

# BANNER ESTATES AND BANNER LANDS IN 18TH CENTURY CHINA—EVIDENCE FROM TWO NEW SOURCES

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In the autumn of 1644 Manchu troops of the Eight Banners, led by Prince Dorgon and welcomed by the ambitious Ming garrison commander Wu San-kuei, crossed the Great Wall and entered North China without a fight. Part of the invading army was sent south to extend the occupation; the major part, however, remained in the north to serve as the imperial guard. And with the severe northern winter imminent, the Manchu commanders had quickly to find accommodation for themselves and their followers. They also had to prepare for the future. So, in the twelfth month of the first year of the Shun-chih reign (January 1645) the new Manchu government hastily promulgated the land regulation for the eight banners. 八旗土田規制<sup>2</sup> which called for the confiscation of all private lands abandoned by persons who had fled from the war and rebellions, and also the confiscation of all public land held by Ming Imperial clansmen, consorts, high officials and eunuchs as manors and gardens. These lands were to be allocated to the newly arrived Manchus, including princes and other army commanders and the rank and file banner troops 兵丁人等.

Though no exact details were published, the promulgation referred generally to the need for separate and distinct settlement of Manchu and Han people so as to avoid future boundary disputes; it referred also to confiscation as a necessity: the conquering warriors simply had to have a base of existence. Confiscation took two forms: (1) The conquerors “encircled” and appropriated 占圈, 撥圈 certain lands, and (2) they accepted the “voluntary” surrender of Han Chinese with their lands 投充, 帶地投充. Thus in Pei Chih-li, especially within a radius of 500 li or 300 km of Peking (1 li: 0.6 km), as much as 75% or more of the total acreage of cultivated lands registered under *fu*, *chou*, or *hsien* was taken over as bannerland. (Clearly there must also have been large amounts of unregistered lands but bannerization must have resulted in a sudden decrease in the total acreage of taxable land.)

The bannerland was partitioned among the bannermen as fiefs. Rent was collected by the fief holders from their cultivators, but the government land tax was generally not

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<sup>1</sup> This is a survey article based on my recent study of banner lands as: Yuji Muramatsu, “Shin no naimufu-sōen—Naimufu zōsō kōsan-chihosatsu toyū shiryō ni tsuite” 清の内務府莊園——「内務府造送皇産地畝冊」という史料について, *Hitotsubashi-daigaku kenkyūnempō, Keizaigaku kenkyū* 12, 1968, Tokyo, pp. 1-119 (Muramatsu (1)). Two more articles relating to this topic are: *Ibid.*: “Kichi no shusosattō oyobi saginsattō ni tsuite” 旗地の「取租冊檔」および「差銀冊檔」について, *Tōyō Gakuhō*, Vol. 45, No. 2 pp. 39-No. 3 pp. 39-61 (Muramatsu (2)), and “Kenryūjidai kakyū Manshūkizoku no chisan to jintei—‘Daiya-tokubun-tonchū-saso-chiho-keinai-tonchū-hokusai-kantō-tōsho jintei-chiho sōsatsu’ to yū shiryō ni tsuite” 乾隆時代下級滿州貴族の地産と人丁——「大爺得分屯中差租地畝京内屯中北塞關東等處人丁地畝總冊」という史料について——*Tōyōshi kenkyū*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Muramatsu (3)).

<sup>2</sup> *Pach'i-tungchih (PCTC), Tutienchih I*, pp. 3a-3b.

levied. The resulting decrease of *min-ti* or taxable private lands increased the tax burden on the remaining private holders to the point where many were forced either to abandon their plots and migrate elsewhere or to commit themselves and their lands to the service of their conquerors. In 1645 and 1646 many Manchus arrived from the East as reinforcements, but the government could no longer afford to allocate to them fief lands in the amounts earlier distributed. The high density of population and the general shortage of land in North China did not allow this. Thus first the per-capita scale of fief allocation was decreased, and then a new support measure was adopted—the payment of meagre monthly salaries in rice in lieu of hereditary fiefs. This of course largely affected only the Manchu rank and file, for imperial clansmen and other high-ranking nobles continued to receive increasingly large manor and garden lands.<sup>3</sup>

These land reallocation programs, coupled with sumptuary regulations and other marks of exclusiveness reflected the early Manchu attempt to stratify Chinese society along rigid ethnic lines. The attempt was often rigorously prosecuted but it eventually failed. The Manchu need to seek a relatively popular base for the dynasty and the need to accommodate tribal sentiment to cosmopolitan reality led the Ch'ing from the exclusiveness of conquest to the familiarity of acculturation. For many Manchus this meant more than cultural bankruptcy: it meant fiscal bankruptcy. It meant hard times and going broke. Urbanized and *arrivistes*, they lived high and fell hard. They spent more than they had and more than they got; they drank too much, ate too well, gambled badly, lost and went into debt. Those with small fiefs were forced to sell or to mortgage them: in both cases they usually lost them for good. The rank and file in Peking, living on their monthly dole (*ch'ien-liang*), often had to borrow against their future incomes and became the prey of moneylenders and merchants who formed long queues in front of the government storehouses on pay day. And as their pauperism grew their martial pride and sense of honor died. Once proud and privileged, these ex-warriors joined the lowest layers of the urban poor. The *hu-t'ungs* or lanes of the Tartar City, originally allocated quarters for the Imperial Guards and thus privileged and restricted Manchu residential districts were transformed into banner slums.

Impoverishment of the Manchu bannermen was evident less than fifty years after the conquest. As early as 1655 the court was forced to supplement regular financial aids with special grants from the Imperial Household budget to alleviate poverty among lower class Manchus.<sup>4</sup> Repeated restrictions forbidding Manchus to dispose of their lands and Han Chinese to acquire them were ignored. Repeated measures to assist bannermen in redeeming debts and land holdings failed.

The pauperization of the Manchu rank and file and the concomitant weakening of their ethnic self-consciousness are by now familiar marks on the landscape of early Ch'ing history. It should be noted, however, that those marks may be more localized than we think. For our data on impoverishment deal almost exclusively with Peking and its environs. We know almost nothing about the living standards and styles of lower class Manchus in the provinces or in the Manchu homeland. Even more obscure, if that is possible, are the socio-economic facts of life among the landed Manchu elite. That they were awarded manors and gardens on a graded scale (first, second, and third class manors, 頭等二等三等

<sup>3</sup> *PCTC*, ch. 62, pp. 5 a, 6 a, 7 a, 9 a, 11 a.

<sup>4</sup> *Tach'ing shihlu (TCSL)*, Hsunchih ch. 89, p. 9, Yungcheng ch. 31, p. 13, ch. 63, pp. 7-8.

莊園, for example) is clear. Little else is. Information on public land management, treatment of bond-servants and tenant cultivators, etc. remains buried in off-beat and heretofore untapped sources.

What I want to do here is to introduce two such groups of sources, possessed by libraries in Japan, concerning Manchu nobles' estates in the 18th century. The first comprises three volumes of rent and labor-service fee collection records from the estates in north and north-east China of an unnamed Manchu grand seigneur (ta-yeh 大爺) whom we shall refer to here as X1.<sup>5</sup> The records are dated 1729 and 1733, respectively Yung-cheng 7 and 11.

The second set of sources, dated 1770, is an inventory of lands and bond-servant families inherited by another unidentified Manchu noble, lower in rank than X1 and referred to here as X2.<sup>6</sup>

Both nobles possessed two types of land, rent land (tsu-ti 租地) and service land (ch'ai-ti 差地), scattered over wide areas in Manchuria and Chihli province. The banner families attached to these estates were domiciled either on the service lands or in Peking as domestic servants of the grand seigneurs or as members of the Imperial Guards. A rough image

TABLE 1. THE ESTATES AND MEN HELD UNDER SEIGNEURS X1 AND X2, AND THE ANNUAL REVENUES FROM THEM

Ta-yeh		X1				X2			
Sites		Manchuria	Hopei	Peking	Total	Manchuria	Hopei	Peking	Total
Service	Land**	20,741.10	48,377.51	0.00	69,118.61	1,140.00	2,049.50	0.00	3,189.50
	House*	0.00	197.00	0.00	197.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rent	Land	0.00	20,437.53	0.00	20,437.53	0.00	5,580.50	0.00	5,580.50
	House	0.00	538.00	0.00	538.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	Land	20,741.10	68,815.04	0.00	89,556.14	1,140.00	7,630.00	0.00	8,770.00
	House	0.00	735.00	0.00	735.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service-men		12	178	0.00	190	75	86	30	191
	Tenants	0.00	21	0.00	21	0.00	69	0.00	69
Total		12	199	0.00	211	75	155	30	260
Service-fee	Land#	570.60	4,523.39	0.00	5,093.99	27.00	352.29	0.00	379.29
	House#	0.00	272.87	0.00	272.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rent	Land#	0.00	2,656.62	0.00	2,656.62	0.00	837.69	0.00	837.69
	House#	0.00	60.12	0.00	60.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total		570.60	7,513.00	0.00	8,083.60	27.00	1,189.98	0.00	1,216.98

Legend: \*\* expressed in mou

\* expressed in chien

# expressed in Taels (Note, Silver-copper conversion rate:

X1 estate (1729—33) 1,000 cash=1 Tael

X2 estate (1771) 950 cash=1 Tael)

<sup>5</sup> The three volume records were entitled as: *Yungchêng chi nien shiyue jili taliang kêchu chütsu-tsêtang* 雍正柒年拾月 日立大糧各處取租冊檔 *Yungchêng chi (shi-i) nien shiyue jili taliang kehxiang ch'aiin-tsêtang* 雍正柒(拾壹)年拾月 日立大糧各項差銀冊檔 possessed by the Jimbunkagaku-Kenkyüjo Library, Kyōtō University.

<sup>6</sup> *Taye t'êfen tungchung-ch'aiiti-timu chinnei-tungchung-peitsai-Kuangtung-têngchu jenting-timu-tsungtsê* 大爺得分屯中差地地畝京內屯中北寨關東等處人丁地畝總冊 possessed by Tōyōbunka-Kenkyüjo Library, Tōkyō University.

of the composition of their estates, their annual revenues, and their relations with their banner families can be had by reference to Table 1, constructed from data in both sets of sources.

Table 1 shows land size, personnel, and annual revenues of the banner estates possessed by X1 and X2 in three geographic areas: Manchuria, Chihli (Hopei) province, and the city of Peking. Note that of the two kinds of land—rent land and service land—the former was held only in Chihli while the latter was found both in Manchuria and Chihli. The total acreage of X1's estates, 89,556 mou, was more than ten times that of X2's 8,770 mou, indicating that X1 was probably a higher ranked and more influential noble than X2. But the geographic distribution of the two estates shows a more or less similar pattern. 68,815 mou or 76% of the total acreage of X1's estate and 7,630 mou or 87% of X2's estate were in north China, and only 24% and 13% respectively in Manchuria. This suggests conclusively that most of the lands held by the Manchu noblemen in the 18th century derived from the expropriation of property either by "encirclement" and confiscation or by the "surrender" of lands by Han Chinese during and directly after the invasion.

Further distinctions need to be made between rent and service lands. Service lands were *ager publicus* granted to the noble families by the government. They included manors and gardens (chuang-yuan 莊園) for the sustenance of the seignorial family; various types of fief lands allocated to the family's banner retainers—bond-servant families and service

TABLE 2. SERVICE LAND (CH'AI TI) HELD BY X1 IN 1729

	In North China			In Manchuria		
	of lessees	Acreage*	Revenue**	Lessees	Acreage	Revenue
Manors (chuang)	9 (manorheads)	20,051.77 (2,227.97)	1,976.62 (0.09)	2	18,993.60 (9,496.90)	531.60 (0.29)
Gardens (yuan)	5 (gardenheads)	2,238.30 (447.66)	534.08 (0.23)	—	—	—
Surrendered lands (tai-ti t'ou chung)	30 (surrenderers)	20,047.44 (668.24)	1,553.48 (0.07)	—	—	—
Service personnel (chuang ting)	30	2,100 (70)	168.00 (0.08)	10	1,747.50 (174.75)	40.00 (4)
Military households (chün hu)						
Lime burners	30	1,050.00 (35.00)	84.00 (0.08)	—	—	—
Charcoal makers	30	1,050.00 (35.00)	84.00 (0.08)	—	—	—
Coal miners	30	1,050.00 (35.00)	84.00 (0.08)	—	—	—
Hunters	14	790.00 (56.44)	39.20 (0.4)	—	—	—
Total	208	48,377.51	4,523.38	12	20,741.10	571.60

Legend: \* acreage is per mou, figures in parentheses show average acreage per lessee  
 \*\* revenue is in taels, figures in parentheses show average per mou

personnel (*tang-ch'ai jen-k'ou* 當差人口) and military households (*chün-hu* 軍戶); and, in Chihli, in certain cases the so-called surrendered lands (*tai-ti t'ou-ch'ung* 帶地投充) of Han owners who had sought protection and mercy at the hands of the invaders. Table 2 shows the composition of service lands held by X1 in 1729.

Of the various types of service land, manors and gardens must originally have been established to supply the various direct needs of the family, such as grain, meat, vegetables, and fruit. Even in 1729, eighty-five years after the lands were granted by the emperor, at least a portion of the labor-service (i.e., corvée) fees was still being paid in kind. For example, Mao Jui 毛璿, manager for X1 of a first-class manor of 2,956.46 mou was required to pay a labor-service fee (*yuan-ch'ai yin* 原差銀) of 256.05 taels. Of this amount he paid 90 taels in kind—two white pigs (24 taels) and three male boars (66 taels)—and 166.05 taels in silver.<sup>7</sup> Rent as well as corvée was also collected partially in kind. According to the 1729 rent collection records of X1, the total value actually collected for a ten-month period between October-November 1729 (Yung-cheng 7/9th month) and July-August 1730 (Yung-cheng 8/6th month) was 2,815.78 taels of which 510.38 taels or 18.1% were received in kind.<sup>8</sup>

Manors, as service lands within the bannerland system, were officially designated as either grain manors (*liang-chuang* 糧莊) or silver manors (*yin-liang chuang* 銀兩莊). The distinctions between the two, once real, were by the 18th century largely blurred. The grain manor was originally conceived as a closed system of quota production; an annual amount of grain to be produced on the basis of a standard land acreage, fixed numbers of bonded cultivators, and fixed quotas of draft animals, farm tools, and seed. The silver manor took its name from the annual currency payment originally made by the Han owner for protection and for the privilege of including his land on the bannerland lists and thus exempting it from the land tax. Despite these ostensible differences, however, management and productive relations of both types of manor land were practically identical: both were commonly let out to Chinese tenants by the manor-heads who functioned themselves as tenant farmers.<sup>9</sup>

Manors and gardens comprised a major component of the service lands of banner estates; so did the fief lands granted by the estate to its retainers. Originally lands granted by the throne to the estate, they were reallocated to the service personnel (*chuag-ting* 壯丁) and to the military households domiciled on the bannerlands in return for annual payments of fixed labor-service fees. As will be noticed in Table 2, the term military households, *chün-hu*, was used to cover a multiplicity of functional specialists: lime-burners (*hui-chün* 灰軍), charcoal makers (*t'an-chün* 炭軍), coal miners (*cha-chün* 炸軍 or *cha-mei-chün* 炸煤軍), and hunters (*ta-pu-hu* 打捕戶). Characteristic of the fief lands allocated to these households were their small size and apparently standardized acreage. For example, the military households designated in Table 2 were allotted almost uniformly 35 mou of land in 1729.

The final component of certain service lands on the banner estates—notably in the case of X1—was the surrendered lands, *tai-ti t'ou-ch'ung*. Surrendered and reclassified

<sup>7</sup> Muramatsu (2), No. 2, p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Muramatsu (2), No. 3, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> Muramatsu (1), p. 62. It should also be noted, with respect to formal distinctions, that there appears to have been no functional difference between first, second, and third class manors and those known as tax-revenue manors (*ch-ien-liang chuang* 錢糧莊).

as bannerlands, these plots nevertheless appear to have remained in the hands of the original owners who acted as private Chinese landlords, letting out their land and, in this case, paying small portions of their rent receipts as dues to the noble house that originally had accepted the surrender.

We must now turn to the other major land-type in the banner estate system: rent lands or *tsu-ti*. Very little is known about them and nothing at all is recorded of them in such official compilations as the *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien*, the *Hui-tien shih-li*, or the *Ta Ch'ing shih-lu*. Indeed, it was only through the sources under discussion here that I learned of their existence. Unlike the service lands, rent lands were not official gifts of the Manchu government: in fact, they may even have been prohibited as formal components of the estate system.<sup>10</sup> Yet they flourished as part of that system—30% of X1's Hopei acreage, for example, and 73% of X2's Hopei acreage (respectively 20,437 and 5,580 mou) being held in rent lands (Table 1).

Rent lands, then, appear to have been semi-private holdings acquired through purchase or mortgage foreclosure on other bannerlands.

In the 1729 rent collection records of X1 there are 24 notices of rent-land transactions, 15 of which contain the names of the original owners, the means of acquisition, and the price of the plots. For example, the third notice reads as follows: 壹處昌平州原買得鑲黃旗傳祥地價銀陸佰兩, which means that one plot of rent land situated in Ch'ang-p'ing prefecture was originally acquired by purchase from the owner Fu-hsiang, a member of the Bordered Yellow Banner, for a price of 600 tasesl.

These transactions confirm the uneven nature of Manchu impoverishment in the early and middle years of the Ch'ing dynasty. Contrary to the accepted notion of universal Manchu pauperization in this period, structural distinctions can and must be made: The haves and have-nots were becoming clearly differentiated; the wealthy and influential Manchu upper classes were accumulating more and more land at the expense of other, less affluent banner households, and possibly, though the evidence is slim, at the expense of impoverished Chinese households, too.

Among those recorded in the X1 data (Table 3) who sold or pawned their lands were Lamaist monks possibly selling off temple lands, a hapless hunter forced to sell his little 35 mou land in his camp, *ta-pu hu ch'u* 打捕戶處, near Yung-ning wei 永寧衛, and once wealthy widows fallen on hard times and forced to divest themselves of relatively large holdings. A Mrs. Chao, for example, known in the records as Chao T'ai 趙太 and apparently a widow or former wife of a member of the Plain Yellow Banner, borrowed, 5,500 teals against property amounting to 3,793 mou, let the pledge run out and forfeited the land. She then borrowed another 900 taels against her remaining 196.9 mou of land, lost that too, and finally pawned a house of 13 chien in the countryside of Ch'ing-yuan hsien 清苑縣 which also was lost to the X1 estate.

Thanks to the geographical specificity of our sources, it has been possible to draw sketch maps locating most of the rent-lands listed in the X1 and X2 records. In both cases (Map 1, 2) it is evident that the rent-land plots were widely scattered rather than forming single coherent and concentrated extensions of the estates. The difference between the two estates was one of scale, not of kind: X1, a vastly larger holding, had its rent-lands

<sup>10</sup> *PCTC*, ch. 18, pp. 12a-b.

TABLE 3. RENT LANDS POSSESSED BY X1 FAMILY IN 1729

site	Plots	Original owners		Acreage	Price
		Banner	Name	Mou	Tael
Wen-an, Pao-ting	2	?	?	7,787.03	?
Tung-pa, Ma-feng	1	?	?	422.00	?
Chang-ping chow	1	Yellow with Border	Fu Hsiang	229.00	600.00
Yen-ch'ing chow	1	Red w. Br.	Hu Sheng-pu	600.00	450.00
Chuo chow	1	Pure Yellow	Wang Mao-keng	320.00	641.60
T'ai-tsu, Chungwang	1	Red w. Br.	Fu Te	300.00	600.00
Feng-jun	1	Pure White	Yang Tiaoting	1,216.00	975.00
Luan-chow	1	Pure White	Chou Shangchih	1,200.00	1,100.00
Si-shan, Ch'ang ch'i-tsun	1	Red w. Br.	Hu Shihpu	120.00	100.00
Feng-shan, Ch'ing-yuan	3	Pure yellow	Chao T'ai, Tu T'ai	3,793.00	5,100.00
An-su hsien	1	?	?	1,585.43	?
Shun-i hsien	1	Yellow w. Br.	Lama	252.00	330.00
Shan-ke-chuang	1	Yellow w. Br.	Lama	340.00	745.00
San-ho hsien	1	?	?	592.51	?
Tsun-hua chow	1	?	?	473.76	?
Kuo hsien	1	?	?	218.00	?
Yung-ning wei ta-pu-hu chu	1	?	?	35.00	?
Chuo chow	1	?	?	87.00	?
Ch'ing-yuan hsien	1	?	Chao T'ai	196.90	900.00
Ting chow	1	?	I Tu-hsian	669.40	600.00
Ch'ing-yuan hsien	1	?	Chao T'ai	0.00	90.00
Total	24	—	—	20,437.53	—

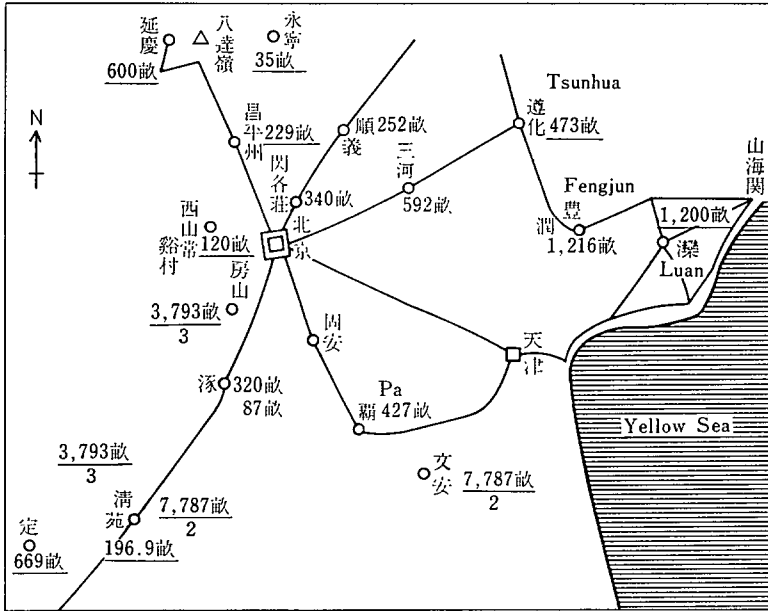
dispersed throughout Chihli, over an area some 200 by 300 kilometers, while X2's were confined to several districts, notably Ku-an hsien, Hsiung hsien, Yuan-p'ing hsien, and Yung-ch'ing hsien, 60 kilometers south of Peking, covering an area some 50 by 60 kilometers.

Unfortunately no comparable information exists for the various service lands and it is impossible to plot on a map the contours of either estate. Internal evidence in the inventory books of X2, however, notably the listing of "camp sites" (*t'un-chung* 屯中) and fiefs of the hereditary bond-servants, permits the conclusion that the estate's service lands were as widely scattered as its rent-lands and over the same districts.<sup>11</sup> And when it is recalled that a part of the estate's service lands were located in Manchuria, the fragmented nature of the land holdings becomes self evident. Thus, for example, X2's service lands were dispersed over a distance, at its greatest, of 500-700 kilometers.

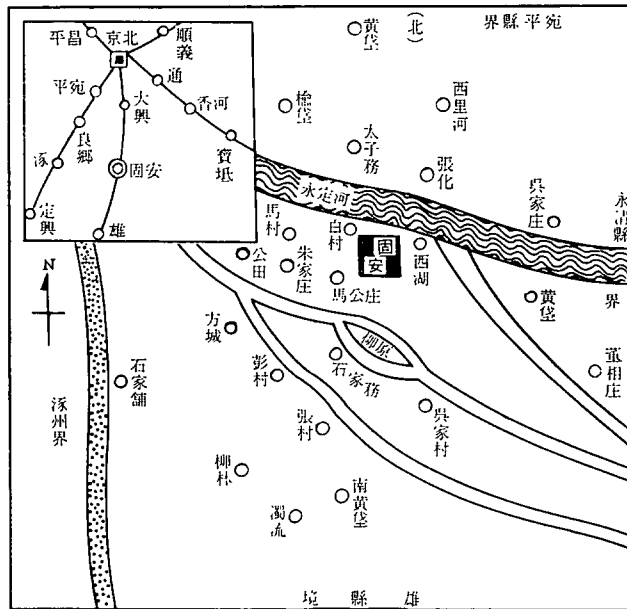
One fairly obvious conclusion to be drawn from such land distribution patterns is that land management was difficult for estate owners who normally lived in the capital. They were obliged over time to give more and more independence to the manor and garden heads, who in turn developed increasingly indifferent attitudes toward their banner lords. The

<sup>11</sup> Muramatsu (3), pp. 85-86.

MAP 1. SITES OF RENT LAND PLOTS POSSESSED BY X1 FAMILY IN 1729



MAP 2. SITES OF VILLAGES IN WHICH RENT LANDS WERE POSSESSED BY THE X2 FAMILY IN 1770



Legend: Drawn to specifications in local gazetteers, especially the Hsien-feng Ku-an hsien-chih, and early Republican military maps of a scale of 1/50,000.



eventual impoverishment of the nobles must have been rooted in these events. Even in 1729 the collection of both rent and service fees by the X1 family was being seriously hindered by the accumulation of arrears. Service fees due that year were 5,094.99 taels to which were added 4,763.91 in arrears. Of the total 9,858.90 taels thus due only 4,057.06 taels were collected, thereby increasing arrears by 21%.<sup>12</sup> The situation with respect to rent collection was largely the same.

Several more things need to be said about the diffuse land patterns of these estates. Both rent and service land parcels in the X1 estate were relatively large, a fact confirmed in Table 4. In several instances acreages amounted to between seven and nine thousand mou. This does *not* mean, however, that single parcels of such size actually existed. As I have shown in an earlier study of the Ch'ing imperial manors, almost all such lands were actually partitioned into thousands of petty land-strips and let out to tenant cultivators: the larger the parcel, the more numerous the cultivators, so that rarely did a peasant ever work and pay rent on more than five mou of land. Furthermore, at least in several rent-land cases, the records clearly show that single parcels on paper were multiple and geographically separated parcels in fact. Thus, for example, the Wenan-Paoing plot of 7,787.03 mou actually comprised at least two parcels, one in Wen-an hsien, the other, 90 kilometers distant, in Pao-ting hsien.

TABLE 4. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE SIZES OF RENT AND SERVICE LANDS POSSESSED BY X1 (1729)

	Service land		Rent land	
	Frequency	Acreage	Frequency	Acreage
Less than 500 mou	14 (lots)	3,904.97 (mou)	13	2,994.26
501—1,000	16	12,210.12	3	1,861.91
1,001—1,500	7	7,715.10	2	2,416.00
1,500—2,000	7	12,569.16	1	1,585.43
2,001—2,500	1	2,100.00	0	—
2,501—3,000	3	8,261.24	0	—
3,001—4,000	1	3,362.47	1	3,793.00
4,001—5,000	0	—	0	—
5,001—10,000	2	18,993.60	1	7,787.03
Total	51	69,116.66	21	20,437.63
Average		1,335.22		937.21

The diffusion of management appears to have kept pace with the diffusion of the land parcels. Owners gave way to manor heads; affluent manor heads moved into the capital and hired agents to oversee their lands. Centralized control over estate lands and subordinates weakened, and eventually the banner estate system dissolved in a sea of private landlordism.

Another point worth considering with respect to the banner estates is their per-mou rent and service-fee rates as compared with rent and tax rates on private land (min-ti 民地).

<sup>12</sup> Muramatsu (2), No. 2, pp. 56-57.

Table 5 shows the rent and service-fee rates for the estates of X1 and X2.<sup>13</sup> In both cases the rent rates, while higher than the service fee rates, are only negligibly so. If we take as representative the conversion rate given in the records, i.e. 1 *shih* of grain=4.5 taels at harvest time and 4.9 taels at the New Year, then both service fees and rent in kind paid on our two estates compute to between .01 and .03 *shih* of grain per mou.

Now the generally accepted estimate for per-mou yields in North China, especially in Hopei, in the 1930's was 2 *shih* (kaoliang or wheat). Assuming that 18th century yields were roughly half that, i.e. one *shih* per mou, we can determine that private land rents were in the neighborhood of .5 *shih* per mou and that general tax levels were on the order of .03-.05 *shih* per mou. If this assumption is at all correct, it means that bannerland rents and service fees more approximated the general tax rate than the private rent rate.

What this means of course is that with the growing decentralization of estate management and the rise of landlord-tenant relationships at many levels of the estate structure, rents and service fees paid to the noble family at the .03—.05 *shih* / mou rate were more than compensated for by the collection of rents and fees at private land-rent rates. Little wonder, then, that by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the banner elites had all but disappeared. Having fallen on hard times, having lost control of their own revenues and the prestige those revenues once brought, they were forced into what for them must have been menial tasks—the teaching of the Peking dialect and similar sub-professional jobs.

As the banner estates were cannibalized by the Chinese market economy, the banner elites declined. But what of the banner-commoners? How universal was their impoverishment? The X2 documents of 1770 speak somewhat to this point. They list by name all the service and military personnel attached to the estate as well as their families and dependent

TABLE 5. ANNUAL BANNERLAND RENT AND SERVICE FEE RATES PER MOU IN THE TWO ESTATES OF X1 AND X2 IN 1729 AND 1770

Estates	Service fees/mou			Rent/mou
	Manors, gardens	Fiefs	Surrendered lands	
X1	0.0736 tael	0.0641 tael	0.0795 tael	0.1288 tael
X2	—	0.1480 tael	—	0.1501 "

TABLE 6. SERVICE AND MILITARY FAMILIES IN THE X2 ESTATE, SERVICE-LAND GRANTED, AND SERVICE-FEES PAID PER MOU

Items	In Manchuria	In Chihli campsites	In Peking
Number of families	9	16	13
Family members	75*	91*	48*
Average family size	8.3	5.7	3.6
Service-lands	1,140.0 mou	1,747.0 mou	—
Acreage per family	126.6 mou	109.2 mou	—
Service-fees per mou	0.02 taels	0.14 taels	—

\* Includes all family members registered on the inventory.

<sup>13</sup> Muramatsu (2), No. 3, p. 48, Muramatsu (3), p. 79.

relatives; acreages and sites of all fiefs granted to these persons for support of their families are also given.

Of the 38 families named in the documents, 9 were domiciled in Manchuria, 16 in Chihli campsites, and 13 in Peking. Only those in Peking were not given service lands (ch'ai-ti 差地) and appear to have supported themselves on monthly rice rations or as domestic servants in their master's household. Table 6 summarizes the relevant data on all these families, Table 7 the nine in Manchuria.

The important point to be noted in this survey is that both in Chihli and Manchuria there was at least in the X2 case an uneven distribution of land holdings even among the rank and file: Some bannermen were more equal than others! Thus, for example, one Lu Ssu-hsiang with a family of 8 in the Chihli campsites possessed 832.0 mou of service land, paying in service fees 0.132 tael per mou. In contrast there were many others with families of between 6 and 8 members whose land holdings were standardized at 30 or 40 mou and some with no lands at all. Similarly, in Manchuria there was great disparity among the land holders, the wealthiest, No. M-3 in Table 7, holding title to 588 mou or more than half of all such land registered. Others, like No. M-7, had modest holdings (54 mou) but paid no service fees, while No. M-6 paid service fees but had no registered (though possibly some unregistered) land in its possession. Despite this evidence of unequal land distribution there was still in 1770 no clear sign of disintegration of entire households. This was probably due to the availability of unregistered ("black") lands productive enough to support average size families over several generations.<sup>14</sup>

Confirmation of the viability and vitality of most of the rural banner families can be had by reference to three family "trees" constructed from the incomparably rich data in the X2 family inventory. The Lu and Feng families, respectively Charts 1 and 2, were domiciled near Ku-an hsien in Chihli. The Lu's with 15 members held 832 mou of land; the Feng's

TABLE 7. SERVICE FAMILIES IN MANCHURIA ON THE ESTATE OF X2

Family No.	Residence	Name of the family heads	Family members	Service land held	Land per capita	Service fee	Service fee
				mou	mou	tael	mou
m-1	錦州	金玉佩	6	132.0	22.0	3.0	0.023
m-2	錦州	金登兩	5	150.0	30.0	3.0	0.020
m-3	栗子窪	王起龍	12	588.0	42.3	15.0	0.025
m-4	黃貴屯	何德住	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	上坎
m-5	七共臺	于斑地	22	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
m-6	沙河子	王老格	9	0.0	0.0	3.0	?
m-7	後鷓鴣溝	徐進相	7	54.0	7.7	0.0	撥什庫
m-8	"	徐進忠	6	144.0	24.0	3.0	0.021
m-9	"	徐自芳	3	72.0	24.0	0.0	?
total		9 families	75	1,140.0	15.6 (126.6)	27.0	0.023

<sup>14</sup> Muramatsu (3), pp. 91-92.

with 7 members, 30 mou. Despite the disparity in the scale of land holdings and thus presumably in the standards of living of the two families, family size and structure in both cases are similar enough to suggest neither disintegration of the smaller family nor abnormal growth of the larger one. Even where a rural household had no registered lands—as with the Ting family, Chart 3—fecundity and family size were maintained through several generations.

Urbanization appears to have been the key to disaster. (For comparative data, see Table 8). Eight of the thirteen service households resident in Peking had no able-bodied

CHART 1. THE LU BROTHERS FAMILY

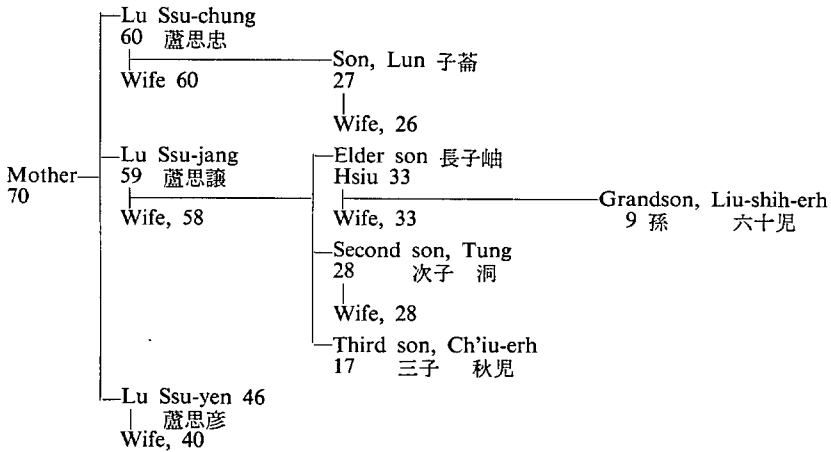


CHART 2. THE FAMILY OF FENG ERH-KE

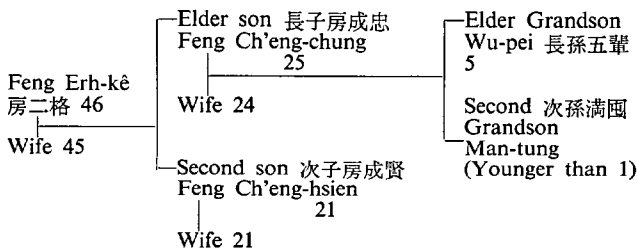


CHART 3. THE FAMILY OF TING PAI-HSING

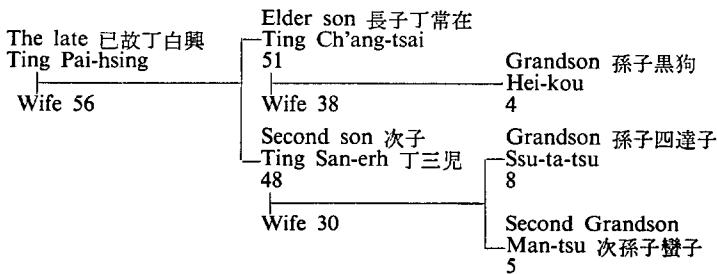


TABLE 8. SERVICE FAMILIES OF THE X2 ESTATE LIVING IN MANCHURIA, CHIHLI PROVINCE AND PEKING

Area	In Peking			In Chihli			In Manchuria			Total		
Number of families	13			16			9			38		
Family members by age/sex	Male	Female	Total	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1—15	14	4	18	20	2	20	19	1	20	53	7	60
16—50	9	12	21	28	27	55	19	23	42	56	62	118
51—60	2	3	5	4	6	10	7	1	8	13	10	23
61+	1	3	4	2	2	4	2	3	5	5	8	13
Total	26	22	48	54	37	91	47	28	75	127	87	214
Deceased	9	9	18	3	2	2	0	0	0	12	11	23
Alive	17	13	30	51	35	86	47	28	75	115	76	191
Alive per fam.	1.3	1.0	2.3	3.2	2.2	5.4	5.2	3	8.2			

male adult. The inertia is impressive. Originally staffing the Imperial Guard, the banner families in Peking became over time a distinct liability to the government. Those households that did not disintegrate completely were left largely with the aged, the helpless, and the poor.

For 18th century bannermen, the capital was often literally the end of the road. The old homeland, on the other hand, often provided new beginnings. Thus one large household (No. M-5, Table 7) with 22 members and no registered land became official bronze and copper craftsmen to the government; another family (M-3, Table 7), well endowed with land, had as its head an active merchant (*mai-mai jen* 買賣人). The establishment of the Ch'ing dynasty and the pacification of the frontiers had facilitated communication and intercourse between Manchuria and North China, thus introducing new opportunities for economic development of the once backward northeast. Inevitably such development affected the bannermen, and some at least moved readily from camp to counting house.<sup>15</sup> Some. For by the late 18th century, where our sources leave us, the bannermen, both elites and urbanized rank and-file, had lost a lot: their status, their estates, and above all their hope. The conquest and its spoils were little more than fond memories, and the state of the nation like the estates of the banners was coming in for hard times.

<sup>15</sup> Muramatsu (3), pp. 94-95.