

THE MOSLEM REBELLION IN NORTHWEST CHINA

1862-1878

CENTRAL ASIATIC STUDIES

MONOGRAPH SERIES DEVOTED TO THE CULTURE,
HISTORY, AND LANGUAGES OF CENTRAL ASIA
AND ITS PEOPLES

Edited by

KARL JAHN and JOHN R. KRUEGER

University of Leiden

Indiana University

V

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THE HAGUE • PARIS

THE MOSLEM REBELLION IN NORTHWEST CHINA 1862-1878

A STUDY OF GOVERNMENT MINORITY POLICY

by

WEN-DJANG CHU

1966

MOUTON & CO.

THE HAGUE · PARIS

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In Memory of my Beloved Father
KING CHU
1887-1951

PREFACE

The great Moslem rebellion in Northwest China in the sixties and seventies of the 19th century has undoubtedly been greatly underestimated in most history books. Some writers have devoted a short paragraph to this subject; others have dismissed it with one sentence. This is hardly justifiable, because the aforesaid rebellion lasted more than 15 years, spread from Shensi to Sinkiang, covering almost one fourth of China's territory, and directly disturbed the life of more than 10,000,000 people. According to one source:

*The population of Kansu was reduced from 15,000,000 to 1,000,000, . . . nine out of every ten Chinese were supposed to have been killed, and two out of every three Mohammedans . . . All the villages and farmsteads for miles and miles in all directions were in ruins, and the huge culturable hills were for the most part deserted.*¹

Other contemporary writers confirmed this tragic story. For instance, Tso Tsung-t'ang reported in one of his memorials: "With the exception of the 2,000 or more Moslems who fled together with Pai Yen-hu, there are no more than 60,000 of the original 700,000 to 800,000 Shensi Moslems who have survived to be rehabilitated in Kansu."² Yet strange though it may seem, very few people know much about this great uprising which uprooted the entire social life of Northwest China.

When the author first visited Northwest China, he knew no more about the Moslem Rebellion than what he had read from the short paragraphs in his history textbooks. It was there where he learned the serious effects of the past conflicts. The more he understood the situation, the more he became dissatisfied with the coverage of the

¹Marshall Broomhall: *Islam in China*, P. 155. Cf. Mark Bell: "The Country of the Dungan Rebellion of 1861 and 1895-6," *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 3rd Series, II, July, 1896, p. 25.

²*P'ing-ting Shen-Kan Sinkiang Hui-fei Fang-lieh*, CCLXXXVI, 8; Tso Tsung-t'ang; T. C. 12 y., 12 m., 22 d. or February 8, 1873.

story by ordinary history books. He felt it a duty to present a more complete picture of this important historical event. This work is a part of his effort.

Due to the scarcity of material from Moslem sources, the present work is forced to emphasize the domestic policy of the Manchu government. The author does not intend to touch upon the diplomatic field nor to elaborate upon the story from the Moslem point of view. He refers to military development and other factors only when they are helpful in understanding the policy.

The main sources of material are the documents compiled by the Manchu government in *P'ing-ting Shen-Kan Sinkiang Hui-fei Fang-lieh* (平定陝甘新疆回匪方略), supplemented by *Ta-ch'ing Shih-lu* (大清實錄) as well as numerous collections of works by the leading participants of the day, such as Tso Tsung-t'ang (左宗棠), Yang Yüeh-pin (楊岳斌), Liu Jung (劉蓉), Liu Chin-t'ang (劉錦棠), Yüan Pao-heng (袁保恆), Li Hung-chang (李鴻章), Tseng Kuo-fan (曾國藩), Tseng Chi-tse (曾紀澤) and others. Local gazettes were frequently consulted to clarify particular facts relating to the given locality. Accounts preserved by contemporary people are heavily depended upon to check the official documents for errors and deliberate whitewashing. Secondary works and semi-official reports are usually used to provide a general background.

Since most Westerners did not have much opportunity to participate in or even to observe the making of governmental policy of the period, there is very little material in Western languages which can help build up the main part of this work. There are, nevertheless some significant exceptions, such as the papers of Sir Robert Hart of the Chinese Customs House on the question of raising foreign loans. Several secondary Western works such as Marshall Broomhall's *Islam in China*, and Captain W. L. Bales' *Tso Tsungt'ang* touch incidentally upon Manchu government policy, but they are far too brief and often incorrect, though sometimes useful. Western sources are especially enlightening on problems about the Moslem religion and people. They are also helpful in clarifying the international background.

It is hard work to plow into the virgin soil of those hundreds of *chüan* (卷) of bone-dry documents without the help of an index. Yet it is a great thrill to be able to present a systematic study of

the confusing policy of the Manchu government in suppressing the Moslem rebellion in Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang from 1862-1878.

The author wishes to record his deep gratitude to Professors Hellmut Wilhelm, Hsiao Kung-ch'uan, Franz Michael and William Stull Holt, to all of whom he is indebted for invaluable advice. He also desires to express his sincere appreciation to Mr. Fang Chao-ying, Drs. Crawford M. Bishop, John K. Fairbank and Donald A. Irwin, who kindly took the time to read the manuscript carefully and to comment at length. But for their generous assistance the work would be guilty of many mistakes. Special gratitude must go to Professor John R. Krueger of Indiana University for painstakingly reading the complete manuscript and for his editorial criticisms and suggestions on styling; to Dr. Ruth Krader and her staff at the Far East Library of the University of Washington for their patient and professional assistance; to Tsing Hua University for the generous grant of a Tsing Hua Fellowship which enabled the author to finish this research.

University of Pittsburgh
August, 1963.

Wen-djang Chu
(朱文長)

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1. THE EMPIRE-BUILDERS

In 1644, the Manchus, a foreign people, penetrated the Great Wall and started an alien rule in China. They proved to be a great dynasty which conquered numerous tribes and clans inside as well as outside China proper. They built up a great empire with a territory comparable to that of any dynasty in Chinese history, with the exception of the Yüan (元). A succession of extraordinarily brilliant emperors—K'ang-hsi (康熙 reigning 1661-1722), Yung-cheng (雍正 reigning 1723-1736) and Ch'ien-lung (乾隆 reigning 1736-1796)—not only consolidated what their predecessors had acquired but continually expanded what they themselves had. Besides Chinese, they conquered Mongols, Tibetans, Koreans, Indo-Chinese, Burmese, and Moslems.

In Northwestern China, the Manchus met very strong resistance. It took the all-out effort of three generations to conquer the land. Each of the three above-mentioned great emperors of the Manchu (Ch'ing 清) dynasty had a share in the hard task of subduing the stubborn Dzungarians (準噶爾), members of a Mongolian tribe living in the northern part of Chinese Turkistan, later the province of Sinkiang (新疆), or T'ien Shan Pei Lu (天山北路). Victory was not complete until 1757, when 80% of the 600,000 or more Dzungarians had been destroyed by disease and war, and the balance had fled to Russia or been captured.¹

In the southern part of Chinese Turkistan, or T'ien Shan Nan Lu (天山南路) lived the Uigur (維吾兒), who by this time (1757). had been converted to the Moslem religion. The chiefs of the tribe

¹Wei Yüan: *Sheng-wu-chi* (魏源: 聖武記), III, 28-48; 49-63. IV, 1-15aa. *Deux insurrections des Mahométans du Kan-su* (1648-1783), recit traduit du Chinois, par M. Camille Imbault Huart. Cf. Eugene Schuyler: *Turkistan*, II, 166-169; E. H. Parker: "Manchu Relations with Turkistan" in *The China Review*, XVI, June, 1888, No. 6, 321-331; Wolfram Eberhard: *A Short History of China*, 293-295.

were two brothers, Burhanal-Din (布拉尼敦), or the Big *Hodja* (大和卓木), and Khozi Khan (霍集占), or the Little *Hodja* (小和卓木). They had become involved with the Dzungarians and decided to fight the Manchus. Their resistance did not last long. Both Yark-and (葉爾羌), and Kashgar (喀什噶爾), the capitals of the two *Hodjas*, fell in 1759. This completed the conquest of the entire region, both the northern and the southern parts, of Chinese Turkistan, which later was known as Sinkiang, or the "New Dominion."²

2. THE MOSLEMS

The nearly total destruction of the Dzungarians left northern Chinese Turkistan open. Toward the close of the reign of Ch'ien-lung (1736-1796), a great influx of population into the region of Dzungaria was secured by encouraging the migration of Chinese and Dungans (better known as Chinese Moslems),³ from the provinces of Kansu and Shensi, to whom extensive tracts of land were allotted.⁴ Uigurs (維吾兒) from southern Chinese Turkistan were also moved by the government into the Ili area.⁵ Manchus from Peking, Solon (索倫) Man-

²Wei Yüan: *Sheng-wu-chi*, IV, 17-24. Arthur W. Hummel, ed.: *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 73. (Hereafter referred to as *ECCP*.) Concerning the history of the conquest of Sinkiang by the Manchus, see: K. S. Latourette: *The Chinese, Their History and Culture*, (Hereafter referred to as *The Chinese*.) chapter IX; Hummel, *ECCP*, under the names of Ch'ang-lin, 67-69; Chao-hui, 72-75; Fu-heng, 252-253; Hsüan-yeh, 327-331; Hung-li, 369-373; Yin-chen, 915-920. Also: Imbault-Huart: *Recueil de Documents sur l'Asie Centrale*; Maurice Courant: *L'Asie Centrale aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Empire Kalmouk ou Empire Mantchou?* Lepage: *Soumission des Tribus Musulmanes du Turkestan par la Chine, 1757-1759* (Mission d'Ollone: *Recherches sur les Musulmanes Chinois*, Paris, 1911, pp. 321-355); P. Pelliot: "Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine" in *T'oung Pao*, 1920, pp. 183-274. E. H. Parker: "Manchu Relations with Turkestan" in *The China Review*, XVI, No. 6, June 1888, pp. 321-340.

³There are various explanations of the meaning of the word "Dungan," or "Tungan" (東干), by various authors. Among these different explanations, it seems that the one presented by Hartmann, namely, "to return to the true faith," is more acceptable than the others. Martin Hartman: "China" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, II, 850.

⁴William F. Meyers: *The Chinese Government*, 102; Schuyler: *Turkistan*, II, 173-174.

⁵Hsü Ts'ung-hao: *Hsin-chiang Chih-lüeh* (許崇灝: 新疆誌畧), 63; Schuyler: *Turkistan*, II, 169-170.

chus from the region of the Amur, Sibe (錫伯) Mongols from the Jehol region, Chahars, and Oirats (額魯特) were sent to Ili as garrison forces. Chinese criminals, including many political offenders, were also sent to the area to serve their prison terms as slave laborers.⁶

The Uigurs were different from the Chinese in race, language and costume, as well as in religion. They were people with fair skins, high-bridged noses, deep eye-sockets, and heavy beards.

The Dungans were believed to be descendants of the ancient Uigurs who entered China during the T'ang dynasty (618-907), and possibly had mixed blood of Hsiung-nu (匈奴), Ti (氏), Ch'iang (羌), Persian, Arab⁸ and Chinese ancestors. With the exception of their religion and its accompanying traditions, the Dungans had long since been assimilated by the Chinese people in language, costume, and in many other ways. Because of this fact, they were known to the Chinese as *Han Hui*, or "Chinese Moslems" (漢回), a term which is quite misleading. In fact, they were not Chinese who believed in the Moslem religion, but a group of mixed-blood descendants of ancient Uigurs who had been assimilated by the Chinese. To distinguish the "Chinese Moslems" from the Uigurs in Chinese Turkistan, the latter were called "ch'an t'ou Hui-hui" (纏頭回回), or "ch'an Hui" (纏回), "turban-wearing Moslems," because they constantly wore white turbans on their heads.

The Dungans did not have such fair skins as the "turban-wearing Moslems," but still kept their high-bridged noses, their deep eye-sockets, and their heavy beards. In provinces where Dungans were the only Moslems they were simply called "Moslems," though the term "Moslem" in a broader sense ought to include both Dungan and "turban-wearing Moslems."

Whereas Uigurs or "turban-wearing Moslems" were mostly living in Chinese Turkistan, or Sin'iang, "Chinese Moslems" were widely scattered in different parts of China. The areas where the largest groups of "Chinese Moslems" were living were Yunnan province in

⁶Mayers: *The Chinese Government*, 101-102; Schuyler: *Turkistan*, II, 170-173.

⁷Hsü: *Hsin-chiang Chih-lüeh*, 63.

⁸Mayers: *The Chinese Government*, 102. Also P. Dabry de Thiersant: *Le Mahométisme en Chine et dans le Turkestan Oriental*, I, 47-52. (Hereafter referred to as Thiersant: *Le Mahométisme*.) Cf. Ts'en Chung-mieh: "The Origin of the Term Hui-hui," in *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* (Academia Sinica), XII, 91-94. 岑仲勉:「回回一詞之語源」見中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊第十二本, 頁91—94。

the southwest and the provinces of Shensi, Kansu, (including present day Ch'inghai, Ninghsia) and Sinkiang in the northwest.⁹

These differences of religious faith led to constant conflicts between Chinese and Moslems. These conflicts in the northwestern provinces were particularly dangerous, because the area was so close to the frontier and involved numerous races as well as foreign nations.¹⁰

3. THE BASIC MANCHU POLICY

No one has explained exactly what the basic policy of the Manchu government was toward Northwestern China and the Moslems living there. However, after examining the existing records, one may reduce it to two points: namely, first to hold the natural frontier line west of Sinkiang; and, secondly, to keep a delicate balance of power between the various peoples so that the Manchus could rule them all.

Along the western frontier of Sinkiang there are mountain ranges which form a natural defense line. If that line were broken, the whole of Sinkiang would be very hard to defend. The distant deserts which separate China proper from Sinkiang make the supply line for any expeditionary forces sent out from China proper danger-

⁹There is a voluminous literature on Islam in China both in Chinese and in Western languages. Concerning the literature in Chinese, see Isaac Mason: *Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature*, reprinted from *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. LVI, 1925. It contains more than 300 titles of Chinese Moslem publications, of which Mr. Mason collected over 240. Claude L. Pickens Jr.: *Annotated Bibliography of Literature on Islam in China* is another comprehensive work. It was originally prepared in New York, printed in successive sections of the *Friends of Moslems*, commencing with Vol. XXII, January, 1948. It contains literature in Chinese as well as in Western languages. For general information about Islam in China, see Martin Hartmann: "China" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I, 839-854; (hereafter referred to as Hartmann: "China" EI); Marshall Broomhall: *Islam in China, a Neglected Problem* (hereafter referred to as Broomhall: *Islam*); H. M. G. d'Ollone: *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois* (hereafter referred to as Ollone: *Recherches*); P. D. de Thiersant: *Le Mahométisme en Chine et dans le Turkestan Oriental*; the Archimandrite Palladius (Piotr Ivanovich Kafarov); translated by Rudolf Loewenthal: *The Mohammedans in China* reprinted from the *Digest of the Synodal Commission*, XVI, Nos. 3/4, March/April, 1943. (Other Western works concerning special topics will be mentioned in other related sections.)

¹⁰Cf. Harrison Forman: *Changing China*, 52-61.

ous, difficult and expensive to maintain. Yet the deserts are not an insurmountable barrier. For people with proper means, such as a strong cavalry, it is a wide-open highway. In fact, during the Manchu dynasty there were numerous invaders, and even Peking, the capital of the empire, was under direct threat. Obviously, this was the main reason why the Manchu government decided to conquer and hold Sinkiang: by other means if possible, but by military force if necessary.

The whole military record of the Manchus in northwest China is a footnote to the above mentioned point. A voluminous explanation, however, can be avoided by the following abridged quotation:

People often complain that the defense of Sinkiang is too expensive. Is that true? In Sinkiang we are stationing a little more than nineteen thousand soldiers and fourteen hundred officers. They are only troops shifted from Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Shensi and Kansu to garrison Sinkiang. The annual payroll amounts to a little more than 678,900 taels of silver, which would have to be paid to them if they were in their original posts. In an Imperial decree in 1772, Emperor Ch'ien-lung claimed: "Since we took over Sinkiang, it has become possible to demobilize a part of the frontier forces as well as the inland garrisons. Besides taking care of the expenses in Sinkiang, the empire saves more than 900,000 taels of silver every year. During these past ten or more years, the government has accumulated these savings up to more than 10,000,000 taels. Hence, during the earlier years of my reign, the treasury had a deposit of around 33,000,000 to 34,000,000 taels, and now the total has increased to 78,000,000 and more taels." Thus, the territory of Sinkiang is not only far from wasting money, but has actually saved the nation's economic resources.¹¹

Furthermore, in northern Sinkiang there are more than 238,600 mou

¹¹When Sinkiang was under Chinese control, it took less soldiers to hold the natural boundary, which was comparatively easier to defend. On the contrary, when Sinkiang was in the hands of a formidable enemy, the whole interior of China became exposed and required a standing army to be ready for potential as well as actual attacks. While the total number of soldiers had to be increased because of the unfavorable geographical position, the cost of national defense increased in proportion. That was the reason why Ch'ien-lung could demobilize part of his army after he conquered Sinkiang and save money. It was especially advantageous because rich southern Sinkiang could share a substantial part of the financial burden.

[each mou is approximately one-sixth of an acre] of "garrison farms"; in southern Sinkiang there are another 49,000 mou. These farms furnish the government an annual income of 14,300 tan¹² of various grains. There are more than 100,000 garrison farmers under the command of the general-in-chief in Urumchi (烏魯木齊提督). Besides the government-owned farms, the rest of the land is open for the common people to establish homesteads. The land cultivated there has been so successful that it is as rich as the land in China Proper. The people there are paying the same kind of taxes and services to the government, and enjoying a life similar to that of their fellow countrymen who are still living in China Proper. During their lifetime they have seen no military action. To compare with the earlier days under K'ang-hsi (1662-1772) and Yung-cheng (1723-1735), when the battle fires were threatening Peking, when the people on the frontier were exposed to constant danger, when the government had to transport all supplies across the distant desert to Kobdo (科布多) and Barkol (巴里坤) to continue a desperate struggle which consumed up to more than seventy million taels of public funds, which period has been more wasteful? Besides, China Proper is becoming more and more overpopulated. In Sinkiang we have found a rich underdeveloped land for our expansion. It is simply stupid to think of giving up Sinkiang to save expenses which have never been wasted.¹³

In simple words, the Manchu government considered it militarily safer to defend the country west of Sinkiang, instead of that at the door steps of Peking; and it was also financially more advisable to exploit the rich resources of the new dominion to maintain the frontier army, as well as to relieve the economic pressure on the resources of China Proper.

The second point—to keep a delicate balance of power between the various peoples so that the Manchus could rule them all—can be detected from the governmental establishments set up in Sinkiang after the area was subdued. Instead of transforming the land into a regular province, the Manchu government set up the Military Governor of Ili (伊犁將軍), the Military Lieutenant-Governor of Urumchi (烏魯木齊都統) and numerous Assistant Military Governors (參贊大臣), Commandants of the Forces (領隊大臣), and Agents (辦事大臣).¹⁴

¹²Each *tan*, or picul, is usually approximately 133.333 pounds. However, it varies in some areas.

¹³Wei Yüan: *Sheng-wu-chi*, IV, 13-15.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 12; 24-25.

All of these officials were exclusively "banner men" (the Manchu military forces).¹⁵ Five divisions (*tui* 隊) of military colonists were established in the strategic Ili region, drawn from the following sources, viz. Manchus from the Capital, Solon Manchus from the region of the Amur, Sibe Mongols from the Jehol region, Chahars and Oirats. Even the provinces of Shensi and Kansu were constantly under the rule of the "banner men," though not as exclusively as in Sinkiang. The refusal to send Chinese to be leading officials in Sinkiang was clear proof that the Manchu government intended to keep the area under direct and firm Manchu rule. The planned migration of different peoples from different parts of the empire into Sinkiang was another illustration of this policy, which tended to make it easier for the Manchu officials to control all of them.¹⁶

One of the advantages of this Manchu control was the fact that Manchus, being the common master over all, were not prejudiced against either Moslems or Chinese. Hence they could, at least theoretically, have less bias and weigh every issue on its own merits. This developed into the policy, which later was coined into a slogan: "We do not discriminate against either Moslems or Chinese, but we do discriminate against people who are evil" (不分漢回只問良莠). Of course, the so-called "evil" here meant action against the interests of the Manchu Government. As long as this policy had been faithfully carried out, Manchu rule over northwestern China was satisfactory.

4. GRADUAL ASSIMILATION AND THE IMPACT OF REVOLUTION

After two centuries of a generally successful regime in China, the empire as well as the ruling class had undergone a gradual change. One of the most striking and interesting developments was the process of assimilating the Manchus into Chinese civilization.

In 1644, when a small but strong army of Manchus stormed over the Great Wall, they were sturdy horsemen and sharp-shooters. They were brave and ready to fight. But by 1844 this gallantry had gone. Manchus were so adapted to Chinese civilization that they had lost nearly all of their own culture, including their many virtues. A typical

¹⁵See below section 5.

¹⁶Schuyler: *Turkistan*, II, 174.

and vivid example may be found in a popular work of fiction called *Erh-nü ying-hsiung chuan*, or *The Romance of a Young Hero and Some Heroines* (兒女英雄傳). Since this novel was written by a Manchu to express his own unrealized dreams, it becomes all the more significant to find there what the Manchus were thinking and doing in the middle of the nineteenth century. The "hero" in this novel was such a weakling that he had to depend upon a girl to rescue him from danger. When he was appointed as an official to Uliasutai (烏里雅蘇臺) in Mongolia, the entire family virtually mourned for the appointee.¹⁷

This gradual process of assimilation weakened the Manchus physically, and in many cases corrupted them morally. With the decline of their physical strength and fighting spirit, they became less formidable in military power, which was an essential element needed to hold the Empire together.¹⁸

The Opium War of 1840-1842 exposed the weakness of the Manchu government and became the prelude to a series of domestic revolutions as well as foreign invasions. Among these new disturbances were the T'ai-p'ing, the *Nien* and the Moslem rebellions. The T'ai-p'ing (太平天國) built up an empire of its own, spread its influence from Kwangsi province in the utmost south to the outskirts of Tientsin, a city only eighty-four miles southeast of Peking, the capital, and barely missed overthrowing the Manchu dynasty as a whole. This uprising lasted from 1850 to 1864. Only by desperate effort did the Manchu government defeat the T'ai-p'ing forces. The campaign left the country half-destroyed and half-exhausted.¹⁹

The *Nien* (捻) were less formal, but even more destructive. A type of guerrilla warfare was carried on by swift-moving cavalry in the

¹⁷Wen-k'ang: *Erh-nü Ying-hsiung Chuan*. Preface by Hu-shih, 1-26; Chapter IV-VI; XL, 3-23; 56.

¹⁸Latourette: *The Chinese*, 5401543. Franz Michael: "Military Organization and Power Structure of China during the Taiping Rebellion" in *Pacific Historical Review*, XVIII, 469-483.

¹⁹Cf. W. J. Hail: *Tseng Kuo-fan and the Taiping Rebellion*; G. E. Taylor: "The Taiping Rebellion: Its Economic Background and Social Theory" in *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, Jan. 1933, Vol. XVI, 545-614; T. T. Meadows: *The Chinese and their Rebellions*; T. Hamberg: *The Visions of Hung-Siu-Tchuen*.

provinces of Shantung, Honan, Anhwei, Hupeh, Shensi, Shansi and Chihli. The *Nien*, a kind of secret society long in existence, intensified its activities from 1851 on and formally rebelled in 1853. It continually played a tragic role of destruction until 1868, when its troops were finally trapped and destroyed, after numerous famous government generals had failed in earlier tries.²⁰

All these conflicts were going on when the Moslem rebellions broke out in Yunnan (1855-1873), Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang. In this work, the field is limited to the Northwestern provinces.

5. MILITARY FORCES AND POLITICAL POWER GROUPS

One of the key factors which marked the rise and decline of the Ch'ing (Manchu) dynasty was its military forces. In order to understand the Moslem rebellion, it is necessary to explain briefly the forces involved on the Government side.

The "*Eight Banners*." In the beginning, Manchus built their basic forces on a system of "Banners." In 1601, the Manchu chief Nurhaci organized his men into four fighting units of 300 men each, known as *niru* (牛录, later changed to *tso-lin* 佐領), or company. These units were distinguished by yellow, white, blue, and red banners. As his conquests brought more men to his side, the number of companies increased, and these were distributed under the four Banners. In 1615, he divided each of the original Banners into two divisions, the new ones being distinguished by borders on their flags. Under each of these Eight Banners there were five *jalan* (扎欄 or 甲喇, later changed to *ts'an-ling* 參領) which in turn comprised five *niru* each. In later years the number of *jalan* and *niru* increased, but the number of Banners remained fixed at eight. Thus was founded the Eight Banner System (八旗制度), primarily a military organization, which proved of great value to Nurhaci and to his successors in their wars of conquest. But the system also had social, political and economic aspects, owing to the fact that each company comprised not only the 300 warriors but also their families. Except for a few princes, everyone under Nurhaci's rule belonged to this organization. In time

²⁰Siang-tseh Chiang: "The Organization of the Nien Rebellion and the Struggle between the Nien and the Loyalists (1851-1868)." 27.

of peace, the men and women of the company worked as farmers or as craftsmen, the affairs of each company being directed by a hereditary captain. In time of war, the captain was ordered to supply a certain number of men from his company—the number depending on the seriousness of the situation. The captain also provided for all the needs of the conscripts by collecting provisions or money from his constituents as a whole. On the battlefield the men were grouped under their respective Banners, which were fighting units. Thus, by means of the Eight Banner System, Nurhaci organized his entire state into a war machine which proved for half a century, at least, to be an invincible military organization.²¹

When later more and more Mongols and Chinese surrendered to the Manchus, separate Mongolian Eight Banners and Chinese Eight Banners were established. Altogether there were twenty-four Banners. At the time when the Manchus invaded China Proper in 1644, there were 320 *niru* in the Manchu Eight Banners, or 96,000 soldiers; 131 *niru* in the Mongolian Eight Banners, or 39,300 soldiers; 171 *niru* in the Chinese Eight Banners, or 51,300 soldiers. The total was about 186,600 soldiers.²² These were the main forces which the Manchu government used to fight the earlier wars. The Manchus, however, soon found that this force was not enough to handle the situation. The Bannermen were too few to guard the vast territory of China, and furthermore, their excellent ability to fight on horseback was not too effective in the mountainous and swampy areas of southern China. Hence the Manchu Court decided to utilize the surrendered Ming soldiers and organized them into *Lü-ying* (綠營 Green Battalions, or Green Banners 綠旗).²³ The Green Battalions thus became one part of the regular troops of the Manchu Empire. But due to racial prejudice and historical background, the Manchu Court trusted the Eight Banners much more than the Green Battalions. The best weapons were issued to the Eight Banners but denied to the Green Battalions. Numerous other privileges were granted to the members of the Eight Banners, but not to those of the Green Battalions. In the most important strategic cities,

²¹*ECCP*, 596. Cf. Michael: "Military Organization..." in *PHR*, XVIII, 470.

²²*Huang-ch'ao Wen-hsien T'ung-k'ao*, CLXXIX. Lo Erh-kang: *Lü-ying Ping-chih*, 1, 7. Hereafter referred to as Lo: *Lü-ying*.

²³Lo: *Lü-ying*, 1-3.

there were the Eight Banners serving as garrison forces. This was an army which could be counted on to be loyal to the Manchu Court under any circumstances. As long as the Eight Banners were strong, the control of the country was in the hands of the Manchu Court.²⁴

Due to their general decline in physical strength as well as in military technique, the Eight Banners gradually became less and less effective as the years went by. As early as 1657, only thirteen years after the Manchu entry into Peking, an edict of the Emperor Shun-chih admitted a decline in the fighting strength of the Eight Banners.²⁵ In later campaigns, such as the one against Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the famous supporter of the Ming dynasty in Formosa and the one against "San Fen," or the Three Feudatories (三藩), the Eight Banners were usually kept in the rear, while soldiers of the Green Battalions were fighting at the front. Even in those campaigns in northwestern China where the geographical situation was more favorable to the Manchu horsemen, they needed the help of the Chinese Green Battalion to accomplish their victories. After the period of Ch'ienlung, the Eight Banners were no more effective fighting forces.²⁶

The *Green Battalions*. As stated above, the Green Battalions, or the Green Banners, were reorganized from the Ming army which surrendered to the Manchus after the latter entered China Proper in 1644. The Manchu Court assigned the color green to its banners to distinguish it from the Eight Banners. The Court used this Chinese army to guard its vast territory. The military system under the Mings had been a well-designed institution for this very purpose, yet at the same time it concentrated power in the hands of the central government. The Manchu Court immediately realized its value and adopted the same system. This system remained about the same during the Ch'ing dynasty with very few basic changes until the last years, when it was first "reformed," and finally abolished. In brief, the Green Battalion was a system of garrison forces stationed at strategic positions all over the country. At its prime, in Peking, the national capital, the Green Battalion developed into a force of five battalions with ten thousand soldiers.²⁷ Outside of Peking, in China Proper, spreading over eleven military regions, around 66

²⁴Lo: *Lü-ying*, 5.

²⁵*Ch'ing-shih-kao*, V, 16.

²⁶Lo: *Lü-ying*, 6-7.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 26-27.