia 刺麻失加." Nevertheless, it was quite common for Uyghur monks to be known by their Tibetan names. Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, 451, 642.

¹⁰⁷² Forgery of seals was extremely common at the time. The Mongols could use documents bearing forged seals to demand rewards from the Ming frontier officials. If their crimes were discovered, the Mongols involved would be punished according to Mongolian customs, with all their property, dependents, and livestock confiscated. Chinese offenders, however, would be executed in accordance with Chinese law. Zheng Luo 鄭洛, *Fuyi jilüe* 撫夷紀略, in *Mingdai menggu hanji shiliao huibian* 明代蒙古漢籍史料彙編, ed. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖 and Wang Xiong, vol. 2 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2006), 147. The fact that Ma Yingshi was deemed guilty of a capital crime further proves that he was not Mongolian but Chinese, albeit not ethnically Han.

¹⁰⁷³ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 176 The decision to release him stemmed from the Ming officials' respect for the opinion of Altan Khan. Moreover, Ming officials also cherished intermediaries who maintained close ties with Mongol chieftains, with the expectation that these individuals would play a greater role in Ming-Mongol relations. For a similar case see Zheng, *fuyi jilue*, 149.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Li Hongjie 李宏傑, "Anda han 'jie dao' yingfo" yu mingchao xibei bian de tiaozheng 俺答汗 "借道" 迎佛與明朝西北邊策的調整," *Xibu menggu luntan* 西部蒙古論壇, no. 2 (2023), 48-57.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Adultery incidents were not uncommon in Mongolian society, see *WLWGL*, j. 8, 111. According to the "Code of Altan Khan", those who engage in illicit sexual relations will be punished by having their livestock taken as punishment, see Bira

pressure Altan Khan to return to their homeland in Tümed as quickly as possible, Zhang Jiuyi arrested Ma Yingshi and used him as a leverage to coerce Erketü Qatun. Left with little choice, Erketü Qatun eventually persuaded Altan Khan to return east to Tümed, thereby alleviating the crisis on the Ming frontier.¹⁰⁷⁶ According to the biography, following his arrest by Zhang Jiuyi, Ma Yingshi resumed his service to the Ming. There is no other evidence to suggest that the biography's account—particularly its claim of an illicit relationship between Ma Yingshi and Erketü Qatun—reflects the actual circumstances. It is nevertheless certain that Ma Yingshi maintained a relatively close relationship with Erketü Qatun, as he taught her the Tibetan language. After this period, Ma Yingshi also indeed ceased serving the Mongols and returned to the Ming. The details of his later career will be elaborated upon in the following section.

Table 7.2. *Comparative Biographies of Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi*

	Mani Bulat	Ma Yingshi
Homeland	Hami Guard, subordinated to the Suzhou Guard	Suzhou Guard
Ethnicity	Uyghur	Wife's family was Uyghur
Language Proficiency	Chinese, Uyghur, Mongolian, Tibetan	Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan
Religion	Buddhist monk, Western Regions magician	Buddhist monk
Military Position (early Wanli reign)	Commander	Commander
Official Assignment (early Wanli reign)	Interpreter	Interpreter
Familiar Mongol Leaders	Altan Khan	Altan Khan, Qolači, Erketü Qatun, Sečen Beyiji
Areas of Activity (early Wanli reign)	Suzhou, Qinghai, Xuanda, Altan Khan's yurt	Suzhou, Qinghai, Xuanda, Altan Khan's yurt

Šagdaryn. "A Sixteenth Century Mongol Code," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, no. 11 (1977): 7–34; Suluge 蘇魯格, "Aletan han fadian 阿勒坦汗法典," *Menggu xue xinxi* 蒙古學信息, no. 1 (1996): 29–35.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ming ducha yuan you qiandu yushi*, j.1, 10a-b; j. 2, 10b-11a; Li Weizhen 李維禎, *Dami shan fang ji* 大泌山房集, in *Ming biji congkan* 明別集叢刊, vol. 4, no. 10 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2016), j. 92, 506; Qu, *Huangming chenglue zuanwen*, j. 4, 90.

A comparison between Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi reveals numerous overlaps in their life events and personal attributes (see Table 7.2): both were from Suzhou; Mani Bulat was an Uyghur, while Ma Yingshi's wife's family were Uyghurs; both were proficient in multiple languages, including Chinese, Mongolian, and Tibetan; both were Buddhist monks; both began their careers as Ming translators; both held military title of "Commander" rather than a monastic title or that of translator; both maintained friendly relations with Mongol leaders such as Altan Khan; and both served Mongol chieftains, contrary to Ming interests, during Altan Khan's encampment in the Qinghai region. Furthermore, Mani Bulat was primarily active before and during Altan Khan's stay in Qinghai around 1578, after which he disappeared from records, while Ma Yingshi was mainly active after that period of time. Based on these observations, it can be suggested that Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi were the same person.

Conversely, if Ma Yingshi were not Mani Bulat, given his similar status as a Suzhou Guard Commander and his parallel experience of being sent to Altan Khan as a "barbarian monk" and translator before accompanying him to Qinghai, he would inevitably have attracted the attention of senior officials such as Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng, as well as Shaanxi and Xuanda Supreme Commander Wang Chonggu, Fang Fengshi, and Gao Guangxian, just as Mani Bulat did. His name should also logically have appeared in Gao Guangxian's list of "Suzhou sutra monks" who were sent to Mongolia to proselytize and spread Buddhist scriptures.¹⁰⁷⁷ However, Ma Yingshi's name is absent from the surviving documents of these officials. This absence provides even more compelling evidence that Ma Yingshi and Mani Bulat were the same person.

By integrating the accounts of Mani Bulat and Ma Yingshi, the mysteries surrounding their origins and experiences can be unraveled. In summary, Mani Bulat was a descendant of Uyghur officials from the Hami Guard who resided in Suzhou. He inherited the title of Commander, was well-versed in Buddhism and Western Region mystical arts, and possessed proficiency in multiple languages and scripts, including Chinese, Tibetan, Old Uyghur and Mongolian. In 1573, he was sent as an envoy to Altan Khan, quickly winning the latter's favor and teaching

¹⁰⁷⁷ *HMJLSC*, j. 4, 164. This list includes two individuals: Mani Bulat and Tongchi Bulat. Based on the same evidence, Ma Yingshi could not have been Tongchi Bulat, as the latter also does not appear in the records of Zhang Juzheng, Wang Chonggu, and others. In fact, no further sources regarding Tong Chi Bula can be found, indicating that his significance was considerably lesser than that of Mani Bulat or Ma Yingshi.

Tibetan to Altan Khan's wife Erketü Qatun. However, his supposed traits of being a “cunning monk driven by greed” displeased Fang Fengshi, the Xuanda Supreme Commander. Fang attempted to repatriate him to Suzhou but was unsuccessful. Later, Mani Bulat's crime of forging the seal of the Grand Coordinator and selling it to the Mongols was discovered. However, due to the intercession of Altan Khan and Qolači, he was released and taken by Qolači to the Qinghai region, where he contributed to projects such as the establishment of the Yanghua Temple for Altan Khan. In 1579, he was captured by Zhang Jiuyi and once again served the Ming. The Ming court granted his long-standing wish to be registered in the Suzhou Guard, equating him to Chinese officials who can serve in other regions. In accordance with the requirements of Han culture and the conventions for *fuyi* officials, he adopted the Chinese name “Ma Yingshi”.¹⁰⁷⁸ This also explains why his name was recorded as “Mani Bula” before 1578 and as “Ma Yingshi” thereafter. Only the *Wanli wugong lu* mentions his early activities under the name “Mani Bula” for the sake of narrative convenience.

7.2.2 Mani Bulat's mediation of Ming–Mongol relations

Due to his close relationship with Mongol leaders such as Altan Khan and Erketü Qatun, Mani Bulat was assigned to a military position in Xuanda, near Altan Khan's yurt, after returning to the Ming faction, and served to resolve Ming–Mongol conflicts. For convenience, the latter discussion uses “Ma Yingshi”, the name by which he is recorded in the sources, to refer to Mani Bulat.

In 1581, after Mangyudai (Ch. Manwuda 滿五大), son of Bayisqal Köndelen (see Figure 6.1), raided the border, Ma Yingshi was dispatched by Zhang Jiayin 張佳胤 (1527-1588), the Xuanfu 宣府 Grand Coordinator, to lead a mission consisting of the interpreter-official (Ch. *tong guan* 通官) Shi Guoxun 師國勳 and other interpreters to Altan Khan's yurt to negotiate with him.¹⁰⁷⁹

¹⁰⁷⁸ Similar renaming incidents also occurred with Tu Wenxiu 土文秀, a leader of the Ningxia Submitted Army, when he obtained the position of *fuyi* official, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 139; Fang Kongzhao 方孔炤, *Quanbian lueji* 全邊略記, in *Mingdai menggu hanji shiliao huibian* 明代蒙古漢籍史料彙編, ed. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖 and Wang Xiong, vol. 3 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2006), 123; Zhang, *Zhang wenzhong gong quanji*, j. 25, 32a-b.

Altan Khan passed away in 1581, causing unrest among the Mongol tribes and raising concerns about the future of the peace agreement. Zheng Luo, then Xuanda Supreme Commander, subsequently dispatched Ma Yingshi, who was the interpreter-official and Municipal Military Commander, and Judge 鎮撫 Shi Guoxun to bring incense and silk as condolences to the Mongol leaders for Altan Khan and to convey written assurances to comfort and reassure them.¹⁰⁸⁰ During this period, Beijing was also deeply troubled by its inability to obtain accurate intelligence on the Mongols. Reports from Mongol envoys at the border were inconsistent, and information reaching the capital was often contradictory and unreliable. Amid this confusion, Ma Yingshi was sent as an envoy to Qung Tayiji (1522-1586), a son of Altan Khan, where he successfully negotiated and returned with letters from Qung Tayiji and his wife, providing reliable intelligence to Ming officials.¹⁰⁸¹ In 1583, Ma Yingshi and Shi Guoxun were again dispatched by Zheng Luo to summon Qung Tayiji to the border, where he received the imperial edict appointing him as the second Prince of Shunyi, the Ming title held by his father Altan Khan.¹⁰⁸²

Qung Tayiji died soon after in 1586. Hu Laigong 胡來貢 (1538-?), the Datong Grand Coordinator, dispatched Ma Yingshi, then Mobile Corps Commander, to Mongolia to offer condolences and take stock of the situation. In 1587, Qung Tayiji's son Čürüge successfully succeeded his father as the third Prince of Shunyi. Because of his merits, Ma Yingshi was promoted to the “Assistant Regional Commander Serving under the Supreme Commander in Charge of Pacification” (Ch. *yi canjiang guan xuandazongdu junmen biao xia fuyi shi* 以參將管宣大總督軍門標下撫夷事),¹⁰⁸³ and transferred to his hometown Suzhou, serving as the Suzhou Right Assistant Regional Commander.

Later in 1587, when Qolači mobilized troops to campaign against the Oirats, he requested permission from Ma Yingshi to establish a water station within Suzhou territory. Ma Yingshi refused Qolači's request, prompting the latter to confront him: “I have shown you kindness.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Zheng Wenbin 鄭文彬, *Chaoben choubian zuanyi* 抄本籌邊纂議 (Beijing: Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2002), j. 7, 712.

¹⁰⁸¹ *WLWGL*, j. 8, 118

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸³ This was an official position within the Xuanda Supreme Commander's directly subordinate troops, which was established in 1545. *WLWGL*, j. 8, 119; *DMHD*, j. 126, 279; Han Shuai 韓帥, “Mingdai xuanda zongdu yanjiu 明代宣大總督研究” (PhD diss., Changchun: Northeast Normal University, 2014), 69.

How could you forget me?” Here, Qolači reminded Ma Yingshi that he had previously interceded on his behalf, helping him to avoid punishment for the capital crime of forging an official seal. In response, Ma Yingshi compelled a group of Muslim merchants to engage in trade with Qolači, who was paid substantial rewards.¹⁰⁸⁴ This case illustrates that as a Ming official, Ma Yingshi acted on the Ming’s behalf by refusing the Mongols entry into Ming territory. At the same time, to maintain good relations with Mongol leaders, he was willing to sacrifice the interests of non-Han groups, such as these Muslim merchants. While his actions were intended to protect Ming interests, they also stirred unrest in the border regions, sparking a series of debates among Ming officials.

7.2.3 The turmoil provoked by Mani Bulat and the Ming response

During his service in Suzhou (ca. 1587-1590), Ma Yingshi’s brother-in-law Hulali and his nephew Bla ma shAkya, who has been mentioned above, served as counselors in the yurt of Sečen Beyiji, who was a powerful leader of the Ordos Mongols from around 1587 to 1611, as discussed in Chapter 6. They advised Sečen Beyiji to request substantial rewards from the Ming. After the request was refused by the Ming officials, they led troops into Ming territory to raid horses, cattle, sheep and provisions from Muslim and Tibetan tribes under the advice and coordination of Ma Yingshi.¹⁰⁸⁵ In general, although Muslims and Tibetans were also subjects of the Ming, they were not always given due consideration by the Ming and their circumstances often had little impact on the evaluations of local Ming officials compared with those of Han subjects. In this incident, Ma Yingshi once again demonstrated his pattern of sacrificing the interests of Muslims and Tibetans to play both sides between the Ming and the Mongols.

Cui Jingrong 崔景榮 (1557-1631), the Shaanxi Investigating Censor (Ch. *shanxi xun'an* 陝西巡按) responsible for investigating the invasion, was highly critical of Ma Yingshi’s actions, holding him responsible for the turmoil in the Suzhou region.¹⁰⁸⁶ Following Sečen Beyiji’s incursion into Suzhou, Cui immediately wrote to Zhu Zhengse 朱正色 (1539-1606),

¹⁰⁸⁴ *WLWGL*, j. 9, 176-177; *MSZSL*, j. 202, 3768.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *WLWGL*, j. 14, 374; *MSZSL*, j. 228, 4226. For the range of activity of Sečen Beyiji, see Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 78.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Cui, “Chushu gao,” vol. 2, 22.

the Surveillance Vice Commissioner of Suzhou, demanding that he either arrest Ma Yingshi immediately or apprehend him together with his brother-in-law and nephew once they were summoned to Suzhou. He further reported the case to senior officials, including the Grand Secretary Shen Shixing and the Minister of War Wang Yi'e 王一鶚 (1534-1591). However, Shen Shixing advised him to take action with caution, arguing that Ma Yingshi, being of “barbarian” origin, might rebel or cause unrest if provoked, yet could still be useful to the Ming if properly managed and utilized for his unique skills.¹⁰⁸⁷ Mei Yousong 梅友松 (1536–?, in office 1589–1590), the Shaanxi Supreme Commander, also wrote to Cui Jingrong, emphasizing that Ma Yingshi was his designated “person in charge of pacifying the barbarians” (Ch. *fulu zhi ren* 撫虜之人). Faced with pressure from such high-ranking officials, Cui Jingrong—much like Fang Fengshi in the past—changed his stance. In his final investigative report, he merely noted: “Opinions on Ma Yingshi are divided, and I request that he be exempted from punishment.”¹⁰⁸⁸

The underlying reason for this collective endorsement of Ma Yingshi was the harsh conditions in Suzhou, which had made official posts there increasingly undesirable. Since 1588, the position of Suzhou Surveillance Vice Commissioner—the highest military-administrative role in Suzhou—had remained vacant.¹⁰⁸⁹ If an experienced figure like Ma Yingshi, with his extensive connections among Mongol tribes, were removed, who else could be tasked with defending Suzhou? Although Ma had colluded with the Mongols, leading raids on Muslim and Tibetan tribes, he had, after all, never harmed Han Chinese, which was considered acceptable by high-ranking Ming officials.

After this incident, records of Ma Yingshi disappear for a long period. His disappearance coincided with a sudden deterioration of the frontier situation in Gansu. As mentioned earlier, in the spring of 1590, the third Prince of Shunyi Čürüge led his forces westward, joined with Qolači, and ultimately triggered the Taohe Crisis, as discussed in Chapter 6. This conflict involved the Mongols of the Right Wing, Oirats, the Yarkand Khanate, Tibetan tribes, and the

¹⁰⁸⁷ Shen, *Lunfei jiandu*, j. 9, 348.

¹⁰⁸⁸ “馬應時議論不一，亦乞免勘問。” *MSZSL*, j. 228, 4226.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Cui, “Chushu gao,” vol. 4, 26.

Ming, resulting in heavy casualties.¹⁰⁹⁰ Throughout the Taohe Crisis, Sečen Beyiji cooperated with the Ming, advising Čürüge against escalation and secretly passing intelligence about him and Qolači to the Ming.¹⁰⁹¹ This demonstrates that, facilitated by Ma Yingshi's family connections, Sečen Beyiji largely maintained a cooperative relationship with the Ming court.

7.2.4 Mani Bulat/Ma Yingshi's later missions

The last record of Ma Yingshi appears in 1602, when he served as the Boluo 波羅 Assistant Regional Commander in Yansui Town. In that year, following strong advocacy from the Grand Secretariat, the Wanli Emperor approved the request of the Ordos Mongols to resume tributary relations, as discussed in Chapter 6. As the tribute had been suspended for a decade, arrangements needed to be reestablished, and officials at all levels actively proposed strategies. Sun Weicheng 孫維城 (1540–1602, in office 1601–1602) and Zheng Rubi 鄭汝璧 (1546–1607, in office 1602–1605), successive Yansui Grand Coordinators, recommended transferring Ma Yingshi to the position of Yansui Assistant Regional Commander to oversee tribute and border markets.¹⁰⁹² However, they remained suspicious of him. Sun Weicheng suggested that if Ma Yingshi colluded with the Mongols for personal gain, he should be severely punished,¹⁰⁹³ while Zheng Rubi stripped him of his military authority.¹⁰⁹⁴

As discussed in Chapter 6, at that time, the Hetao region, which bordered Yansui, was under the control of the Ordos Mongols, which were led by such powerful leaders as Qolači, Buyantai, and Sajı.¹⁰⁹⁵ These leaders relied on Sečen Beyiji to communicate with the Ming, make requests on their behalf, and accept penalties.¹⁰⁹⁶ This indicates that the Ming court transferred Ma Yingshi to Yansui with the expectation that he would leverage his family's close ties with Sečen Beyiji to facilitate deeper communication and ensure the maintenance of the peace agreement between the Ming and the Ordos Mongols at least until 1602.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Lu, "Neiya zhu shili de chongxin zhenghe," 128-145.

¹⁰⁹¹ *WLWGL*, j. 14, 374; Meng, *Wanli wugonglu yanjiu*, 131.

¹⁰⁹² *MSZSL*, j. 369, 6910; Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j. 28, 674-675.

¹⁰⁹³ *MSZSL*, j. 369, 6909-6910.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Zheng, *Yougeng tang ji*, j. 28, 674-675.

¹⁰⁹⁵ For the activities of those three people, see Li, *Mingdai xihai menggu*, 108-113.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *MJSWB*, j.447, 4915.

7.3 Conclusion

Mani Bulat was an Uyghur Commander of the Hami Guard who had submitted to the Ming, was proficient in Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Old Uyghur, and who used to practice the Western Regions magical arts as well as the Tibetan esoteric ritual *yandie*. In 1573, he was dispatched to Altan Khan to satisfy his religious needs and soon won his favor. The scriptures he carried were in Old Uyghur, reflecting the influence of Uyghur Buddhism and Uyghur monks at that time. Having betrayed Ming interests, he sought protection from Altan Khan and was rescued by Altan and Qolači, thereafter entering their service. Moreover, he instructed Erketü Qatun in Tibetan and had an affair with her.

In 1579, he was captured by the Ming and assigned to the Suzhou Guard, where he was renamed “Ma Yingshi” and appointed as the *fuyi* official. Because of his close ties to such high Mongol personalities as Altan Khan, Erketü Qatun, and Qolači of the Tümed Tümen, he served in the Xuanda region for a long time and carried out missions such as the investiture of the Prince of Shunyi. Owing to his family’s connection with Sečen Beyiji of the Ordos Tümen, he later served in Suzhou and Yansui, undertaking tasks such as reestablishing the tributary relations with the Ordos Tümen. In mediating Ming–Mongol relations, Mani Bulat consistently defended Han Chinese interests, yet frequently sacrificed the interests of Muslim merchants and Tibetan groups that maintained tributary relations with the Ming, so as to win the favor of Mongol leaders and preserve a delicate balance between the Ming and the Mongols.

The change of his name from “Mani Bulat” to “Ma Yingshi” in Ming records and his duties closely paralleled the evolution of Ming–Mongol relations after the Longqing Peace Treaty. In the early phase of the agreement, both sides were chiefly concerned with meeting Altan Khan’s religious needs; Mani Bulat thus traveled between the Ming and the Mongols as a “scripture monk” and “interpreter-envoy.” After Altan Khan’s death, Ming–Mongol interactions centered on managing frontier disturbances, and by then Mani Bulat—now Ma Yingshi—appeared primarily as a *fuyi* official responsible for mediating frontier conflicts. Compared with other regions, Suzhou faced more complex and volatile ethnic, cultural, and frontier circumstances, thus the functions of *fuyi* officials serving here were more extensive. Officials cultivated in such

an environment were therefore often endowed with multifaceted abilities and, like Mani Bulat, were transferred among various frontier regions to resolve Ming border crises.

Mani Bulat consistently attracted the attention of senior frontier officials and Grand Secretaries: Fang Fengshi urged Zhang Juzheng to send Mani Bulat back to Gansu, though unsuccessfully; Zhang Siwei praised the intelligence Mani Bulat gathered; Shen Shixing believed that if Mani Bulat was managed well, he would be of considerable use. Thus, despite occasional skepticism among frontier officials regarding the rationale for employing Mani Bulat, the Grand Secretariat consistently sought to deploy and exploit his talents and enforce the *fuyi* policy across the northwestern borderlands.

Chapter 8: The Ningxia Submitted Army: Mongolian and Chinese *Fuyi* Officials

This chapter examines the so-called “Ningxia Submitted Army” (Ch. *ningxia guifu jun* 寧夏歸附軍) in the late Ming period as a case study for Mongolian and Chinese *fuyi* officials. It scrutinizes the dynamics between Han and non-Han groups within the unit, reveals the duties of its *fuyi* officials, and explores the degree of acceptance that these groups received from the local society in Ningxia and the central government in the period of its existence.

Previous research on surrendered populations during the Ming period has primarily focused on their non-Han ethnic identities, with extensive scholarship examining the Mongols, Muslims, and Jurchens incorporated into the Ming military.¹⁰⁹⁷ However, the submitted armies included not only non-Han ethnic groups but also a significant contingent of Han Chinese who had served under Inner Asian regimes prior to their surrender. Through the study of the Ningxia Submitted Army, I hope to advance the understanding of multi-ethnic administration under the Ming,¹⁰⁹⁸ while further deepening the perception of the *fuyi* officials as a crucial governmental institution across the northwestern frontier of Ming Chinese imperial rule.

8.1 The rise of the Ningxia Submitted Army

In the late Ming, due to the deterioration of the traditional garrison system,¹⁰⁹⁹ the Ming army became increasingly vulnerable and suffered multiple defeats at the hands of various nomadic groups. Especially in Ningxia, the Ming found it increasingly difficult to mount an effective

¹⁰⁹⁷ For scholarships on the submitted army, see Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations During the Ming. I.*; Hagihara Junpei 萩原淳平, *Mindai Mōko Shi Kenkyū* 明代蒙古史研究 (Kyōto: Dōhōsha, 1980); Zhang Hongxiang 張鴻翔, *Mingdai ge minzu renshi rushi zhongyuan kao* 明代各民族人士入仕中原考 (Beijing: Zhongyang mingzu daxue chubanshe, 1999); David M. Robinson, “Images of Subject Mongols Under the Ming Dynasty,” *Late Imperial China* 25, no. 1 (2004): 59-123; Qi Wenying 奇文瑛, *Mingdai weisuo guifuren yanjiu: yi Liaodong he jingji diqu weisuo daguan wei zhongxin* 明代衛所歸附人研究——以遼東和京畿地區衛所達官衛中心 (Beijing: Zhongyang mingzu daxue chubanshe, 2011); Temule, “Jiafeng Zhong de jueze,” 157-175.

¹⁰⁹⁸ For a long period, the Ming was considered to be a “Han” Chinese state in contrast to the Yuan (Mongol) or Qing (Mancu) dynasties, due to the ethnicities of their respective ruling houses. Now, it is increasingly recognized that the Ming, like the Yuan and Qing, ruled over many ethnic groups and had its unique methods of governance. For noteworthy research on this topic in recent years, see Johannes Lotze, “Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2016).

¹⁰⁹⁹ See Hucker, *The Traditional Chinese State in Ming Times* (1368-1644) (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1961), 19.

military response to the incursions of the Mongols of the Right Wing. The death of Wang Xun 王勳, the Ningxia Vice Regional Commander, in a battle against the Mongols in 1562 was a direct consequence of this unfavorable military balance.¹¹⁰⁰

This situation changed with Wang Chonggu's appointment as Ningxia Grand Coordinator 寧夏巡撫 in 1564. As discussed before, Wang Chonggu was a capable and forward-looking Ming official who served on the northern frontiers for many years, gaining extensive knowledge of the Mongols. Later appointed as the Xuanda Supreme Commander, he facilitated the Longqing Peace Treaty in 1571, leading to reconciliation between the Ming and the Mongols.¹¹⁰¹ During his tenure in Ningxia, he believed that the Mongols had superior military capabilities compared to the Han Chinese. To address this, he issued thousands of proclamations across Mongol territories, encouraging the nomads to submit to the Ming.¹¹⁰² The contents of these proclamations are unclear, but they may have included the provision of food and rewards. Wang's efforts were notably successful, resulting in the surrender of a significant number of Mongols, Oirats, Tibetans, and previously captured Chinese individuals to the Ming rule during the late sixteenth century.¹¹⁰³

Wang Chonggu's greatest achievement in Ningxia was the establishment of the Ningxia Submitted Army, which was led by Babai 哱拜 (d. 1592) and Zheng Yang 鄭陽 (d. 1586). Concerning the origin of the Ningxia Submitted Army, a frequently referenced source is the record in *Liangchao pingrang lu*:

Babai was originally one of the Yellow-Haired Tartars. During the Jiajing reign, he established his encampment behind the [Helan] mountains, where he engaged in pastoral activities and frequently looted the livestock of border residents for profit. For some reason, he submitted to the faction of Qung Tayiji [Sečen Qung Tayiji]. Qung Tayiji, wary of Babai's cunning and fierce nature, harbored suspicions towards him.

¹¹⁰⁰ Yang, *Yang bo zouyi ji*, 768-769. MSIZSL, j. 515, 8464.

¹¹⁰¹ See Ono Kazuko 小野和子, "Yamanashi shōnin to chō kyōsei - ryūkei wagi o chūshin ni - 山西商人と張居正—隆慶和議を中心に—," *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報, no. 58 (1986): 566-577.

¹¹⁰² Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 12, 524.

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 12.522.

Babai, therefore, along with Tugči, Amushang, Hubuhai, and a Chinese captive named Zheng Yang, led a group of approximately three hundred individuals to submit to the Ming. They were accepted by Wang Chonggu, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator, who further selected robust local men to incorporate them into their ranks and designated them as military retainers.

哮拜者，故黃毛韃子也。嘉靖中住牧山後，屢盜邊民頭畜得利。因投黃台吉部。吉惡其狡悍，頗忌之。拜遂與土谷赤、阿木尚、虎不亥、及華人被擄者鄭陽等，前後三百人扣塞降。夏鎮開府王崇古受之，更選土著健兒豐其資廩，號為家丁。

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Babai, Tugči, Amushang, Hubuhai, and Zheng Yang were therefore the leaders of the Submitted Army, collectively known as the “Five Tiger Generals” (Ch. *wu hu jiang* 五虎將).¹¹⁰⁵ Together with their 300 troops, they formed the foundational core of the Ningxia Submitted Army in 1565.¹¹⁰⁶ Serving as the military retainers of the Ningxia Grand Coordinator, they were under the direct command of the Grand Coordinator Wang Chonggu.

Among the “Five Tiger Generals”, Babai is consistently referred to as a “Yellow-Haired Tatar” in various sources.¹¹⁰⁷ Based on this description, Kenneth Swope identified him as a Čaqar Mongol,¹¹⁰⁸ while Wang Xiong assumes him to have been of Uriyangqai Mongol

¹¹⁰⁴ Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, *Liangchao pingrang lu* 兩朝平攘錄, in *Siku quanshu cun mu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *shi bu* 史部, vol. 54 (Jinan: Qi lu shushe, 1996), j. 3, 721. The *Liangchao pingrang lu* was written between the 29th and 34th year of the Wanli reign (1601-1606). Its primary sources of information are official memorials to the emperor and imperial edicts, among other documents, See Wang Dong 王冬, “Liangchao pingrang lu menggu shiliao yanjiu 《兩朝平攘錄》蒙古史料研究” (master’s thesis, Lanzhou: Northwest Minzu University, 2020), 16-21.

¹¹⁰⁵ Fu Weiling 傅維麟, *Ming shu* 明書, in *Siku quanshu cun mu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *shi bu* 史部, vol. 40 (Jinan: Qi lu shushe, 1996), j. 163, 408.

¹¹⁰⁶ *MSHZSL*, j. 546, 8820; Jiao Hong 焦竑, *Jiao Shi Tanyuan Ji* 焦氏澹園集, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 vol. 1364 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), j.29, 340. In the *Ming shilu* and the epitaph of Wang Chonggu, their names are recorded as Bu’erzhang 卜兒丈, Chinese Zhang Jing 漢人張景, Tugči 土忽赤, Bojisu 哮吉素 and Ketai 克太.

¹¹⁰⁷ Babai’s name was written as 哮拜 in Ming sources and as 巴拜 in Qing sources. The equivalent in Mongolian sources to 巴拜 was *babai*. Hu Qide reckons the meaning of *babai* is escort, but he doesn’t provide any evidence. In Oriat Mongolian, Babai is an honorific to the elderly. See Hu Qide 胡其德, *Mengguzu tenggeli guannian de yanbian* 蒙古族騰格里觀念的演變 (Taipei: Mengzang weiyuanhui 蒙藏委員會, 1989), 32. Quejingzhabu 確精紮布 and Na Geriletu 納·格日勒圖, *Weilate fangyan cihui* 衛拉特方言詞彙 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe 內蒙古大學出版社, 1998), 67; Luntu 倫圖, *Weilate fangyan cihui huibian* 衛拉特方言詞彙彙編 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 1994), 83.

¹¹⁰⁸ Kenneth Swope, “All Men are not Brothers: Ethnic Identity and Dynastic Loyalty in the Ningxia Mutiny of 1592,” *Late Imperial China* 24, no. 1 (2013): 89.

origin.¹¹⁰⁹ However, both interpretations seem to be incorrect. It has been already substantiated that the term “Yellow-Haired Tater” referred predominantly to the Uriyangqai Mongols during the early Ming period, while in the latter Ming period, it was more commonly associated with the Oirats,¹¹¹⁰ as discussed in the previous chapters. According to the *Jiubian tu* (九邊圖, “Map of the Nine Borders”) drawn between the end of the Jiajing reign and the beginning of the Longqing reign (1567-1572), the Helan Mountains, where Babai was originally stationed, were occupied by the Oirats.¹¹¹¹ Therefore, Babai should be recognized as an Oirat. He experienced conflicts with an Oirat leader, which led him to kill that leader and subsequently submit to Qung Tayiji, namely the Sečen Qung Tayiji of the Ordos Mongols.¹¹¹² However, failing to secure Sečen Qung Tayiji’s trust, he defected once more in 1565, this time to Ming China.¹¹¹³

Tugči was another power leader of Five Tiger Generals. Tugči, transliterated into Chinese as Tuguchi 土谷赤, was not his original name but comes from a Mongolian term *tugči*, which denoted a standard-bearer.¹¹¹⁴ The standard, usually a yak tail, served as a symbol of power among nomads, with each Mongol khan or prince having one of a distinctive model.¹¹¹⁵ The role of a standard-bearer in Mongol tribes was revered, as their stance often determined the outcome of battles.¹¹¹⁶ Owing to their close association with Mongol chieftains and their esteemed status, standard-bearers had authority beyond merely guarding the standard but also undertaking other vital roles. For instance, among the Tümed Mongol around the same period,

¹¹⁰⁹ Wang Xiong 王雄, “Guanyu bab zhi luan 關於‘倭拜之亂’,” *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古大學學報(哲學社會科學版), no. 2 (1988): 27.

¹¹¹⁰ Serruys, “Yellow Hairs and Red Hats in Mongolia,” 131-155.

¹¹¹¹ Li Xiangcong 李孝聰 and Chen Jun 陳軍, eds., *Zhongguo changcheng zhi tuzhi* 中國長城志 圖志 (Nanjing: Jiangsu fenghuang kexue jishu chubanshe, 2016), 106.

¹¹¹² As Swope notes, Qung Tayiji was a common title for Mongol princes, making it difficult to determine which specific Huangtaiji is referenced here, see Swope, “All Men are not Brothers,” 89. At the time, there were two famous Qung Tayijis. The first is the Qung Tayiji of the Tümed Mongols, firstborn son of Altan Khan; Second is Sečen Qung Tayiji, a powerful chieftain of the Ordos Mongols. I suggest the latter one is the Qung Tayiji mentioned here based on three reasons. First, Babai surrendered at Pinglu, today’s Pingluo County 平羅縣, near the yurt of Sečen Qung Tayiji but far from the Tümed Mongols. Second, it is recorded that after his first “betrayal”, Babai surrendered to the “*tao* 套,” namely “*taolu* 套虜,” another appellation of the Ordos Mongols. Third, during the Ningxia Crisis, Joriytu 着力兔 and Dayičing 打正, two chieftains of the Ordos Mongols, claimed that they and Babai were “one family” (*yijia ren* 一家人), which shows the close connection between Babai and the Ordos Mongols. See Swope, “All Men are not Brothers,” 89; *Pingxi guanjian* 平西管見 (Tōkyō: National Archives of Japan, 1592), j. 2, 13a; Mei Guozhen 梅國禎, *Xizheng ji* 西征集 (Tōkyō: National Archives of Japan, 1638), j. 9, 3a. For details of the life of Sečen Qung Tayiji, see Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan*, 53-55.

¹¹¹³ *Pingxi guanjian*, j. 2, 13a.

¹¹¹⁴ Haltod, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 838.

¹¹¹⁵ Ma Xiaolin 马晓林, “The Mongols’ tuq ‘standard’ in Eurasia, 13th-14th Centuries,” *Studia Uralo-Altaica*, no. 53 (2022): 185-187.

¹¹¹⁶ Mo Jiuyu 莫久愚, “‘Harisulede’ kaobian ‘哈日蘇勒德’考辨,” *Neimenggu minzu daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古民族大學學報(社會科學版) 42, no. 1 (2016): 6.

there was another Tugči (Ch. Tuguchi 土骨赤) who was of a Han Chinese origin and, after surrendering to Altan Khan,¹¹¹⁷ adopted the role of *taiši* (Ch. *taishi* 台實, “a prince’s trusted retainer”),¹¹¹⁸ responsible for the diplomatic and tribute affairs between the Ming and Mongols.¹¹¹⁹ Furthermore, another word meaning standard in Mongolian was *qošiyu*. In Mongol tribes from the fifteenth century onward, there was a position named *qošiyučī*, which was responsible for selecting soldiers and organizing the army.¹¹²⁰ Drawing parallels, it can be inferred that the *tugči* also assumed a similar role. Overall, Tugči must have occupied a significant position within the tribal group led by Babai prior to their submission.

Amushang 阿木尚 (Mo. Amursain?,¹¹²¹ also referred to as Amugao 阿木高 in some sources) and Hubuhai 虎不亥 (Mo. Qabuyai of Kōrbuṣa?,¹¹²² also referred to as Hubuhai 虎卜亥 in some sources), the remaining two generals of the Five Tiger Generals, did not seem to have played an important role after their submission, thus few sources mentioned them. However, Hubuhai 虎不亥 (or 虎卜亥, 虎不害, 虎卜害) is a common Mongol name in Chinese sources, thus it is reasonable to infer that he was a Mongol as well.

Zheng Yang, the last of the five generals, was described as a “Chinese captive” (Ch. *huaren beiluzhe* 華人被擄者). This implies that he was born in Ming China, was subsequently captured and taken away by the Mongols, and then made his way back to Ming territory. In the *Ming shilu*, he was once referred to as “the Han Chinese Zhang Jing” (Ch. *hanren Zhang Jing* 漢人張景).¹¹²³ “Zhang Jing” is likely a phonetic corruption of “Zheng Yang”. Therefore, Zheng Yang should be Han Chinese. However, in the reports, Zheng Yang, along with Babai, was referred to as a “surrendered barbarian” (Ch. *xianglu* 降虜),¹¹²⁴ indicating that Zheng Yang were also often identified as a barbarian in Ming sources.

¹¹¹⁷ Temule 特木勒, “Mingmeng jiaoshe zhong de menggu shichen da'erhan shoulingge 明蒙交涉中的蒙古使臣打兒漢首領哥,” *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 2 (2012): 79.

¹¹¹⁸ Wang Shiqi 王士琦, *Sanyun chouzu kao* 三雲籌俎考, in *Mingdai menggu hanji shiliao huibian* 明代蒙古漢籍史料彙編, vol. 2, ed. Bo Yinhu 薄音湖 and Wang Xiong 王雄 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2006), j. 2, 419. For an explanation of the title *taiši*, see Ho, “The Office and Noble Titles of the Mongols,” 140-141.

¹¹¹⁹ Temule, “da'erhan shoulingge,” 79.

¹¹²⁰ Tayama Shigeru 田山茂, *Qingdai menggu shehui zhidu* 清代蒙古社會制度, trans. Pan Shixian 潘世憲 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2014), 20-25.

¹¹²¹ Choimaa, *Mongol khün-ii neriin tol'*, 27.

¹¹²² Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 448-449, 566.

¹¹²³ *MSHIZSL*, j. 546, 8820

¹¹²⁴ Pang Shangpeng 龐尚鵬, *Baikezhai ting gao* 百可摘亭稿, in *Siku quanshu cun mu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *ji bu* 集部, vol. 129 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1997), j. *zhong*, 283.

Regarding the Submitted Army, it contained not only the three hundred individuals following Babai and other generals but also incorporated multiple local people and a significant number of submitted Mongols, Oirats, Tibetans, and previously captured Chinese. By 1568, the number of troops had reached 1500.¹¹²⁵ Inside the Submitted Army, there existed an internal division into two factions, each led by Babai and Zheng Yang, both of whom held the highest ranks within the army. As a critical component of Ming China's northern military forces, the primary responsibility of the Submitted Army included gathering intelligence on the Mongols and conducting attacks or raids against them. Eager to demonstrate their loyalty to the Ming, the Submitted Army performed their military duties with unwavering commitment, earning multiple accolades and assisting the Ningxia Grand Coordinator and later Shaanxi Supreme Commander Wang Chonggu in securing numerous victories against the Mongols, such as defeating and beheading the leader *Sartai Kiy-a (Ch. Sa'ertai Qia 撒兒太恰) in 1568,¹¹²⁶ and winning the significant battle "The Great Victory of Huamachi" (Ch. Huamachi *dajie* 花馬池大捷) in 1569.

In the "The Great Victory of Huamachi", Wang Chonggu, who had received intelligence about an impending Mongol invasion from two surrendered individuals, promptly assembled an army to be stationed at Huamachi, a strategic chokepoint for the Mongols. Simultaneously, he commanded Assistant Regional Commander Li Zhen 李震 to lead an elite force, primarily composed of soldiers of the Surrendered Army, to raid Mongol camps. During this raid, Babai, Zheng Yang, and Li Dahu 李大虎, among others were said to have displayed exceptional valor, killing 200 Mongols and collecting their heads. Li Dahu, in his pursuit of the enemy, lost his life. During the retreat, Li Zhen's forces were the first to withdraw, while Babai, Zheng Yang, and others led the Submitted Army to cover their rear. Evidently, in both the raid on Mongol camps and the subsequent retreat, the Submitted Army played a pivotal role, while the majority of the Han troops held their positions at Huamachi.¹¹²⁷ Other battles followed a similar pattern, with the Submitted Army leveraging their formidable combat abilities and intimate knowledge

¹¹²⁵ Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 12, 522.

¹¹²⁶ Ibid., j. 12, 517. Rybatzki, *Die Personennamen und Titel der Mittelmongolischen Dokumente*, 716-717.

¹¹²⁷ Ibid., j. 14, 612-615.

of Mongol tactics to undertake reconnaissance and combat roles, while the Han forces primarily provided support and defense. It can be asserted that the establishment of the Ningxia Submitted Army delivered a significant blow to the neighboring Mongols, effectively overturning Ming China's previous defensive posture in Ningxia.

As a reward for their military merits, the five generals were steadily promoted, as shown in Table 8.1. Between the two main leaders, Babai and Zheng Yang, Ming officials clearly exhibited a higher level of trust in Zheng Yang, who was of Chinese origin, as opposed to Babai, whom they regarded as a barbarian. It is recorded that Babai has been promoted to the Regional Military Commissioner before 1569 because of his military merits, while Zheng Yang, whose contributions were notably inferior to those of Babai, was supposed to have been promoted as Vice Commander in 1569. However, Wang Chonggu, who had already been promoted to Shaanxi Supreme Commander by that time, advocated for Zheng Yang to be awarded a position equivalent to that of Babai, which was approved by the Ming court.¹¹²⁸ Wang Chonggu's decision to grant Zheng Yang a position equivalent to Babai's appears to be a strategic maneuver designed to counterbalance and oversee Babai, the most influential figure in the Submitted Army, but of Oirat origin.

Table 8.1. *Military Promotion of the "Five Tiger Generals" before the Longqing Peace Treaty*

	Babai	Zheng Yang	Tugči	Amushang	Hubuhai
1565	Squad Commander (Ch. <i>xiaoqi</i> 小旗)	Informal officer with official hat and belt (Ch. <i>guandai</i> 冠帶)	Informal officer with official hat and belt	—	—
Before 1568	Company Commander (Ch. <i>bazong</i> 把總); Commander	Company Commander (<i>bazong</i>); Company	Platoon Leader (Ch. <i>duizhang</i> 隊長)	Platoon Leader	—

¹¹²⁸ Ibid., j. 14, 619.

		Commander (<i>baihu</i>)			
Before 1569	Regiment Commander ; Regional Military Commissioner	Company Commander (<i>bazong</i>); Battalion Commander	Platoon Leader; Battalion Commander	Platoon Leader; Battalion Commander or Company Commander (<i>baihu</i>)	Platoon Leader; Battalion Commander or Company Commander (<i>baihu</i>)
Before 1571	—	Regiment Commander	—	—	—

Sources: MSHIZSL, j. 546, 8820; Jiao, *Jiao Shi Tanyuan Ji*, j.29, 340; Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 12, 522; j. 14, 604, 619; *Bingbu zoushu*, 296b.

Notes: In some cases shown in the table, certain individuals held two distinct types of military rank. Because they served within the garrison system, they were initially granted ranks in the Ningxia Guard. However, when they were dispatched to undertake military missions in a camp, they were assigned additional ranks within the camp hierarchy. Due to the limitations of the *Chinese-English Dictionary of Ming Government Official Titles*, some official titles in the garrison system and in the camp are rendered with identical English translations. For example, both “*ba zong* 把總” and “*baihu* 百戶” are translated as “Company Commander”. To avoid confusion and to preserve institutional distinctions, the Chinese transliterations are also provided.

The Ming court’s mistrust of Babai is further illustrated by the difficulties he encountered while attempting to register as a military official in the Ningxia Guard. Initially, upon his surrender, Babai and his men were merely designated as military retainers under the command of Zheng Yin 鄭印, the Pinglu 平虜 Municipal Military Commander.¹¹²⁹ Around 1568, when the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Wang Chonggu was granted the authority to establish his personal armed force,¹¹³⁰ Babai transitioned to serving as a military retainer under Wang’s command. This role indicated that Babai was a retainer of the Ningxia Grand Coordinator rather than a formal official of the Ningxia Guard.¹¹³¹ While he was awarded various titles like “Regiment Commander” “Municipal Military Commander” and “Regional Military Commissioner”, these positions were essentially temporary, created by the Ningxia Grand

¹¹²⁹ Swope, “All Men are not Brothers,” 89.

¹¹³⁰ Xiao Lijun 肖立軍, *Mingdai shengzhen yingbing zhi yu difang zhixu* 明代省鎮營兵制與地方秩序 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2010), 32.

¹¹³¹ For a brief introduction to the “retainer” (*jiading* 家丁), see *Ibid.*, 58-61.

Coordinator and did not reflect fully legitimate military ranks.¹¹³² The resulting issue was that, despite the fact that Babai and other generals of the Submitted Army fought diligently against the Mongols for the Ming, the central government was reluctant to reward them appropriately.¹¹³³ Hence, Babai and other generals were eager to become registered in the Ningxia Guard.

In the meantime, officials in Ningxia also hoped that Babai would permanently settle in Ningxia and serve their interests. Xiao Lin 蕭廩 (1523-1587), the Shaanxi Regional Investigating Censor, recommended Babai to the court in 1572, deeming him as someone “particularly suited for permanent service in Ningxia”.¹¹³⁴ Judging from subsequent developments, his actual objective was to advocate for Babai’s registration in Ningxia and for him to lead the Submitted Army to “defend the capital” (Ch. *ruwei* 入衛).¹¹³⁵ “Defend the capital” refers to the strategy of temporarily or steadily deploying military forces from areas beyond Beijing to its peripheral regions to safeguard its security.¹¹³⁶ For Ningxia, given its significant distance from Beijing, this duty meant a long journey to the environs of Beijing. Moreover, the soldiers assigned to this duty often did not receive the rewards they normally could expect, while their absence generated a vacuum in Ningxia’s local defenses.¹¹³⁷ By allowing Babai to register in Ningxia and lead the Submitted Army to assume the duty originally performed by Ningxia troops, these troops could be relieved of their extra duties, while Babai and his forces could resolve their registration issues. In addition, Babai and his forces could also demonstrate the trust placed in them by the Ming court if they were to be entrusted with “defending the capital”.

Xiao Lin’s proposal received substantial support from Zhu Ji 朱笈 (1512-1574), the Ningxia Grand Coordinator, and Wang Chonggu, the then Assistant Administrator of Military Affairs in Capital Training Divisions and Minister of War (Ch. *xieli rongzhegn bingbu*

¹¹³² Wang, *Dufu zouyi*, j. 12, 522.

¹¹³³ *Ibid.*, j. 12, 522-523.

¹¹³⁴ “尤當永為西夏之用。” *MSZSL*, j. 7, 251.

¹¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁶ Peng Yong 彭勇, *Mingdai beibian fangyu tizhi yanjiu: yi biancao banjun de yanbian wei xiansuo* 明代北邊防禦體制研究：以邊操班軍的演變為線索 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2009), 84.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

shangshu 協理戎政兵部尚書). However, Zhang Juzheng 張居正, the Senior Grand Secretary, completely rejected both Babai's registration and deployment to "defend the capital" due to his identity as a "surrendered barbarian" (Ch. *xianglu* 降虜).¹¹³⁸ As a prominent politician in the late Ming period, Zhang Juzheng, despite his role in advancing the Longqing Peace Treaty, similar to Wang Chonggu, remained perpetually skeptical of the loyalty of the submitted armies at the northern frontier.¹¹³⁹ It was not until 1577 that Wang Chonggu, who personally championed Babai, finally facilitated Babai's formal registration in Ningxia during his brief tenure as the Minister of War.¹¹⁴⁰ Yet, between his registration and retirement in 1589, Babai's primary responsibility remained leading the military retainers subordinate to the Ningxia Grand Coordinator.¹¹⁴¹

While the Ming court harbored suspicions towards Babai and other non-Han submitted soldiers, these "foreigners" nevertheless wholeheartedly embraced the Han way of life. Though they continued to raise livestock,¹¹⁴² their nomadic lifestyle had ended, as they settled within the city of Ningxia. Furthermore, among the "Five Tiger Generals," at least two, Babai and Tugči, married Han Chinese wives.¹¹⁴³

8.2 The Longqing Peace Treaty and the *fuyi* officials

As discussed in Chapter 6, Zheng Yang was trusted to be dispatched to the Ordos region to negotiate the terms of the peace agreement as a Municipal Military Commander in 1571. After the conclusion of the Longqing Peace Treaty, the Ming established three markets—Zhongwei, Pinglu and Qingshui—in Ningxia and recruited *fuyi* officials to manage them.

Among the "Five Tiger Generals", Zheng Yang was the only individual ever assigned as a *fuyi* official, who managed the frontier markets and was responsible for Ming–Mongol

¹¹³⁸ *WLWGL*, j. 7, 5; Tan Qian 談遷, *Guo que* 國權 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), j. 76, 4667. While Zhang Juzheng was in power, not only were the military retainers not permitted to "defend the capital", but they were also restricted from becoming part of the Capital Training Divisions (Ch. *jing ying* 京營). See Okuyama Norio 奥山憲夫, *Mingdai gunseishi kenkyū* 明代軍政史研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko shoin, 2003), 357.

¹¹³⁹ Temule, "Jiafeng Zhong de jueze," 169.

¹¹⁴⁰ *MSZSL*, j. 8.283-284; j. 63, 1411-1412.

¹¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, j. 208, 3906.

¹¹⁴² Mei, *Xizheng ji*, j. 9, 10b.

¹¹⁴³ Babai's wife came from a military officer family in Ningxia, see Zhuge, *Liangchao pingrang lu*, j. 3, 735. Tugči's wife was also Han Chinese and will be discussed in the next section.

communications. He was appointed as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification in 1572. When he participated in mutual trade, his title was temporarily rendered as the Municipal Military Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs, possibly in order to emphasize his preeminent status among the officials responsible for managing the trade. In 1579, he succeeded in persuading Altan Khan, who had just left Qinghai and was on his way back to Tümed, to not march back by the route through Ming territory.¹¹⁴⁴ In 1586, he had already been promoted to the Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs.¹¹⁴⁵

The other generals of the Ningxia Submitted Army, given that there was no longer a need to combat the Mongols after the Longqing Peace Treaty, also transitioned to engage in the administration of Ming–Mongol trade, despite the fact that they were not appointed as *fuyi* officials. Evidence from available sources documents four occasions on which the leaders of the Ningxia Submitted Army played a role in mutual trade events (see Table 8.2). As documented, participants in the trade of 1574, 1575 and 1576 included Babai, Zheng Yang, Hubuhai, and Tu Wenxiu 土文秀 (the son of Tugči, who might have passed away by that time),¹¹⁴⁶ while the trade exchange in 1586 witnessed the participation of Zheng Yang and a new official, Sha Yang, only.¹¹⁴⁷ Apart from Zheng Yang, the duties of the others included preparing goods needed for trade, overseeing transactions, and guarding the market. Zheng Yang, in addition to these tasks, was responsible for hosting Mongol leaders and guiding them through the relevant rituals. Consequently, after each mutual trade occasion, the Supreme Commander would specially propose to the court to bestow additional rewards and higher official positions upon Zheng Yang, a privilege not extended to others.

In summary, the Ming court persisted in its pronounced reliance on Zheng Yang after the Longqing Peace Treaty due to his Han Chinese identity, bestowing upon him the position of *fuyi* official, along with enhanced authority and rewards. In contrast, the other generals of the

¹¹⁴⁴ *HMJLSC*, j. 21, 152.

¹¹⁴⁵ Zhang, *Lübo lou ji*, j. 10, 334.

¹¹⁴⁶ For a detailed description of mutual trade in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of the Wanli reign (1574, 1575, 1576), see Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 4, 17b-22a; j. 9, 44b-50a; j. 10, 1a-5b; j. 13, 26a-32b; j. 13, 64b-75b.

¹¹⁴⁷ For a detailed description of mutual trade in 1586, see Zhang, *Lübo lou ji*, j. 10, 333-335.

Ningxia Submitted Army, who originated from so-called “barbarian” backgrounds, were confined to auxiliary duties, devoid of access to the core of power and its responsibilities.

Table 8.2. *Military Promotion of the Submitted Army Generals after the Longqing Peace*

Treaty

	Babai	Zheng Yang	Tu Wenxiu	Hubuhai	Sha Yang
Before 1572	Municipal Military Commander	Municipal Military Commander	—	—	—
1572	Mobile Corps Commander	Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification	—	—	—
1574	"	Municipal Military Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs	Regional Military Commissioner	Guard Commander	—
1575	"	"	"	"	—
1576	"	"	Regional Military Vice Commissioner	Guard Assistant Commander	—
1577	On-Call Mobile Corps Commander in a Defending Squad	—	—	—	—
1582	Assistant Regional Commander	—	—	—	—
Before 1586	—	Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs	—	—	Banner Officer; Battalion Commander
1586	—	—	—	—	Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification

1589	Vice Regional Commander	—	—	—	—

Sources: Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 4, 17b-22a; j. 9, 44b-50a; j. 10, 1a-5b; j. 13, 26a-32b; j. 13, 64b-75b; Zhang, *Lübo lou ji*, j. 10, 334; Mao, *Wanli sandazheng kao*, 1b.

8.3 Sinicized names: Tugči, Tu Wenxiu, and Sha Yang

In 1586, Zheng Yang passed away, with his responsibilities being assumed by a figure known as Sha Yang 沙陽. I propose that Sha Yang was, in fact, Tu Wenxiu, the son of Tugči. The adoption of the name Sha Yang was likely to emphasize his Chinese maternal lineage and identity, thereby qualifying him to become a *fuyi* official. As Tugči's son, Tu Wenxiu inherited his father's authority and duties after the Longqing Peace Treaty.¹¹⁴⁸ It is evident that Tugči extracted the first syllable “Tu (Ch. *tu* 土)” from the Chinese transliteration of his name “Tuguchi”, and adopted it as his family name.

There is sufficient evidence to support the claim that Tu Wenxiu and Sha Yang were the same person. Initially, they shared two identical historical footprints. Firstly, as documented in *Wanli sandazheng kao* 萬曆三大征考, which provides a detailed account of the later rebellion of the Submitted Army in 1592, and the *Ming shu* 明書, a history of the Ming dynasty, due to Zheng Yang's advanced age, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Liang Wenmeng 梁問孟 (1538-1607) recommended Tu Wenxiu for the position of “the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification” in 1586. Subsequent to this, Zheng Yang passed away due to illness later that year.¹¹⁴⁹ Parallel to this, according to the *Ming shilu*, Sha Yang was elevated to the same position upon Liang Wenmeng's proposition on account of Zheng Yang's senescence in 1586.¹¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, *Wanli shuofang xinzhì* (萬曆朔方新志 “The New Gazetteer of Ningxia in Wanli”) claims that prior to the Ningxia Crisis in 1592, only Zheng Yang, Sha Yang, and Ma Chengguang 馬承光 (d. 1592), who served as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification and was killed by Tu Wenxiu's people at the onset of Ningxia Crisis,

¹¹⁴⁸ Zhuge, *Liangchao pingrang lu*, j. 3, 722.

¹¹⁴⁹ Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, *Wanli sandazheng kao* 萬曆三大征考 (Tōkyō: National Archives of Japan, 1621), 1b; Fu, *Ming shu*, j. 163, 408.

¹¹⁵⁰ *MSZSL*, j. 180, 3354.

once held the position.¹¹⁵¹ This suggests that Tu Wenxiu and Sha Yang were the same person. Secondly, *Wanli wugong lu* records that both Tu Wenxiu and Sha Yang were the Municipal Military Commander responsible for negotiating with Čürüge in 1589.¹¹⁵² Since the *Wanli wugong lu* often mistakenly records the same individual under two different names, it is plausible that this is a similar error.¹¹⁵³ In summary, the consistency between Tu Wenxiu and Sha Yang’s experiences confirms the claim that they were the same individual.

In addition to the identical experience, the phonetic similarity between their names provides further confirmation. Sha Yang 沙暘 is also written as “Sha Yang 沙楊” in *Lübo lou ji* and both “Sha Yang 沙楊” and “Sha Yang 沙揚” in *Wanli shuofang xin zhi*,¹¹⁵⁴ which indicate that the name is likely a phonetic transcription rather than an indigenous name. In Mongolian, the Chinese word *tu* (土, “soil/earth”), the family name of Tugči and Tu Wenxiu, is translated as *široi*,¹¹⁵⁵ pronounced [ʃɔɾɔː]. According to a Sino-Mongol dictionary in the late Ming, the sound of the Mongolian word equivalent to *tu* was depicted using the Han Characters *shi lao* 石勞.¹¹⁵⁶ The *Hebing zixue pianyun bianlan* (合併字學篇韻便覽 “An Overview of Combined Character Study & Rhyme”), which reflects Northern Mandarin phonetics of the late Ming period, shows that *shi lao* 石勞 is vocalized as [ʃɿ, lau], while Sha Yang 沙暘 is pronounced as [ʃa, ɔian].¹¹⁵⁷ The phonetic semblance between *široi*, *shi lao* and Sha Yang is evident, leading to the conclusion that the name Sha Yang was a transliteration derived from the Mongolian translation of Tu Wenxiu’s surname Tu.

Further inspection reveals that Sha Yang was indeed the formal appellation of Tu Wenxiu. His adoption of the character *yang* 暘 in his name can be attributed to dual motivations. On the one hand, it was strategically selected to align his name with his predecessor, Zheng Yang, to legitimize his succession to the position of *fuyi* official. On the other hand, *yang* 暘,

¹¹⁵¹ *WLSFXZ*, j. 2, 124.

¹¹⁵² *WLWGL*, j. 8, 127-128.

¹¹⁵³ For the mistakes that arose during the compilation of the *Wanli wugong lu*, see Meng, *Wanli wugonglu yanjiu*.

¹¹⁵⁴ Zhang Jiuyi, *Lübo lou ji*, j. 10, 334; *WLSFXZ*, j. 2, 124; j. 3, 241.

¹¹⁵⁵ Hattod, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 719.

¹¹⁵⁶ Jia Jingshun 賈敬順 and Zhu Feng 朱鳳, comp., *Menggu yiyu nvzhen yiyu huibian* 蒙古譯語 女真譯語 彙編 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1990), 151.

¹¹⁵⁷ Xu Xiao 徐孝, comp., *Hebing zixue pianyun bianlan* 合併字學篇韻便覽, in *Siku quanshu cun mu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *jing bu* 經部, vol. 193 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1997), 571, 593, 324, 625. For the phonological reconstruction of the characters, see Zhou Saihua 周賽華, *Hebing zixue pianyun bianlan yanjiu* 合併字學篇韻便覽研究 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2005).

signifying “sunrise” in Chinese, was seen as a decidedly upstanding Han Chinese name. Tu Wenxiu’s utilization of this name aimed to fortify his Han Chinese image. Prior to the Ningxia Crisis, only the name Sha Yang was documented in the *Ming shilu*. After the rebellion, this name vanished, replaced by Tu Wenxiu.¹¹⁵⁸ This suggests that Ming court deprived Tu Wenxiu of the right to bear the more Sinicized appellation, Sha Yang, due to his involvement in the rebellion.

Tu Wenxiu’s adoption of the name Sha Yang was most probably strategically chosen to succeed Zheng Yang’s position of *fuyi* official. According to the *Ming shu*, Babai was not permitted to be appointed as the *fuyi* official owing to his identity as a “surrendered barbarian”.¹¹⁵⁹ Tu Wenxiu, who was the son of Tugči and a Han Chinese woman and thus was of mixed Han lineage, was seen as a more suitable candidate.¹¹⁶⁰ Consequently, he adopted the name Sha Yang to present himself as more Han Chinese, crafting a Chinese persona and emphasizing his Han identity, thereby qualifying for the *fuyi* official position. It can be inferred that, after the demise of Zheng Yang, Ming officials sought a “pro-Han” figure within the Submitted Army to succeed him, someone who could continue to counterbalance and oversee Babai. Thus, the half-Han, half-“barbarian” Tu Wenxiu emerged as their ideal choice.

There appears to be one piece of evidence seemingly contrary to our argument: Tu Wenxiu had already been appointed as a Regional Military Vice Commissioner in 1576, while Sha Yang held only the position of Battalion Commander and was assigned to be the Banner Officer in 1586. The explanation for this apparent contradiction lies in the distinction between “nominal appointment” (Ch. *titong* 體統) and “substantive appointment” (Ch. *shishou* 實授). The Regional Military Vice Commissioner here was just a “nominal appointment”, a temporary appointment to a higher official position to facilitate an official’s duties, while the rank of Battalion Commander was the “substantive appointment”.¹¹⁶¹ Since the Banner Officer did not

¹¹⁵⁸ In *Ming shilu*, Sha Yang appears in 1586 while Tu Wenxiu appears in 1592, see *MSZSL*, j. 180, 3354; j. 246, 4585; j. 246, 4586; j. 247, 4601; j. 249, 4629.

¹¹⁵⁹ Fu, *Ming shu*, j. 163, 408.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Wanli wugong lu records* that Tu Wenxiu’s uncle was named Wan Jin 萬錦, a *shengyuan* (生員, “student member”), while *Xizheng ji* records Tu Wenxiu’s uncle as Wu Jitao 吳繼韜. Whether either of these names is accurate, they are both typical Han Chinese names, indicating that Tu Wenxiu’s mother was of Han ethnicity. *WLWGL*, j. 7, 9; Mei Guozhen, *Xizheng ji*, j. 4, 5b.

¹¹⁶¹ *WLSFXZ*, j. 3, 241.

require a high “nominal appointment” to serve, it was sufficient for Tu Wenxiu to hold the position based on his “substantive appointment” of Battalion Commander.¹¹⁶²

In conclusion, Tugči, known by the Chinese version of his name as Tuguchi, held a high position in the Submitted Army, second only to Babai and Zheng Yang. He adopted the first character of his name Tu as a family name and bestowed upon his son the name Tu Wenxiu. In pursuit of succeeding to Zheng Yang’s position, Tu Wenxiu adopted the Han transcription of the Mongolian word *široi*, corresponding to the meaning of “*tu* 土”, rendering his official appellation as Sha Yang. The evolution of the names of Tugči and Tu Wenxiu manifests their inclination towards Sinicization, attempting to reap the greater rewards available to Han officials. Beyond Tugči and Tu Wenxiu, other known members of the Tu clan include Tu Wenxiu’s younger brother, Tu Wende 土文德, and Tu Wenxiu’s son, Tu Xiwei 土希衛,¹¹⁶³ whose names also exhibit significant Sinicization.

A parallel can be drawn with the Ba clan. Babai’s children also took “Ba 𠵹”, the first syllable of Babai’s name as their surname. Babai’s two sons are named Ba Cheng’en 𠵹承恩 and Ba Chengchong 𠵹承寵 while his two adopted sons are named Ba Yun (𠵹雲, Mo. Buyan),¹¹⁶⁴ and Ba Hongda (𠵹洪大, Mo. Bayiqundai), with Ba Yun’s two sons being Ba Jixun 𠵹繼勛 and Ba Jiye 𠵹繼業.¹¹⁶⁵ Their names are clearly influenced by Han cultural norms. The examples of the Tu and Ba clans demonstrate that the descendants of the Submitted Army generally adopted Han-style names, indicating their psychological integration into the local society and strong inclination towards Sinicization.

8.4 The *fuyi* system and the Ningxia Crisis

In 1592, a rebellion known in Ming sources as the “Ningxia Crisis” erupted in Ningxia. Initiated by Han Chinese soldiers, and with the Submitted Army actively participating in the uprising,

¹¹⁶² For more introduction on the distinction between “nominal appointment” and “substantive appointment,” see Cao Xun 曹循, “Mingdai wuzhi jieguan hua shulun 明代武職階官化述論,” *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊, no. 5 (2010): 108-116; “Mingdai zhenshu jiangguan de guanjie yu daiyu 明代鎮戍將官的官階與待遇,” *Lishi dangan* 歷史檔案, no. 3 (2016): 66-73.

¹¹⁶³ *WLWGL*, j. 7, 23.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ba Yun had a close connection with the Ordos Mongol, see Wen Chun 溫純, *Wen gongyi ji* 溫恭毅集, in *Jingyin Wen yuan ge siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1288 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1986), j. 26, 732-733.

¹¹⁶⁵ *WLWGL*, j. 7, 22-23.

the rebellion continued for seven months before it was ultimately suppressed by troops mobilized from across the empire. Babai committed suicide, his son Bo Cheng'en was captured and executed, his adopted son Bo Yun died in combat with the Ming army while Tu Wenxiu was killed due to internal conflicts. All non-Han soldiers in the Submitted Army were executed, marking the end of the Ningxia Submitted Army.¹¹⁶⁶ Current research suggests that the trigger for the Ningxia Crisis was the prolonged exploitation of soldiers by senior officials, notably the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Dang Xin 党馨 (1534-1592).¹¹⁶⁷ The rebellion, instigated by Han Chinese soldiers, was subsequently framed by the Ming government as the “crisis of Babai (Ch. *Babai zhi luan* 哱拜之亂)” to obscure the genuine societal contradictions through a ethnic tension narrative.¹¹⁶⁸

In this rebellion, Babai and his clan adopted a markedly different stance from Tu Wenxiu. While the Ba clan actively supported the uprising initiated by Han Chinese soldiers, Tu Wenxiu was reluctantly drawn into the conflict. Their divergent attitudes indicate that, beyond the oppression from Han Chinese officials, the inability of the Ba clan to attain the position of *fuyi* official and their exclusion from the benefits of the Ming–Mongol trade also served as pivotal motives for their involvement in the uprising.

The discord between Tu Wenxiu and the Ba clan had been long-standing. Following Tu Wenxiu's promotion as a *fuyi* official in 1586, Babai, dissatisfied with his failure to secure this position, retired and transferred his role to his son, Ba Cheng'en.¹¹⁶⁹ In the ensuing period, Tu Wenxiu monopolized the benefits of the Ming–Mongol trade, sidelining the Ba clan. After the Taohe Crisis, in 1591, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Dang Xin dispatched Tu Wenxiu, who he trusted more than the Ba clan, to lead a troop of a thousand men in a campaign against the Mongols in Qinghai.¹¹⁷⁰ Viewing this campaign as an invaluable opportunity to display prowess and secure rewards, Babai sought to involve his son and thus approached the Minister

¹¹⁶⁶ Zhu Yibin 祝以翮 and Zhu Yuan 祝淵, *Zhu yibin zhu yuan heji* 祝以翮祝淵合集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2024), 267. For a detailed description of the Ningxia Crisis, see Wang Xiong, “Guanyu babai zhi luan,” 27-36; Okano Masako 岡野昌子, “Banreki nijū nen ningxia heibō 萬曆二十年寧夏兵變,” 587-659; Swope, “All Men are not Brothers,” 79-130.

¹¹⁶⁷ Lu Hongli 魯宏立, “Mingdai wanli babai zhiluan yuanyin xintan 明代萬曆‘哱拜之亂’原因新探” (master's thesis, Zhejiang University, 2009), 19-25.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

¹¹⁶⁹ Fu, *Ming shu*, j. 163, 408.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

of War Zheng Luo, who had worked on the northern frontier for many years and maintained close relationships with numerous Mongol leaders.¹¹⁷¹ Babai undermined Tu Wenxiu's competence, asserted his inadequacy to lead an army independently and proposed the deployment of his own son as the head of three thousand soldiers.¹¹⁷² This appeal was sanctioned by Zheng Luo but invoked Dang Xin's rancor. In retaliation, Dang Xin punished several of Babai's close followers and had Ba Cheng'en whipped, on the grounds that he had forcibly taken a commoner as his concubine,¹¹⁷³ which deepened the divisions between the Ba clan on one side and Dang Xin and Tu Wenxiu on the other.

Consequently, when a Han Chinese soldier Liu Dongyang 劉東陽 (d. 1592) killed Dang Xin, initiating an uprising in Ningxia, Ba Cheng'en immediately joined wholeheartedly. Apart from Ba Cheng'en, Babai's adopted son Ba Yun actively participated in the uprising as well. Dang Xin had previously promised Ba Yun the position of *fuyi* official but later reneged, which fostered deep resentment in Ba Yun.¹¹⁷⁴ Therefore, when the uprising erupted, Ba Yun was also at the forefront of combat.

In stark contrast to the active participation of the Ba clan, Tu Wenxiu's involvement in the rebellion was decidedly coerced. Tu Wenxiu and Ba Yun were serving as the two generals of the Submitted Army, managing the mutual trade in Zhongwei with two Han generals Liang Qi 梁琦 (d. 1592) and Ma Chengxian 馬承光 when they received news of the rebellion.¹¹⁷⁵ Initially, they believed the uprising was confined to Han soldiers and swiftly mobilized to suppress it.¹¹⁷⁶ However, upon arriving in Ningxia City, they discerned that Babai and the entire Submitted Army had joined the rebellion, seized the city, and were preparing to establish an independent regime. In order to coerce Tu Wenxiu into the uprising, Babai captured Tu Wenxiu's wife and children, compelling him to execute the Han generals Liang Qi and Ma Chengxian.¹¹⁷⁷ Amidst Tu Wenxiu's hesitation, his subordinates preemptively killed Liang Qi

¹¹⁷¹ See Qian Ping 錢萍, "Zheng Luo yanjiu 鄭洛研究" (PhD diss., Inner Mongolia University, 2020).

¹¹⁷² Fu, *Ming shu*, j. 163, 408.

¹¹⁷³ Ibid., 408-409.

¹¹⁷⁴ Zhuge, *Liangchao pingrang lu*, j. 3, 724.

¹¹⁷⁵ Wei Xuezheng 魏學曾, *Wei gongxiang gong wenji* 魏恭襄公文集 (Xian Yang: Jingyang xian danganguan, 2014), j. 9, 15a.

¹¹⁷⁶ Zhuge, *Liangchao pingrang lu*, j. 3, 724.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

and Ma Chengxian, leaving Tu Wenxiu with no choice but to join the revolt.¹¹⁷⁸ Despite outwardly supporting the rebels, Tu Wenxiu maintained secret communication with Ming officials who has been sent to quell the rebellion, hoping to assist them internally in quelling the rebellion.¹¹⁷⁹ Eventually, his clandestine activities were unearthed, resulting in his assassination by Liu Dongyang, the soldier who initiated the rebellion.¹¹⁸⁰ Shortly thereafter, perceiving resistance as futile, the Ba clan surrendered, only to be subsequently annihilated by the Ming army.¹¹⁸¹

With the quelling of the Ningxia Crisis, the Ningxia Submitted Army was completely extinguished. Having lost this formidable force, the Hetao region fell into chaos again. The Ming and the Ordos Mongols were locked in a decade-long tug-of-war before they finally reached a peace agreement in 1602, as discussed in Chapter 6.¹¹⁸² After reestablishing peace, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator Huang Jiashan 黃嘉善 (1549-1624) argued that the title of “Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification” was too low to secure the conviction and submission of the Mongols. He thus proposed elevating the title to “Regional Military Commander in Charge of Pacification” to better manage the mutual trade, which was not approved.¹¹⁸³ However, it is clear that after losing the formidable Submitted Army, Ming China had also lost its military deterrent over the Ordos Mongols.

It is also notable that, after the Ningxia Crisis, Wu Jilü 吳繼呂,¹¹⁸⁴ the uncle of Tu Wenxiu, succeeded to the post of Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification. At the outset of the rebellion, he joined the rebel forces for the sake of self-preservation. However, he remained personally aligned with Tu Wenxiu, did not participate directly in the rebellion, and later cooperated with Ming forces in suppressing the rebels. In the aftermath, he was commended as a meritorious commander and appointed a *fuyi* official. He then appropriated Tu Wenxiu’s family property, took Tu Wenxiu and Bao Yun’s concubines as wives for his retainers,

¹¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁹ Wang Liang 王亮, *Wang zhiyu wenji* 王稹玉文集 (Beijing: National Library of China, Ming dynasty), j. 7, 1b.

¹¹⁸⁰ Okano Masako, “Banreki niju nen Neika heihen,” 607.

¹¹⁸¹ *WLWGL*, j. 7, 22-23.

¹¹⁸² *MSZSL*, j. 369, 6909.

¹¹⁸³ Huang, *Fuxia zouyi*, j. 1, 9, 16b.

¹¹⁸⁴ There was a Wu Rushan 吳汝山 serving as the Pacification Reward Regional Military Commissioner 寧夏撫賞都指揮. See Shi, *Yi'an zongdu shanxi zouyi*, j. 4, 19b. They two may have had some kind of family relationship.

inheriting the heritage of the Ningxia Submitted Army. He was later impeached by Zhou Guanghao, the Ningxia Grand Coordinator, for embezzling market goods and instigating Mongols to petition the Ming court for rewards and was subsequently dismissed from office. This effectively marked the final dissolution of the power connected to the Submitted Army.¹¹⁸⁵

8.5 Conclusion

The Ningxia Submitted Army was established in 1565 with the submission of the “Five Tiger Generals” and their subordinates. It soon reversed the Ningxia troops’ disadvantage against the Mongols and became the backbone of the Ningxia military forces. There existed a persistent dual headship within the Ningxia Submitted Army. From the time of their surrender until the Longqing Peace Treaty, the Ningxia Submitted Army were divided into two factions, led respectively by Babai and Zheng Yang. The Ming court showed a stronger trust in Zheng Yang, who was of Han Chinese origin, granting him preferential treatment and expecting him to counterbalance and oversee Babai. Following the Longqing Peace Treaty, the position of *fuyi* official was established to manage mutual trade with the Mongols. The Ming government appointed Zheng Yang to this role. It seems that they had greater trust to him, granting him more privileges and substantial rewards, thereby sidelining Babai. When Zheng Yang could not continue his official duties due to age and illness, Babai anticipated that he would naturally obtain the position of the *fuyi* official. However, the Ming government instead promoted Tu Wenxiu, a half-Han, half-“barbarian” individual, who adopted the name Sha Yang, to succeed Zheng Yang. Consequently, Babai felt pushed aside and thus retired, while his son Ba Cheng’en took over his responsibilities as the leader of the Submitted Army. Thereafter, the Submitted Army continued under the dual headship of Ba Cheng’en and Tu Wenxiu, until the Ningxia Crisis, which resulted in the complete annihilation of the Ningxia Submitted Army.

This dual headship structure of the Ningxia Submitted Army reveals systematic discrimination against the Ba clan and non-Han ethnic groups within the army. Despite the active Sinicization of the Submitted Army, their earnest efforts to integrate into local society,

¹¹⁸⁵ Zhou, *Ming nongshan tang ji*, j. 28, 442-443.

and their significant service in defending Ming China against the Mongols, the Ming government consistently preferred those with Chinese backgrounds or ancestry, such as Zheng Yang and Tu Wenxiu, over those of barbarian origin like Babai. Even Tu Wenxiu, who was relatively favored, due to his mixed heritage, did not receive equitable treatment from the Ningxia Regional Commander,¹¹⁸⁶ let alone ordinary soldiers.

Such dual headship and systematic discrimination reflect the deeply entrenched “us versus them” mentality toward Han and non-Han groups that prevailed among most Ming officials during the late Ming. After the Ningxia Crisis, the common sentiment among Ming officials was that the Ningxia Submitted Army was “not of our kind and thus their hearts must be different”.¹¹⁸⁷ They largely overlooked the exploitation of the Submitted Army by high-ranking officials and the systemic discrimination against various non-Han groups embedded within the institutional framework. In contrast to the views of most officials, locals in Ningxia or those who had interacted with the Submitted Army generally held them in trust and felt sympathy towards them. For instance, Li Yuhua 李毓華, a Beijing official who was born in Ningxia, argued that “Babai had been loyal throughout his life and would never rebel”.¹¹⁸⁸ Niu Bingzhong 牛秉忠, the Ming general dispatched to quell the uprising, resided in Babai’s house after his surrender. When Ming soldiers arrived to arrest Babai, Babai did not hold Niu hostage but allowed him to leave, indicating their strong rapport.¹¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Chen Ye 陳燁, who had conversed with Babai, lamented in a poem *Hearing of Ba Bai’s Rebellion in Ningxia* (Ch. wen Ningxia Babai fan 聞寧夏唃拜反), writing, “The barbarians are like fish swimming in a pot [i.e. liable to be cooked and eaten at any moment]. Their rebellion evokes a helpless sigh.”¹¹⁹⁰ These actions and sentiments suggest that the local society of Ningxia had embraced the Submitted Army as part of them, and they deeply sympathized with and regretted their ultimate fate, especially given their shared oppression by high-ranking officials. In reality, in

¹¹⁸⁶ Zhuge, *Liangchao pingrang lu*, j. 3, 724.

¹¹⁸⁷ “非我族類，其心必異。” The majority of letters written by various officials collected in *Pingxi guanjian* and the then Senior Grand Secretary Zhao Zhigao 趙志皋 held this viewpoint. Zhao Zhigao 趙志皋, *Zhao zhigao ji* 趙志皋集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2012), 3-4, 164.

¹¹⁸⁸ “唃拜一生忠義，必不肯反。” Mei, *Xizheng ji*, j. 9, 10b.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid., j. 2, 6a.

¹¹⁹⁰ “虜雖遊釜魚，發難良足喟。” Chen Ye 陳燁, *Chen shi jincun ji* 陳氏僅存集 (Beijing: National Central Library of Taiwan, 1600), j. 3, 55b.

response to the Babai crisis, people in other towns in Shaanxi—Gansu, Guyuan, and Yansui—also intended to rebel, revealing widespread public resentment and social inequality in northwest China during the late Ming.¹¹⁹¹

¹¹⁹¹ Wen, *Wen gongyi ji*, j. 26, 734-5.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This dissertation analyzes how Ming China, following the collapse of the Mongol Empire, assumed the role of successor to the Yuan rulers in the northwestern frontier region centered on the Hexi Corridor. The dissertation argues that, beyond the inheritance of the Yuan's legacy, as emphasized in previous scholarship, the Ming further introduced a major innovation in frontier governance: the recruitment of *fuyi* officials to manage relations with various ethnic groups both within and beyond its borders, thereby establishing a new Inner Asian order known as the *fuyi* system. To be specific, it can be observed that the overall strategy of the Ming lay in stabilizing the situation on the northwestern frontier so as to concentrate its resources on dealing with Mongol, Jurchen, and other forces in the north and northeast.¹¹⁹² Therefore, throughout the Ming period, the empire did not pursue territorial expansion in the northwest. Instead, a generally conservative and defensive posture was adopted: it first established a buffer system, and after the collapse of the buffer system, it constructed frontier walls to separate itself from hostile Inner Asian powers. However, these tendencies, strategies and measures did not mean that Ming China abandoned contact and communication with the Inner Asian world. On the contrary, the Ming maintained close communication with various Inner Asian forces through *fuyi* officials, thereby preserving the stability of its northwestern frontier and establishing a new and influential order based on the *fuyi* system within the Inner Asian world.

In this concluding chapter, the discussion above will be summarized from three points of view—the functions of the *fuyi* officials as mediators, the evolution of the structure of the Ming northwestern frontier, and the general dynamic of the Ming–Inner Asia relations—elucidating on this basis the significance of Ming China in the political, economic, and cultural history of Eurasia.

9.1 *Fuyi* officials as mediators

The *fuyi* system was the most distinctive and effective institution utilized by the Ming to govern its frontiers. The core of the *fuyi* system relied on using *fuyi* officials to manage relations

¹¹⁹² Zhao Xi'anhai 趙現海, *Mingdai jiubian changcheng junzhen shi* 明代九邊長城軍鎮史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012), 745-764.

between the Ming and various Inner Asian forces, thereby maintaining the Ming northwestern buffer zones and ensuring stability and peace in the region.

In the early Ming period, although the positions of the *fu'an* and the *fuyi* officials had already been established in Xining and Qinghai, their responsibilities were limited to the management of the Xifan people under the authority of the Xining Guard officials and native officials, and they lacked independent authority for action or significant influence. However, in response to the invasions of the Moghul Khanate, the Ming established numerous offices of *fuyi* officials in Suzhou and Ganzhou around 1475, marking the beginning of the period when the *fuyi* system truly began to function effectively. The historic significance of the *fuyi* official is attributed to the fact that the Ming no longer relied solely on local civil officials, military officers, or native officials to communicate with non-Han groups, but instead created specialized institutions and personnel for this purpose—indicating the professionalization of Ming frontier governance.

At the time of their initial establishment, *fuyi* officials in Suzhou included a number of official positions. Among them, the Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs held the highest rank. The holder of this office often concurrently served as the Jiayu Pass Municipal Military Commander and was responsible for receiving and managing the tribute missions from the Western Regions, envoys from various Inner Asian forces, as well as refugees or individuals seeking asylum. Under his authority, the offices of Commander in Charge of Pacification, Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification and Company Commander in Charge of Pacification were established in descending order of rank. According to the assessment of this study, each of these posts was held by only one person at a time. In Ganzhou, the highest-ranking *fuyi* official was the Gansu Commander in Charge of Pacification. He was also the highest-ranking *fuyi* official in the entire Gansu region and was able to participate in Ming frontier decision-making.¹¹⁹³ Under his authority, the offices of Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification and Company Commander in Charge of Pacification were established in descending order of rank, with each position held by a single individual.

¹¹⁹³ For example, Pīr Muḥammad 皮馬兒黑麻[皮兒馬黑麻], the Gansu Commander in Charge of Pacification, engaged in the discussion on how to resist the Moghul Khanate in 1526. Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, 648.

Four major functions of the *fuyi* officials in Ganzhou and Suzhou were fully manifested during this period. Firstly, *fuyi* officials such as Yang Zhu were repeatedly dispatched to the hostile Moghul Khanate to conduct negotiations and collect intelligence on the Western Regions.¹¹⁹⁴ These missions not only compelled the Moghul Khanate to return Hami in 1492, but also provided crucial intelligence for the Ming military campaigns to recapture Hami in 1495 and after. Secondly, *fuyi* officials coordinated and communicated with frontier guards and buffer zone groups such as Hami, Čikin, Handong, Mekrin, and the Oirats, reconstructing a defensive and offensive Xiyu buffer zone between the Ming and the Moghul Khanate. Third, they organized and managed joint “Han–Barbarian” forces to launch attacks against the Moghul Khanate or to defend against invasions by the Eastern Mongols. Finally, they cooperated with former members of the Hami Guard, who remained in Hami, to receive and host tributary missions from the Western Regions.¹¹⁹⁵

In carrying out these activities, the multilingual abilities of the *fuyi* officials and their Inner Asian social networks were crucial factors that enabled them to mobilize and co-opt various Inner Asian forces. During the 1532 peace negotiation with Burqai, leader of the Qinghai Mongols, another characteristic of *fuyi* officials was fully revealed—their familiarity with Inner Asian customs. Two *fuyi* officials, Chen Gang and Bao Xiang, were dispatched to Burqai’s yurt, where they were received and entertained by Qinghai Mongol leaders. Following Inner Asian customs, they completed the alliance ritual by drinking fermented mare’s milk and swearing an oath to the sky. The Ming’s requirement for the alliance was that Burqai propose a formal document written in the “barbarian script”, which was difficult to achieve since the Chinese sources suggest that there were no writers in Burqai’s forces.¹¹⁹⁶ As a result, his requests had

¹¹⁹⁴ In addition to the figures already introduced in the dissertation, there are also other examples: Ma Xun 馬馴, the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, was sent to Hami to gather intelligence in 1513. SYZZL, j. 12, 418. Ma Xun and Ma Sheng 馬昇, the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, were also sent to negotiate with the Moghul Khanate in 1515. Ibid., j. 13, 438.

¹¹⁹⁵ There are also other examples: Xu Zhao 許釗, the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification 撫夷千戶, and Zhang Ying 張英, the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification 撫夷百戶, received the Western Region tributary missions in the Jiayu Pass in 1516-1517. Wang Qiong, *Wang qiong ji*, j. 6, 221. Sha Wen 沙文, the Ganzhou Company Commander in Charge of Pacification 甘州撫夷百戶, received Uzbek-i Qazaq envoys in 1532. Xia, *Guizhou zouyi*, j. 11, 26b. For the negotiation between the two sides, see Nurlan Kenzheakhmet, *The Tūqmāq (Golden Horde), the Qazaq Khanate, the Shībānīd Dynasty, Rūm (Ottoman Empire), and Moghūlistan in the XIV-XVI Centuries: from Original Sources* (Almaty: Khoca Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University Eurasian Research Institute, 2019), 31-66.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Jindai mingchen bianjiang tiyao*, c. 15, 25b.

to be conveyed through the *fuyi* officials and put in writing. Here, the *fuyi* officials functioned not merely as translators of language and writing, but as mediators between Ming culture and Inner Asian customs. They translated the military and economic demands and oral oath-taking traditions of the Qinghai Mongols into terms compatible with the Ming state's frontier governance requirements and document-based bureaucratic administration. It was through their efforts that the Ming frontier policies could be implemented, and the demands of Inner Asian groups fully understood by the central authorities.

The Longqing Peace of 1571 represented a major step in the expansion of the *fuyi* system. Not only were the positions of the *fuyi* officials widely distributed in other northwestern military towns such as Ningxia and Yansui, but their authority was also greatly enlarged, making them responsible for all communications between the Ming and the Mongols. During this period, a large number of submitted people, most notably Mani Bulat and the Ningxia Submitted Army, were entrusted with significant responsibilities. Mani Bulat was a Commander of the Hami Guard, which had already migrated in the Suzhou region in the early sixteenth century, while the leaders and soldiers of the Ningxia Submitted Army were Mongolian, Oirat, Tibetan and Chinese captives who had been recruited in Ningxia in the mid-sixteenth century by Wang Chonggu, who was known for his strategic vision and his willingness to place trust in non-Han Ming subjects. Following the Longqing Peace Treaty, both Mani Bulat and leaders of the Ningxia Submitted Army were appointed as *fuyi* officials, responsible for communicating with Mongol leaders, managing frontier markets, and addressing other religious and economic needs of the Mongols. While maintaining frontier stability, they also used their identities as *fuyi* officials to advance the interests of their families and factions, skillfully maintaining a balance between Inner Asian and Ming interests through the mediation of multiple powers. The case of Mani Bulat illustrates this complexity. He once defected from the Ming and served Mongol leaders such as Altan Khan and Qolači in 1570s. He also sacrificed the interests of Muslim merchants and Xifan tribes in order to help his affinal relatives in the yurt of Sečen Beyiji curry favor with their lord. A similar dynamic can be observed in the case of the Ningxia Submitted

Army. Wu Jilü, who served as a Ming *fuyi* official, even contacted Mongol leaders in an attempt to demand greater rewards from the Ming court.

At this point, it is worth reflecting on the extent to which the so-called “*fuyi* officials” can be understood as the officials of the Ming. Their actions often ran counter to Ming interests, serving primarily themselves, their families, or their ethnic groups. Beyond the cases of Mani Bulat and Wu Jilü, numerous other examples also invite reflection. After the recovery of Hami, Ḥājjī Ḥasan decisively renounced his position as a *fuyi* official and returned to Hami. Chen Gang and Bao Xiang were clearly very familiar with and enjoyed life in the yurt of Burqai. In their daily lives, they likely followed Inner Asian ways of living rather than Han-style practices. From this, we may conclude that these *fuyi* officials were first Inner Asian civilians and nomads who lived according to their own ways of life and pursued their own interests. When carrying out assignments for the Ming, their primary consideration was not the broader interests of the dynasty, but rather how to maximize their own interests in the process of fulfilling these tasks. From an Inner Asian perspective, it was the leaders of these groups who leveraged the Ming administrative system to obtain positions of the *fuyi* officials, thereby advancing the interests of those around them. This, however, does not undermine the argument that the Ming effectively used *fuyi* officials to govern the Inner Asian world. On the contrary, it demonstrates that the institution of the *fuyi* official was a product co-created and mutually recognized by the Ming and the various Inner Asian forces—a deliberate arrangement made to coordinate the interests of all parties.

Correspondingly, the Ming court did not fully trust the *fuyi* officials either. Some officials, such as Wang Chonggu and Zheng Luo, placed considerable trust in the submissive groups and made extensive use of figures such as Mani Bulat and Zheng Yang to mediate relations between the Ming and the Mongols. They believed in the military and diplomatic abilities of the *fuyi* officials and assumed that they could be integrated into frontier society. Other officials such as Dang Xin and Cui Jingrong, however, regarded the *fuyi* officials with deep suspicion and constantly questioned their loyalty. The specific circumstances of *fuyi* officials therefore depended to a significant extent on the personal attitudes and values of the Ming officials

responsible for frontier affairs. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Ming consistently relied on *fuyi* officials in the administration of its frontiers. A clear example, again, is Mani Bulat, who was removed from office for provoking disturbances on the frontier but was soon reappointed. This demonstrates that, by this time, Ming frontier governance had become highly dependent on the services of the *fuyi* officials. Into the Qing period, *fuyi* officials continued to be employed in governing the multiethnic frontier, reflecting the Qing's conscious adoption of Ming frontier governance policies.

As an effective institutional innovation, the offices of the *fuyi* officials were widely established across the various frontiers of Ming China. Its specific forms, however, varied according to the specific conditions of each frontier region. On the southwestern frontier in Yunnan, the position of Vice Prefect in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi tongzhi* 撫夷同知) was established in 1533. This office was responsible for handling “barbarian” affairs, supervising military-agricultural colonies, and managing soldiers.¹¹⁹⁷ Unlike the situation on the northwestern frontier, the *fuyi* officials in Yunnan were civil officials selected through the imperial examination system rather than hereditary military officers, and they were mainly recruited from outside the local region rather than from among the indigenous population.¹¹⁹⁸ This difference may be explained by the more agriculture-oriented character of the region, which led the Ming state to prefer civilian administrative institutions over military institutions for local governance.¹¹⁹⁹ The office of Vice Prefect in Charge of Pacification was later inherited by the Qing in the region.¹²⁰⁰ On the northeastern frontier, offices such as the Regional Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi zongbing* 撫夷總兵), the Regional Vice Commander (Ch. *fuyi fu zongbing* 撫夷副總兵) and the Mobile Corps Commander in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi youji* 撫夷遊擊) had been established no later than 1622. Institutions such as the Camp in Charge of Pacification (Ch. *fuyi ying* 撫夷營) and the Pacification Reception Hall (Ch. *fuyi ting* 撫夷廳) were also created. The *fuyi* officials on the northeastern frontier were responsible for maintaining contact with the Mongol and Jurchen

¹¹⁹⁷ Luo, *Jinglüe dianxie*, 173-175.

¹¹⁹⁸ Luo, “Mingdai *fuyi* huodong,” 130.

¹¹⁹⁹ Luo, *Jinglüe dianxie*, 173.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

groups. Their personnel included not only Han Chinese familiar with Inner Asian affairs but also Mongols and Jurchens. In addition to military officials, some lamas were also involved in pacification affairs—an arrangement that reflected the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols and Jurchens in the early seventeenth century.¹²⁰¹ These examples demonstrate the considerable flexibility of the *fuyi* system. In each frontier region, the Ming court adapted the institution to local conditions, recruiting appropriate *fuyi* officials to address the particular ethnic, cultural, and economic circumstances of the region.

9.2 Structure of the Ming northwestern frontier

Accompanying the innovation of the institutions of *fuyi* officials, was the Ming's thorough transformation of the Yuan's northwestern frontier governance system. The structure of the Yuan's northwestern frontier was that the Hexi Čayadaid Ulus, centered on Suzhou, garrisoned the Western Regions, while the *Oγruqči clan of Hezhou and the Qonggirad son-in-law family of Xining managed Tibetan affairs. This structure was inherited by the Ming during its early period, as the Suzhou Guard continued to administer the Xiyu buffer zone, while the Xining Guard continued to supervise the Qinghai buffer zone.

The structure of the Xiyu buffer zone was centered on the Prince of Zhongshun stationed at Hami, who was a descendant of the Yuan Prince of Su, with the Hami Guard serving as its military backbone. It supervised the Shazhou Guard and Čikin Guard, as well as nomadic groups such as the Mekrin, and was collectively responsible for the Ming's communication and tributary relations with the Western Region forces. Further on, the Qinghai buffer zone had a three-layer structure. At its core were native officials within the Xining Guard who had been transformed from former Yuan officials and princely forces. Surrounding the Xining Guard were the Handong Guard and the Thirteen Xifan Tribes, which also bore the title of “native officials” but were not permitted to hold office within the Ming bureaucracy. Beyond them were the Sarıg Uyğur groups commanded by the Prince of Anding, who retained his Yuan-era

¹²⁰¹ Chen, “Mingmo beibian de fuyiguan,” 147-162; Li Qinpu 李勤璞, *Hou jin shidai he qingchao chuqi zangchuan fojiao chuanbo shi yanjiu* 後金時代和清朝初期藏傳佛教傳播史研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020), 167-217.

title. The core of the buffer system lay in leveraging the powerful local forces of the northwestern frontier as intermediaries to manage relations between the Ming and Inner Asia. During this period, the Ming was able to avoid direct involvement of its administrative and military systems in the political and military contests of Inner Asia to the northwest and instead use the Xiyu buffer zone and the Qinghai buffer zone as proxies. Internally, however, the Ming court had not yet developed an effective mechanism for direct communication with Inner Asian forces.

This complex buffer system collapsed under the invasions of the Moghul Khanate and the Ibarai Group during the end of fifteenth century and the beginning of sixteenth century. As a result, the Ming administration of the northwestern frontier was no longer split between the Western Regions and Tibet. Instead, a newly established unified *fuyi* system was created to govern all frontier affairs. Within the *fuyi* system, under the supervision of the *fuyi* officials, the Ming reorganized various submitted groups into new buffer zones, while simultaneously establishing contacts with forces such as the Mekrin and the Oirats in order to expand friendly relations across Inner Asia. If the existing buffer zones could no longer be maintained, it might have been a better choice to allocate resources toward improving relations with hostile powers. Guided by this strategy, the Ming also explored the possibility of transforming the Qinghai Mongols into the new buffer zone and repeatedly dispatched *fuyi* officials to negotiate with them.

The Longqing Peace Treaty represented a further extension of this line of strategy. Since the Mongols of the Right Wing had occupied the entire northwestern frontier, the Ming chose to make peace with them in order to preserve frontier stability, particularly when these Mongols were eager for Ming goods. Consequently, a new frontier governance structure emerged: offices of the *fuyi* officials were established in every military town and responsible for maintaining contact with corresponding Mongol chiefs and handling routine affairs. This structure persisted until the final years of Ming China.

Previous discussions of Ming frontier defense emphasized the construction of frontier walls as evidence of the empire's conservative strategy. The analysis in this dissertation, however,

demonstrates that it was only after the buffer system, a “frontier wall” made up of people, had collapsed that the frontier walls were erected. Moreover, even after the construction of the physical walls, the Ming *fuyi* system continued to have the capacity to extend beyond them and project the empire’s influence into Inner Asia. The transition from the buffer system to the *fuyi* system reflected the Ming’s move from dependence on intermediary powers to direct engagement with Inner Asian authorities. This also meant that the Chinese and Inner Asian peoples became more closely connected through the institutionalized framework of the *fuyi* system, as seen, through the facilitation of trade, mutual intermarriages and interregional migration.

The innovation of the *fuyi* system was also reflected in its transcendence of earlier institutions such as the *jimi* policy and the “Native Official” (*tusi* or *tuguan*) System. As Jennifer Took has pointed out, the blueprint of the *jimi* and later Native Official System was probably evident as far back as the Zhou dynasty.¹²⁰² The core principle of this policy was to allow frontier ethnic groups to govern their own tribes or communities through their own leaders, according to their own customs and laws. As she further explains, “Under this system, native chieftains became attached to the Chinese empire through their submission to the court and the subsequent conferral by the court of Chinese titles with rights of hereditary succession.”¹²⁰³ The Native Official System of the Ming and Qing period, as well as the buffer system discussed in this dissertation, were all built upon this general principle. The *fuyi* system, however, went beyond it in two important respects. Firstly, the *fuyi* system introduced a unified administrative structure. Under the *fuyi* system, different tribes were managed through the intermediary of *fuyi* officials, rather than each leader independently administering his own group under nominal imperial authority. Secondly, the *fuyi* system possessed a greater degree of expandability. Under the Native Official System, only the leaders of ethnic groups served as native officials of their own communities, and their authority rarely extended to other groups. The *fuyi* system, by contrast, allowed the Ming, through negotiation and consultation, to incorporate an increasingly

¹²⁰² Jennifer Took, *A Native Chieftaincy in Southwest China: Franchising a Tai Chieftaincy under the Tusi System of Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 31.

¹²⁰³ Took, *A Native Chieftaincy in Southwest China*, 24 and also see her Chapter 2.

wide range of Inner Asian groups into a shared framework of interaction. This difference helps explain a broader historical transformation. During the early Ming period, when the dynasty relied primarily on the buffer system, the number of tribes submitting to the Ming court remained largely unchanged and, in some cases, even declined as dissatisfaction with Ming authority grew. Once the *fuyi* system was established, however, the Ming succeeded in forming peaceful relations with a greater number of Inner Asian forces than before. Communication and coordination with these groups were conducted through *fuyi* officials, who served as the principal mediators. In this sense, the *fuyi* system reflected an unprecedented degree of inclusiveness and pluralism in Ming frontier governance.

So far, the evolution of the structure of the Ming northwestern frontier have largely followed a “impact-response” model: faced with the pressure of the Moghul Khanate, the Qinghai Mongols, and the Mongols of the Right Wing, the Ming was compelled to introduce reforms in order to cope with new frontier crises. This interpretation aligns with the actual situation. As emphasized above, the Ming generally sought to maintain stability on its northwestern frontier and adopted a defensive posture there, so that it could devote greater resources to confronting the nomadic groups to the north and northeast. Nevertheless, we can also observe the vitality of cross-border activities that operated beyond the direct control of the Ming state on the northwestern frontier. Three examples can illustrate this point. Firstly, in 1525, a woman surnamed Zhu from Ganzhou was captured by cavalry from the Moghul Khanate while she was gathering grasses around the lake and was subsequently sold to a Muslim household in Hami. She later escaped by jumping down from the city wall at night and, after a month, arrived at Jiayu Pass. It is difficult to imagine that she could have crossed the desert from Hami to Jiayu Pass entirely on her own. She was likely assisted along the way by the groups of the Xiyu buffer zone, such as the Handong Left Guard. More importantly, it records that during her stay in Hami, she overheard Muslim merchants and Moghul generals discussing plans to attack the Ming.¹²⁰⁴ This suggests that she understood the language of their conversation, most likely Old Uyghur or Persian. The episode indicates that linguistic

¹²⁰⁴ Yang, *Yang yiqing ji*, j. 12, 439-440.

communication between ordinary people from the Ming realm and non-Han populations of Inner Asia was possible. Secondly, also in 1525, we know of a Xifan from the Handong Left Guard in Shazhou arrived at Suzhou along with the Ming envoys. His visit was not for political purposes but to see relatives residing within Ming territory.¹²⁰⁵ This case suggests that marriage ties and daily social interactions between populations inside and outside the Ming realm were not strictly constrained by the frontier. Thirdly, in 1590, a group of Ming merchants from Shanxi, who were dissatisfied with the costs imposed on them by the state in conducting trade with the Mongols, allied with the Oirats and the Yarkand Khanate in an attempt to assassinate Čürüge, the third Prince of Shunyi. Their connection was most likely based on commercial relationships.¹²⁰⁶ This episode demonstrates that alliances between Han merchants and Inner Asian forces could emerge independently of Ming state control. Taken together, these examples suggest that, during the Ming period, interactions between Ming subjects and Inner Asian populations became increasingly close. It was precisely this development that made the *fuyi* system possible. In turn, the *fuyi* system further intensified interactions between the Ming and Inner Asian populations.

9.3 General dynamic of Ming–Inner Asia relations: Reshaping the northwestern frontier

After the collapse of the Mongol Yuan Empire and the successive establishment of the Ming, the question of how to position itself within Eurasia became a persistent concern for Ming emperors and central decision-makers. In its early years, the Ming inherited the Yuan legacy and used a buffer system composed of former Yuan officials and troops as intermediaries to communicate with the Inner Asian world. However, as Inner Asia entered a phase of “reimperialization”,¹²⁰⁷ those buffer zone groups and regimes were gradually absorbed by more powerful forces such as the Moghul Khanate and the Mongols of Right Wing. Confronted

¹²⁰⁵ Ibid., j. 13, 485.

¹²⁰⁶ Lu, “‘Taohe zhi bian’yu ‘longqing heyi’,” 137-140.

¹²⁰⁷ Jame A. Millward, “The Qing Formation, the Mongol Legacy, and the ‘End of History’ in Early Modern Central Eurasia,” in *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, ed. Lunn A. Struve, 100-101; Cf. Allsen “Eurasia after the Mongols,” 159-181.

with these new challenges, the Ming was compelled to engage directly, cultivating *fuyi* officials to deal with Inner Asian powers.

Thus, as one of the most powerful political and economic entities on the Eurasian continent between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ming constructed a new set of rules—the *fuyi* system—in Inner Asia on the basis of its economic superiority. This system emphasized that any Inner Asian power, so long as it submitted to the Ming, even if only for a very brief period, could receive rewards and the military protection from the Ming. If the prevailing rule of Inner Asia had previously been “marriage for alliance”, the *fuyi* system may be described as “submission for pacification”.

During this period, the waning of the Činggisid Principle could be observed. When the Moghul Khanate killed Hanshen on the grounds that he was not a member of the Golden Lineage, the Moghul Khan nevertheless married Hanshen’s daughter in order to ally with the Hami forces, demonstrating that the call for the Činggisid Principle was just an excuse. At the same time, the various Inner Asian forces never submitted to the Moghul Khan simply because he was a descendant of the Golden Clan. On the contrary, all factions, including the Moghul Khanate, sought to advance marriage alliances, forming a complex matrimonial network across Inner Asia. Likewise, when the Mongols of Right Wing occupied the Ming northwestern frontier, they did not proclaim their legitimacy on the basis of the Činggisid Principle but relied purely on military conquest.

The interaction between the *fuyi* system and Inner Asian marriage networks was highly complex. On the surface, the two appeared to be in opposition. For example, the Ming prohibited Burqai from marrying into the Moghul Khanate otherwise he would not be allowed to join the *fuyi* system, thereby creating a confrontation between Ming authority and the Moghul Khanate’s authority. Yet when the Ming sought to implement the *fuyi* system at the local level, it sometimes had no choice but to make use of the principle of “marriage for alliance”. One such case was the Ming’s persuasion of Engke Bulat to form marital alliance with Abidbolu, an Oirat prince, thereby incorporating the Oirats into the *fuyi* system.

Inner Asian concepts of alliance also profoundly shaped the structure of the Ming's *fuyi* system. Burqai claimed that while he was alive, he would enjoy peaceful relations with the Ming, but he could not guarantee whether his descendants would continue the alliance after his death. Although Altan Khan swore that his descendants would never again invade the Ming, conflicts between the Mongols of the Right Wing and the Ming continued after the Longqing Peace Treaty.¹²⁰⁸ In the late Ming period, Qolači stated that his peace agreement with Gansu did not imply peace with Guyuan. Meanwhile, the Ordos Mongols repeatedly violated agreements, leaving the Ming with little choice but to adopt a policy whereby any tribe that observed the peace agreement at any given time and place would be permitted to trade and receive rewards; otherwise, relations would be severed. Yet if a tribe whose relations had been severed later resubmitted, it could once again receive rewards. In this regard, the Ming could only respond passively. This approach reveals several important points. Firstly, it clearly shows that the Ming did not possess the capacity in this region to compel Inner Asian forces to follow the methods it had envisioned in order to maintain long-term peace. Secondly, it indicates that, for the Ming, forming alliances according to Inner Asian customs was an acceptable practice. Thirdly, this does not mean that the Ming was weak or entirely passive. On the contrary, the Ming possessed sufficient military strength to induce Inner Asian forces to obtain the goods they needed through mutual trade rather than through raiding. At the same time, the Ming also had the economic resources necessary to satisfy their demands. This combination of strong military and economic capacity, together with a strategic preference for frontier stability rather than territorial expansion, led the Ming to seek appropriate ways to coexist with the cultural plurality of Inner Asia along its northwestern frontier through continuous negotiation. Therefore, the *fuyi* system was not exclusively controlled by the Ming, but rather operated as a collaborative and negotiated framework involving all parties.

Overall, throughout the Ming period, China established its own set of rules within the Inner Asian world—the *fuyi* system. Deeply embedded in the preexisting Inner Asian order, this

¹²⁰⁸ Of course, Ming officials also had incentives to provoke conflicts with the Mongols, since killing Mongols could be counted as military merit and thus contribute to their promotion. However, as this section focuses on how Inner Asian forces understood alliances, this issue will not be discussed in detail here.

system offered the various regimes and groups in Inner Asia an alternative way of life. The Ming was neither conservative nor closed; rather, it inaugurated a new era of political, economic, and cultural exchange in Inner Asia—the legacy of which can be traced up until now.

Appendix I: Prosopography of *Fuyi* Officials

Notes:

1. Since the names of the *fuyi* officials were only recorded in Chinese sources, only their Chinese names are given in the following table. In the case that the original name could be reconstructed, the reconstructed name will be given.
2. “Period of Activity” refers to the period from the individual’s first appearance in the sources to the last. They could have lived longer than the given time, but we know nothing about their later activities.
3. “Geographical Coverage” includes where the individual served in the army, where he once was dispatched as an envoy and where he once led army to fight or pacify.
4. “Contact Groups” does not distinguish between written and oral communications. The languages they may use are listed as follows: Western Regions Missions: Old Uyghur, Mongolian and Persian; Oirat: Oirat or Mongolian; Mongol: Mongolian; Moghul Khanate: Old Uyghur, Mongolian and Persian; Hami: Old Uyghur, Persian, Tibetan and Mongolian; Čikin, Handong: Mongolian and Tibetan; Anding, Aduan, Quxian: Mongolian, Tibetan and Old Uyghur; Xifan tribes: Tibetan, Old Uyghur or Mongolian.
5. “Biography” lists a person’s basic information, his career history and important events he participated in.
6. The table first lists the *fuyi* officials in Gansu (including Qinghai), followed by those in Yansui, Ningxia, and Guyuan. Within each region, the individuals are arranged according to the chronological order of their first appearance.

No.	Name	Period of Activity	Geographical Coverage	Contact Groups	Biography
1	Shi Ying 師英	1477-1479	Suzhou, Shazhou	Handong Left Guard	As the Suzhou Commander in Charge of Pacification, he led an army to Shazhou to pacify the native people three times between 1477-1479

2	Dong He 董和	1477-1480	Suzhou, Shazhou, Čikin	Handong Left Guard, Hami Guard	Serving as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, he followed Shi Ying to pacify Shazhou between 1477-1479. In 1480, he was sent to mediate the conflict between Hami and Čikin but was murdered by a Čikin leader on the mission.
3	Yang Zhu 楊翥	1491-1500	Suzhou, Hami, Moghul Khanate	Moghul Khanate, Hami	Suzhou officer. As the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent along with Sayyid Ḥusayn to negotiate with the Moghul Khanate in 1491, which led to his promotion to the Commander in Charge of Pacification in 1492. He engaged in recovery attempts of the city of Hami and was promoted to Suzhou Assistant Commander in 1497. He later died in the battle against the Mongols.
4	Ḥājjī Hasan 哈只哈三	1493-1504	Hami, Gansu	Hami, Moghul Khanate, Western Regions Missions	Hami Muslim. He served as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification after the fall of Hami, responsible for receiving the Western Region tributary missions around 1493. After the recovery of Hami, he escorted *Šamba back to Hami along with Yang Zhuand in 1499. Serving as the Battalion Commander in Charge of the Barbarian Soldiers in 1504, he escorted *Šamba back to Hami again.
5	Liu Da 劉達	1497	Suzhou	Mongol	Serving as the Suzhou Company Commander in

					Charge of Pacification, he led a combined force of more than 400 Han and non-Han soldiers to defeat the Mongols' invasion in 1497.
6	Dong Jie 董傑	1504-1512	Gansu, Hami	Hami, Moghul Khanate, Western Regions Missions	As the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent to escort *Šamba back to Hami along with Ḥājjī Ḥasan in 1504. In 1512, he was promoted to the Suzhou Regional Military Vice Commissioner due to his merits. Later, he was demoted as Commander due to a defeat.
7	Rui Ning 芮寧	1506-1517	Gansu	Xifan tribes; Moghul Khanate	Lanzhou officer. Serving as the Regional Military Commissioner in Charge of Pacification in Xining in 1506, he was promoted to the position of the Yongchang Right Assistant Regional Commander in 1508. Being raised to the position of the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander in 1515 and registered at the Suzhou Guard, he engaged in battle with the Moghul Khanate and was killed in action in 1517.
8	Ma Xun 馬馴	1513-1515	Gansu, Hami, Moghul Khanate	Hami, Moghul Khanate	Serving as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent to Hami to gather intelligence in 1513 and to the Moghul Khanate for peace negotiations in 1515.

9	Ma Sheng 馬昇	1515	Gansu, Hami, Moghul Khanate	Hami, Moghul Khanate	Serving as the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent to the Moghul Khanate for peace negotiations along with Ma Xun in 1515.
10	Xu Zhao 許 釗	1516- 1517	Gansu	Western Regions Missions	Serving as the Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, he received the Western Region tributary missions in the Jiayu Pass in 1516-1517.
11	Zhang Ying 張英	1516- 1517	Gansu	Western Regions Missions	Serving as the Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, he received the Western Region tributary missions along with Xu Zhao in the Jiayu Pass in 1516-1517.
12	Peng Jun 彭 濬	1525- 1529	Gansu	Moghul Khanate; All submitted groups	Lanzhou officer. He served as the Xining Municipal Military Commander and Hongchengzi Assistant Commander during 1525 and 1528. Around 1528, he was appointed as the Gansu Mobile Corps Commander and the <i>fuyi</i> official. During 1528 and 1529, he and Liu Yun conducted an investigation of data and records pertaining to the hereditary succession of all the leaders of the groups which had submitted to the Ming.
13	Liu Yun 劉雲	1525- 1529	Gansu	Handong Left Guard; All submitted groups	Serving as the Commander in Charge of Pacification, he received the envoys from the Handong Left Guard and a Chinese captive at the Jiayu Pass in 1525. During 1528

					and 1529, he and Peng Jun conducted an investigation of data and records pertaining to the hereditary succession of all the leaders of the groups which had submitted to the Ming.
14	Pir Muhammad 皮馬兒黑麻 [皮兒馬黑麻]	1526	Gansu	Moghul Khanate	Muslim. Serving as the Gansu Commander in Charge of Pacification, engaged the discussion on how to resist the Moghul Khanate in 1526.
15	Sha Wen 沙文	1532	Gansu	Uzbek-i Qazaq	Serving as the Ganzhou Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, he received Uzbek-i Qazaq envoys in 1532.
16	Chen Gang 陳剛	1532	Gansu, Qinghai	Mongol, Handong	Serving as the Suzhou Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent to negotiate with Burqai in 1532.
17	Bao Xiang 保祥	1532-1539	Gansu, Qinghai	Mongol, Handong, Oirat	Serving as the Ganzhou Company Commander in Charge of Pacification, he was sent to negotiate with Burqai along with Chen Gang in 1532. In 1539, he was sent to the Taolai River Basin to gather intelligence about the Oirats.
18	Wang Jie 王節	1539	Suzhou	Oirat	Serving as the Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs, he received the envoys sent by Prince Bolu of the Oirats in 1539.
19	Liu Chengsi 劉承嗣	1573-1610	Gansu, Ningxia	Western Regions Missions	Zhenwu 振武 officer. He served as the Kelanzhou 崑崙州 Municipal Military Commander in 1573. During 1573 and 1576, He served as

					the Military Official in Charge of Pacification in Ganzhou. He received Western Regions missions in 1574. He supervised the Ming–Mongol mutual trade in Biandu Pass in 1576. Later, He was promoted to the Ningxia Regional Commander in 1584 and the Gansu Regional Commander in 1585. He died in 1610.
20	Mani Bulat 馬你卜刺/ Ma Yingshi 馬應時	1573- 1602	Gansu, Yansui and Xuanda	Mongol, Uyghur, Tibetan, Western Regions Missions	Originally an Uyghur Commander of the Hami Guard, he and his family developed close connections with Mongol leaders such as Altan Khan, Erketü Qatun, Qolači and Sečen Beyiji. He served as an envoy to transmit sutras to Altan Khan in 1573. He followed Altan Khan to Xining in 1577 and was captured by the Ming official. Later, he served in Xuanda, Suzhou and Yansui as a <i>fuyi</i> official to negotiate with the Mongols. His last position was as Yansui Assistant Regional Commander in 1602.
21	Mei Ji 梅濟	1574- 1589	Gansu	Western Regions Missions	He served as the Suzhou Commander in Charge of Pacification and Jiayu Pass Municipal Military Commander between 1574-1589, responsible for receiving Western Region tributary missions.
22	Xue Ruyu 薛如玉	1578	Gansu, Qinghai	Mongol	Serving a <i>fuyi</i> official, he prepared pots and stoves for

					Altan Khan and his troop during their journey to Qinghai in 1578.
23	Li Rong 李榮	1602-1608	Yansui	Mongol	Suide officer. He was appointed as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification in 1602 and dismissed in 1608.
24	Zheng Yang 鄭陽	1542-1586	Ningxia	Mongol	One of the Five Tiger Generals of the Ningxia Submitted Army. Originally a Han Chinese captive in Mongolia, he submitted to the Ming with Babai and others in 1565. He engaged in the Longqing Peace Treaty negotiations in 1571 and served as the Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs and other <i>fuyi</i> official positions until his death in 1586.
25	Tu Wenxiu 土文秀/Shan Yang 沙陽, 沙楊, 沙揚	1574-1592	Ningxia	Mongol	Son of Tugči, one of the Five Tiger Generals of the Ningxia Submitted Army. He engaged in the management of the Ming – Mongol trade from 1574. In 1586, he changed his name to Shan Yang and was appointed as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification, succeeding the responsibility of Zhen Yang. He was coerced to participate in the Ningxia Crisis and still tried to cooperate with the Ming forces, leading to his murder by Liu Dongyang in 1592.

26	Ma Chengxian 馬承光	c. 1592	Ningxia	Mongol	Ningxia officer. His grandfather Ma Jing 馬經 and father Ma Yun also served as generals in Shaanxi. He served as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Tu Wenxiu and was killed at the outset of Ningxia Crisis (1592).
27	Wu Jilü 吳繼呂	c. 1593	Ningxia	Mongol	Ningxia officer. His father 吳嵩 also served as a general in Ningxia. His sister married Tugči and gave birth to Tu Wenxiu. He succeeded as Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after the Ningxia Crisis but was dismissed due to his collusion with the Mongols.
28	Liu Jijue 劉繼爵	1590s	Ningxia	Mongol	He registered in Ningxia Hou Guard 寧夏後衛. He succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Wu Jilü.
29	Xiong Yanji 熊彥吉	1592-1609	Ningxia, Xining	Mongol	Xining officer. He engaged in the suppression of the Ningxia Crisis and was then promoted to be the Battalion Judge. He served as an envoy official between the Ming and Mongols and succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Liu Jijue.
30	Jiang Tingfu 江廷輔	1591-1599	Ningxia	Mongol	Ningxia officer. He succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after

					Xiong Yanji. He was appointed as the Yuquan Mobile Corps Commander later.
31	Zhao Weihan 趙維翰	1601-1618	Ningxia, Gansu and Beijing	Mongol	Ningxia officer. He succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Jiang Tingfu around 1601. He served as the Gansu Vice Regional Commander in 1618 and was appointed as the Right Deputy Commander of the Training Division of Divine Engine 神機營 at the year.
32	Zhang Shu 張曙	1607-1619	Ningxia	Mongol	Ningxia officer. His brother Zhang Xin 張昕 also served in Ningxia. He succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Zhao Weihan around 1607. He served as the Xingwu Mobile Corps Commander in 1619.
33	Gou Fuwei 苟伏威	1620-1631	Ningxia	Mongol	Ningxia officer. He succeeded as the Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification after Zhang Shu. No names of latter Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification were known. He served as the Xining Vice Regional Commander in 1623 and suppressed the uprising in Shaanxi in 1631.
34	Great and Little Bao Dbon po 大小包完卜	1576	Guyuan	Xifan tribes	They served as the Buddhist officials in Charge of Pacification in 1576.

Appendix II: Translation of *Fuyi* Official Titles

Notes:

This table provides the English translations of the *Fuyi* official titles frequently used in this dissertation. The entries are first arranged in the following order: “*Fuyi* Official Titles (Guard and Battalion System)”, “*Fuyi* Official Titles (Frontier Garrison System)”, and “Religious *Fuyi* Official Titles”. Within each category, the titles are further listed according to their hierarchical rank.

Official Titles	Translations
<i>Fuyi</i> Official Titles (Guard and Battalion System)	
撫夷都指揮 <i>fuyi du zhihui</i>	Regional Military Commissioner in Charge of Pacification
總理夷情指揮 <i>zongli yiqing zhihui</i>	Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs
撫夷指揮 <i>fuyi zhihui</i>	Commander in Charge of Pacification
撫夷千戶 <i>fuyi qianhu</i>	Battalion Commander in Charge of Pacification
撫夷百戶 <i>fuyi baihu</i>	Company Commander in Charge of Pacification
<i>Fuyi</i> Official Titles (Frontier Garrison System)	
撫夷參將 <i>fuyi canjiang</i>	Assistant Commander in Charge of Pacification
總理夷情遊擊 <i>zongli yiqing youji</i>	Mobile Corps Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs
撫夷遊擊 <i>fuyi youji</i>	Mobile Corps Commander in Charge of Pacification
撫夷都司 <i>fuyi dusi</i>	Military Official in Charge of Pacification
總理夷情守備 <i>zongli yiqing shoubei</i>	Municipal Military Commander Superintendent of Barbarian Affairs
撫夷守備 <i>fuyi shoubei</i>	Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification
撫夷千總 <i>fuyi qianzong</i>	Municipal Military Commander in Charge of Pacification and Regiment Commander in Charge of Pacification
Religious <i>Fuyi</i> Official Titles	
撫夷官僧 <i>fuyi guanseng</i>	Buddhist Official in Charge of Pacification
撫夷番僧 <i>fuyi fanseng</i>	Barbarian Buddhist Official in Charge of Pacification

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