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Encompassing Boundaries of the Ming and Early Qing Liaodong

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
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by

Yirui Ma

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Encompassing Boundaries of the Ming and Early Qing Liaodong

by

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Master of Arts in East Asian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Richard von Glahn, Chair

This MA thesis examines the border makings in the Liaodong region of northeast China in the mid-15th to the early 16th centuries and the late 17th to the early 18th centuries. I dissect how people on both sides of the borders creatively chose their modes of interaction with the borders, depending on how they understood border(s): as a political technology, an institution, a physical barrier, and/or a cultural demarcation. Chapter 1 explores how the Chosŏn court’s five requests for changing the tribute route extended the borders between Ming Liaodong and Chosŏn Korea. Chapter 2 traces the border relationship of Liaodong in the interactions between Liaodong border officials and Jurchen merchants. Chapter 3 investigates the imaginary border between the Liaodong frontier and China Proper. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the transformation of the physical and ethnocultural boundaries of Liaodong from the Ming to the early Qing. My research suggests
that Liaodong did not follow a linear process from a borderless frontier to a bounded borderland, and that frontier people were able to construct new local boundaries and modify their relationship with their borders.
The thesis of Yirui Ma is approved.

Andrea Sue Goldman

Sixiang Wang

Richard von Glahn, Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2022
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Introduction

Two names for the Liaodong region used in Ming and Qing times acknowledged its significant position but defined its role differently. While Ming officials referred to Liaodong as “the left arm of the divine capital” (shenjing zuobi 神京左臂), the Qing court defined it as “the place where dragon arose” (longxing zhi di 龍興之地).¹ During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the geographic area of Liaodong generally bordered on the east by the Yalu River, on the west by the Shanhai Pass, on the south by the Bohai Gulf, and on the north by Kaiyuan.² As the northeastern frontier of the Ming and the southernmost part of Manchuria under Qing rule, Liaodong was a relatively segregated geographical area but an active arena wherein different regimes and ethnic groups negotiated, commingled, and collided.³ To the east and north of it were forests bordering Chosŏn Korea, Jurchen tribes, and various local ethnic groups. The Mongols occupied the steppe to the west. In the south, Liaodong was separated from northern China by the sea and was linked to China proper only in the southwest via the Shanhai Pass. From the Ming to the early Qing, this frontier had witnessed the Ming court’s dread of Mongolians, Jurchen merchants and raiders coming and going, the southward conquest of Manchus and the establishment of the Qing’s first capital, as well as Ming and Qing courts’ numerous negotiations with the Chosŏn. The term shenjing zuobi frequently appeared in the memorials of Ming officials, indicating the military importance of the Liaodong region to the

² Liaodong zhi 遼東志(1537), 1:7b. The change of the geographic boundaries of Liaodong from the Ming to the Qing will be discussed in Chapter 4.
³ To learn about the development of the toponym “Manchuria,” see Mark C. Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary.”
Beijing capital and the Ming’s border security mechanisms in the face of Mongolians and Jurchens. The phrase *longxing zhi di* demonstrated the Qing court’s strategy in constructing and maintaining Manchu identity and legitimacy through adopting Liaodong as a part of its divine homeland.

Ming and Qing Liaodong was a military society, a periphery, and a frontier. The Liaodong region was under the jurisdiction of the Liaodong Military Commission in the Ming and the Fengtian/Shengjing Generals in the Qing. The daily life of Liaodong residents often revolved around the military units with which they were affiliated—garrisons under Ming rule and banners by the Qing era. Despite the geographical proximity of Liaodong and the Beijing capital, several ecological and state-induced factors made Liaodong a reserved periphery during the Ming and Qing dynasties: a relatively harsh natural environment, the geographical isolation from China proper, the threat of the nomads throughout the Ming period, and the Qing court’s ban on Han migration in its northeast borderlands. As a result, this land lacked prominent lineages and famous gentry who could dominate the local societies as in the Jiangnan area and literary travelers who were common in the southwest and even the northwest. The main participants in this frontier were local military officers and soldiers, merchants of different ethnic groups attracted by the ginseng, fur, and pearls produced in the northeast, the Mongols and Jurchens who shifted between the identities of trader and raider, Chosŏn envoys and commoners who crossed the borders, peasants from northern China who came to farm legally or illegally, and literati and officials who were self-exiled or exiled by the central courts. With this frontier as the center and these marginal historical people as protagonists, this thesis explores the history of

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4 With the influx of immigrants, the Qing state began to establish the system of prefecture and county for civilians in the Northeast. See Chapter 5 for details.
Liaodong as a military society, a periphery, and a frontier in Ming and early Qing times while taking a step away from a state-centric perspective.

The Liaodong region of the Ming and Qing has not received much scholarly attention. Most scholarship either follows the framework of how the state expanded into its frontier zone in the early Ming or early Qing or traces the mobilization and commercialization in the Liaodong society in the late 16th century. On the one hand, a local perspective is deficient, if not absent. This is mainly due to the lack of local historical sources of Liaodong, compared with the southeast and southwest frontiers. Existing research also underutilizes the *Veritable Records of Chosŏn*, a few local commonplace jottings and writing collections, and local archives. In addition, scholars of the “New Qing History” often study the Qing Liaodong region as a part of the monolithic northeast, ignoring the uniqueness of Liaodong as a border zone where agrarian, forest, and nomadic characteristics were intertwined. On the other hand, studies on Liaodong in the mid-Ming period are relatively rare, although the mid-15th to the mid-16th centuries was an important stage in the transformation of Liaodong and other northern frontiers of Ming China. Neither has the great transition experienced by the Liaodong society in the early Qing dynasty been adequately studied. Existing scholarship on the early Qing northeast borderlands usually emphasizes the uniqueness of Manchu rule while overlooking continuity from the Ming to Qing.⁵

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This thesis focuses on two time periods: the mid-15th to the early 16th centuries and the late 17th to the early 18th centuries. Both were periods of border makings in Liaodong—namely, the Ming Liaodong frontier wall and the Qing Old Palisade. These two borders were fundamentally different in terms of their constructors’ purposes. The Liaodong frontier wall marked the limit of the power that the Ming wielded over its frontier. Ming Liaodong was an outer frontier under the threat of the Mongols and Jurchens and turned to extensive wall-building since the mid-15th century along the border of the Liaodong Military Commission. The Old Palisade was the boundary within the northeastern borderlands of the Qing. As the Manchu rulers chose to govern the whole northeast, their homeland, administratively and socially apart from China Proper, Qing Liaodong faced the tension between the state’s goal of delimiting ethnic boundaries and the mobility of local society. The Qing state built the Old Palisade on the basis of the original Ming...
Liaodong frontier wall in the 17th century. Yet, this thesis does not focus on how the physical border barriers were built in Liaodong but rather on how different groups of people creatively chose their modes of interaction with their borders. I do not see borders solely as a state-induced project but intend to examine how the borders of Liaodong exhibited different facets in the understandings of frontier people and people who imagine the frontiers of Ming and Qing China.

The border is a complex phenomenon that fascinates scholars who study borderlands. When borders divide the land, the realm of authority, people, societies, and culture, they create networks and interactions across them at the same time. Geographers believe that border does not have a fixed meaning but is a polysemous concept. Physical, territorial, social, personal, and symbolic boundaries are all examples of borders. A single border can also embody diverse dimensions—it can be “functional and symbolic entities which do work in material and imaginative ways,” and be “perceptual, structural and discursive.”6 In the case of the Ming and Qing Liaodong, the borders were also multi-dimensional. Different groups of people understood the borders in various ways: as a necessary territorial dividing line, an annoying physical barrier, an exploitable institution, and/or a constructed cultural demarcation. The following chapters will also show how Liaodong people and people who imagined the Liaodong frontier constructed new local borders in different ways when the borders built by the states could not satisfy their needs. Some of these borders did not physically exist and could not be drawn on any maps but regulated the lives of frontier people. In this thesis, the boundary is a dynamic concept that exists in interactions between people on both sides of the borders and between people and the borders. While the borders regulated the mobility of people, the flows of goods, and the exchange of

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information, people constantly built and modified their borders. The changes of borders transformed local people’s perception of the borderland wherein they lived; people were also changing the way that the borders affected them.

From the Liaodong Military Commission to the Fengtian/Shengjing General’s administrative region, the borders of Liaodong manifested not the scope but the nature of the borderlands. In this thesis, I define the Ming Liaodong as a frontier and the early Qing Liaodong as a borderland. Scholars have given different definitions to “frontier” and “borderland.” Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel believe that “frontier commonly refers to the territorial expansion of nations or civilizations into ‘empty’ areas,” and the borderlands are “the region in one nation that is significantly affected by an international border.”7 Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron argue that “while frontiers are cultural meeting places where geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined, borderlands were zones of interaction and rivalry among empires and contested boundaries between colonial domains.”8 Both works distinguish frontier and borderland based on the shapes and functions of the borders. The Liaodong frontier wall in the Ming dynasty was discrete, while the Old Palisade of the Qing circled the entire Liaodong region; the Liaodong wall did not serve as an ethnocultural demarcation, but the Old Palisade was built to be a de facto dividing line between different ethnic groups. Scholars also bring up the slight difference between the term “boundary” and “border”, but the thesis does not differentiate between them. 9 Both terms indicate a multi-dimensional divide.


9 For example, Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel summarize that “boundary is often used in diplomatic
The first three chapters examine the border formation process in Liaodong and its impacts from the mid-15th to the early 16th centuries. Chapter 1 examines how the borders of eastern Liaodong were reinforced and extended throughout the negotiations between the Ming and the Chosŏn. It emphasizes how the Ming and the Chosŏn courts understood a bordered frontier and the role of the Liaodong Military Commission in the diplomatic exchanges between the two states. Chapter 2 explores the interactions between Liaodong border officials and Jurchen merchants around the more clearly defined borders. Both of them saw the borders as an institutional system that could be exploited and challenged. Chapter 3 uncovers the invisible border between the Liaodong frontier and the Ming’s Central Plain by exploring the representation of He Qin (1436-1510), a Confucian scholar who had spent more than 40 years in Liaodong. This imaginary boundary represented an inward turning of Ming literati’s vision of their life pursuit and the Ming northern borderlands. Chapters 4 and 5 elucidate how the transformation of boundaries, either physical or ethnocultural, reshaped the Liaodong borderland of northeastern China in the late 17th century. Chapter 4 compares the Old Palisade with the Ming Liaodong frontier wall. With the changing meaning of the borders, the landscapes of Liaodong accordingly show that this borderland evolved into the core of the Manchus’ regional identity and the traumatic and nostalgic margin of the Han world. Chapter 5 investigates the images of Liaodong women in He Qin’s writings and Wang Yiyuan’s (1658-?) commonplace jottings, both of which were written at the exact time when the Ming and Qing border barriers of Liaodong were first finished and attempted to delineate ethnic boundaries that the border barriers failed to draw.

Baud and van Schendel, “Towards a Comparative History,” 213.
Chapter 1. Towards Extended Borders: Institutional and Informational Access to the Eastern Liaodong Frontier

This chapter showcases how and when institutional and informational access to eastern Liaodong created firmer borders between the Ming Liaodong and the Chosŏn. Revolving around the Chosŏn court’s five requests for changing the tribute route, it dissects the Ming and Chosŏn diplomatic exchanges and examines the local space of the Liaodong frontier in the 15th century. Why did the Chosŏn request to change the tribute route five times? Why did the Ming court keep rejecting Chosŏn’s proposals? What was the role of Liaodong as a frontier in this process? These questions will help us understand Liaodong as a frontier and how diplomacy between Ming and Chosŏn shaped this frontier and its borders.

The first section focuses on the idea of “wilderness” as applied to eastern Liaodong. The Chosŏn’s requests depicted a dangerous and desolate eastern Liaodong frontier. Although the Chosŏn court described only part of the truth, it showed that the eastern frontier of Liaodong was not under the control of Liaodong’s local administration. As an effective military system did not reach beyond the Lianshanguan, communities that settled in east Liaodong were unregistered and ungoverned. Nonetheless, eastern Liaodong was a bordered frontier. The Yalu River was a clear boundary between the Ming and the Chosŏn, and the Chosŏn kept strengthening this border in its diplomatic interactions with the Ming. The Chosŏn’s requests for changing the tribute route also facilitated establishing a military defensive system in eastern Liaodong, which extended the eastern edge of Liaodong and marked its eastern border. The second section examines the asymmetry of knowledge in diplomatic exchanges between the Ming and Chosŏn over the Liaodong frontier. The Chosŏn court was initially one step ahead of the Ming court, aware of the local conditions that the Ming court did not know. After both sides learned about the local space,
they tried to hide their real motivations behind their diplomatic rhetoric and assumed the other’s knowledge about the local conditions could be comprehensive. The Ming’s unspoken desire for Korean refugees to continue living along the new tribute route was likely to be an essential factor in its rejection of Chosŏn’s proposals. Yet, in fact, Chosŏn officials and literati did not have precise information about Liaodong. In the information circulation between the Ming and the Chosŏn, Liaodong’s administrative system not only transferred diplomatic documents and surveyed local conditions but also provided a space for the imperial court to explain itself as it pleased and obtained private and unofficial information in diplomatic interactions.

I. Across the Wilderness: Five Requests for Changing the Tribute Route

Since 1388, when the Ming defeated the Mongols in its northeast frontier and incorporated Liaodong into its territory, it established a tributary route across the Liaodong region. Through this route, Chosŏn envoys regularly came to the Ming to pay tribute. After crossing the Yalu River, they entered Ming domain and embarked on the first leg of the route, “the Eastern Eight Stations” (dongbazhan 東八站), which referred to the eight easternmost post stations in Liaodong: Jiuliancheng (九連城), Tangzhan (湯站), Fenghuangcheng (鳳凰城), Zhendongbao (鎮東堡), Lianshanguan (連山關), Tianshuizhan (甜水站), and Liaoyang (遼陽), the administrative center of Liaodong. However, from 1436 to 1480, the Chosŏn court requested to change this section of the tribute route five times. Although its petitions were repeatedly rejected

10 Sun Weiguo 孫衛國, “Chaoxian ru Ming haishang gongdao kao,” 朝鮮人明海上貢道考 [Study on The Maritime Tribute Route From the Chosŏn to the Ming] Hanguoxue lunwen ji, no.1 (2009): 26, 28. From 1368 to 1388 the Ming and the Goryeo interacted through a sea route. The Chosŏn achieved a stable tributary relationship with Ming China in 1402 since the Ming Yongle period.

by the Ming, discussions in the Chosŏn court about rerouting continued. This section dissects the reasons for Chosŏn’s request to change the route of the Eight Stations and the nature of Liaodong’s eastern border as reflected in the discussions of the Chosŏn court and in Liaodong’s wall-building project by focusing on a local perspective.

The proposals in Chosŏn’s five diplomatic memorials presented to the Ming court were consistent. They requested that the Ming changed the road of the East Eight Stations to a new line that passed through Ciyuzhai station (ciyuzhai bajie 刺楡寨把截), which was south of the original eight-stations route. Yet, the reasons for rerouting proposed by the Chosŏn in the five requests were not the same. The initial reason was the harsh natural environment and difficult terrain around the route of the eight stations. In 1436, the Chosŏn court first proposed to change the tribute route, arguing that:

“Our state’s envoys have been traveling via the road of the eight stations, which lies in between high mountains and dangerous rivers. Our envoys need to cross the curving rivers eight to nine times along the way. In summer, the rivers rise, but there are no boats and oars; in winter, the rivers become slippery with ice and deep snow, our envoys and horses are often injured in falls. In recent years, tigers have appeared frequently along the road. It is particularly tough for people and horses to travel across Kaizhou and Longfeng, which are unpopulated wildlands with only weeds and trees.”

The beginning of Chosŏn’s proposals to the Ming dynasty to change the eight-stations road coincided with the period when the Jianzhou Jurchens and the Uryangkhad Mongols began to move to the region of the Pozhu river. After the Jurchens’ southward migration in the 1430s, although the chieftains accepted positions and grants from both the Ming and Chosŏn courts, they continuously launched raids against border zones of the Ming and Chosŏn from the 1430s to

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12 Sejong sillok, 75:23a (Sejong 18/12/8).
the 1470s.¹³ In memorials after 1436, the Chosŏn court became anxious about the Jianzhou Jurchens who were moving south to the region of the Pozhu River. In 1437, the Chosŏn brought troops with more than 3,000 soldiers to attack the region of the Pozhu River, where the chieftain of the Jianzhou Jurchens, Li Manzhu, and his followers lived.¹⁴ The tension between Chosŏn and the Jurchens got pressing. In the following year, the Chosŏn proposed to the Ming court that “now the Pozhu River’s Jurchens led by Li Manzhu and our state have a grudge and are now at war. Their interpreters told our officials that if they failed to invade our borders, they would take revenge on our tributary envoys who traveled through the eight-stations road. The original road of the eight stations, especially the four stations from Kaizhou to Lianshan, is extremely tortuous and adjacent to the north and the region of the Pozhu River. Our state fears that the Jurchen raiders will haunt along the way.”¹⁵ The king of Chosŏn once again requested the Ming court to open a new road in 1450. “Since the Jurchen Li Manzhu and the people of his tribe repeatedly provoked trouble, raiders from Manzhu’s tribe regularly appeared along the road of the Eight Stations, causing the tribute road to be blocked and extremely inconvenient. […] Manzhu’s followers previously dared not do evil because of their fear of your majesty, but now betray your emperor’s holy grace and launch raids everywhere. We are terrified that Manzhu’s people would keep watch by the roadsides of the eight stations, suddenly attack our envoys, rob the tributary people, and pursue the old hatred with us. The old eight-stations road is truly difficult to pass


¹⁴ Sejong sillok, 78: 13a-b (Sejong 19/7/18).

¹⁵ Sejong sillok, 80: 12a (Sejong 20/1/21).
In 1460, the potential threat to the eight-stations tribute route turned out to be Lang Borghon’s son Abiche, the chieftain of the Uryangkhad Mongols. One year before, Lang Borghon was killed by the Chosŏn court. Abiche vowed to avenge their father, and thus the Chosŏn court once again petitioned for a new road. “Abiche guided several Uryangkhad (Ch. Wuliangha) Jurchens to attack the Huining Prefecture of Chosŏn Korea. […] He told local people that his father was killed, and although he has not succeeded in revenge now, when Chosŏn envoys pass through the eight stations, he would wait in the valleys along the eight stations and rob the tribute envoys. Along the eight-stations route, grass and trees are dense, and no one lives around. If our envoys encounter Abiche and his followers quietly infiltrating the area and lying in wait for them, the tribute route will be cut off.” In 1480, when Chosŏn envoys were returning from Liaodong, more than 2,000 Jurchen people intercepted them when they were resting at the eight-stations road. After the battle with the Jurchens, Chosŏn envoys and escorting army got scattered, and many people and livestock were captured by the Jurchens. The Chosŏn court again sent an envoy to the Ming to request a new road in the south of the eight stations to keep distance from the Jurchens.

In Chosŏn’s diplomatic memorials, the east of Liaodong, along the route of the eight stations to Liaoyang, was a dangerous and desolate frontier zone with treacherous terrain, heavy weeds, fierce beasts, uninhabited lands, and the threat of Jurchen raiders, who might lay in

16 Munjong sillok, 3: 16b (Munjong 0/8/19).
17 Sejo sillok, 17: 20a (Sejo 5/8/28).
18 Sejo sillok, 19: 36a (Sejo 6/3/10).
19 Seongjong sillok, 124: 2b (Seongjong 11/12/9).
ambush in the dangerous terrain. While the Jurchens’ threats to Chosŏn envoys in memorials could only be the fiction of Chosŏn court’s rhetoric, the Chosŏn’s concerns for the Jurchens’ activities in the area of the eastern eight stations was highly reasonable. During this period, the Ming military towns and population were concentrated in western Liaodong, and the effective military defensive system in the east did not reach beyond Lianshanguan. The eight post stations along the eight-stations route were not under the protection of the Liaodong Military Commission; this route was used only because it was the old route established during the Yuan dynasty. In memorials, the Chosŏn repeatedly mentioned that the most dangerous section of the eight stations was from Kaizhou (Fenghuangcheng) to Lianshanguan, and the opening of the new tribute route south of Liangshanguan would allow Chosŏn envoys to avoid this section. Chosŏn envoys also stated that “the eight east stations used to start from Jiuliancheng and zigzagged upwards among the rivers. A pass and corresponding officials were set up at Lianshanguan.”

In other words, there were no Liaodong soldiers and officials stationed at the posts and tribute route east of Lianshanguan. From the easternmost of the eight-stations to Lianshanguan, Chosŏn envoys were escorted by their own troops when they went to the seat of the Liaodong Military Commission in Liaoyang. In 1437, the Chosŏn court held a discussion on increasing the number of soldiers in escort troops, arguing that because of the dangers of passing through the eastern eight stations, the number of soldiers in escort troops should be increased by 160.

However, the eastern frontier of Liaodong, even around the eastern eight stations, was not as desolate and uninhabited as the Chosŏn’s narrative had presented. The Chosŏn court gave the Ming two reasons for opening a new tribute route that passed through Ciyuzhai: first, this route

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20 So Kwang-jin 蘇光震, Jocheon Ilrok 朝天日錄.

21 Sejong sillok, 79: 24a. (Sejong 19/12/25).
was farther from the Jurchens in the north, and second, there were “scattered populations” and no “dangers of mountains and rivers.” In fact, the population settled in Ciyuzhai was much more considerable than this description suggested. When the Chosŏn court discussed the possibilities of the new tribute route, a Chosŏn official, Seong Geon, who supported the court’s proposal described Ciyuzhai as “densely populated,” and stated that all the settlers in Ciyuzhai were originally inhabitants of Chosŏn Korea, and their language was understandable for Chosŏn people. Sin Sugju, the official who opposed requesting the Ming to change the route argued that the road from Ciyujian was not different from the eastern eight stations in terms of distance from Liaoyang, and that it was still effortless for the Jurchens to go south to Ciyuzhai and plunder Chosŏn envoys. Thus, the most significant difference between the Ciyuzhai route and the eastern eight stations was that a sizable Korean population lived around Ciyuzhai. In the north, there were also communities of Koreans along the eight stations. One of them was located between Fenghuangcheng and Lianshanguan. In 1459, when a Chosŏn envoy passed the Boyan cave (boyandong 伯顏洞), he depicted the scenery he saw: “crops grow luxuriant, and all villagers are able to speak the language of the east.” Yet, these communities outside the Lianshanguan were beyond the actual control of the Liaodong Military Commission. Because these populations were unregistered, they were hardly visible to the Liaodong Military Commission, even though their communities were located on lands under the Liaodong Military Commission’s, and thus the Ming’s, territorial claim.

22 Sejong sillok, 75:23b (Sejong 18/12/8).
23 Seongjong sillok, 110: 3b (Seongjong 10/10/7).
24 Sejo sillok, 46: 12b (Sejo 14/4/27).
25 Lee Seungso 李承召, Gimyo Jocheonsi 己卯朝天詩.
While the Liaodong Military Commission’s institutional access did not reach beyond Lianshanguan in terms of both military defense and population registration, two questions arose: was there a border marking the eastern edge of Liaodong during this period, and if so, where was the border? If we consider Lianshanguan as the eastern margin of the Liaodong Military Commission's operative realm, eastern Liaodong seems to be a typical premodern frontier wherein territorial boundaries were not clearly defined. Beyond the Lianshanguan, the Jurchens could penetrate deep into the eastern Liaodong south of the eight stations. Chosŏn envoys were not under any protection from the Liaodong Military Commission, and the population who settled in the east was also out of the state’s control.

Existing scholarship on borderlands widely accepts the narrative of the shift from the borderless frontier to borderlands that are formed around the contested boundaries between at least two domains. However, the eastern part of Liaodong did not follow such a linear process. On the one hand, while the area from the Lianshanguan to the Yalu River was not under the control of the Liaodong Military Commission, the Yalu River was always a clear boundary between the Ming and the Chosŏn, and the Chosŏn kept strengthening this border. On the other hand, the Liaodong Military Commission established its eastern border with a defensive system composed of walls, fortresses, watchtowers, and the guarding military during the negotiations between the Chosŏn and the Ming on the route of the eight stations from the 1430s to 1480s. From then on, although the most easternmost part of Liaodong remained a wilderness beyond state control until the late Ming, its edge moved eastward, and eastern Liaodong became a frontier with a clearly defined border.

26 See Baud and van Schendel, “Towards a Comparative History”; Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders”; Kim, Ginseng and Borderland.
The Chosŏn's diplomatic interactions with the Ming constantly conveyed a clear recognition that the other side of the Yalu River was Ming domain. Although there were no Ming escorts on the way to Liaoyang from the eight stations and no operative post station before the Lianshanguan, Chosŏn strictly adhered to the original route that was dangerous and inconvenient. When the Chosŏn considered whether to increase the army detachment escorting envoys along the eight stations, officials discussed whether they should immediately inform the Liaodong Military Commission about their plans.27 In the debates of whether the Chosŏn court should propose to Ming to open a new road via Ciyuzhai, the officials who opposed the proposals all argued that Ciyuzhai was close to the Chosŏn and if the road was opened, it would lead to more people fleeing to Liaodong territory. They clearly expressed that it was the Yalu River that separated the two states and urged the court to clarify the household register of frontier people in P’yŏngan Province who lived next to the Yalu River. “The Pyŏngan Province is bounded by the Yalu River. […] There is no physical obstruction between the Ming and our state besides the Yalu River, and if the two banks of the river were connected, this area would be a flat land. This is truly not the right way to consolidate the state and strengthen the border. […] Moreover, the taxes and corvee of Liaodong people are light, yet those of our people are extremely heavy. […] As the barrier at the border is not strong, and the household registers are in disorder, this is the same as abetting the exodus of our frontier population. […] We sincerely hope that the court will implement the decree on household registration and the annual spring and fall population census on the frontier people.”28

The defensive system in eastern Liaodong began to extend from the Liangshan to the east

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27 Sejong sillok, 79: 24a (Sejong 19/12/25).

28 Seongjong sillok, 48: 19a (Seongjong 5/10/28).
from the 1460s. In 1460, after the Ming Dynasty rejected Chosŏn’s request to change the tribute route, the Ming built a fortress east of the Lianshanguan and assigned Liaodong military officers and soldiers to guard the Chosŏn envoys who passed through from the Jurchens. Later, several watchtowers and fortresses along the eight stations were established to protect Chosŏn envoys.29 In 1469, the Liaodong Military Commission informed the Chosŏn that it planned to build a frontier wall from the Songfalu Mountain southwest of the Yalu River to Fushun, setting up forts every 30 miles and stationing 300 to 400 soldiers. This plan “took the journey of your envoys into account.” By the 1470s, Liaodong’s eastern border wall had been finished.30 In 1481, the Liaodong Military Commission began to build thirteen watchtowers and three castles along the eastern eight stations and stationed Liaodong troops in these fortifications.31 From then on, the whole eastern eight stations were under the control of the Liaodong Military Commission, and the Chosŏn did not request to change the tribute route again.

2. Asymmetry of Information across the Borders and The Role of The Liaodong Military Commission

In the negotiations between the Chosŏn and the Ming, Ciyuzhai, the hub of the proposed tribute route to Liaoyang, constantly appears in the Chosŏn’s descriptions and discussions. However, in an interesting contrast, the name Ciyuzhai does not even appear once in any common sources of the Ming dynasty. Even the local gazetteer of Liaodong compiled during the Jiajing period does not record or mention Ciyuzhai. Why did the texts and maps of the Ming

29 Sejo sillok, 21: 21a (Sejo 6/8/26).
30 Zhang Shizun 張士尊, Mingdai Liaodong bianjiang yanjiu, 70-73.
31 Ming Xianzong Shilu 明憲宗實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 216: 3757.
dynasty not record Ciyuzhai? How did the Chosŏn learn about Ciyuzhai and its local conditions across Liaodong’s eastern border? Why did the Ming court refuse five times the Chosŏn’s requests to open a new tribute route passing through Ciyuzhai? This section focuses on the asymmetry of knowledge about the Liaodong frontier between the Chosŏn and the Ming behind their diplomatic rhetoric in the border-making process and the role of the Liaodong Military Commission in the circulation of information about the frontier.

After the Chosŏn’s first request for changing the tribute route in 1436, the Ming court appointed Liaodong officials to survey the area of Ciyuzhai. These officials delivered their reports and drawn maps to the Ming court a few months later: “It is about two hundred and fifty li from Liaoyang along the road south of Touguanzhan (頭館站) to Ciyuzhai. From Ciyuzhai to Kaizhouzhan (開州站), the distance is more than one hundred and twenty li. Along the original road from Kaizhou to the Yalu River were two stations. The route of Ciyuzhai has a total of nine stations along the way, none of which goes through the old road of Lianshanguan.” 32 It was the first time that the knowledge of Ciyuzhai was presented in front of the Ming court and the Liaodong Military Commission. 33

Although Ciyuzhai was within Liaodong’s eastern border, and this border was clearly recognized by the Chosŏn, the Chosŏn court knew about Ciyuzhai earlier than the Ming court. At the time of the first proposal to change the tribute route, the Chosŏn court argued that “under the jurisdiction of Liaodong, there is a road south of Lianshanguan passing through Ciyuzhai and leading to Liaoyang. Here people live scattered, and no dangerous mountains and rivers are

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32 Sejong sillok, 80: 12a (Sejong 20/1/21).
33 The record of the Ming official report only appears in the Chosŏn Veritable Records.
around."\(^{34}\) By this time, the Chosŏn not only clearly knew the location of Ciyuzhai, its terrain, and its population but also knew that the road from Ciyuzhai could reach Liaoyang. There are several possible sources for the Chosŏn’s knowledge of Ciyuzhai. First, Chosŏn envoys could learn about it from the residents or officials of Liaodong on their way to pay tribute.\(^{35}\) Second, the Chosŏn court indirectly found out about Ciyuzhai from Chinese and Korean smugglers, evaders, and migrants who crossed the Yalu River. Compared with the Ming court’s investigation of its own frontier, the Chosŏn’s access to information about Ciyuzhai was less public and lay in a space where the boundary between the official and the unofficial was blurred.\(^{36}\)

After both the Ming court and the Chosŏn gained knowledge about Ciyuzhai, a diplomatic contest based on the disparities in knowledge of the Liaodong region got under way. In this contest, there was an enormous gap between the reasons explained in Ming diplomatic replies for disagreeing with the Chosŏn’s proposal and the reasons perceived by the Chosŏn for being rejected. The Ming had different explanations for rejecting the Chosŏn’s requests. In 1438, the Ministry of War answered the Chosŏn’s memorials: “The original route has been in place for more than seventy years, and generations of envoys have traveled through this road, which is unobstructed. Now you request to change the road completely, but it is difficult to approve.”\(^{37}\) In 1460, the reason for the Ming court’s refusal became that “the Ciyuzhai region is not easy to travel because of its dangerous mountains and rivers and sparse population, while the road of the

\(^{34}\) *Sejong sillok*, 75:23a-b (Sejong 18/12/8).

\(^{35}\) The fact that the Liaodong officials knew Ciyuzhai does not mean that the Liaodong military commission knew.


\(^{37}\) *Sejong sillok*, 80: 12a (Sejong 20/1/21).
eastern eight stations is flat and smooth with the Jurchens of the Maoling Guard relatively far away.” “Although the Jurchens threatened to raid, they might not be able to stay away from their lair for a long time. If we believe in the words of the Jurchens and easily change the tribute route, this would be our own display of cowardice. Then how can we not be despised by the Jurchens?” In 1480, the Ming court refused to change the tribute route because “this road was prescribed by the ancestors and meanders through several large military towns—a sublime and profound meaning was contained here.” Officials of the Chosŏn court came up with four different potential reasons why the Ming repeatedly refused to open a new road at Ciyuzhai. First, the Ming court knew that the people living in Ciyuzhai had migrated from the Chosŏn. Second, the Ming might assume that the residents of Ciyuzhai were Koreans who once lived in the Dongning Guard of Liaodong, wherein many Goryeo Koreans settled in the early Ming, and they might follow Chosŏn envoys to leave Liaodong. Third, the road of Ciyuzhai unfolded along the southern coast. Since Liaoyang was a huge town, the tribute route to the Ming must pass through Liaoyang. Fourth, the Ming did not want the Chosŏn to learn about the geography and roads of Liaodong easily.

The Ming’s diplomatic replies did not provide the Chosŏn with any updated knowledge of Ciyuzhai and the eastern Liaodong, and the Chosŏn’s assumptions about the Ming court’s decisions were all based on the knowledge game between the two sides. In the negotiations

38 Sejo sillok, 21: 21a (Sejo 6/8/26).
39 Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉, Ming shi 明史, 182:14b.
40 Sejo sillok, 46: 12b (Sejo 14/4/27).
41 Seongjong silok, 121: 6a (Seongjong 11/9/12). The texts in this passage is that “然遼東，乃巨鎭也，上國欲使外人，必由此而行”. Here, Liaodong should refer to the Liaodong military commission that was located in Liaoyang.
42 Seongjong silok, 185: 1a (Seongjong 16/11/1).
between the Ming and the Chosŏn, both sides assumed the other’s knowledge about Ciyuzhai could be comprehensive. The reasons expressed by the Ming on the table, except for the second one, could be part of the real motivation for its rejection of the Chosŏn’s proposals. Yet, the Ming court’s consideration for the Korean community in Ciyuzhai was also likely to be an essential factor. From the perspective of the Ming court and the Liaodong Military Commission, these Chosŏn refugees were populations who filled the eastern frontier of Liaodong and rendered the frontier less penetrable for the nomads from the north. Although their absence in official records means that they were not registered and not under the administrative control of the Liaodong Military Commission, the knowledge of Ciyuzhai’s population enabled the Ming to maintain an informational control over its northeastern frontier and to claim this frontier territory.

While the Ming court and the Liaodong Military Commission welcomed these Korean emigrants who might be deserters or refugees, the Chosŏn did its best to prevent them from fleeing into the Liaodong border. Therefore, the Ming avoided expressing in diplomatic interactions that they understood the demographic situation of Ciyuzhai. The second reason given by the Ming court that Ciyuzhai was desolate while the road of the eight stations was smooth is the exact antithesis of the Chosŏn’s proposals and can be seen as pure diplomatic rhetoric.

The Chosŏn’s first two speculations about the reasons for the Ming court’s refusal depended on the assumption that the Ming court was in possession of knowledge of the population in Ciyuzhai. The 1438 memorial trail given to the Chosŏn by the Ming court recorded the Ming’s investigation report of Ciyuzhai submitted by Liaodong officials. Yet the report of this investigation only mentioned the distance between Ciyuzhai and other eastern stations. Thus, the Chosŏn knew that the Ming had knowledge of Ciyuzhai but was unsure whether the Ming court knew about the Korean communities in Ciyuzhai. The second and third speculations show that
Chosŏn officials did not have precise information about Liaodong. The Dongning Guard was located in Liaoyang, far away from Ciyuzhai. In addition to Korean residents, there were many Jurchens at the Dongning Guard. Haizhou and Ciyuzhai were still at a great distance from the southern sea, and there was no potential coastal travel. Therefore, in the Chosŏn court’s debate on whether to request again, a Chosŏn official apologized: “I do not know exactly the condition of the Ciyuzhai road. I can only tell from what I have heard.”

Chosŏn literati also spilled a lot of ink discussing the Chosŏn’s request to change the tribute route, yet their knowledge of the Liaodong frontier was even more inaccurate. For example, Hŏ Kyun believed that if the tribute route went through the Haizhou Guard without passing the Guangning Guard, Chosŏn envoys could go straight to the Ningyuan Guard. However, between the Haizhou Guard and the Ningyuan Guard was the Liaodong Gulf, and the Guangning Guard was the station through which envoys would need to pass.

The Liaodong Military Commission played a vital role in the back-and-forth contest between the Ming and the Chosŏn court about the knowledge of the Liaodong frontier. In 1436, when the Chosŏn first requested to change the tribute route, a Chosŏn official interpreter delivered a lateral communication to the Liaodong Military Commission. The Liaodong Military Commission forwarded the lateral communication to the Ming court, and the court then asked the Liaodong Military Commission to survey Ciyuzhai. The commission assigned two military officers of the Dongning Guard to investigate this region. These officers handed over the report and the map of Ciyuzhai to the Liaodong Military Commission, who then gave it to the Chief Military Commission of the Left. The commissioner submitted the report to the Ministry of War.

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43 Seongjong sillok, 110: 3b (Seongjong 10/10/7).
44 Hŏ Kyun 許筠, Sŏngso pubugo 慶所覆瓿稿.
After the Minister of War decided, he forwarded the decision to the Liaodong Military Commission. In the eighth month of 1437, the Chosŏn official interpreter went to Liaoyang and copied all the correspondence from the Liaodong Military Commission. In this diplomatic communication, the Liaodong Military Commission was responsible for transferring the diplomatic documents between the Chosŏn and Ming court and surveying the situation of local settlements.

The military commission of Liaodong and its role was used by the Ming court as an excuse in its diplomatic exchange with Chosŏn. After the Ming rejected the Chosŏn’s request to change the tribute route again in the third month of 1438, the Ming court gave the excuse that “although the Liaodong Military Commission has sent officials to check the road of Ciyuzhai, yet no reply from the Liaodong Military Commission had been seen. As a result, it is difficult for our court to decide the advantages and disadvantages of changing the initial tribute route.” This time the Ming court responded to the Chosŏn by pretending that the Liaodong Military Commission was derelict in its duties, even though it had already received the report and map of Ciyuzhai. The Liaodong Military Commission, standing a part from the Ming and Chosŏn’s diplomatic hierarchy, provided a space for the Ming court to explain itself as it pleased in the diplomatic interactions with the Chosŏn. Starting from 1450, the Chosŏn stopped relying on lateral communications with the Liaodong Military Commission to convey requests for changing the tribute route to the Ming court. The Chosŏn’s proposals were submitted directly by Chosŏn envoys to the Beijing capital. The envoys then transmitted the Ming’s replies to the Chosŏn court. The Liaodong Military Commission’s jurisdictional territory was also an arena wherein the Ming

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45 Sejong sillok, 80: 12a (Sejong 20/1/21).

46 Sejong sillok, 81: 11b (Sejong 20/5/13).
and the Chosŏn obtained private and unofficial information when Chosŏn envoys passed through Liaodong.

3. Conclusion

Although at the beginning neither the Ming nor Chosŏn’s concerns were focused on their borders, the borders of eastern Liaodong were reinforced and extended during the negotiations between Ming and Chosŏn. The eastern Liaodong frontier did not follow a linear process from borderless frontiers to bounded borderlands. A clearly defined border had long existed along the Yalu River. It was constantly strengthened by the Chosŏn court, even though the area between Lianshanguan and Yalu River was not under Ming control. While the border along the Yalu River became firmer during the diplomatic exchanges regarding the tribute route, the Liaodong Military Commission established its eastern border with a defensive system that extended to the border of the Yalu River. The border was not created conceptually first by the Ming but rather established as a response to Chosŏn’s diplomatic requests. This does not mean that the Ming court did not establish the border out of its own concerns about Jurchen incursions into eastern Liaodong. However, the eastern part of the Liaodong was not under the control of the Liaodong Military Commission in the mid-15th century. It was the exchange of knowledge in diplomacy with the Chosŏn that brought eastern Liaodong into the vision of the Ming court and led to the establishment of a new border. On different sides of the borders, the Chosŏn and the Ming had different knowledge about the Liaodong frontier. Diplomatic correspondence did not necessarily reflect the actual knowledge of either side but had led to some knowledge exchange. The local government of Liaodong and its role in diplomatic interactions was used by both the Ming and Chosŏn courts.
Chapter 2. Border as Institution: Border Officials and Jurchen Merchants in Cross-border Trade

This chapter examines how the increasingly well-defined Ming border enabled border officials within it to expand their authority, and how Jurchen merchants contested the border with them. Historians of East Asia have long noticed the unique role of border officials in interregional exchanges. Kawachi Yoshihiro finds that in Chosŏn’s fur trade with the Jurchens, Chosŏn’s border officials collected furs to bribe their superiors in the mid-15th century. 47 Jing Liu focuses on the influence of the Ming coastal sailors in a maritime smuggling network that started to take shape since the 1590s. 48 Michael Szonyi interprets a range of strategies that Ming military households applied to manage their risk and opportunities living with the state. He pointed out that Fujian military officers and their kin were able to profit from illegal trade with maritime smugglers precisely because of their proximity to the state. 49 There are also a few studies that pay attention to the role of Liaodong military officers. 50 These works illustrate how common was border officials’ participation in both “legitimate violence and private commerce” in the Ming time. 51 Following the scholarship, this chapter will explore the role of border officials on the Liaodong border.

This chapter will start with the background of a series of raids by the Haixi and Jianzhou

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47 Yoshihiro Kawachi, “Mindai touhoku ajia no tenkawa boueki”.


50 See Byung-Chul Jung, Mingmo Liaodong Yanhai Yidai de Haishangshili 明遼東沿海一帶的海上勢力, trans.Guidong Wang (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue, 2016); Jing Liu, “Shuijun, haidao yu kajing maoyi”.

51 Jing Liu, “Beyond the Land.”
Jurchens on the Liaodong border in 1477. The Ming’s response to this raid has been mentioned in Phillip Hasley Woodruff’s Ph.D. dissertation. He views the Ming’s handling of the raid as the product of the tension between two factions in the Ming court. He believes that while one side held a defensive attitude towards the Jurchens and the Mongols, the other side promoted frontier military expeditions for the purpose of career advancement. Supplementing Woodruff’s descriptions of the process of the invasion and reexamining its background and consequences from the perspective of Liaodong, I intend to take a step away from the design of the Ming tributary and military system to reclaim the agency of border society, which was shared by both Liaodong border officers and the Jurchens. I will argue that the raids were the product of the local and regional order established by Liaodong border officers who took advantage of the tributary and military systems, and that the border relationship of Liaodong was largely mediated by local actors rather than at the central level.

1. Jurchen Envoys Entering Ming China and the Network of Interregional Trade in Northeast Asia

In 1467, Sanciha (Ch. Sanchiha) visited the Ming’s capital as a Jurchen envoy for the first time. He was the chieftain of a branch of the Haixi Jurchens. Under the Nurgan regional military commission set by the Ming court, he was a military commissioner (duzhihuishi 都指揮) and granted permission to pay tribute to the Ming court. Bringing sable fur and horses from the Northeast, Sanciha and his companions were greeted by the officials from the Huitong Hostel for

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52 Phillip Hasley Woodruff, “Foreign Policy and Frontier Affairs along the Northeast Frontier of the Ming Dynasty, 1350-1618: Tripartite Relations of the Ming Chinese, Korean Koryo, and Jurchen-Manchu Tribesmen” (Ph.D. Diss., The University of Chicago, 1995), 179-188.

53 During nearly the whole Ming period, the Nurgan regional military commission only existed in name. The Ming court granted Jurchen chieftains with imperial appointments as vouchers to entering the Liaodong border.
tributary envoys and merchants (*huitongguan* 會同館) and received clothing, two kinds of silk, cotton cloth, and a banquet invitation all in the name of the Chenghua Emperor (1465-1487).\(^{54}\) For Sanciha, this journey was worthwhile—the Jurchen envoys not only received rewards and presents from the Ming court in return for their gifts but gained the opportunity to trade with the Han people in Beijing and along their way. His mission could get two rolls of satin and one roll of silk for every horse that he brought as tribute and a roll of silk for every four sable furs.\(^{55}\) According to his official title granted by the Ming court as the military commissioner of the Wuzhe Guard, Sanciha would also be personally rewarded. He could obtain a roll of satin, four rolls of silk, a set of silk clothes, shoes and socks, and a certain amount of paper notes (*baochao* 寶鈔) every time he visited Beijing. He could also expect to receive a sheep and a big table used for banquets (*daguozhuo* 大果桌) when he left the Ming’s territory through the Liaodong Pass.\(^{56}\) According to the Ming's tributary regulations, he was allowed to trade with capital merchants in the Huitong Hostel for five days, "exchanging for all kinds of silk."\(^{57}\) The trading along the way and in the Liaodong horse market was also profitable for Sanciha. There are many records of the Jurchen envoys trading with the Liaodong people on their way to or back from Beijing in the *Ming Veritable Records*. In the Zhengtong period, the Ming court prohibited the Jurchen envoys from trading with inhabitants along the way, yet such trade continued unabated.

\(^{54}\) *Ming Xianzong Shilu*, 47: 972.

\(^{55}\) *Ming Huidian* 明會典,111:16a-16b.

\(^{56}\) *Ming Huidian*,111:2b; *Liaodong Zhi* 遼東志 (1537), 3:56a.

\(^{57}\) *Ming Huidian*,112:4b.
The Ming court chose to compromise. In the Chenghua period, only sale of weapons was
forbidden—the court acquiesced to Jurchen envoys to exchange agricultural tools and silk.58

Silk was the main item that the Jurchen envoys obtained from their tributary trade with the
Ming. On the one hand, the silks that Jurchen envoys obtained through tributary trade were
luxury goods "favored by the Jurchen chieftains."59 On the other hand, a market of luxury
goods—mainly silk and fur—expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries in eastern Eurasia as well as
along a “northern silk road” that connected merchants in Ming China, Chosŏn Korea, and Japan
to tribal people of the Sunggari and Amur river valleys and the islands of the northwestern
Pacific.60 Through Jurchen envoys and merchants, silk circulated among the Jurchen tribes and
other Northeast Asian regions. For example, as a Haixi Jurchen, Sanciha paid tribute to the Ming
with sable fur every time he traveled to the capital. However, sable fur was mainly obtained
north of the Sunggari River, where the Yeren Jurchen lived.61 Furthermore, because the Yeren
Jurchens were located in far northern Manchuria, they rarely traded with the Ming and the
Chosŏn.62 Yet when the Yeren Jurchens engaged in trade with the Emishi people living in
Hokkaido, silk was the main products that the Yeren Jurchens provided to the Emishi.63 The
Ming was not the direct supplier of silk for the Yeren Jurchens. It can be inferred that the Haixi

58 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 159: 2915.


60 Schlessinger, World Trimmed with Fur, 131.

61 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 35:476.

62 Yao Mengxi 姚希孟, Gonghuai Ji 公槐集, 4:1b.

Jurchens used silk from the Ming to exchange with the Yeren Jurchens for sable fur, and the Yeren Jurchen used the silk to trade with the Emishi people. Sanciha visited Beijing carrying sable fur nearly every year. This indicates that the network of luxury goods had become regular and stable in the 1460s. The Jianzhou Jurchens, located to the south of the Haixi Jurchen, also used sable fur as their main tribute to the Ming and the Chosŏn courts and thus were also engaged in the trade of silk for sable fur. In other words, with silk and sable fur, the Jurchens were active participants in the trading network of Northeast Asia.

The development of the Northeast Asian market brought active cross-border trade flows to the Ming. The number of Jurchen envoys coming to the Ming for tribute exchange increased rapidly in the 15th century. As the scale of Jurchen tributary missions grew, the main goods that the Jurchen envoys and merchants brought to the Ming, especially in the Liaodong Horse Markets, consisted of furs and other indigenous products of Manchuria instead of horses, which the Ming court expected. As the tributary trade with the Jurchens began to deviate from the Ming court’s original aim, the Ming court attempted to restrict the scale and the frequency of Jurchen missions. Since the Zhengtong period, the Ming court changed its inclusive foreign policy towards the Jurchens and began to limit the number of Jurchen envoys. Yet the restrictions did not work: “the Jurchen tributary missions only paid tributes with three to five horses but consisted of thirty to forty envoys; some of them even returned to the Huitong Hostel without leaving the capital in order to get rewards and gifts again.” The Chenghua Emperor further prescribed that the Jurchen missions from each guard could pay tribute only once a year,

64 Yoshihiro Kawachi, “Mindai touhoku ajia no tenkawa boueki,” 109.
65 Ming Xiaozong Shilu 明孝宗實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 195:3602.
66 Ming Yingzong Shilu 明英宗實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 58: 1117-18.
and the scale of these missions had to be limited to less than one hundred people for the Jianzhou and Maoling garrisons and less than five persons for the Haixi and Wuzhe garrisons. Yet the regulation failed again, and the number of Jurchen envoys kept expanding. In 1469, the number of Haixi Jurchen envoys who had access to the capital before the early 12th month was 1832, and many Jurchen missions still had not arrived yet.

As the endless stream of Jurchen envoys and merchants made Liaodong one of the Northeast Asian interregional trade centers, it brought pressure to bear on Liaodong’s border. Liaodong was the starting point for Jurchen envoys and merchants entering the Ming’s territory. Accordingly, the Liaodong Military Commission and the Grand Defender took on the task of checking their identities, deciding whether to allow them to pass, and escorting them along the way. Horse markets and timber markets were established in the border area as part of the tributary trade. Jurchen envoys and merchants needed imperial credentials to enter Liaodong and its markets. In the Ming’s design, only the Jurchen tribal leaders granted titles of the Nurgan regional military commission were able to obtain a corresponding number of imperial credentials according to their official ranks and to send the same number of people to Liaodong and then to Liaodong’s horse market and/or the capital.

The responsibility of checking their imperial credentials and deciding whether to allow them to enter the border of Liaodong fell to the Liaodong border officers. Yet this responsibility could also be power. These Liaodong border officers were able to take advantage of their official status to gain tangible benefits when they interacted with the Jurchen merchants at the border. As

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67 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 10:225-26.
68 Ibid., 74: 1428.
69 Ming Huidian, 107:7a-7b.
a result, they became a significant part of the Northeast Asian market and served to integrate the Liaodong frontier into it.

The cross-border relationship between the two intensive participants of the Northeast Asian trading network—the Jurchen merchants and Liaodong border officers—could be fragile and volatile. From 1467 to 1477, Sanciha embarked on his trip through Liaodong to pay tribute to the Ming every year. Yet, in 1477, Sanciha broke his relationship with the Ming that had lasted for ten years. He gathered together the Haixi Jurchens, invaded the Liaodong border region, and then obtained the support of the Jianzhou Jurchens.70 Their forces continued to develop and broke through the Liaodong forts of Qinghe, Aiyang, and Fengji in succession.71 By the summer of 1478, the Ming court was still unable to settle this series of raids, and the raids started by Sanciha became one of the two largest and longest-lasting Jurchen invasions of the Ming in the 15th century (the other was led by Dong Shan) and the turning point in the relations between the Ming and the Jurchens; after this series of raids subsided, there were basically no large-scale conflicts between the Jurchens and the Ming from 1482 to 1541.

2. **Shared Interests: Practice of the Liaodong Military and Administrative System**

In 1477, Sanciha wrote to the Ministry of War, arguing that the senior commissioner (guanzhihuizhe 都指揮者) of Kaiyuan, who was in charge of checking Jurchens' identity at the Liaodong border, exacted pearls and sable furs from the Jurchen envoys. The Ministry of War handed over his report to the grand coordinator of Liaodong (liaodongxunfu 遼東巡撫), Chen Yue, and ordered him to go to Kaiyuan and verify Sanciha's report. According to the private

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71 *Ming Xianzong Shilu*, 172: 3110.
notes of Ma Wensheng, the vice-minister of the Ministry of War who was sent to Liaodong by the Ming court later to suppress the raids, it was Liaodong officers who shielded each other that led to the outbreak of the series of raids:

(After Sanciha wrote the report to the Ming court) the senior commissioner was afraid that his crime would be discovered. They bribed Sanciha's nephew and asked him to state that they had not asked the Jurchens envoys for a bribe. Sanciha got very angry after he heard about this and threatened to attack the Liaodong border. The border officials reported Sanciha's menace to their superior. The superior official then asked Sanciha to come to Guangning Guard to report the situation in person. Sanciha then led a dozen subordinates to go to Guangning through the Fushun pass. At this time, the assistant defender (canjiang 參將) Zhou Jun worried that once Sanciha arrived in Guangning he would reveal that the senior commissioner had taken bribes from the Jurchen envoys. Zhou then lied to the Guangning Guard: “the Haixi Jurchens usually do not enter Liaodong from the Fushun pass. Once they get familiar with this barrier, Guangning may suffer from their raids.” The officers of the Guangning Guard then stopped Sanciha from entering Guangning. Sanciha became furious and vowed to take revenge.  

Except for the Ming Veritable Records, all the Ming and Qing official and unofficial historical records and private biji adopted Ma Wensheng's description of Sanciha’s raid. The Ming Veritable Records has a different account for the cause of this raid: "(Jurchen envoys were) treated well by the court in the past. However, this year, the court asked one Liaodong border officer to escort each group of Jurchen envoys and limit their trade with Liaodong residents. This is the reason why they chose to attack the border.”73 The records of local affairs in the Ming Veritable Records were mostly taken from the local officials’ memorials and reports, which were then sent to the central government. This record in the Ming Veritable Records appeared shortly after the court sent Chen Yue to Kaiyuan to check the situation. Since Chen was the grand coordinator who presented his reports directly to the court, this record most likely derived from

72 Ma Wensheng, Fuan dongyi ji., 7-8.
73 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 172: 3309.
the report by Chen Yue. Attributing the Jurchen's attacks to tributary etiquette and the prohibition of border trade, this record deliberately concealed the Liaodong border officers' solicitation of bribes that had angered Sanciha. As Ma’s notes pointed out, in this series of incidents, the Kaiyuan assistant defender Zhou Jun, the senior commissioner, and the grand coordinator of Liaodong Chen Yue all belonged to the same community of shared interests.

The functioning of this community shows how border officers seized the opportunities offered by both the tributary and military system on the Liaodong border to establish a local order in which they occupied the dominant position relative to the state and the Jurchens. The three military officials mentioned above belonged to two military institutions that coexisted in Liaodong: the regional military commission of Liaodong and the Grand Defender. The Liaodong Military Commission was established since 1371 and included 25 regular guards and two special guards for Jurchens who moved to Liaodong.74 The composition of the officers of regular guards varied. While officers in the southern guards were mainly Han people, in the northern guards such as Sanwan garrison, officers were mainly Jurchens. In 1414, in fear of future invasions by the Mongol tribes, the Ming court set up the Grand Defender in Liaodong to strengthen its military defense force in its Northeastern frontier.75 At the institutional level, before the Jiajing period (1522-1566), the responsibilities of the two Liaodong institutions overlapped. Both were in charge of military defense, colony lands, and the visits of Jurchen envoys and merchants.

Zhou Jun, the assistant defender who was involved in the incidents prior to Sanciha’s raids, had positions in both Liaodong military institutions. In Zhou Jun's career, there were two crucial turning points, one was in 1466, and the other was in 1476. Before 1466, Zhou Jun was the

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74 Ming Taizu Shilu 明太祖實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 66: 1242.

75 Ming Shi, 155:6a-7a.
Assistant Commissioner (zhihui qianshi 指揮僉事) in the Dingliaqian Garrison. His salary was relatively low, but his responsibilities were not too heavy. Affiliated with the Liaodong Military Commission, he was mainly responsible for the public security of the garrison. In 1466, Zhou Jun was appointed to serve as the Right Assistant Defender (youcanjiang 右參將) of Liaodong Grand Defender in Ningyuan and soon was sent to Kaiyuan. From then on, Zhou began a rather demanding career. Kaiyuan was located at the northern end of Liaodong, facing directly the Jurchen and Mongol raiders who attacked the Liaodong border from time to time. As the assistant defender, Zhou Jun needed to fight the raiders who broke into Kaiyuan. If the nearby barracks and forts were attacked, he also needed to go for help immediately. Another duty of Zhou Jun was to check the tributary envoys and merchants when they arrived at the border pass, which was by no means easy. He often faced the situation that Jurchen tribal people attempted to enter Liaodong and loot local inhabitants under the pretext of paying tribute. If he failed to suppress the raids, to help the nearby barracks and forts in time, or to recognize potential raiders, he would be punished by the court with rebuke, pay cut or demotion; yet if he succeeded in defending against the raiders, there might not be any substantial rewards. Already in 1467, Zhou Jun was twice impeached by the Ministry of War due to his belated assistance to nearby forts.

For Zhou Jun, life like this lasted for ten years before things turned around when Chen Yue became the Grand Coordinator and Superintendent of Military Affairs in Liaodong (xunfu liaodong difang zanli junwu 巡撫遼東地方贊理軍務) in Liaodong in 1476. After Chen's

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76 Liaodong Zhi, 6:61b.
77 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 35:690, 61:1252.
78 Ibid., 38:756-57, 39: 774.
appointment, when Zhou Jun failed to suppress the raids again, he no longer suffered any impeachments by the Ministry of War. Instead, he received rewards such as gold and silk for “killing raiders.” More obviously, after Sanciha's first invasion was settled in 1478, Zhou Jun was recommended by Chen Yue as a military talent (jiangcai 將才) when the Ministry of War requested Chen to recommend talents from Liaodong military officers. One year later, when Chen Yue got promoted, Zhou was promoted to Commissioner-in-Chief (duzhihui shi 都指揮使).

The turning of Zhou Jun's career was closely related to Chen Yue. The relationship between Zhou and Chen was well reflected in the case of Sanciha's incursion. On the one hand, as the grand coordinator of Liaodong, Chen Yue was in charge of military affairs and border defense. One specific responsibility he bore was to organize Liaodong military officers and report their contributions and faults to the Ming court. In other words, Zhou Jun's performance could only reach the court through Chen Yue's report, if the court did not send other censors. On the other hand, the result of the repression of the Sanciha's raid was tightly bound to Chen Yue's career as the grand coordinator. Thus, at the beginning of Sanciha’s raid, Chen Yue repeatedly asked permission from the court to conduct an expeditionary campaign against the Jurchens in order to acquire his own military merit. According to the imperial edict on the appointment of the assistant defender, officers of the grand defend army were encouraged to cooperate with the local

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79 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 119:2291.
80 Ibid., 182: 2867.
81 Ibid., 198:3483.
grand coordinator.82 Zhou Jun was directly responsible for suppressing the incursion and reporting the progress of military operations to Chen.83 Chen needed to achieve the goal of winning military merits through Zhou Jun. The assistant defender Zhou Jun and the grand coordinator Chen Yue were interdependent in the border region of Liaodong.

The relationship between Zhou and the senior commissioner who exacted bribes from the Jurchen envoys was more direct. It is likely that both of them participated in taking bribe from Jurchen envoys at the border crossing. In addition, the overlap of the Liaodong Military Commission system and the grand defense army system at the Jurchen-Ming border intensified the close connection between Zhou Jun and the senior commissioner. In the beginning, it was the senior commissioner who was accused by Sanciha. Yet when the Ministry of War and Guangning officials started to verify the Sanciha’s report, it was Zhou Jun who worried that the secrets would be exposed and tried to block Sanciha’s passage to Guangning. Moreover, Ma Wensheng had impeached Zhou for knowing about the senior commissioner’s corruption but failing to report it to the court.84 It is possible that Zhou Jun stopped Sanciha’s report because of his involvement in the solicitation of bribes from the Jurchens. Even if he did not participate in this bribery solicitation, he was still a beneficiary, the same as the senior commissioner. Although Zhou and the senior commissioner were affiliated with different military institutions, the officials of the two institutions often overlapped, and there was no mutual restraint relationship between the two institutions. For example, in 1466, when Zhou Jun was appointed as the Right Assistant Defender of the Liaodong Grand Defender, his position in the military

82 See Liaodong Zhi, 5: 24a-24b.

83 Ma, Fuan dongyi ji, 12.

84 Ma, Fuan dongyi ji, 12.
commission was retained.\textsuperscript{85} It was common for border officers from the Liaodong Military Commission to serve as the grand defend officers before the Jiajing period. In the Gazetteer of Liaodong, most of assistant defenders of Liaodong filled their posts with their original position as assistant Commissioner-in-Chief.\textsuperscript{86} The presence of border officers who simultaneously served in both systems merged the two systems from the inside and determined that they shared the same interests.

In front of the Liaodong border, the interests of Zhou Jun, Chen Yue, and the senior commissioner were firmly intertwined. Their relationship was ubiquitous in the practice of the frontier military and administrative mechanism. In the Ming court’s vision, the Liaodong Military Commissioner, the Grand Defender, and the Grand Coordinator were supposed to perform separate functions: the military commissioner was responsible for administrative management, the grand defender managed border security, and the grand coordinator inspected for the court and coordinated the military commands. However, the operation of these local systems tightly tied the interests of officers belonging to different institutions together. Through the military system, Liaodong border officers carved out a local space to take advantage of both the Ming state and the Jurchen merchants.

The change of the Ming’s tributary policy in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century brought another opportunity for the Liaodong border officers to utilize the border region’s regulatory system. From the Zhengtong period, the Ming court adopted more restrictive tributary policies. In 1437, the Ming court began to restrict the number of Jurchen envoys and merchants entering the capital and the

\textsuperscript{85} Ming Xianzong Shilu, 50: 1020.

\textsuperscript{86} Liaodong zhi, 5:1a-75b.
Liaodong horse market by requiring imperial credentials for qualified Jurchen merchants.\textsuperscript{87} Liaodong border officers were given the power to verify Jurchens' credentials and to decide whether to allow them to enter the Liaodong border. In 1477, Chen Yue submitted a memorial, requesting that the Jurchens should also be checked by the Liaodong border officers when leaving Liaodong's territory in order to investigate whether the Jurchens had smuggled prohibited items.\textsuperscript{88} The court agreed with Chen Yue’s proposal. Thereafter, the decision as to whether the Jurchen merchants could enter or leave the Liaodong pass was made solely by the Liaodong border officers.

With the tightening tributary trade policy, Liaodong border officers were able to make various excuses to stop the Jurchen envoys and merchants coming from the northeast. For instance, in 1466, the Liaodong border officers blocked the passage of Jianzhou, Maoling, and Haixi Jurchen envoy missions with the reason that their tributary horses were not strong enough, and their tributary sable furs were not black enough.\textsuperscript{89} This meant that in Liaodong, one of the Northeast Asian interregional trade centers, Liaodong border officers had successfully positioned themselves as dominant players in cross-border trade with the Jurchens in the second half of 15\textsuperscript{th} century. In interacting with Jurchen envoys and merchants, Liaodong border officers enjoyed considerable privileges. They were able to threaten the Jurchens to keep them from entering and leaving the Liaodong border and then to ask for bribes or to trade with the Jurchen envoys and merchants unfairly and forcibly. Sancha’s incursion happened in this context. At this time, Liaodong border officers and Jurchen merchants were in an unequal position in cross-border

\textsuperscript{87} Ming Yingzong Shilu, 35:693.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 169: 3059.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 35:698.
trade. Liaodong officers knew that they were the rule-makers in Liaodong frontier society. Although they profited from Jurchen merchants by asking for bribes, Liaodong, the center of Northeast Asian market would continue to attract Jurchen envoys and merchants.

3. The “Failure” of Suppressing the Jurchens and the Construction of Cross-border Relations

The suppression of Sanciha’s invasion did not go well. The suppression was mainly the responsibility of the grand coordinator Chen Yue. However, Chen Yue slaughtered innocent Jurchen merchants and fabricated reports of victory. By 1478, the Jurchen invasions had not been put down but became increasingly intense. The Ming court decided to send the vice-minister of the Ministry of War Ma Wensheng to make further efforts. Instead of military suppression and expedition, Ma chose to persuade the Jurchen raiders to make peace through granting them with imperial credentials. With the new credentials, the Haixi and Jianzhou Jurchens could send more merchants to the Ming. Ma’s strategy turned out to be effective temporarily, which once again proved the attraction of the Liaodong’s market for the Jurchens.

After the Sanciha’s initial raid subsided, the attitude of the Ming court was quite interesting. In the twelfth month of 1478, Ma wrote: “the Jurchen raiders have settled down. This disaster started with the Haixi Jurchen Sanciha and his companions, who suffered from the solicitation of bribes and humiliation by Liaodong border officials. The assistant defender of Kaiyuan Zhou Jun has known about the corruption but did not report to the court. After the Jurchen invasions broke out, he failed to ease the tension. Zhou Jun and associated border officers should be arrested and

90 Ma, Fuan dongyi Ji, 12.
investigated.” The Chenghua Emperor commented on Ma Wensheng’s memorial with an agreement. In other words, at this time, the Ming court was aware of the real causes of the Sanciha's incursion and the behavior of Liaodong border officers. However, the following year, Chen Yue, Zhou Jun, and other Liaodong military officers involved in the suppression of the invasions got promoted and rewards, while Ma Wensheng was imprisoned for malfeasance and sent to Chongqing in 1479. This was partly a result of the conflicts between different political factions as Woodruff has pointed out, in which the faction advocating military expeditions towards the Jurchens won with the assistance of an imperial eunuch. Yet it also reflected the Ming court’s attitude towards the cross-border order established by Liaodong border officers in Liaodong society. Although the local order disrupted the Ming's tributary system, the Ming court adopted an acquiescent attitude. As long as the behaviors of border officials did not directly threaten the border defense and complied with the restrictive tributary policies, the Ming court would defend these frontier officials. In the vision of the court, the policy towards the Jurchens, including diplomacy, tributary trade, and military suppression, were means of exerting control over the Jurchen tribes and maintaining border security in face of the threat from nomadic peoples, making the Jurchens a northeast barrier against the Mongols. The concerns about economic benefits from the border trade hardly figured in the eyes of the Ming court. This attitude provided a space for Liaodong border officers to achieve their interests and reshape the role of the tributary system at the local level.

91 Ming Xianzong Shilu, 185:3320.
92 Ma, Fuan dongyi Ji, 13.
93 Woodruff, 187-188.
The privileged position of the Liaodong border officers in cross-border trade by no means indicated that the Jurchens had lost their agency in Liaodong frontier society. The reason why Sanciha chose to attack the Liaodong border was that he had no other approaches to challenge the border officers’ position in cross-border trade and to resist their control over the local and even regional order. In the 15th century, before the final settlement of the series of invasion starting with Sanciha’s raid, there were frequent conflicts between the Jurchen merchants and the Liaodong officers. Like Sanciha, the Jurchen merchants resisted Liaodong officers’ exploitation via attacks of the Ming border and urged the Ming court to restrain the Liaodong border officers. The role of the Jurchens swung between traders and raiders. Trading with border officials who violated the regulations of the Ming court and seeking protection from the court to challenge border officers’ privilege, Jurchen merchants sought to make a space for themselves between the Ming court and Liaodong border officers.

The series of Jurchen invasions that started with Sanciha did not end with Chen Yue’s and Zhou Jun’s promotion and Ma Wensheng’s imprisonment. The expeditionary campaign led by Chen could not address the needs of the Jurchens for cross-border trade. In 1480, after the Liaodong troops defeated the Jurchens and returned to Liaodong, Jianzhou Jurchens immediately attacked the forts of Aiyang and Qinghe and killed more than 500 Liaodong people. In the next few months, three relatively large-scale raids were carried out on the Liaodong border by the Jianzhou Jurchens.94 As military expeditions turned out to be a failed tactic, the Ming court decided to change the current border control strategies towards the Jurchens. In 1481, the Ming court regranted Jurchen chieftains with credentials for joining the tributary trade, and in 1483,

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the court recalled Ma Wensheng, who supported maintaining relations with the Jurchens through tributary trade rather than military campaigns, to replace Chen Yue.  

This placatory strategy towards the Jurchens seems to have worked. From 1482 to 1541, there were no large-scale conflicts on the Jurchen-Liaodong border, and the Jurchens were satisfied with their roles on the border as traders rather than raiders. Yet the reasons behind the nearly sixty years of peace are multilayered. First, the Ming court began to restrain Liaodong border officials’ unlimited privileges over the Jurchens, strictly forbidding them to kill the Jurchens at border crossings indiscriminately in order to claim bonuses for military accomplishments. Second, from the late 15th to early 16th centuries, powerful Jurchen chieftains began to emerge from the previously scattered tribes. Two branches of the Haixi Jurchens, Hada and Yehe, moved southward. They monopolized the horse and timber markets in Liaodong and expelled other Jurchen merchants from approaching the Liaodong border. Third, the development of the Northeast Asian market rendered the cross-border trade more lucrative for Liaodong border officials. The 16th century witnessed the increasing consumption of furs in China proper and Jurchen merchants’ demand for silk. Liaodong officials then preferred to participate in the border trade rather than resort to extortion and irritate the Jurchens. Fourth, the influx of a large amount of silver to pay for military, provisions and soldiers’ salaries, as well as silver in exchange for salt tickets into Liaodong enabled the Liaodong border officers to engage in trade on a large scale with the Jurchens. Accordingly, both the Liaodong border officials and

95 Zhang, Mingdai Liaodong, 246,264.
98 Qiu Zhonglin 邱仲麟, “Baonuan, xuyao yu quanshi—Mingdai zhengui maopi de wenhua shi,” 保暖、炫耀與權
Jurchen chieftains shared the considerable profits from the border trade and relied on it to maintain their own power.

As the Liaodong border officials and Jurchen merchants became the main participants in the border trade, the privileged position of Liaodong border officials over the Jurchens on the border faded away. Liaodong officials began to form alliance with Jurchen merchants and monopolized the border trade with Jurchen chieftains. The access to the Liaodong border became a bargaining chip between border officials of Liaodong and the Jurchens. That is, while the Liaodong officials sheltered Jurchen merchants subordinate to a certain chieftain and ensured that these Jurchen merchants could easily to enter and exit the Liaodong territory, Jurchen merchants provided sable fur and ginseng to Liaodong border officials and promised not to invade the Liaodong border. From the late 16th century, the rising power of Liaodong military officials largely depended on the profits from the border trade with the Jurchens for sustenance.99 Liaodong border officials then only had the authority to choose whom to collaborate with among the Jurchen chieftains and lost the possibility of not cooperating with any Jurchen merchants.

4. Conclusion

The development of a market for trading fur and silk brought both Liaodong border officials and Jurchen merchants into the active cross-border trading network of Northeast Asia. In the border zone, Liaodong border officials were able to gain a privileged position in relation to the Jurchens in the second half of the 15th century. On the one hand, the number of Jurchens

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merchants coming to the Ming for trade increased rapidly. On the other hand, while the
restrictive tributary policy endowed these officials with the authority to decide whether to allow
Jurchen merchants to enter and exit the Liaodong border, the frontier military and administrative
mechanism created a firm tie between border officials belonging to different institutions. As a
result, Liaodong border officials carved out a local order through which they took advantage of
both the Ming state and the Jurchens. The 1477’s invasion led by Sanciha was the Jurchens’
response to this regional order. However, with the changes in the Ming court’s border control
strategy, local economy, and Jurchen organizations from the 1480s, Liaodong border officials
and Jurchen merchants became interdependent, and Liaodong officials gradually lost their
dominant position in the cross-border trade of Liaodong.
Chapter 3. Imagined Boundary between the Center and the Periphery: He Qin’s Representation and The Liaodong Frontier

He Qin (1436-1510) was a Confucian scholar who spent most of his lifetime in Liaodong and left the richest private accounts about Liaodong in this period. After his death, his son collected the articles, poems, letters, epitaphs, and memorials written by him and wrote down a record of He Qin’s words and deeds. In 1530, his son compiled and printed He Qin’s collected works with the support of the Liaodong governor Li Chengxun. The most remarkable characteristic of He Qin is that he enjoyed a sterling reputation as a Confucianist both during his lifetime and after his death despite of his lack of political career and literary or scholarly accomplishment. How was the image of He Qin as a respectable Confucian scholar produced and reproduced across the state? How did Liaodong, as a frontier and periphery, shape He Qin’s experience as a member of Ming literary elites and the representation of his personal identity with the Liaodong region? The answer lies in the Ming literati’s imagination of an illusory border between the Ming’s Central Plain and the Liaodong frontier.

This chapter uncovers this imagined boundary in the Ming literati’s community through exploring the representation of He Qin. He Qin’s sterling reputation came from his choice to remain alone in Liaodong. The Tumu Crisis led to a change in literati understanding of themselves and converted their imagination of the northern frontier. The literati inclination for a peaceful life and self-exploration prompted them to see He Qin as a paragon of Confucian virtue, because they saw Liaodong as a place far away from political struggles and the desire for wealth and fame, where a literatus could devote himself to the study of Confucianism. The literati fantasy of creating a civilized social order in the Ming frontier and their urge to confirm the borderlands as the Ming territories led them to construct He Qin as a representative of Confucian
orthodoxy and an agent of the Ming state.

1. Becoming A National Elite in the Liaodong Frontier

He Qin had several identities in the eyes of the literati of his time. He was a transitional Neo-Confucian scholar who witnessed the transition of Neo-Confucianism from the Cheng-Zhu school to the Lu–Wang school. He was an upright remonstrator who was concerned about the Ming state orthodoxy. He was also a “true Confucian” who resigned his position as the Supervising Secretary of the Office of Scrutiny for Revenue shortly after the appointment and devoted himself to Confucian practices for the rest of his life. After He Qin's death, the imperial court granted him a posthumous title, while officials kept handing in memorials recommending him as one of the candidates to be worshipped in the state Confucian Temple. In a miscellany complied in the early 16th century, He Qin was regarded as one of "the only three or four people in the world who were famous for their practice of the way of sage." In other words, He Qin was acknowledged by his contemporary literati as an ideals of Confucian scholars. On the other hand, He had not left Liaodong for more than 40 years since 1468 when he handed in his resignation. Moreover, unlike most of his contemporary literati who resigned from the government, He did not teach in local academies or schools or had no works printed and circulated during his lifetime.

He Qin’s family was registered as a military household in the Guangning Back Guard of the Liaodong Military Commission. In the early Yongle period, He Qin’s father He Mengyuan

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100 He Qin was often viewed as a follower of his teacher Chen Xianzhang, who marked the turn of the Ming Neo Confucianism.

101 Mao Kun 茅坤, Maolumen wenji 茅鹿門文集, 32:5b-6a.

102 Kang Hai 康海, Dui shan ji 對山集, 25:12b.
complied with his father’s wish and followed his uncle, who served as a soldier in Yizhou, to Liaodong from Zhejiang province and settled in the city of Yizhou.\(^{103}\) He Qin was the only son of He Mengyuan. For a second-generation immigrant whose family was neither part of the military elite nor known for a tradition of Confucian education, the only way to gain entry into the literati world was through the civil service examination. However, Liaodong did not provide He Qin with a satisfying environment to prepare for the examinations. He Qin received his early education in the Yizhou Guard school as a military student.\(^{104}\) Although Liaodong had established the Commission schools since 1384, the education for civil service preparation was underdeveloped. The guard school in Yizhou was not built until the Zhengtong era.\(^{105}\) Most of its students were forced by the guard to attend school and saw learning at the school as a heavy corvee duty.\(^{106}\) In the Yizhou Guard School, He Qin often found himself lacking the necessary Confucian classics and could only read the available books repeatedly.\(^{107}\)

With the absence of a tradition of Confucian education in Yizhou, He Qin’s pursuit of Confucian learning was the result of his personal interests and ambition. At the age of eighteen, He heard that Qiu Ji, a juren degree holder in Liaoyang, was proficient in the *Classic of Poetry*. He Qin traveled hundreds of miles from Yizhou to Liaoyang, the political center of Liaodong, to

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103 He Qin 賀欽, *Yi lü xiansheng ji* (hereafter abbreviated as *YLXSJ*) 醫閭先生集 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2011). As shown in *YLXSJ*, none of He Mengyuan, He Qin or He Qin’s sons served in the army. It can be speculated that the obligation of military service fell on Mengyuan’s uncle’s immediate family and He Mengyuan came to Liaodong only as a companion. Both Guangning Back Guard and Yizhou Guard were located in the city of Yizhou.

104 The Ming Guard schools mainly helped students prepare for the civil service examination. The military students were also allowed to participate in the civil service examination.

105 *Liaodong Zhi*, 2:1a, 7b.

106 He, *YLXSJ*, 4.

107 He, *YLXSJ*, 3-4.
study with Qiu. One year later, he finished his studies and returned. The following year, 1456, He went to Shandong for the provincial examination and won second place in the examination with his mastery of the Classic of Poetry—this was the best ranking that Yizhou students had ever achieved.\footnote{He, YLXSJ, 4.} After that, He Qin traveled to the Beijing capital to take the jinshi examinations twice but failed both times. He then returned to Liaodong, where he passed the departmental examination in 1466 and earned the jinshi degree.\footnote{He, YLXSJ, 2.}

Earning the juren degree ended He Qin’s status as a male descendant of the Liaodong military companion (junyu 軍餘), responsible for farming the military colony land, building military fortifications, and waiting for recruitment. He could be a teacher or local official in Liaodong or elsewhere. The jinshi degree further enabled He Qin to enter a statewide literary elite circle formally—not all Ming Confucian scholars were jinshi degree holders, yet for He Qin, who was from Liaodong and lacked the connections provided by native place and teacher-student lineages, the jinshi degree was a passport.

The connection between He Qin and this circle was first established within his 1466 class. The class was composed of 353 candidates who passed the jinshi examinations that year and provided a channel for formal and informal networking and socializing among these new jishi degree holders. Their networking not only constituted friendships among some of them, but also brought scholars and officials together and created scholarly or working links among them. Along with these successful candidates, He Qin began to establish and expand his social networks in the Ming literati world. He asked Luo Lun, who ranked first in the court exam, for academic advice, and praised Zhang Mao, who won the first place in the jinshi examination, for
being a scholar he always admired. He and Zheng Si encouraged each other with the value of integrity. In company with Xiong Xiu, He studied in the Office of Transmission to learn how to be a competent official. The social networks were then strengthened and extended through their common academic interests. In 1466, the Confucian scholar Chen Xianzhang traveled to the capital to give lectures and gained great fame after composing poems with the Chancellor of the Directorate of Education. He Qin, Luo Lun, and many of their co-students visited Chen and listened to his lectures. Other scholars in the capital at that time, such as Zhou Ying, were also among them. Although most of these students of Chen did not entirely agree with Chen’s theories, they established close friendships with others. After being appointed to the Supervising Secretary, He Qin’s also developed relations with court officials like Xie Duo.

So far, He Qin had established his social and scholarly networks with the Ming literati. However, this is far from enough to explain why he gained a place among the Ming famous scholar-officials—as an official, his political career lasted for less than two years, and he did not have any political achievements; as a scholar, he had no writings or scholarly works, nor did he participate in the collective activities of scholars such as compiling gazetteers and teaching in famous local academies. In fact, He Qin’s reputation as a famous Confucian scholar only began after he chose to resign and return to Liaodong. There were different rumors on the reasons for He Qin's resignation. Some literati believed that his decision was influenced by Chen Xianzhang’s thoughts on the heart as the ultimate object of philosophical contemplation. Some officials used the example of He Qin’s remonstrance of the Chenghua emperor to persuade the Hongzhi Emperor to be open-minded to advice, arguing that because He Qin’s memorial was not

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110 He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, Mingshan cang 名山藏, 84:8b-9a.
taken seriously, he returned to Liaodong in disappointment. His fellow student Zhang Mao recorded that He Qin was very reluctant to accept the position of Supervising Secretary, because he thought it would be difficult to perform his duties.

These three factors may all have an impact on He Qin’s decision. Yet no matter how these literati interpreted He Qin's resignation, they all highly praised He Qin’s decision to resign and return to Liaodong. Chen Xianzhang’s student Gan Ruoshui described He as someone who “despises profiting through the study of Confucianism and pursues an old way of the sage.” Xia Shangpu, a writer who lived in the late 15th and early 16th century, wrote in a letter to his nephew, “He Qin has returned to Liaodong for decades. Although he has been recommended many times, he never held office because of his lofty purpose. Your younger generations always see our generation indulging in wealth. I am insufficient to be your role model. You need to learn from people like He Qin and not fall into vulgarity.”

Most of the Ming literati were educated to be scholar-officials. Yet the literati elites had never given up on seeking cultural and scholarly independence, which was partly reflected in the deep-seated yearning of officials to stay away from politics. However, when He Qin left his post in 1468, his decision to return to Liaodong gained him a reputation among the literati for more than leaving the court—if He Qin left his position and returned to his original hometown of Zhejiang, the story of his resignation would not be so remarkable. During the Chenghua period, while the Jianzhou Jurchens moved southward and frequently plundered the Liaodong border,

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111 Chu Quan 储巏, *Chai xu wen ji* 柴墟文集, 11: 1a-1b.
112 Zhang Mao 章懋, *Fengshan yulu* 楓山語録, 15.
113 He, *YLXSJ*, 159.
114 Xia Shangpu 夏尚樸, *Dongyan shiwen ji* 東巖詩文集, 4: 7a-7b.
many inhabitants fled, and the population of Liaodong began to decrease gradually. The problem of Liaodong military officers and soldiers abandoning their posts was quite serious, and registered military households fled back to their place of origin. 115 The degree holders in Liaodong also tended to leave and find positions elsewhere. 116 He Qin's choice of returning to Liaodong and staying there for the rest of his life was the opposite of the flow of other Liaodong people. It was this counter decision that earned him the most admiration from the literati at his time. The reason is that from the 1450s to the early 16th century, Liaodong carried two meanings in the imaginations of the Ming literati: first, it was a remote periphery of the Ming state with a harsh environment; second, it was the Ming territory that was penetrable to the Confucian orthodoxy. An imagined boundary unfolded between Liaodong and central Ming China and was equally physical and social in literati imagination.

2. Imaging Liaodong: Remoteness, Arduousness, and Turmoil

After He Qin decided to move back, the interactions between He and other literati with whom he had built social networks exemplified the literati imagination of the remoteness of Liaodong. Xie Duo wrote in his farewell poem to He Qin: “I can only send you off from here, from now on, there are wind and dust between Liaodong and me.” 117 After He Qin settled in Liaodong, Chen Xianzhang wrote in a poem sent to He with the line: "I don't know how many days it will take from here to Liaodong." When receiving a letter from He Qin, Chen said: “when

115 Zhang, Mingdai Liaodong Bianjing, 70, 133-134.
116 Zhang, Mingdai Liaodong Bianjing, 198.
117 Xie Duo 謝鐸， “Song He Kegong huan Liaodong,” 送賀克恭還遼東 in Shicang lidai shixuan 石倉歷代詩選, 395:4b.
I open this letter, I can see He Qin’s life from tens of thousands of miles away.” In fact, the geographical distance between Liaodong and Beijing was not far, which was why Liaodong was called “the left arm of the Beijing capital.” This sense of distance was brought about by Liaodong’s representation as the edge of the Ming state—a periphery that was separated from the Ming heartland and thus had little to do with the Ming political, economic and cultural centers in the eyes of the Ming literati elites.

This sense was then reinforced by the difficulties of letter correspondences between He and his friends. When Chen Xianzhang left the Beijing capital to give lectures in the south, the letters and poems he sent to He Qin had to be mailed to Beijing first, and then await people going to Liaodong to be brought to He. The postal route to Liaodong was not without a hitch. Chen did not hear from He for a long time after sending a collection of poems to him. Fearing that He Qin, who was far away in Liaodong, did not receive his letters, Chen copied the same content and forwarded it to He Qin twice a year. In the letters that He Qin sent to his former friends, He often mentioned that he had lost contact with some of his friends he met in Beijing for more than ten years.

The imagination of Liaodong as a borderland suffering from difficult living conditions was also deeply ingrained in the minds of He Qin’s contemporary literati. When Chen sent He off in Beijing, he comforted He by saying: "a person who has no integrity or self-cultivation cannot deal with trials and tribulations." Chen also encouraged He with the examples of Han Yu.

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118 Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章, Baishazi 白沙子, 8: 11a.
119 Ming jingshi wenbian 明景史文編, 323: 3a.
120 He, YLXSJ, 174-175.
121 He, YLXSJ, 63.
famous official in the Tang Dynasty who was depressed after being demoted to Chaozhou, and Su Shi, a well-known Song writer who enjoyed himself in the far-flung southern borderland of Lingnan.\textsuperscript{122} In Chen's view, Liaodong, like Chaozhou and Lingnan, was an outlying region with a lack of material and cultural resources, and He had to endure hardship by living there. Lü Nan, a later scholar in the early 16\textsuperscript{th} century, told his students that in Liaodong He Qin plowed the military colony lands himself and did not read anymore, and He also taught his son to do the same.\textsuperscript{123} Lü’s narrative could be a metaphor but showed his stereotype of the northern frontier as a difficult periphery, although He Qin’s life in Liaodong was far from arduous. Many of He Qin’s family members were engaged in trade in Liaodong and outside it, and he hired a few tenants to farm. Clearly, he was not farming the land himself. Lü Nan’s suppositions combined the literati’s worship of hermits who, like Tao Yuanming, personally cultivated the land with his vision of the living environment in Liaodong. The literati imagination of Liaodong also became integral to their imagination of He Qin’s life.

A sense of literati sublimity then derived from the imagination of Liaodong as a remote and brutal periphery separated from the center by an invisible boundary. The remoteness of Liaodong symbolized detachment from the political center, whereas the difficult living circumstances in Liaodong indicated inward self-seeking. When the literati projected the imagination of Liaodong on He Qin, Liaodong became a space for He Qin to take the initiative to stay away from the troubles of officialdom, to pursue personal self-improvement, and to explore the way of the sage. He Qin’s image was remodeled as a true Confucian scholar who shunned the desire for wealth and fame, devoted himself to the pursuit of Confucianism, and inquired into his own heart.

\textsuperscript{122} He, \textit{YLXSI}, 175.

\textsuperscript{123} Lü Ran 呂柟, \textit{Jingyezi neipian 涇野子内篇}, 11:13a-13b.
This conjunction was closely related to the mentality of the Ming scholar-officials since the Zhengtong period. Unlike the heyday of the relations between the emperor and his officials in the Hongxi and Xuantong periods, the political environment for literati deteriorated after the Tumu Incident. After the execution of the scholar-official Yu Qian, who led the defense of Beijing in the Tumu Crisis, the Ming literati’s faith in their political careers was greatly shaken. Thereafter, the inclination for a peaceful life and self-exploration became the common interests of a considerable number of the Ming literati. They kept a certain distance from the imperial authority, eager to relieve their mental fatigue and expand their own space. This is also the reason why Chen Xianzhang’s theory “quietly look at the heart/mind” had made such a deep impression on He Qin’s literati circle—it directly linked the way of sage and literati self-settling and encouraged abandoning external fame and fortune. He Qin’s choice of staying in Liaodong corresponded with the orientation of scholar-officials at that time.

In this literati discourse, the scholar-officials at He Qin’s time not only fully understood and admired He Qin’s choice, but also claimed to long for it. This mentality of the literati is well reflected in the farewell poem written by He’s friend Zhou Ying: “You go back to your hometown in illness, and it must be hard for you to tell people the load on your mind. Your memorial that can save the world is on your bedside, but you do not allow anyone to look at it again. (Once you get home) please build a house with a deep foundation, and you will find that the happiness in this is incomparable to other things in the world. At that time, when you are free, open your memorial again, you will find clouds floating on the mountain and the water flowing

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124 Zuo Dongling 左東嶺, Wangxue yu Zhongwanming Shiren Xintai 王學與中晚明士人心態 [The Lu-Wang School and the Mentality of Literati in the Mid-late Ming](Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2011), 61-84
in the lake.” The first two lines indicate that He Qin moved back to Liaodong with the excuse of illness after his memorial was ignored by the Chenghua Emperor. Zhou Ying put himself into He's situation, revealing his disappointment in politics as a scholar-official. In his views, the political environment for literati was oppressive, and this situation gave rise to a more or less permanent breach between contemporary court politics and the political ideals of the literati. The second part expresses his wishes for and comforts to He Qin after he returned to Liaodong. The imagined Liaodong in the last two sentences is a place far away from the political whirlpool where literati can live a peaceful life and study Confucianism wholeheartedly.

The Tumu Crisis not only led to a change in literati understanding of themselves but converted their imagination of the northern borderland. The literati’s imaginations of the Ming northern border, like the Ming military strategies, turned inward. The imagination here is not their views of the state’s strategies of managing the borders, but how they described an imagined borderland to which they had never been. In the case of Liaodong, their interests changed from civilizing the northeastern ethnic groups to conducting moral transform on the Han border people living within the Liaodong Military Commission. The rhetoric of universal Ming rule—how the Ming court recruited Jurchens and Mongolians to build their own settlements in Liaodong and took Liaodong as a fulcrum to operate the Nurgan military commission in Northeast Asia—receded in the second half of the 15th century. Literati began to emphasize the potential impact of Confucian ideology on the chaotic Liaodong frontier, with the hope of confirming that the

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125 Zhou Ying, *Cuiqu zhaigao* 翠渠摘稿, 7:47a.

126 The military strategies towards the Northern borders were not unified. Some leading officials, such as Bai Gui (1419–75) and Xia Yan (1482–1548), would push for the recovery of the Ordos – the territory of the great bend of the Yellow River, which had been lost to the Mongols – others, such as Yu Zijun (1429–89) and Yan Song (1480–1565), would argue for a more defensive strategy. See Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 122-139
society of the Liaodong Military Commission inside the Liaodong frontier wall belonged to the Ming state.

When literati in the Ming dynasty wrote biographies for He Qin, most of them mentioned two anecdotes. First, on one occasion several Liaodong military officers used wine and food as bait to trick several Jurchens into approaching the Liaodong border and then killed them to request rewards from the commission. Before He Qin visited them, they had discussed whether to tell the truth when He Qin asked them about the killing and decided instead to conceal the truth. But when He Qin arrived, they could not help telling the facts, saying: “we can deceive everyone, but cannot bear to deceive someone so respectable like you.”\textsuperscript{127} Second, in 1509, there was a riot in Yizhou city where He Qin lived. The Han inhabitants of Yizhou gathered for arson and looting. When passing by the intersection where He Qin’s house was located, these rebels said: “don’t enter this street to bother Master He.” After He Qin learned about the riot, he went out to convince them to stop. Following He’s words, the rebels did not hurt anyone in the city, and the riot was quickly quelled.\textsuperscript{128}

In these two stories, the image of He Qin is not that of a gentry exercising leadership in local society. Instead, He was represented as an agent of Confucian orthodoxy. In the literati fantasy, the attitudes of these disobedient frontier people changed before and after seeing He Qin because of their heartfelt respect for He Qin, that is, respect for the Confucian principle. In the eyes of the Ming literati who chose to narrate these two stories, despite the turmoil on the Liaodong borderland, they believed that He Qin with his benevolent attitude had the power to morally transform these border residents to a certain extent. From the 1550s to the early 16\textsuperscript{th} century,

\textsuperscript{127} He, \textit{YLXSJ}, 167.

\textsuperscript{128} He, \textit{YLXSJ}, 5, 163, 165.
century, the Liaodong frontier was not a tranquil place. The Jianzhou Jurchens, the Haixi Jurchens, the Uriankhai and other Mongol tribes continued to invade the Liaodong border. Moreover, owing to the development of the border trade in Northeast Asia, the ethnic distinctions between Liaodong society and the nomads were not clear-cut in the Liaodong commission and guards, and conflicts between military officers and multiethnic merchants often occurred. The literati who described these two stories expressed their vision that through He Qin, Confucianism was able to rectify morals in the turbulent border society. He Qin thus became the sole representative of Confucian orthodoxy in Liaodong, where there was a lack of Confucian education and responsible civil officials. In the first story, the military officers called He Qin “Father He”, which was typical of Neo-Confucian discourse on moral reform that assumed the father-son relationship to be the exemplary model of relations between the local officials and local people. In this sense, without any official position, He was also a representative and agent of the Ming state. Within the Confucian culturalist thinking, He Qin became a moral reformer who undertook social responsibility for enacting the Confucian vision.

From the late 15th century to the early 16th century, the literati imaginations of Liaodong rendered He Qin as the perfect image of a Confucian scholar. The remoteness and difficult living circumstances of the Liaodong borderland made He a Confucian scholar who took the initiative to stay away from political struggles and dedicate himself to the practices of Confucianism. The vision of transforming local social order in the Ming frontier and the urge to confirm the borderlands as Ming territories made him a quintessential scholar-official in the Confucian ideology. This is the reason why He Qin was recognized and appreciated in national literati circles and became a famous scholar in his time. Although He Qin had been in Liaodong during most of his lifetime, the literati were willing to maintain and expand their networks with He Qin.
He kept active in the circle of literati across the empire. Most of his friends he met in Beijing maintained lifelong letter correspondences with him. Chen Xianzhang often praised He in front of his students. Luo Lun’s son asked He to write the funeral biography for his father. Zheng Si discussed his philosophical perplexity with He, and Xiong Xiu sent books to him.\textsuperscript{129} After his teacher Qiu Ji went to Beijing from Liaodong, through Zhou Ying He Qin made friends with Liang Tingmei and Hu Yidao, whom he had never met, and the five literati viewed each other as confidantes.\textsuperscript{130} After his death, there were no negative comments about him. The Neo-Confucian philosopher Cui Xian commented on He Qin: “He was steadfast and gracious in his Confucian belief.”\textsuperscript{131} As a follower of the Cheng-Zhu school, Cui opposed the school of mind and made derogatory accusations against Chen Xianzhang, Luo Lun, and other contemporary literati who showed an affinity for the school of mind teachings, yet he did not offer any criticism towards He Qin. The compilation of He Qin’s writings further consolidated He Qin’s reputation and the imaginations of Liaodong and its border with the Ming Central Plain.

3. \textit{Conclusion}

He Qin’s representation derived from the literati imagination of a boundary between the Ming heartland and the Liaodong frontier. Despite its proximity in terms of distance to the Beijing capital, Liaodong was imagined as a remote and difficult frontier waiting for the salvation of Confucian orthodoxy. As He Qin chose to return to Liaodong, Ming literati enthusiastically cast an image of him as a Confucian scholar-official who renounced the desire

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{129} He, \textit{YLXSI}, 64-66, 68, 95.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Zhou, \textit{Cuiqu Zhaigao}, 1:2a.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} Cui Xian 崔銑, \textit{Huai ci 濤詞}, 9:21a.
\end{itemize}
for fame and fortune and instead dedicated himself to the practices of Confucianism. This image reflected the Ming literati’s mentality from the Zhengtong period when the Tumu Crisis marked an inward turning of literati understanding of both their own pursuits and the Ming northern borderlands. The representation of He Qin carried their aspiration for self-seeking and their hope to confirm that the Liaodong region inside the wall was the Ming’s territory. The interaction between He Qin and his contemporary literati and the compilation of his writings reinforced his reputation in his lifetime and after his death.
Chapter 4. Within The Old Palisade: The Transformation of Liaodong’s Landscapes

The chapter examines how the Old Palisade (*laobian* 老邊), the physical border barrier of Liaodong, transformed local geographic and social landscapes and elucidates the transition of Liaodong from outer frontier to inner borderland in the early Qing period. It compares the Old Palisade that circled the Liaodong region with the Ming Liaodong frontier wall that was discontinuous. It then traces the changing meaning of the Old Palisade from the Chongde and Shunzhi eras to the Kangxi period. I will argue that beginning in the Kangxi period, the Old Palisade became the border of a rhetorically ultimate inner land that represented the core of the Manchus’ homeland, the periphery of the Han people, and a rhetoric part of China Proper. The landscapes accordingly show that Liaodong evolved into the core of the Manchus’ regional identity and the traumatic margin of the Han world.

I use Wang Yiyuan’s (1658-?) *Records of Travel in Liaoziuo* (*Liaozuo jianwen lu* 遼左見聞錄) as the major source to examine how physical borders transformed borderlands.132 Wang was born and raised in the South and went to Liaodong in 1685.133 He earned the *juren* degree five years later and passed the *jinshi* examinations in 1703.134 As a *jinshi* degree holder, He was appointed as the magistrate of Lingtai county in Gansu. *Liaozuo Jianwen Lu* is based on Wang Yiyuan’s experience of living in Liaodong for nearly twenty years, and the content of this commonplace book (*biji* 筆記) shows the local society of Liaodong from the late 17th century to 1703. Although this *biji* records the richest body of surviving materials about the local society of

132 “*Liaozuo*” has the same meaning as Liaodong because “east”(*dong*, 東) and “left”(*zuo*, 左) had the same meaning.
133 Wang Yiyuan 王一元, *Liaozuo jianwen lu* (hereafter abbreviated as *LZJWL* 遼左見聞錄 [Records of Travel in East of The Liao River] (Copy from China’s National Library, 1722), 1a, 61a.
134 *Fengtian tongzhi* 奉天通志 (1934), 154: 35a, 155: 33b.
Liaodong in this period, it has hardly been used in existing scholarship. Wang Yiyuan was a typical Han literatus, and *Liaozuo jianwen lu* is similar in content and style to the numerous commonplace jottings and travel accounts depicting the Southwest and Southeast in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. However, unlike these *biji* about southwest and southeast China, Wang Yiyuan's writing of Liaodong exhibited a careful and secretive project of othering the Manchus at the core of the Manchu homeland that was being constructed.

1. *From The Ming Liaodong Frontier Wall to The Old Palisade*

   In 1681, four years before Wang Yiyuan’s trip to Liaodong, the Willow Palisade was completed.\(^{135}\) This border barrier had three sections, resembling the Chinese character *ren*. The first to begin construction were the western and eastern lines, known collectively as the Old Palisade. The western line started from Shanhaiguan in the west and went northeast to Weiyuanbao in Kaiyuan, and the eastern line reached from Weiyuanbao to the southeast to Fenghuangcheng. These two lines surrounded the perimeter of the Fengtian military governor’s administrative district, drawing the boundary to the area known as Liaodong. The territory outside the Old Palisade was reserved for the allied Mongols and tribal people who lived in Jinlin and Heilongjiang.

   Studies on the Willow Palisade are not in agreement as to whether the Qing built the Old Palisade based on the Ming Liaodong frontier wall. Based on Manchu-language archives, Guan Shuhe argues that the eastern line of the Willow Palisade was expanded on the basis of the military defenses built by the Qing army in 1633, and the western line was also based on the

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\(^{135}\) For the time when the Willow Palisade was completed, see Guan Shuhe 管書合, “Liutiaobian shijian niandai kaolue,” 柳條邊始建年代考略 [Study on the construction date of the Willow Palisade] *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu*, no.3 (2020):80-87.
border fence set up by the Qing army in the early years of the Chongde era to control the bend of the Liao River.\textsuperscript{136} Other scholars believe that the Qing built most of the Willow Palisade according to the original Liaodong wall of the Ming Dynasty. Richard Edmonds uses local gazetteers to show that at least a portion of the western line was a reconstruction of the Ming wall, which was simply filled with soil in the broken parts of old walls.\textsuperscript{137} Zhang Jie proposes that most of the Old Palisade was in line with the Liaodong frontier wall. Yet compared with the Liaodong wall, there were three obvious changes in the Old Palisade: the palisade expanded outward at Guangning and Weiyuanbao and moved westward along the Yalu River.\textsuperscript{138}

The foundations of different parts of the Willow Palisade likely were different. Although the construction processes of each section are quite vague in the Qing records, it is certain that the location of the Old Palisade mostly overlapped with the Ming Liaodong border wall. The exception is that in the western and northern parts of Liaodong, the Old Palisade enclosed the Liao River bend, Xingjing city (one of the “Three Capitals” in the Northeast), and the Yong Mausoleum (one of the “Three Mausoleums” of the Manchu ancestors) that had been outside the Ming Liaodong wall. At the same time, the land between the Yalu River and Fenghuangcheng that was once within the eastern edge of the Ming wall was entirely moved out of the border of Liaodong in the southeast.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{136} Guan, \textit{Liutiaobian}, 82-85.


\textsuperscript{139} Before the Ming Xuande era, the area of the Liao River Bend belonged to Liaodong. However, when Wang Ao built the border wall at Liaodong during the Zhengtong era, it was abandoned outside the border wall in order to use the Liao River as a barrier. For reasons for moving the border along the Yalu River during the Qing Dynasty, see
In addition to the alterations of location, the most visible change was in the material structure of Liaodong’s border barrier. In the 1530s, when the Ming started to build the Liaodong wall, the border barrier was in the form of a wooden fence. Since the 1540s, it had mostly drawn on local materials, including earth, stone and wood. In the late 15th century, the border wall in the Liaodong area was constantly reinforced and repaired due to the Ming defensive military strategies, the southward movement of the Jizhou Jurchen and the Uriankhai Mongols, and the active building of the Great Wall across the whole northern border. No later than 1510, a Liaodong elite sighed that: “When our dynasty first established its border, it buried woods to make the fence and dug pits for the trench. Later, the border barrier became small earthen walls. […] Now the scale of the walls is already high and thick. […] There are still people who want to bake bricks to build the wall.” By the end of the Ming, the Liaodong border wall in the river bend area was made of a rammed earthen structure, and the rest was built with stone with either earth or bricks or wood.

The Willow Palisade of the Qing Dynasty, despite some local variation, was mostly recorded as fence made of willows or other trees and woven ropes: “The border was all made of thorny tress that were pulled together.” Part of the Willow Palisade contained walls inside. Inaba Iwakichi gives a detailed description of a part of the Old Palisade based on the report of a local official from Liaodong: “The levee of trees was 3 chi high and 3 chi wide with a trench that

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140 Zhang Shizun 張士尊, Mingdai Liaodong Bianjiang Yanjiu 明代遼東邊疆研究[Study on the Ming Liaodong Frontier] (Jilin: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 2002), 69-70, 73.
141 He Qin, YLXSJ, 11.
142 Zhang, Mingdai Liaodong, 73.
143 Wang, LZJWL, 57b.
was 5 chi deep and 5 chi wide on the outer side. A wall was in the middle of the levee. Two willows were fastened horizontally to the trees or willow branches were woven together and fastened. The willow trees were spaced about 1 chi 7 cun apart or roughly three trees every 5 chi. The Old Palisade of the Qing was more like the Liaodong border wall built in the mid-15th century. In terms of structure, it was mainly wooden fence, and the height was “merely like the courtyard walls of people’s households.” Compared with the height and thickness of the border wall wrapped with bricks in Liaodong since the 16th century, the landscape around Liaodong was recast.

Despite the changes in the location and structure of the Old Palisade, the role that the Ming and Qing dynasties wanted the border to play did not change completely during the Chongde and Shunzhi periods. The Liaodong border wall of the Ming Dynasty was part of the extensive building of fortifications on the northern frontier since the mid-15th century. The Ming Liaodong faced constant raids from the Mongols and the Jurchens who settled around this region. The intricate interactions among the Han, the Mongols, the Jurchens, and Korean people in Liaodong further stirred up the Ming court’s desire to define its boundaries and to reaffirm the distinctions between “Chinese” (hua 華) and “non-Chinese”(yi 夷) since the Tumu Crisis in 1449, at which time awareness of the Ming state’s vulnerability increased. As the wall-building and the demarcation of hua and yi were of concern to the Ming court and court officials, in their minds, the Liaodong border wall should serve as a physical obstacle between the grasslands and the

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145 He, YLXSJ, 15.

Liaodong Military Commission that delineated the line of military defense and the realm of different ethnic groups’ activities.

During the Chongde and Shunzhi periods, Liaodong’s border continued to play the role of military and ethnic barrier. The eastern section of the Willow Palisade was set up at the beginning to guard against the threat of the Ming army and the Chosŏn on the southeast coast of the Liaodong Peninsula in the early Chongde era.\(^{147}\) The relocation of the Willow Palisade demonstrated above further served to shorten the defensive line around the Liaodong area and thus strengthened the protection against the Mongols and Chosŏn Korea. Moreover, in the periods of the Chongde and Shunzhi emperors, the Old Palisade was applied to redefine the ethnic dividing line of Liaodong. Just as in the Ming dynasty, the Northeast peoples were not strictly bounded by the Willow Palisade before the 1660s. For example, outside the western line, there were many lands belonging to the Manchu eight banners: “In 1655, when the Qing court approved the establishment of the border, many Manchu banner lands were located outside the border. The Court thought that these lands had been in existence for a long time and did not need to be relocated. Thus, the Qing court ordered these bannermen to live as usual while it considered opening the border so that these men would not miss out on cultivation and harvesting.”\(^{148}\) Along the eastern section, the Chosŏn Korean people also crossed the border to poach Ginseng or hunt from time to time, resulting in disputes repeatedly.\(^{149}\) The construction of the Old Palisade redefined the boundary between Liaodong and the Mongols and Korean people, as the western lines was extended to wall in the farmland of Liao River Bend, and the eastern

\(^{147}\) Guan, \textit{Liutiaobian}, 81-83.

\(^{148}\) \textit{Da Qing huidian zeli} 大清會典則例, 34: 41a-43a.

\(^{149}\) Guan, \textit{Liutiaobian}, 83.
section was moved westward to keep a no-man’s land between it and the Chosŏn Korea.

From the perspective of the Qing court, the meaning of the Willow Palisade changed during the Kangxi period. Although the Kangxi emperor did not modify his two predecessors’ policy towards Liaodong and its border, he began a new project that rendered the Northeast a symbol of the divine homeland of the Manchu people and the geographic root of Manchu identity. Mark C. Elliott proposes that beginning in 1671, the Qing court started this project through incorporating the Changbai Mountains, the mythical origins of the Manchus, and the city of Fengtian, the administrative center of Qing Liaodong and the first capital of the Manchu conquerors, into court ritual, literary representations, distinctive administration, and cartography. This conflation enabled the emperor to establish a rhetoric of “Greater Fengtian (Ma Mukden)” as a legendary site of Manchu identity. ¹⁵⁰

However, after the city of Fengtian and the Changbai mountains became the co-foundation for the Manchu regional identity, a problem arose: on the one hand, rhetorically, “Greater Fengtian” suggested a symbolic connection of Fengtian city and the Changbai mountains that were across the Old Palisade; on the other hand, the Old Palisade surrounding Liaodong not only drew the boundary between Liaodong and Mongolia and Korea, but delineated an actual border between Fengtian and the area further north where the Changbai mountains were located. This meant that the Qing court needed to give a new interpretation to the Old Willow Palisade.

A poem of the Kangxi emperor perfectly showcases this new interpretation. The Emperor wrote in a poem titled “Entering the Willow Palisade”:

The Jiuguan Terrace leans on the Willow Palisade and joins the majestic mountains. 九關
t臺據柳條邊，峻嶺崇山相屬連
Once entering (the Willow Palisade), one will immediately feel the difference between

the inside (nei) and the outside (wai). As the homeland comes closer, my mood grows joyful.\textsuperscript{151} 一人分明別内外，沛豊近矣意欣然

The Jiuguan Terrace was a gate in the western section of the Willow Palisade, neighboring the Mongol tribes. Yet in this poem, the Kangxi Emperor did not emphasize that the Willow Palisade represented the military or ethnic or living boundary between Liaodong and the Mongols. Instead, he proposed that the Willow Palisade divided the inside (nei 内) and the outside (wai 外). Here, nei and wai did not refer merely to the area within western line of the Willow Palisade and Mongolia; the eastern and western lines were seen as a whole, together defining the inside and the outside. The nei and wai now had three layers of meanings: first, relative to the more northern Manchu homeland of Jilin and Heilongjiang, the area within the Old Palisade was nei; second, compared with Mongolia and Korea outside the Willow Palisade, within the Old Palisade was nei; third, in comparison with the Han world south of the palisade, land within the Old Palisade was nei. Defined by the Old Palisade, Liaodong became an ultimate nei. In other words, 1) compared with Jilin and Heilongjiang, Liaodong was the core of the Manchus’ homeland, 2) juxtaposed with Mongolia and Korea, Liaodong became a rhetoric part of China Proper for the first time, and 3) Liaodong became the periphery of the Han people where the Manchus dominated.\textsuperscript{152}

As the demarcation of nei and wai, the Old Palisade designated a new role to the Liaodong area—a Manchu inner borderland. This borderland was exclusively surrounded by a clear

\textsuperscript{151} 义县志, 2:39a. Peifeng is the hometown of the Emperor Gaozu of Han.

\textsuperscript{152} The term “nei” and “wai” also applied to the banner system and civilian system. “In terms of the ‘inner’ (dorgi) and ‘outer’ (tulergi) dichotomies of which the Qing were fond, the Chinese-martial, together with the Manchus and the Mongol bannermen, were ‘inner.’ Chinese civilians were ‘outer.’” Pamela Kyle Crossley, \textit{A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 108.
border—a border that displayed its separation from Mongolia, Chosŏn Korea, the more northern Jilin and Heilongjiang, and the Han world to the south. Specifically, on the one hand, Liaodong was the core of the Manchus’ regional identity protected by the surrounding borderland, “the place where the dragon arose” (longxing zhi di 龍興之地)\(^{153}\). On the other hand, it was the margin of China Proper, the long-lasting Han world, demonstrating a complete defeat of the Ming dynasty not so long ago. In the late 17\(^{th}\) century and the early 18\(^{th}\) century, when Wang Yiyuan traveled to Liaodong, the landscapes of Liaodong fully manifested its new role.

2. *From Inner Frontier to Outer Borderland: The Vicissitude of Landscapes*

The abandoned Ming garrisons, castles, battlements, fortresses, and watchtowers were the most direct indicator of the transformation of Liaodong from a frontier controlled by a Han Chinese dynasty to the territory of the Manchus. Alongside the Old Palisade of the Qing, which marked the Manchu regional identity, were the deserted Ming garrisons. “In Liaodong, from Shanhaiguan to Kaiyuan and Tieling, every thirty \(li\) there is a garrison. These garrisons look like a chain of pearls and were part of the old border defense system of the Ming. In the past, soldiers lined up to guard here. Today, only empty fortresses remain, and most of them are in ruins.”\(^{154}\)

Wang devoted much of his writing to the landscapes around Shanhaiguan, the southern end of the Old Palisade, from where he entered Liaodong and was impressed by the contrast of Shanhaiguan’s majestic terrain and the dilapidated Ming fortifications that lay in between the mountains. “Shanhaiguan is adjacent to the sea in the south, next to the mountains in the north. The tigers coiled here, and the Great Wall ran in a zigzagged line over the sublime mountains to


\(^{154}\) Ibid., 7b-8a.
the sky.”155 Yet at the end of the Great Wall were the decaying observation towers and unoccupied castles of the Ming. “In the eastern part of Shanhaiguan, watchtowers were built with brick and stone four to five zhang high, covering an area of two to three mu. Around them are battlements that are either square or round. The small castles used to defend the border were scattered for thousands of miles, even at the tops of the surrounding mountains, far above the ground. Yet now they are all ruins covered with smoke and choked with weeds.”156 “The fortress south of Shanhaiguan stretches into the sea for two to three li, and the foundation of the fortress is cast in iron. It was built by Xu Da, the king of the mountain in the early Ming. The Chenghai tower is on the fortress. Every time the sea wind blows, the tower shakes with the wind. At a glance, the sky and the sea are joined together.”157 The imposing Great Wall and the solid and densely distributed fortifications at the border of Liaozuo were the remnants of the Ming Dynasty. By the time Wang Yiyuan entered Liaozuo, these fortifications had already been overtaken by weeds or seawater. Such a contrast directly visualized the change of regime and the trauma that Liaozuo endured at the end of the Ming dynasty. For Han literati like Wang Yiyuan, the remaining Ming fortifications and the still magnificent Great Wall were suffused with nostalgia and thus marked Liaozuo as the margin of Han Chinese. From the perspective of the Manchus, the entry into Shanhaiguan was the beginning of the Qing imperial household's takeover of China Proper, and the abandoned Ming fortifications, which had not succeeded in stopping them from moving south, now served as a symbol of the Manchus’ victory and authority.

155 Wang, LZJWL, 8b.
156 Ibid., 8a
157 Ibid., 8a-b.
Another shift brought by the new role of Liaodong was the relocation of regional centers. During the Ming, the most prosperous towns in Liaodong were situated in Tieling and Liaoyang. The former was the hometown of the prestigious military family of Li Chengliang, a Liaodong general, in the late Ming, and the latter was the administrative center of the Liaodong Military Commission and the station of the military governors of Liaodong. In the Qing, the largest garrison was at the city of Fengtian (Ming Shenyang). Wang Yiyuan recounted the decline of Tieling and Liaoyang:

In the early Wanli period, Liaodong was extremely prosperous, and there were hundreds of hereditary military officers in the Tieling Guard. The town was full of official residences, and there was no space for soldiers and civilians to live. They instead built their houses outside the town because of its narrowness. Master Pingyuan Li Chengliang and his four sons took control of the Liaozuo’s military one after another, with their troops numbering tens of thousands of soldiers in their troops. Their residences stretched more than ten li outside the city. The dwellings of each household were close to each other, and the trees obscured the sky so that the town walls could not even be seen. More than 2000 prostitutes lived in the town. They embellished the ends of their garters with scented capsules that were studded with jewels, and one garter could cost 30 to 40 jin. Their scent could be smelled from a few steps away. Every evening, both sides of the public road were filled with the sound of pipes and strings. Larger towns like Liaoyang were even more prosperous. These towns were more booming than the cities and towns in the south. However, now Tieling has become a grassland. From prosperity to decay, it is truly lamentable.¹⁵⁸

However, after the Manchus built their first capital in 1625, royal palaces and tombs began to be established in the city of Fengtian, especially in the Kangxi period. Soldiers of the Eight Banners and civilian people gathered in Fengtian, and merchants also started to gather. As a result, the public roads of Liaodong that once converged in Liaoyang instead turned to Fengtian city. Thousands of civil and military officials were stationed in Fengtian. Official institutions were set up, simulating the example of Beijing. The location and orientation of official offices

¹⁵⁸ Wang, LZJWL, 34a-b
were also the same as in Beijing. Every morning, Fengtian officials returned to their own private mansions after the daily morning assembly. Once again, the center of Liaodong became more bustling than the south and even more prosperous than before because of its imitation of the Beijing capital—except that the social landscapes of a prosperous center moved from Liaoyang and Tieling to the city of Fengtian.

A prosperous center by no means indicated that the Qing rendered the whole Liaodong area flourishing in spite of the imperial household’s attempt to build a ritualized homeland here. On the contrary, what the Qing court wanted to build in Liaodong was not another center modeled exactly on Beijing, but the core of Manchu homeland surrounded and protected by an untouched borderland. In the Kangxi period, although the official Qing ban on migration to Manchuria by Han Chinese had not yet come into being, the mass exodus of the Liaodong population in the early Qing left most of the area wilderness. The desolation outside the towns was in stark contrast to the prosperity of Fengtian and other Liaodong towns, whose prosperity was entirely the result of manipulation by the Qing court. During his journey from Liaoyang southwest to the seashore, Wang Yiyuan and his companions did not take the official roads, which were inaccessible, with weeds several chi high and stretching to the horizon. Within a hundred li, there were no traces of humans, but plenty of tiger tracks—there were tigers lying in the grass by the roadsides. Mosquitoes were all over the air, like flying snowflakes, and their sound was comparable to thunder. Wang and his companion’s mules and horses were bloody from head to foot from mosquito bites, kicking their hooves and refusing to move forward. Liaodong in the late 17th century regressed to a dangerous and depopulated frontier with a harsh environment as

160 Ibid., 62a.
a result of the exodus of Liaodong residents. Additionally, when Wang depicted the mountains and rivers of Liaodong, he often praised their beauty or magnificence by saying: "If these mountains were in Wu and Yue region, they would be famous."\(^{161}\) That is to say, even in areas with fine scenery and favorable natural environment, there was still a lack of people who could appreciate and visit these beautiful landscapes in sparsely populated Liaodong. Thus, Wang counterposed Liaodong’s landscapes to the Jiangnan area to convey a strong sense of Liaodong as a periphery.

As the rebuilding of the regional center materialized the ascendancy and authenticity of the Qing imperial household, Wang Yiyuan transfigured the trauma experienced by Liaodong in the late Ming into myths about the landscapes left by the Ming, based on which an awareness of Liaodong as the frontier of the Han world was raised. Wang described his own experience: “There was a deadly massacre in the western part of Tieling Pass during the Chosŏn’s Imjin war at the end of the Jiajing period. Many ghosts still hover around the pass. In the winter of 1695, a friend of mine invited me to go on a guest tour. It was almost midnight when I suddenly wanted to go home, so I left without saying goodbye to my friend. The town had been dilapidated for a long time, and there was only a dark road to walk between battlements. When I almost got to the official road, I suddenly heard the sound of ghosts chirping, and in a moment hundreds of ghost sounds surrounded me. My hair was almost standing on end, and I rebuked them loudly before the sounds disappeared. From then on, I dared not walk alone at night.”\(^{162}\) Wang also recorded that every time it rained, many dirt clods fell from the ruined castle outside the western pass of


\(^{162}\) Ibid., 67a.
Tieling. Wang believed that these dirt clods were blood left by the soldiers during the war.¹⁶³

The trauma experienced by Liaodong also raises an unspoken awareness of the Manchus as the hostile other in Wang Yiyuan’s description of the local landscapes. Wang recorded that Tieling had been “a city full of loyal and righteous soldiers and civilians” during the Qing’s conquest, and by digging a few cun in the soil at Tieling, one would discover swords, arrows, armor, and skeletons all around under the earth.¹⁶⁴ In 1619, Nurhaci and his army used ladders and other weaponry to attack the town of Tieling and broke the city walls. The Ming army fought with Nurhaci’s army who successfully entered the town, and the Ming soldiers defending the city were almost wiped out. The officers and soldiers in Nurhaci’s army “killed no fewer than one hundred thousand people, including both men and women; and only about a thousand people survived and escaped from the city.”¹⁶⁵ After the battle, Nurhaci ordered the town of Tieling to be destroyed. In his narrative, Wang Yiyuan did not point out that the weapons and skeletons were the product of the Manchu attack at the end of the Ming Dynasty, as in the case of the Chosŏn’s Imjin war. Yet, he used the description of the Liaodong’s landscapes to express an awareness that the Manchus had at least once been the hostile other.

3. Conclusion

This chapter examines how the transformation of the Liaodong border barrier reshaped the nature of the Liaodong borderland and how local Han elites interacted with the physical border building project. It first traces the building of the Old Palisade. The alterations of location and

¹⁶³ Wang, LZJWL, 67b.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 7b.

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changes in the material structure of border barriers from the Ming to the Qing transformed the landscapes around Liaodong. While the Old Palisade served as a military and ethnic barrier in the early Qing, from the Kangxi era it became the demarcation of nei and wai that defined Liaodong as a Manchu inner borderland. In Liaozuo jianwen lu, while the abandoned Ming military fortifications and relocated regional centers signaled the complete defeat of the Ming dynasty and evoked Wang’s nostalgia, they also marked the authority of the Qing, helping to construct the lore of the divine Manchu homeland. Liaodong was preserved as the core of the Manchu homeland surrounded and protected by an untouched borderland. The landscapes of Liaodong also conveyed the trauma experienced by Liaodong, raising awareness of Liaodong as the frontier of the Han world and the Manchus as the hostile other.
Chapter 5. Representing Women in Liaodong: The Local Practice of Building Ethnic Boundaries

Chapter 5 converses with two topics: border and ethnicity. These two topics are often intertwined. While borders have long acted as ethnic divides in history and created social and cultural distinctions, ethnicity can either be based on acceptance of the border or resistance to it. In the Qing context, border and ethnicity became even more interrelated and sometimes pointed towards the same end. Borders, such as garrison walls, were an important part of the changing construction of the Qing’s ethnic representation. However, as Mark C. Elliott suggests, ethnicity was not a topic for open discussion in the Qing, because such discussion would lead to severe consequences that neither Han Chinese nor the Manchus could afford: “exile or capital punishment (for the Han), delegitimation and rebellion (for the Manchus).”166 As a result, the ethnic discourse in the Qing period was ambiguously presented in sources. In this chapter, I will use gender as a lens to dissect the ethnic discourse and its relationship to the imposition of borders in Liaodong in 15th and 17th centuries. The concealed ethno-cultural difference was revealed in Han literati’s descriptions of frontier women and their unspoken self-images underneath their narratives.167 The Manchus and the Han discussed in this chapter do not refer to Manchu and Han ethnicities. Instead, the phrases touch on the relationship between people who belonged to the Eight Banners (bannerman) and people who did not (civilian).168

166 Mark C. Elliott, The Manchu Way the Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009), xv.

167 Steven B. Miles and Louisa Schein’s article on southwest China show that frontier encounters were structured by a asymmetry in which indigenous groups were represented by erotic women, while Han observers appeared to be masculine males. See Steven B. Miles, “Strange Encounters on The Cantonese Frontier: Region and Gender in Kuang Lu’s (1664-1650) Chiya,” Nan Nü 8.1 (2006): 115-155; Louisa Schein, “Gender and Internal Orientalism in China,” Modern China 23, no.1 (1997): 69-98.

168 Here, I follow Wang Yiyuan’s usage of the phrases. Wang’s definition of the Manchus and the Han is explored in
Specifically, this chapter compares the images of Liaodong women in He Qin’s writing collection with Liaodong women in Wang Yiyuan’s commonplace jottings over two centuries later. Both He Qin’s collection and Wang’s biji were written at the exact time when the Ming and Qing border barriers of Liaodong were first finished. While both attempted to draw ethnic boundaries that the border barrier failed to delineate, the nature of borderlands wherein they had lived changed completely. Faced with threats of nomadic others, He Qin built a binary system between the Chinese and the nomads. Wang constructed an ethnographic hierarchy of self and others to solve his dilemma of positioning himself in the core of the Manchu homeland. This hierarchy reflected the complex sentiments that Han literati and southerners had for their Manchu rulers and their own fates, and being in the Northeast, the sentiments were reinforced. Through categorizing women in Liaodong, Wang Yiyuan participated in both constructing and deconstructing the ethnic ideology of the Kangxi reign.

1. **Brave Women in He Qin’s Narrative**

He Qin, the Confucian scholar who spent most of his lifetime in Liaodong, began to write down his interactions with Ming literati and Liaodong local people about two hundred years before Wang’s travel in Liaodong. Similar to Wang Yiyuan, He Qin lived in an era that witnessed the completion of a border barrier in Liaodong. Both He and Wang depicted Liaodong

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Section 2. To learn how Han banner people understood their identity and lived a banner way, see David Campbell Porter, “Ethnic and Status Identity in Qing China: The Hanjun Eight Banners” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2018). Porter believes that although Han ethnicity was central to official conceptions of Hanjun identity, it was secondary to their status identity as banner people prior to the 1750s. Elliott and Pamela Kyle Crossley disagree with each other on the relationship between ethnicity and banner status. While Elliott believes that the Eight Banners were considered to follow ethnic lines since the period of Hong Taiji, Crossley argues that ethnicity was a modern term that only appeared when people had a consciousness of it, and banners were cultural and political entities before the Qianlong period. See Elliott, *The Manchu Way*; Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Crossley, “Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” *Late Imperial China* 11, no. 1 (1990): 1–35.
women in their writings. Although the representations of women in their narratives are quite different, their selective descriptions of women serve a common goal—drawing ethnic boundaries that the border barrier failed to delineate. The difference is that while He Qin tried to build a dichotomy between Chinese (hua, 華) within the Liaodong border wall and the nomads outside, Wang constructed a multilayered ethnic hierarchy with women from Han elite families at the top and tribal women from the far north at the bottom, which demarcated ethnic boundaries within the Old Palisade.

He Qin’s writings chronicled two heroic stories of women. In the first story, in Guan Family Village of Liaodong, a woman was abducted by the Jianzhou raiders when the male adults of her family were absent from home. Three days later, her husband returned and found that the household had been sacked. The man then sneaked into the Jurchens camps and waited for his wife to appear. One day, when he saw his wife coming out to carry water, he conspired with her on how to leave the place. That night, the woman piled firewood outside the house of the Jurchens and set it afire. When the fire broke out, the Jurchens awakened and fled while still naked. The husband killed all of them with arrows. He then took his wife and all the belongings of the Jurchens and returned home. From then on, other Jurchen raiders were afraid to pass Guan Family Village.  

In the second story, only the brave women are the protagonists. In the east mountain of Liaoyang, the Jurchen raided a household when all the adult male members were absent, and only three to four women at house. The raiders did not know the situation and hesitated to enter the house. Thus, the raiders shot arrows from the yard into the house to terrorize the people inside. Although the women inside the house did not have bows, two of them pulled a rope, another placed arrows on the rope and drew the rope tight to shoot out of the

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169 He, YLXSJ, 106.
window. After shooting a few arrows, the raiders still did not retreat, yet their arrows had been used up. A woman deliberately shouted: “Take some arrows.” Then these women took bunches of straws from the roof and threw them to the ground, recreating the sound of arrows.  

The Liaodong women described by He Qin were extraordinarily courageous, while the Jurchen raiders were brutal and gullible in these two stories about local women. Although He Qin did not mention the ethnicity of these women, there is no doubt that a hostility was between Liaodong people, whether Han or non-Han who could be categorized as hua, and the caitiff (lu, 虜) who constantly invaded the Liaodong border and launched raids as part of their foraging in his writing. The image of women in Liaodong who were fighting and confronting the nomads breaks the standard narrative of these encounters, in which women became captives, resources, and objects. He Qin’s descriptions convey the message that even women were fighting the Jurchen raiders bravely, and even women were capable of defeating the caitiffs, thereby casting aspersions on the soldiers, military officers, and the Liaodong residents who had failed to do so. More specifically, He assumed that the encounters between Liaodong women, and thus Liaodong’s local people, and the lu could only be violent and that there was no possibility of peaceful coexistence between the hua and the lu.

Through the representation of brave women, He Qin intended to show an utterly hostile relationship between the lu populations around Liaodong and the hua Chinese within the Liaodong frontier wall. He believed that once the lu people entered the city, even if these lu did not plunder in the city, the Liaodong soldiers would probably kill them for rewards, which would

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170 He, YLXSJ, 107.
still lead to the destruction of the border defense.\footnote{He, YLXSJ, 19-20.} He emphasized that the hua and the lu should be separated and kept at a distance by a defensive system composed of walls, fortresses, watchtowers, and, most importantly, the guarding military—a system that strictly delimited the boundary of Liaodong. In his views, whether it was the Jurchens, the Uriankhai Mongols, or other Mongol tribes, they were all threats to the Ming border. Once close to the border, “anyone can be a spy spotting the news inside the border wall.”\footnote{Ibid. 19.} As a result, He supported the burning of the grasslands outside the frontier wall, which he believed would make the lu unable to herd and stay away from the border wall.\footnote{Ibid., 111. Interestingly, there is also a record of burning around Liaozuo in LZJWL, yet the purpose of burning was to drive away fierce animals.}

However, He Qin’s assumption did not reflect the actual relationship between Liaodong residents and the surrounding lu. His vision of Liaodong as a bounded frontier territory derived from the growth of interregional trade and the mobilization of frontier people in the second half of the 15th century. The boundary between Liaodong residents and the nomads was porous. Taking Yizhou City of the Liaodong Military Commission as an example, the Uriankhai Mongols not only camped near the frontier wall but also settled within Yizhou City with the permission of the military officers. These Mongols also occasionally went to neighboring guardposts and cities to rob. Most Yizhou residents knew of this, yet no one accused the Mongols.\footnote{Ibid., 76.} As the case of Yizhou shows, Liaodong military officers and residents refused to refrain from contact with the nomads. For the military officers who could take advantage of their positions, the lu were the sources of their illegal profits, and the Liaodong border wall indicated
their sphere of superiority over the *lu*. Ming Liaozuo commoners even freely changed their positions between the nomads and the Liaodong Military Commission. Compared with He Qin, even the Ming court held a more flexible attitude towards the nomads. In 1487, the northern Mongol tribes expelled and looted the Uriankhai Mongols, located in the upper Liao River, near western Liaodong. The Ming court issued an edict allowing the Uriankhai tribes, except for their strong soldiers who were required to be stationed three to four hundred miles away from Liaodong, to temporarily settle next to the Liaodong border to wait until the northern Mongols retreated before returning to their homes. The reason for this given by the Ming court was that "the Uriankhai non-Chinese (*yi*) people are the shelters for our frontiers, and they are now threatened by the *lu*. If we do not take care of them with benevolence, we may lose their support and cause them to lean towards others."

After the Uriankhai tribes moved near the Liaodong border, He Qin lamented that it was a devastating blow to the frontier defense of Liaodong to tolerate the Uriankhai Mongols to live near the border wall. In the past, when the border was the most secure, He argued, the nomads were the furthest away from the frontier wall.

In He Qin’s view, ethnic relations in Liaodong were binary, exclusively contained by the categories of *hua* and *lu*. Although both He Qin and the Ming court identified the Uriankhai Mongols as a non-Chinese ethnic group, they put them into different categories. In the decree promulgated by the Ming court, the Uriankhai Mongols were referred to as “*yi*” while the northern Mongols who looted the Uriankhai tribes were called “*lu*.“ Yet, He Qin regarded the

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175 “*Ming Xianzong Shilu* 明憲宗實錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 291:4921-22.


177 During the Ming, “*yi*” referred to the ethnic groups not belonging to the Han population in the central dominion (the general treatises on *si yi*, 四夷), while “*lu*” has always been used to describe the "non-Chinese" of the northern border region, sometimes specifically referring to the Mongols.
Uriankhai as "lu." When He described the location of Yizhou, he said: “Yizhou is adjacent to Guangning in the east, Jinzhou in the south, Daning in the west, and only neighbored the lu in the north. During the Yongle period, the imperial court moved the Uriankhai Mongols to Daning. The lu then threatened Yizhou from two directions.” While “yi” alluded to the potential that the ethnic groups’ customs could be transformed into Chinese (hua) ones, “lu” implied the nomad barbarians who posed continuous threats to the Ming border and implied that they were incapable of being civilized. Whereas the Ming court thought that the Uriankhai Mongols could help the Ming contain the northern Mongols, He Qin believed that the Uriankhai were dangerous barbarians who could never be civilized and left no space for the category of yi in Liaodong area.

2. **Wang Yiyuan’s Project of Self and Others**

Wang Yiyuan drew a very different picture of women and ethnicity in early Qing Liaodong. Compared with He Qin, living in an inner borderland rather than an outer frontier, Wang did not experience the threats of the nomads across the border. He was faced with a new dilemma: how to define his position in the core of the Manchu homeland. He finally decided to define himself and other Han elites as the self and cautiously hinted that the Manchus were part of the other. Through the depiction of women’s clothing, bodies, and activities, Wang actively engaged in a project of categorizing women who lived in and moved around Liaodong area. Women in his writing were categorized under different appellations: women from tribes outside the Old Palisade, women from Russia, women of the New Manchus (yiqimanzhou 義氣滿洲), women

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178 He, *YLXSJ*, 37.

179 Yiqimanzhou was the Chinese translation for the Manchu term “ice Manju”, in which “ice” means “new”. It refers to non-Jurchen Manchurian tribes who were incorporated into the banner system in the early Qing.
of Chosŏn Korea, women from Yongping Prefecture, and Liaozuo women. Under the category of Liaozuo women, Wang further differentiated Manchu women and Han women, as well as Han women in elite families and commoners. Wang Yiyuan’s demarcation and categorization of women not only exhibited the ethnic and identity boundaries within Liaodong’s border but also his attempt to build a hierarchy of self and others and his participation in the Qing’s construction of Manchu identity.

In the late 17th century, when Wang Yiyuan traveled around Liaodong, the Old Palisade, like the Ming Liaodong border wall in the late 15th century, did not draw an real boundary between ethnic communities in the Northeast. The imposition of the Willow Palisade was one of the cases of confrontation between the state and local people in borderlands. There was an enormous gap between everyday life in and around Liaodong and the rhetoric of border maintenance, in which the Old Palisade was the military and ethnic barrier between Liaodong and the Mongols, Koreans, and northern tribal peoples, as well as the boundary between nei and wai. Moreover, the ban that forbade Han emigration into the Old Palisade was not launched until the Qianlong period. During the Kangxi reign, although entry into Liaodong was restricted by the state through the issuing official credentials, the restriction mainly targeted ginseng poachers, fur merchants, escaped criminals, and Korean envoys, and there was no prohibition on other Han Chinese and the Manchus passing in and out. On the contrary, the Kangxi emperor issued three statutes that awarded official positions to people who were able to recruit peasants to farm in Liaodong. In 1740, when the Qianlong emperor imposed the legal ban on Han settlement in

180 Zhang, Liutiaobian, Yinpiao, 82-83.
181 Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成 [Collections of Ancient and Present Books] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), 52: 36, 37, 39. In 1688, the emperor suspended previous statutes but did not ban Han migration to Manchuria.
Liaodong because of his anxiety about the crisis of Manchu identity, the Willow Palisade began to serve as an institutional demarcation preventing free movement of people and goods and protecting imperial property in the Northeast. It is safe to say that the late 17th century saw the most unconstrained interactions between different ethnic groups in early Qing Liaodong.

In *Liaozuo jianwen lu*, Wang did not describe or imagine his own interactions with women in Liaodong but recounted the activities of these women across ethnic communities from an observer's perspective. Most of the interethnic activities that these women were involved in were cross-border trade. For example, men and women from the Nakuan tribe of northwestern Manchuria passed through Liaodong on their way to the Shanhaiguan and exchanged beeswax, amber, cattle, and horses with Liaodong people. Wang observed that women of the New Manchus, who became a part of the Eight Banners system in the early Qing, “come in groups of three or four and enter Liaodong markets to trade.”

Wang also noticed a process of acculturation that was taking place in Liaodong. After the 1688 war with Russia, the Qing accepted the surrender of thousands of Russian soldiers and placed them in the Eight Banners outside the Eight Gates of Liaodong. Russian women who accompanied these soldiers gradually learned the Chinese language, and even the color of their hair changed slightly. Interethnic movements also included the sale and enslavement of women. Tribes living outside the Old Palisade sold their sons and daughters to Liaodong people when they had poor harvests and

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185 Ibid., 35a.

186 Ibid., 16b.
Hunts.\textsuperscript{187} Human traffickers from the interior provinces also brought children to Liaodong and sold them to tribes outside the Old Palisade for furs, ginseng, or cattle.\textsuperscript{188} When Liaodong people went to the northeastern mountains to poach ginseng, they took Korean women for their sexual labor.\textsuperscript{189}

Like He Qin, when Wang Yiyuan described interethnic interactions, he clearly identified the boundaries between different ethnic groups. Yet, unlike He Qin, these boundaries were not in territorial terms. In the decades when the Willow Palisade did not separate the ethnic other, Wang tried to label categorical boundaries between self and others, albeit within, rather than along, the Liaodong border. Wang did not construct a hostile relationship to emphasize the existence of boundaries. In addition to writing down the names of ethnic groups, one of his methods was, to distinguish women’s exotic body features and clothing—a common practice in China’s long history of othering barbarians or less civilized groups.\textsuperscript{190} In an ethnic discourse, the information conveyed by body features and dress has subtle differences. The distinction in bodies constructs, as innate difference, a greater distance between the self and the ethnic other, while the difference in clothing is about practices and customs, which some scholars believe were not necessarily determinants of Chineseness or barbarism from the Song dynasty.\textsuperscript{191} In

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 35a.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 31a.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 59a-59b.
\item \textsuperscript{190} For example, see Shin, \textit{The Making of the Chinese State Ethnicity and Expansion}; Emma Jinhua Teng, \textit{Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895} (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004).
\item \textsuperscript{191} See Shao-yun Yang. \textit{The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China}. (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2019). Yet, I think this argument is true for the Han literati like Wang Yiyuan in early Qing but not for the Qing conquest elites, who utilized practices and customs to construct banner system. For Wang Yiyuan, the ethnic other did not hint at barbarism.
\end{itemize}
Wang’s narrative, because of their distinctive physical features, Russian women and tribal women were the most exotic groups and thus at the periphery of the ethnic hierarchy that Wang constructed. Russian women had high noses, sunken and misty eyes that lacked luster, and red or yellow hair. Few of them had black hair.\textsuperscript{192} Tribal women from the far north had very high cheekbones, which made them looked similar to men. Wang further compared these women outside the Liaodong border with women of the interior, making a clear statement that tribal women belonged to the ethnic other. “Sometimes I meet one or two beauties among these women, and their beauty is natural with no powder applied, which is not what women inside the Shanhai Pass can expect.”\textsuperscript{193} As for New Manchu women living in Liaodong, Wang only described their clothing: “Their clothes are mostly embroidered, and they wear shoes made of a whole piece of cowhide with \textit{wula} grass.”\textsuperscript{194} Their native dress was different from Russian women and tribal women. The former “wear red and green woolen clothes. The length of their sleeves is more than three \textit{chi}, leaving a hole under the armpit part. When they need to bow with hands held in front, they throw the sleeves over their shoulders and put their hands out of the sleeves. After they withdraw their hands, the sleeves return to their original shape. They all wear a big felt hat.”\textsuperscript{195} The latter wore their hair down and were barefoot.\textsuperscript{196} In Wang Yiyuan’s narrative, women of the New Manchus were less alien than Russia and tribal women.

While the portrayal of Russian women, tribal women, and New Manchu women exoticized and othered these ethnic groups, it raised a question: who was the self? It was certain that these

\textsuperscript{192} Wang, \textit{LZJWL}, 16b.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 34b.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 35a.

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 16b.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 30a.
ethnic women were closer to the ethnic other than “Liaozuo women”. Nonetheless, the category of Liaozuo women did not appear as the ethnic self in the usual sense. While most Ming and Qing travel accounts and commonplace jottings about frontiers involved othering frontier groups, they did not devote space describing who belonged to the self because an othering project would not have needed to emphasize how the antithesis of the ethnic other looked.\textsuperscript{197} However, Wang spilled a lot of ink depicting the dress and marital customs of Liaozuo women and cited southern customs to make his description more understandable for his readers. The hairstyles of Liaozuo women were different according to their marital status. “Liaozuo women who are not married leave a strand of hair near their forehead in the part of the hair split and plait it. When they get married, they split all their hair in the middle. It is just like the ceremony of ‘coiling up’ (\textit{shangji 上髻}) when a woman gets married in the south.”\textsuperscript{198} “When a Liaozuo woman is first betrothed to someone, her aunt will ask her female relatives to come to her house, and the woman will come out to pay her respects. These female relatives will put a jade hairpin on her hair. This ritual is called ‘inserting the band’ (\textit{chadai 插帯}). The betrothal gifts given to the woman are called ‘sheep money’ (\textit{yangqian 羊錢}). When the wedding ceremony comes to a close, the aunt will come with colored silk to help the girl cut out her garment.”\textsuperscript{199} As Wang imparted to his readers a detailed image of Liaozuo women, this means that at least for Wang and his audience, the category of Liaozuo women did not belong to the ethnic self as a whole.

In that case, who fell into in the category of Liaozuo women? Wang’s narrative had shown

\textsuperscript{197} The selfness was raised through various period of contact with other. See Thomas S. Mullaney, \textit{Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China’s Majority} (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

\textsuperscript{198} Wang, \textit{LZJWL}, 17b.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 37b.
that Russia and New Manchu women, who settled and lived in Liaodong, did not belong to Liaozuo women. The hairstyle of Liaozuo women described in Wang's writing was typical of Manchu women. Yet Liaozuo women did not only refer to Manchu women either. Elliott demonstrates that the differences between Manchu and Han Chinese women were conspicuous: “Apart from her natural feet, the appearance of the Manchu woman differed from the Han woman’s in a number of other ways. Her clothing, with its narrower sleeves, and above all her hair, were also different.”

However, this was not the case in the local society of Liaodong. Wang Yiyuan noted that Liaodong was initially the place of the Eight Banners, and less than three-tenths of people were Han Chinese out of the banner system. Therefore, Han people had similar customs as the Manchus, and their diet and daily life were mostly the same. All the Liaozuo women observed the attire of the Qing dynasty, with “hair worn in bun and narrow sleeves, and did not bind their feet.” This suggests that Liaouzo women not only referred to the Manchu women of the Eight Banners living in Liaozuo but also included Han civilian women, who primarily followed the Manchu customs.

However, not all Han women living in Liaodong belonged to the category of Liaozuo women, and not all Han women were affiliated with the self. After describing Liaozuo women as “all observing the Manchu attire,” Wang went on to write: “only the peasant women who were recruited from Yongping Prefecture to cultivate in Liaodong in past years still keep the old

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201 In the early Qing, the Northeast strictly implemented a banner system, and the Eight Banners took charge of both military and administrative management of northeast society. After immigrants, who were predominantly civilians, entered the Northeast, the system of prefecture and county gradually formed. The Eight Banners managed bannermen, and the prefectures and counties managed civilians—the two systems coexisted.


203 Ibid., 6a.
customs. They like to wear red and green clothes, and their feet are bow-shaped but still big. Their hair buns on the head carry bands with inlaid jewels, the same as the dress in the former Beijing capital. They have various kinds of hair accessories such as cascading hair clips, hairpins, and hooks for the sideburns, which are too hideous to describe."\(^{204}\)

The range of the category Liaozuo women is now clear: Liaozuo women was applied to all banner and civilian women living in Liaodong except for women from Russia, northern tribes, and Yongping Prefecture. Yongping Prefecture was part of the Zhili province. As a “Han” territory, it was close to Shanhaiguan, the southern end of the Old Palisade. During the Shunzhi and Kangxi eras, to restore the production of traditional agricultural areas, the court issued five decrees that encouraged people to enter the Liaodong region to reclaim the land.\(^{205}\) There was an influx of people from Yongping into Liaodong. However, Wang’s account shows that these recruited peasants were not integrated to the local society of banner people and civilians in Liaodong in terms of customs, but rather formed their own communities. In addition to farming, these peasants often pawned themselves as servants. After receiving the sale payments, they fled within a few months and sold themselves again to other households. Some of them were even sold to several buyers. Wang Yiyuan criticized them as “extremely poor and deceitful.”\(^{206}\)

As “Liaozuo women” was a multiethnic cultural category, which referred to people who followed the same customs, Wang continued his work of classification. To establish a clear-cut self, Wang devoted himself to details that could further separate Han women, especially women in Han elite families, from the general category of Liaozuo women. He identified the difference

\(^{204}\) Wang, *LZJWL*, 6a-b.

\(^{205}\) Zhang, *Liutiaobian*, 78.

\(^{206}\) Wang, *LZJWL*, 58a-58b.
in adornment between Han women and Manchu women. “Liaozuo women who are not married wear earrings that have the name shuangliuma. When they get married, the earrings will be replaced by ear pincers. The number of piercings in each ear varies from one to three or four. Yet most Han women have only one ear piercing.” The concept of chastity also differed in terms of marriage practice. Divorce did not bring disgrace to Liaozuo women and their natal family, nor did remarriage suffer from Confucian prejudice. Many Liaozuo women were divorced, either because the couple did not get along or because the husband saw a younger woman and wanted a new wife. When the husband sent the woman back to her natal family, the family would gather several men to beat the husband and take back all the dowry to welcome the woman back and to wait for a new betrothal. On the other hand, concubines of local Han elites were expected to commit suicide for their dead masters, as women’s chastity and suicides were an object of intense elite male fascination. After the death of a Han elite, the family asked all his concubines if they were willing to die for chastity. When a concubine agreed, the whole family would kneel before her. From then on, she was given a feast at every meal, and the family worshipped her before the meal. Whatever she wanted, the family would find a way to satisfy her. By the night of the funeral, she would hang herself. The offspring of the family would always

207 Wang, LZJWL, 17b.

208 It was common for Qing peasant women to lack the concern for Confucius’ prejudice. They likely valued themselves supporting the family through remarriage, and their economic contribution enhanced their position within the household. See Matthew H. Sommer, Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China: Survival Strategies and Judicial Interventions (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

209 Wang, LZJWL, 45a.

worship her tablet, and her tablet would never be moved out of the family ancestry hall.\(^{211}\) Wang also highly praised the concubine of Magistrate Sun of Jinzhou Prefecture: “During her lifetime, she followed Magistrate Sun in all his hardships. After Sun’s death on his post, she hanged herself, showing indomitable chastity. It is a pity that no one asks for an award for her.”\(^{212}\) Moreover, Wang further distinguished women in literary families that came from the south from ordinary Han women. In Liaodong, people posted spring couplets everywhere during the lunar New Year and decorated them with gold and silver foil paper. Some women’s boudoirs wrongly posted the couplets of the horse stable or had couplets that were reversed left and right or upside down. Some couplets on the doors of the boudoirs had wrongly written characters or characters with strokes added or subtracted. Wang commented that “ridicule can be seen everywhere,” “they are so vulgar and ugly that they make people sick,” and “only families migrated from the south escape such vulgarity.”\(^{213}\)

Through categorizing women in Liaozuo, Wang Yiyuan built a multilayered identity hierarchy that distinguished the self and the other. However, inside the ethnic/identity hierarchy of self and others was a gender hierarchy, in which women were the categorical other and men were the unspoken self. The representations of women invoked an ethnical discourse that could be dangerous and painful if the subject being described was men. Hypothetically, if Wang Yiyuan described the attire of Liaozuo men, which, like Liaozuo women, followed Manchu customs regardless of their ethnicity, Wang had to describe the queue imposed on the bodies of Han men that marked their humiliating subjugation to the Manchus. On the other hand, Wang

\(^{211}\) Wang, *LZJWL*, 37a-b.

\(^{212}\) Ibid., 13b.

\(^{213}\) Ibid., 45b-46a.
was comfortable describing the categorical other, either as the ethnic or the gendered other, and juxtaposed it with the self, either implicitly or explicitly. For example, he described the appearance of Korean men who “have a white face with three mustaches and looked gentle and frail” and Russian men who “have yellow or red moustaches.”214 Wang also praised the vigor of Liaozuo women by writing: “the women of Liaozuo are good at riding horses and ride better than men. They sit on their horses and wave their whips to gallop at full speed, without any feelings of fear. On horseback, they carry themselves with ease and natural poise. Occasionally there are one or two women who cannot ride a horse, and everyone laughs at them.”215 Liaozuo women’s excellent skills compared to men othered these women, revealing ways in which Wang positioned himself within the ethnic margin of the Han world of his audience and in relation to women.

Wang Yiyuan’s identification project and the Kangxi reign’s construction of Manchu identity proceeded in tandem. Wang’s description of the women who lived in and around Liaodong shows that the construction of the “Manchus” in the early Qing was successful. By the Kangxi era, the Qing court had well established their project of attaching Liaodong people who lived in Liaodong during the Ming-Qing transition to the Manchus through the institutionalization of the Han banners and the ideological representation of Liaodong people as "those who made a contribution (to the Qing conquest) in former times” (jiu you gongxun 舊有功勳).216 Wang observed the distinction between these former Liaodong people and the more recently incorporated populations. The most typical example is that Han women from Yongping

214 Wang, LZJWL, 42b-43a.
215 Ibid., 18a.
216 Crossley, A Translucent Mirror, 105.
Prefecture, who dressed entirely differently from Han Liaozuo women. The boundaries that Wang Yiyuan and the Kangxi court established were based on banner status rather than ethnic categories. Such boundaries were equally clear in the everyday life of Liaodong people. Wang recorded that the courtyards of houses in Liaodong were mostly spacious and empty, and when there were happy events such as weddings or births, people would set a stage in their courtyard and invite local troupes to play. They then used a cloth to build a large canopy above the stage and set up tables and chairs around it. “Civilian officials of counties, banner people, and Han civilians grouped separately according to their status. In their respective groups, they drank together without consideration of noble or lowly social status.”

In drawing lines between women in Liaodong, Wang himself was involved in the process of constructing the Manchu identity of the Qing court. The Kangxi emperor continued his predecessors’ work, transferring Han groups who had lived outside the Shanhaiguan to the Manchu banners and establishing their distinctive position compared to people who previously lived in China proper. Wang, however, both constructed and deconstructed Kangxi’s demarcation. On the one hand, Wang established southern Han women as the self and alluded to other Liaozuo women as the other. This is consistent with Kangxi's classification. On the other hand, Wang also otherized the Russian and New Manchu women, who had already been incorporated into the Eight Banners, and he further pointed out the differences between Han Chinese among Liaozuo women. This had the effect of undermining the ideology of establishing the “Manchus” as “bannermen” and setting them apart from the Han. However, to a certain extent, it can be said that through distinguishing Russian, New Manchu, and Han groups from

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217 Wang, LZJWL, 48a-48b.

218 Crossley, A Translucent Mirror, 87.
the banners, Wang Yiyuan gave a local basis for the “genealogical thinking and idealization of cultural knowledge” of later emperors, who attempted to racialize their subjects. 219 Moreover, the success of the Qing court and Wang’s othering project also explain to some extent why Wang did not eroticize the ethnic women he described even as he exoticized them. While the boundaries between Han civilians and banner people might result in a lack of sexual encounters, the ethnic boundary and hierarchy that Wang intended to build might have caused him to conceal or overlook such encounters.

3. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the role of local Han elites in the project of building ethnic boundaries. Through the description of brave Liaodong women, He Qin emphasized an utterly hostile relationship between the *lu* populations around Liaodong and the *hua* Chinese within the Liaodong frontier wall. This binary ethnic relation shows his anxiety in the face of both the threats of the nomads and the growth of interregional trade and the mobilization of frontier people in the second half of the 15th century. Wang, in contrast, categorized women into different groups according to their physical features, clothing, customs, and marriage practices. His elaboration of Liao zuo women’s appearance revealed his attempt of establishing people who followed Manchu customs as the ethnic other regardless of their actual ethnicity. Wang devoted himself to details that furthered separated Han women, especially women in Han elite families, from the general category of Liao zuo women. Through the description of women and sometimes men in Liaodong, he built an ethno-cultural and gender hierarchy of self and others, in which

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219 Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 338. Different from Crossley’s opinion, Elliott believes that the genealogical concerns had existed even before the Yongzheng period. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*. 
Han literati were at the top of the hierarchy and constituted the core of the self. Wang's description of the women who lived in and around Liaodong shows that the construction of the “Manchus” in the early Qing was successful. Yet, Wang both constructed and deconstructed Kangxi’s ethnic demarcations.
Conclusion

The Ming and early Qing Liaodong is a good site for observing the development of border and borderland in premodern and early modern East Asia. As this thesis demonstrates, the borders and borderlands of Liaodong presented a wide variety of different aspects for the Chosŏn who followed a tributary relationship with the Ming, the Ming court who intended to defend the Mongols, Liaodong border officials, Jurchen merchants, Ming literati and local elites, and Han sojourners in the Qing’s Manchu homeland. The Liaodong frontier has more fascinating frontier stories that this thesis does not explore—for example, its interactions with different tribes of Mongolians, the refugees relocated in the southern islands, its flourishing trades with the Jiangnan area and even Southeast Asia, the exiled literati groups, the relationship between its population and the environment. There is also a gap of nearly two hundred years in the periods that this thesis focuses on, during which Liaodong underwent dramatic transformations. All these transitions had an impact on the shape and nature of Liaodong’s borders and borderland in the early Qing. One example is that at the turn of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Han Chinese of Liaodong was regarded by the literati in Central Plain as barbaric and alien, similar to the Jurchen invaders. Such an understanding of ethnic boundaries was quite different from Wang Yiyuan’s perspective in the early Qing in Chapter 5, but one can still see its shadow in Wang’s ethnocultural conception.

A key element of the history of borderlands is the border. Historical studies have shown that the clearly defined border is never a modern notion of European origin but had its own paths in premodern and early modern East Asia.220 My thesis responds to these studies and explores how

borders were invented and reinvented in cross-border diplomatic exchanges, local cross-border trades, local cross-border culture, and the actual operation of multiple levels of government. From the discrete borders in the middle of Ming to the Old Palisade surrounding Liaodong in the early Qing, different parts of the Liaodong borders had different development paces. The border of the Yalu River was a long-standing and clear borderline between the Chosŏn and the Ming, while the new border north of the Yalu River, consisting of a military defensive system, was gradually constructed during the nearly fifty years of negotiation between the Ming and Chosŏn courts from the 1430s. Yet, the stretch borders in the east did not prevent Liaodong from being a porous frontier, as the Ming side tried to keep Chosŏn refugees from leaving eastern Liaodong. The border between Liaodong and Jurchen tribes was built for defense purposes in the mid to late 15th century. This border regulated the active trading network of Northeast Asia and the relationship between Liaodong border officials and Jurchen tribes. As the border endowed authority to border officials, they were able to take advantage of both the Ming state and the Jurchens, while Jurchen merchants contested the border system mainly through raids. The border between Liaodong and the Central Plains was a product of the imagination of the Ming literati after the 1450s. Through this boundary, they dealt with their concerns as literati about their fate and the country’s northern security after the Tumu crisis. Before the Kangxi era, the early Qing border of Liaodong was functionally the same compared with the Ming Liaodong frontier wall, although it differed in location, structure, and shape from the latter. The Old Palisade became the demarcation of inside and outside that defined Liaodong as a Manchu inner borderland since the Kangxi period. Neither the Ming Liaodong wall nor the Qing Old Palisade functioned as an effective ethnic demarcation in practice, while local Han scholar and traveler were committed to delineating ethnocultural boundaries.
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