

## Rumour, Hanjian 漢奸 and Identity: Who Led the “Barbarians” to Burn the Yuanming yuan?<sup>1</sup>

LI Man 李漫\*

The burning of the Yuanming yuan (*hui mingyuan* 燬名園) is a well known historical trauma for Chinese and it constitutes a great regret and irreparable loss for world culture as well. The burning of this beautiful and unparalleled garden has caused lots of literati, Western and Eastern, to lament and reflect about it. This article will in some way also treat this tragedy. Mainly, however, it focuses not directly on the burning and the vandalism itself, but rather on hearsay about it: Who led those “barbarians” (Englishmen and Frenchmen) to burn the Yuanming yuan? Through a narration and an analysis of this hearsay which later became a rumour, this essay tries to research the dynamics behind the spreading of this rumour and the confusion about identity, deconstruction and reconstruction, among people in the late Qing and early Republican period reflected in the spreading of the rumour.

In order to understand the background behind this rumour and to assess it correctly from a historical point of view, it will first of all be necessary to analyze and clarify the concept of Hanjian 漢奸 in a historical context.<sup>2</sup> As will become evident in the second part of this article, it is exactly this concept of and the idea behind Hanjian that to a large extent facilitated the spread of the rumours about the burning of the Yuanming yuan. It is just because of the designation as “Hanjian” to the protagonist of this article, that all “reasonable” connections and “plausible” convictions on him are seemingly well grounded.

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\* Ghent University, Belgium, Department of South and East Asian Languages and Cultures.

1 In this article, all quoted Chinese materials will be presented in accordance with its original form, namely to be quoted in simplified Chinese or traditional Chinese characters according to their original sources.

2 About the history and etymology of Hanjian, viewed from a different angle, see Wang Ke, “Hanjian: Xiangxiang zhong de danyi minzu guojia huayu”.

## 1 A Short History of the Changing Concept of Hanjian 漢奸

The first problem we encounter is the translation of Hanjian 漢奸 into English. Hanjian is just a compromise, a transcription of the term, but not a literal translation. Of course there are many editions of translations of this term, for instance: traitor (to China);<sup>3</sup> a traitorous Chinaman, a spy;<sup>4</sup> *traître(sse) à la nation chinoise*;<sup>5</sup> *traître à la Chine (vendu à l'étranger)*;<sup>6</sup> *traître à la Chine*;<sup>7</sup> *prōditor pátriae, prōditor óris m., tránsfuga ae m.*,<sup>8</sup> etc. Of course the list can be longer, but not a single one can show a relatively comprehensive historical development of this phrase, in an angle of Ideengeschichte. So the transcription Hanjian is an expedient Latinized form of the Chinese phrase 漢奸. According to the *Cibai* 辭海, the most canonical modern Chinese dictionary, Hanjian

[...] originally signifies a degenerate of the Han ethnic group. Now, it broadly refers to a traitor of the Chinese people, somebody who seeks refuge with another nationality or foreign invaders and willingly serves them, and betrays the interest of his/her motherland.<sup>9</sup>

A recent and authoritative dictionary on the basis of *Cibai*'s definition gave its own definition and translation:

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- 3 *Chinese-English Dictionary* 漢英大辭典 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaotong daxue, 1993), vol. 1, 1054. See also: *A Chinese-English Dictionary* 漢英詞典 (Beijing: Shangwu, 1985), 266.
  - 4 *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (New York: Paragon, 1964), 478.
  - 5 *Dictionnaire Chinois-Français* 漢法詞典 (Beijing: Shangwu, 1995), 260. But its former edition, *Dictionnaire Chinois-Français* 漢法詞典 (Beijing: Shangwu, 1964), 173, translates Hanjian as: *traître chinois*.
  - 6 *Grand Dictionnaire RICCI de la langue chinoise* (Paris and Taipei: Institut Ricci, 2001), vol. 2, 782.
  - 7 *Dictionnaire Chinois-Français du Chinois Parlé* (Paris: You-Feng, 2001), 438.
  - 8 *Magnum lexicon Sinico-Latinum* 中華拉丁大辭典 (Hong Kong: Catholic Mission, 1957), 663.
  - 9 *Cibai* 辭海 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 1979), vol. 2, 2027. 原指汉族的败类。现泛指中华民族中投靠外族或外国侵略者，甘心受其驱使，出卖祖国利益的叛徒。But it is noticeable that in the first edition (*Cibai* 辭海, Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1936), vol. 1, 1786-1789, and in the one-volume edition (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1947), 826-827, there are no entries for Hanjian. Some other dictionaries take *Cibai*'s definition as the canon, for instance, *Xiandai Hanyu guifan cidian* 现代汉语规范词典 (Beijing: Waiwen jiaoxue yu yanjiu; Waiwen, 2004), 512.

Traitor (of China); quisling (of China); orig. a traitor to the Han people later used to refer to Chinese who threw themselves into the lap of an aggressor and betrayed the interest of the Chinese nation.<sup>10</sup>

These two definitions are similar, and they represented to some degree the historical evolution of the phrase Hanjian 漢奸, but a big problem also arose. If the term Chinese refers to a nationality which has been latterly claimed to include 56 ethnic groups and the Han ethnic group is but one component of this Chinese nationality, then how could a degenerate of the Han ethnic group be used to broadly refer to degenerate people of other ethnic groups? That is to say, how could one part represent the whole? This is a problem which cannot be solved simply by analyzing its definition and translation. A transcription of 漢奸 as Hanjian is necessarily used as a working concept to avoid a “hallo effect” in the translation of this Chinese phrase. A brief historical review is also needed to make clear the semantic development and change of the concept and its historical context. Therefore when we later proceed to the case of Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan, we can have a more meaningful interpretation.

Hanjian is not a very old expression, and its earliest usage can be traced back to the Yuan dynasty, where, according to my knowledge, it appeared only once. Except for one example, we cannot find any other effective written material that used the expression Hanjian, until it suddenly reappeared in the Qing.

The only mention of Hanjian before the Qing is by Hu Zhen 胡震 in his *Zhouyi yanyi* 周易衍義. He argues:

If the purpose is to contain an evil, but the evil cannot be contained, and if the purpose is to defeat a crime, but the crime cannot be defeated, however, if one strictly follows the rule [of justice] with no fault of [violating the rule], then the righteousness does not err, and the gentleman does not shoulder the responsibility [of failure]. Zi Tu intended to banish the Marquis Shuo of Wei State (r. 699–669 BC [699–697]), but became a victim of four states [who invaded Wei state];<sup>11</sup> however, as his purpose was to assist

10 *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* [Chinese-English Edition] 现代汉语词典 [汉英双语] (Beijing: Waiwen jiaoxue yu yanjiu, 2002), 765: 原指汉族的败类, 后泛指投靠侵略者、出卖国家民族利益的中华民族的败类。For the same Chinese definition also see the original Chinese edition of this dictionary: *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 现代汉语词典 (Beijing: Shangwu, 2002), 496.

11 Cf. *Zuozhuan*, Zhuangong 莊公 6. See Li Mengsheng (1998), 110.

justice, so how does [his failure] harm righteousness? Li Gu (94–147) intended to banish those Hanjian, but became a victim of those vile men; however, his purpose was to get rid of those evils, so how does [his failure] harm righteousness? [Zhu]ge Liang (181–234) wanted to eliminate those Hanzei (lit. enemies of the Han), but suffered a defeat in Jieting; however his purpose is to eliminate those enemies, so how does [his failure] harm righteousness?<sup>12</sup>

It is clear in this text Hanjian means “an [official] treacherous to the Han court” (Hanshi *zhi jianchen* 漢室之奸臣). In this text another phrase Hanzei is also used, which means “enemy of the Han”. These two phrases therefore are used in the same sense; both are used to refer to those who would do harm to the *Han regime* but not in the sense of *Han nationality*. In addition, Hanjian is not a general term here, it is an occasional usage in a special situation. However, it after all embodied the first meaning of Hanjian, i. e. a treacherous person to a certain court/regime of a royal family: Han. Later, we find a great number of materials using the term Hanjian in the Qing. As there simply exists too much source material about this term, here we can only introduce a limited number of examples in order to analyze the meaning in the context of the Qing.

The most important and frequently quoted material is an imperial edict of the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor (Aisin Gioro Inren, r. 1723–1735), even the later *Qinding Da Qing huidian zeli* 欽定大清會典則例 (Imperially Endorsed Collected Regulations and Precedents of the Qing) quoted it.<sup>13</sup> Because of its important historical value, we quote it completely as follows:

Imperial edict to the governor-general and governors, supervisors and commanders in Sichuan, Shaanxi, Huguang, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guizhou:

“I hear that the Aboriginal Office (*tusi*, a system of indirect control in the aboriginal areas) in each province rarely possesses a knowledge of laws and regulations, and they often levy heavy taxes and charge duties, often many

12 Hu Zhen, *Zhouyi yanji* 6.8a-8b: 若夫志在遏惡，而惡不能遏；志在討罪，而罪不能討；雖其範我馳驅，而无去間之失，然義之不忒，君子无責焉。子突欲去衛朔，而反遇四國之毒吝也，然志在輔正，於義何咎？李固欲去漢姦，而反遭羣小之毒吝也，然志在去姦，於義何咎？葛亮欲殄漢賊，而反遭街亭之毒吝也，然志在殄賊，於義何咎？

13 *Qinding Daqing huidian zeli* 24.5a-5b.

times higher than the taxation departments' request, on their subordinate aboriginals, and even take away their horses and cattle, even their children, and decide upon their life or death as they wish. Aboriginals suffer this without the courage to voice their anger and discontent. Who is not my beloved child? Nowadays all lives under Heaven enjoy happiness and benefit together, only those aboriginals are forsaken, alone in the corner. I have deep compassion for them. But the reason that Native Chieftains dare to want to behave like this is mostly because of the instigation of Hanjian who either hide themselves [in those remote areas] because of the crimes they committed or become evil from accumulating criminal gains and assume the strength of Native Chieftains. These villains are basically literate and serve Native Chieftains by doing the paperwork and official issues. They side with the bully and throw their weight around, and there is no evil they do not commit. This is really detestable. From now on, you governors-general and governors, supervisors and commanders should strictly compel your subordinate Native Chieftains to love and sympathize with the aboriginals. No cruelty and overtaxing will be tolerated. If after this edict, former wrong doings are not corrected, once discovered, then those Native Chieftains will be discharged and heavily punished. For those Hanjian, severe punishment is to be regulated immediately, no tolerance and indulgence is allowed. All these measures should be carried out to realize my idea of benefiting all people and treating people with no difference. This [edict] is to be carefully followed.<sup>14</sup>

In this influential edict, Yongzheng mentioned the Hanjian twice, and in this context, the meaning of the term here clearly refers to “guileful people from the Han ethnic group” (*Hanren zhi jianzhazhe* 漢人之奸詐者), because this term is used comparatively with Native Chieftains (*tusi* 土司) and aboriginals (*tumin* 土民) who belong to other ethnic groups. A clearer usage of Hanjian in comparison with other ethnic people can be observed in lots of Qing materials. Here only two are supplied:

14 *Shizong Xianhuangdi shengxun* 15.6b-7a: 上諭四川陝西湖廣廣東廣西雲南貴州督撫提鎮等：朕聞，各處土司鮮知法紀，每於所屬土民多端科派，較之有司徵收正供不啻倍蓰，甚至取其馬牛、奪其子女，生殺任情。土民受其魚肉敢怒而不敢言。孰非朕之赤子？方今天下共享樂利，而土民獨使向隅。朕心深為不忍。然土司之敢於恣肆者，大率皆由漢姦指使，或緣事犯法避罪藏身，或積惡生姦依勢橫行，此輩粗知文義，為之主文辦事，助虐逞強，無所不至，誠可痛恨。嗣後，督撫提鎮宜嚴飭所屬土官愛恤土民，毋得肆為殘暴，毋得濫行科派。儻申飭之後，不改前非，一經發覺，土司叅革，從重究擬，漢姦立置重典，切勿姑容寬縱，以副朕子惠元元、遐邇一體之至意。欽此。

1. Imperial edict to governor-generals and governors, supervisors and commanders in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Guangxi: As the Zhong-Miao<sup>15</sup> (one aboriginal ethnic group) are always known as aggressive, once instigated by the Hanjian and profiteers who mingled with the Zhong and the Miao to do evil things, they finally went as far as burning, killing and looting, and savagely oppressed those good people, [therefore] local residents suffered deeply from their harassment.<sup>16</sup>
2. Just within one or two years, inland people are all grateful; barbarians who submitted to our authority unanimously hold us in awe and veneration [for our Might] and in gratitude [for our generosity]. Those Zhong-Miao, the Red Miao, the Black Miao and other Miao groups mostly have connections with Hanjian to exchange information, so [after they hear of our might and generosity] they should become obedient and be warned to behave, and dare they continue to be out of control? If there are still any who will not repent and behave, they will definitely be investigated.<sup>17</sup>

In the first text, Hanjian is used in comparison with the Zhong-Miao 种苗, and in the second one, in combination with the Zhong-Miao, the Red Miao, the Black Miao and other Miao groups (种苗及紅黑諸苗), therefore, it is clearly used in the sense of “guileful people from the Han ethnic group” (漢人之奸詐者).<sup>18</sup> Because the Zhong-Miao, the Red Miao, the Black Miao and other Miao groups are all subordinate groups of the ethnic group Miao 苗, Hanjian is used for emphasizing the ethnic attribute of those “guileful people”. If this is not enough for the argument, then the following demonstration would suffice.

Miao, as a counterpart term to Han, is also often generally designated as Yi 夷, together with other ethnic groups living in southwestern China.<sup>19</sup> For instance, in the memorial to the throne by

15 Zhong 种 is one ethnic sub-group of Miao (苗族).

16 *Shizong Xianhuangdi shengxun* 6.16a: 上諭雲南貴州四川廣西督撫提鎮等:种苗素稱兇悍, 加以漢奸販棍潛藏其中, 引誘為惡, 以致燒殺劫掠, 毒害善良, 居民深受其擾。

17 *Shizong Xianhuangdi shengxun* 6.2b-3a: 不一二年間,內地之民莫不感激奮勵;已附之夷人,胥皆畏威懷惠。彼种苗及紅黑諸苗,多與漢姦聲氣相通,自當俛首帖耳、望風惕息,猶敢縱肆猖獗乎?設有怙惡不悛者,亦必審查。

18 In many similar materials to those quoted, Hanjian also has a tint of implying that those guileful Han people tried to instigate Miao people to fight against the Manchurians.

19 Yi 夷 is commonly used by the Han people when referring to other ethnic groups, to describe non-Han people's “uncivilized/barbarian” state and differentiate themselves from non-Han people. In Qing times, the Manchurian conquerors inherited this dif-

Mao Wenquan 毛文銓, the Governor of Guizhou Province on 17th of the 11th month of 1724, Yongzheng remarked briefly that:

[I] got it. Why did you not report things had happened in the fourth and ninth month when soldiers of the government troops were insulted and laughed at by the Miao Yi?<sup>20</sup>

And later in the next year, Yongzheng once again remarked on another memorial submitted by Ding Shijie 丁士傑 (?-1764), the Regional Commander of Guizhou Dading:

I have noticed for some time that Mao Wenquan tried to conceal things and whitewash himself and that Zhao Kun is also too weak to be in charge of frontier issues. So both of them were transferred [to other places]. Two proposed candidates in substitution, Šiliha, a Manchu official, and Ma Huibo, are incomparably better than those two fellows [Mao Wenquan and Zhao Kun]. You should cooperate frankly to administer local areas. But the frontier issues are crucial, neither loosely following old tracks nor pursuing grandiose feats will do. The key is to observe the situation and act according to circumstances. Even [frontier] the Miao Yi are our people, as are the inland people.<sup>21</sup>

In these two materials, we can see that Miao Yi is a term used to differentiate them from Han and Manchurian people, while Miao Yi is in a lower hierarchical position than Han, which in its turn is lower than Manchurian, although it is not manifestly expressed. Yongzheng naturally called the Miao people “Yi”, the uncivilized or barbarian, without consciously noticing the fact that the conquering Manchurians were also referred to as Yi by the Han not long ago.

It is also interesting to see a term used as a couplet concept to Hanjian: Yijian 夷奸. And by using this term, it actually means “guileful people from the [Miao] Yi ethnic group” (*Yiren zhi jianzhazhe* 夷人之奸詐者). The following material will illustrate this clearly:

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ferentiation from the Han tradition. They used this term when referring to other ethnic minorities, for instance, Zhunga'er Yi 準噶爾夷 (*jegün yar*, uncivilized/barbarian), Miao Yi 苗夷. This term was used naturally by Manchurians, even the emperor.

20 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi* 13A.23a: 知道了。四月、九月間，官兵被辱，貽笑苗夷之事，為何隱而未奏？

21 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi* 119.7a: 朕早鑒照毛文銓徇隱欺飾，卑鄙巧詐，趙坤柔懦亦非邊關之才，已俱更調矣。合委任石禮哈、馬會伯，非彼二人可比。爾等可共相協力，整理地方，但邊陲緊要，既不可因循懈弛，又不可喜事貪功，要在相機度宜，審擇情理而行。雖苗夷亦民也，何況內地赤子乎？

His Majesty tentatively decreed:

"[You shall] make a deeper investigation into the matters of Yijian, if they entered Liangshan to make illegal contacts with each other, they should be punished, according to that applied to the Hanjian, etc. We, servants of His Majesty, have examined the case reported about the Hanjian by the Provincial Military Commander and have come to know clearly the details listed in the report. The imperial decree is to be publicized, and [those Yijian] should be commanded to abandon evil and follow good. If they do not change after these instructions, then they will be punished according to the law. If there are Yijian who violate the rule, they will be punished according to that applied to the Hanjian, and no tolerance is allowed."<sup>22</sup>

This material convincingly shows that Yijian and Hanjian have a similar connotation: "guileful people from the Yi or Han ethnic group" (*Yiren, Hanren zhi jianzhazhe* 夷人、漢人之奸詐者). Therefore, we can conclude: At least until the reign of Yongzheng, the expression Hanjian became widely used to designate those "guileful people from the Han ethnic group", and the usage aimed to emphasize the ethnic attribute of those "guileful people".

One century after Yongzheng's reign, a new content was gradually added. In 1839, Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785–1850) was sent to Guangdong in the course of the struggle against the importation of opium. He mentioned Hanjian a lot of times in his *Xinji lu* 信及錄, and from his record, this new connotation of Hanjian can be easily recognized. Here two instances are supplied, because they both illustrated the new meaning of Hanjian quite clearly:

Draft for arresting in secret Hanjian (11th of the first month of 1839).

For secret arrest issue: It is my honour to be authorized to investigate the Haikou issue, and the first mission is to rigorously track down Hanjian. The reason that opium from foreign barbarians was clandestinely sold is because of inland villains who collude with each other, and therefore opium has become widely spread and had a harmful influence.<sup>23</sup>

22 *Sichuan tongzhi* 18a.34a: 皇仁姑先示諭:再查夷奸有入凉山勾通情罪,照漢奸究治等語。臣等查該提督奏陳漢奸情罪,詳悉開列。通行示諭,令其改惡從善,倘教而不改,則嚴拿按律治罪。夷奸有犯者,與漢奸同科,毋得少縱。

23 Lin Zexu, *Xinji lu*, 8: 密拿漢奸劄稿(己亥正月十一日)為密飭查拿事:照得本部堂恭膺簡命,來粵查辦海口事件,首在嚴拿漢奸。緣外夷鴉片之得以私售,皆由內地奸民多方勾串,以致蔓延日廣,流毒日深。



[Foreign] barbarian merchants from all countries who come to Canton for business, all cargo ships in harbour and [foreign] barbarian merchants in the province or Macao are all allowed to hire workers through an authorized foreign trading agency, and this is originally not forbidden by the law. But there are a kind of guileful people who deal with foreign barbarians secretly, not through the authorized agency, and collude to benefit unlawfully, and flee hither and thither, so inland they are called “Hanjian”. [...]

So, all [foreign] barbarian ships depend on them (i. e. the Hanjian) to get information and [unlawful] profit, and shield them when they are pursued, but according to the law of [our] Heavenly dynasty, this hiding away can never be allowed to go on. Moreover, these guileful people stir up uneasiness from both inside and outside, and this activity not only violates the law of China, but also gets [foreign] barbarians involved in smuggling which also hurts but not benefits [Foreign] barbarians themselves.<sup>24</sup>

These two examples show that Hanjian was used like a synonym to Jianmin 奸民 (villains) or Jiantu 奸徒 (guileful people) without any emphasis on the ethnic attribute of those cunning or crafty people. Lin Zexu's emphasis is on the *behavioral quality* of those people who deal with “foreign barbarians” without authorization and profiteer from smuggling opium. Due to the trend that oral Chinese prefers disyllable phrases to monosyllabic phrases or rather a two-character phrase to a single-character phrase, contrary to the classical written style, people tend to add a character before or after a meaning indicating character.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, here Hanjian was used as a term with its emphasis on the second character, 奸 (guile). But different from the usage of Hanjian in Yongzheng's reign which was used to signify Han people having contacts with other ethnic groups for “guileful” purposes, in Lin Zexu's text, Hanjian people deal with foreigners but not Chinese countrymen. So Hanjian became a phrase vaguely signifying people who, in a weak sense, “contact foreigners in private” (*yu waiguoren sizi jiaowangzhe* 與外國人私自交往者), and, in a stronger sense, who “contact foreigners and betray the interest of their country or/and countrymen and benefit from contact with foreigners” (*zhengzhi gongtongti de pantu, tongbao liyi*

24 *Xinji lu*, 118: 各國夷商來粵貿易，所有貨船進埔，及夷商在省在澳，均准由洋商雇給買辦工人應用，定例原所不禁。乃有一種奸徒，不由商雇，私與夷人往來，勾串營私，無所不至，是以內地名曰「漢奸」。[...] 是各夷船平日既藉其勾通，聞拿又為之包庇，按之天朝法律，斷難任其藏匿不行查拿。況此等奸徒，內外播弄，不但犯中國之法，即引誘夷人走私犯罪，與夷人亦有損無益。

25 Tang Kejing (1989), vol. 2, 38.

*de beipan zhe* 政治共同體的叛徒，同胞利益的背叛者)。This implication is not very clear yet in Lin's text, but later it becomes more obvious, to be a general noun rather than a specific term. For instance, people later even added some prefix to this term to specify some informational attribute, such as Hong Kong Hanjian 香港漢奸, Jiaomin Hanjian 教民漢奸, Manchurian Hanjian 滿洲漢奸:

1. At this moment in Hong Kong, there are fourteen barbarian ships, tens of sampans and more than a thousand barbarian soldiers with whom Hanjians and pirates meet. Yishan (1790–1878) and others have summoned to surrender more than three thousand Hanjians, among whom five to six out of ten of those Hong Kong Hanjians' ringleaders are still motherland oriented. They are willing to atone for their crimes by fixing Humenfort and suggesting that in a certain month of the winter they would suddenly attack barbarian ships when they are least expecting it and eliminate them with these Hong Kong Hanjians as planted agents.<sup>26</sup>
2. Later, as it turned out not to be true, then [they] would vent their anger on card gamblers, saying that those players annoyed God. [They] will forage about family by family, and those who secretly keep gambling cards will be charged as Jiaomin Hanjian (Christian Hanjian). [Therefore] residents are scared and remove all their cards and burn them in advance.<sup>27</sup>
3. Lian Xianheng (i. e. Lian Yuan 联元, 1838–1900), an academician of the Grand Secretariat, [...] after the Yihequan tumult occurred, together with Yuan and Xu expostulated with [the emperor about not encouraging the Yihequan to attack foreigners]; he was regarded as Manchurian Hanjian, and was so hated by the Manchurian nobles who patronize Yihequan that they desperately wanted to kill him.<sup>28</sup>

These three quotations may show that the concept of Hanjian has subtly changed its meaning from “guileful people” into “traitor”, from “guileful people who secretly contact foreign barbarians for profit which violates the interest of his country or/and countrymen” to “traitor of the political community of all ethnic groups”. All these entries

26 *Fanghai jilue* B.14b (124): 時香港夷船十四，三板小船數十，夷兵千餘，漢奸海盜叢聚其間。奕山等既召回漢奸三千餘，其香港漢奸頭目內向者十之五六，各願請立功贖罪，請包修虎門礮臺，並請冬令晦朔，出其不意，與香港漢奸表裏應和，火攻夷船，一舉殲之。

27 *Gengzi shijian*, 137: 既而不驗，則迂怒民間博紙牌者，謂以上犯神怒。將按戶搜查，私藏紙牌者與教民漢奸同罪。居民大恐，悉檢紙牌預毀之。

28 *Gengzi shijian* 2.64: 联仙齋閣學 [...] 寻遭拳乱，因与袁、许协衷谏阻，为袒拳王公所嫉，目以满洲汉奸，必欲杀之。About this matter please see also p. 211.

use the designation to describe a kind of people who betrayed their country or more precisely their motherland in a political sense. In the first text quoted above, an adjectival noun, Hong Kong, was used to describe the Hanjian's regional origin (*diyu shuxing* 地域屬性); in the second case, Jiaomin 教民 (Christian) is added as an attribute of religion/belief, and in the third case, Manchurian (Manzhou 滿洲), as an attribute of ethnicity.

The third entry is particularly intriguing. Because the term Hanjian literally included the character for Han 漢, which somehow implies the ethnicity issue. If, however, a Manchurian is called Hanjian, then it is clear that Hanjian does not have any ethnic implication anymore. The above example, however, still has a defection: this material is taken from a Han literate's record. So, it is possible that Han people used it in a broad sense, but not Manchurian nobles. A Manchurian noble's letter will perhaps support this argument of the de-ethnicization of the term Hanjian:

Yesterday, finally, a Hanjian was caught, and a message was ordered to be sent by him in order to exchange information [with foreigners]. [...] It goes as far as when any reasonable remark is made on the current situation and impossibility to wage war against a dozen countries alone, it will be regarded as disrupting policy making. And [they (who advocate warfare against foreigners)] even shout at the presence of His Majesty. Such an improper manner is never seen. Therefore, Qing Wang 慶王 (1838–1917; i. e. Yi Kuang 奕劻 a main figure of the doves/pro-peace, *zhuhepai* 主和派) did not dare to utter a word. Some members of the Yihequan even regarded him as a Hanjian, and almost attacked his mansion. This is also under somebody's instigation.<sup>29</sup>

In this letter from a Manchurian noble to another, Ronglu 榮祿 (1836–1903; a figure of the doves/pro-peace) mentioned Hanjian twice, and the first mention tells us what Ronglu understands about the meaning of Hanjian: a Hanjian works for foreign barbarians; the second one is his quotation from the Yihequan. The second mention is important, because Ronglu, as a Manchurian, mentioned Qing Wang was called a Hanjian by the Yihequan (almost all of whom are of the Han ethnic group). The quotation contains two possible conclusions:

29 "Ronglu yu Kui Jun shu", 139: 昨好不容易拏住一汉奸, 令其送信, 以通消息。[...] 至于略有言须斟酌事理、不可以一国而敌十数国者, 则谓乱政, 竟敢当着上头, 大为喊叫; 其不成事体, 亦所未有。故庆王尤不敢出语。而拳民竟有以他为汉奸, 几欲攻其府第, 亦有人使之耳。

1. At that time, people from the Han ethnic group normally take Hanjian as a synonym for “traitor”, and used it to name a Manchurian noble.
2. Ronglu as a Manchurian noble himself naturally used this phrase in the sense of “traitor” to describe the vulgar usage by the Yihequan and this shows his acceptance of the generalized and de-ethnic usage of the phrase.

There is yet another record about a Manchurian being called Hanjian:

Shan (?–1900; also a figure of the doves 主和派) did not respond. Zai Yi (1856–1922; a member of the eagles 主戰派) described Li Shan (Lišan) as Hanjian, and Lišan contradicted him. The Queen Mother pacified them, and [all people] retired.<sup>30</sup>

As the author was a high official and personally experienced what he recorded, the Manchurian Zai Yi’s calling another Manchurian Lišan, “Hanjian” is quite reliable. And furthermore, even the imperial edict declaring war on all foreign barbarians used Hanjian as a general and de-ethnic term:

If he/she isolates him/herself from the country where he/she has been brought up, gets cold feet, willingly follows the enemy, and even becomes a Hanjian, then I will order an immediate and severe punishment upon him/her without any tolerance. You, all the people under Heaven, all being loyal, should together vent the anger of both god and mankind. In fact I have great expectations of that.<sup>31</sup>

In this edict it is clear that Hanjian is used in a general sense as a synonym of “traitor of the country”, just excluded from “all the people under Heaven” (*putian chenshu* 普天臣庶). Therefore, from the above quoted materials, that Hanjian functions as a general and de-ethnic term is quite clear. So Hanjian in this sense is a synonym of “traitor of his country as a political community, or betrayer of his countrymen” (政治共同體的叛徒，同胞利益的背叛者)。

30 *Gengzi guobian ji*, 14: 山未對，載漪詆立山漢奸，立山抗辯。太后兩解之，罷朝。Interestingly, in the xylographic edition of the book printed 1902 (光緒二十八年刻本, p. 4b) the person who decried Li Shan as Hanjian is Zai Lan 載瀾。The whole story is about a debate at court for debating whether or not to go to war with foreign countries, with confidence in the Yihequan or not.

31 *Yibetuan dang'an shiliao*, 163: 苟其自外生成，臨陣退縮，甘心從逆，竟作漢奸，朕即刻嚴誅，決無寬貸。爾普天臣庶，其各懷忠義之心，共洩神人之憤，朕實有厚望焉！

However, this general term once again underwent a significant change into a specific term, namely when the anti-Manchurian movement started finally bringing about the collapse of the Qing and the founding of the Republic. Ironically, the term is used in diametrically opposite ways by Manchurian and Han people. First, Hanjian is used by anti-Manchurian people to criticize Han people who serve the Manchurian regime. The most famous lyric during the late Qing against the Manchurian regime is Zhang Taiyan's 章太炎 (1869–1936) "Zhu Man ge" 逐滿歌 (Lyric for driving off Manchurians), although in his later years Zhang Taiyan changed his anti-Manchurian stance in favour of a unified and geographically complete national state. In this poem, Zhang accused Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872) as a Hanjian:

[After] two hundred years in hell [of the Manchurian dictatorship], suddenly the Heavenly King, Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864), came [to overthrow the Qing]. Manchurians escaped to Jehol Province, but Zeng Guofan played a Hanjian role [to save the Qing]. Hong's men were killed and the Han people's dynasty perished, while the [Manchurian] monkey still occupies the throne.<sup>32</sup>

In this lyric, Zeng's effort to combat the Taiping tianguo 太平天國 Rebellion, a Han ethnic uprising, is an unforgivable crime in the eyes of the Han people. Zeng, therefore, is considered a Hanjian for saving the tumbling Qing. Hanjian here clearly means "a traitor of Han ethnic people (betrayers to the interest of his ethnic group Han)" (漢族之叛徒). This usage could be seen in many historical records; here are some more:

Peng said: "It is only because I know the Great Way, that I am not ensnared into being cajoled by your kind of Hanjian-slaves of the Manchurians, not sitting waiting for the coming death. And thus [I] know the extreme humiliation imposed on our ancestors since hundreds of years must be wiped out."<sup>33</sup>

Liu said: "Except for your kind of Hanjian-slaves of the Manchurians, all other people are my comrades."<sup>34</sup>

32 "Zhang Taiyan xiansheng zhu Man ge", 65 (521): 地獄沉沉二百年，忽遇天王洪秀全。滿人逃往熱河邊，曾國藩來做漢奸。洪家殺盡漢家亡，依舊糊猴作帝王。

33 "Wuchang qiyi sanlieshi gongci", 37 (49): 彭曰：“惟其我深知大道，纔不致被爾等一般滿奴漢奸牢籠住了，而坐以待斃，方知雪卻祖宗數百年莫大之恥。”

34 "Wuchang qiyi sanlieshi gongci", 41 (53): 劉曰：“除去了彼一般滿奴漢奸，即皆是我的同志。”

“A European storm and American downpour are surging down on us, the Manchurian enemy and the Hanjian drawing in their net [toward us] alternatively; my fellow countrymen still being ignorant of their own situation of being besieged on all sides, all this is what we must sorrowfully warn [them, my countrymen] about for the sake of the Big Justice.”<sup>35</sup>

In these three examples one point in particular can be noticed: Hanjian is either used after an adjectival noun “slave of the Manchurians” (Man *nu* 滿奴), or it is used as a parallel noun to “Manchurian enemy (lit. Manchurian thief, Man *zei* 滿賊)”. This adjective noun or parallel noun in front of Hanjian makes it clear: Hanjian is used in the sense of “a traitor of Han ethnicity” (漢族之叛徒) in the service of the Manchurians. A more direct and clearer definition of this sense of Hanjian says:

The so-called real Hanjian means one who helps other ethnics to hurt his own ethic. [...] Wu Sangui (1612–1678), Geng Jimao (d. 1671), Shang Kexi (1604–1676) who helped the Qing to overthrow the Ming, and Zeng Guofan (1811–1872), Zuo Zongtang (1812–1885), Li Hongzhang (1823–1901) etc. who helped the Manchurians to squash the Kings of the Taiping tianguo movement, are all deceased Hanjians of today.<sup>36</sup>

Although during the Qing regime, especially the middle and late Qing, both Han nationalism and Manchurian nationalism were strictly forbidden, the anti-Manchurian movement of Han nationalism certainly also caused reactions from the Manchurian counterpart. When Han nationalists used the Hanjian to blame those who served Manchurian interests, it is reasonable that Manchurian nationalists would react in a certain way, but it is perhaps ironical that they also used the phrase Hanjian to describe those who serve Han interest:

When the *Gemingjun* (Revolutionary Army) rose, the southwestern part of China was stirred up, while the northern metropolitan area remained calm. Since some high officials started to mention the Hanjian, Han officers and court officials escaped with their families in succession. When the news of Wu Luzhen (1880–1911)<sup>37</sup> changing sides to the *Gemingjun* arrived at the

35 *Qing Jianbu nüxia Qiu Jin nianpu*, 121: 歐風美雨，澎湃逼人，滿賊漢奸，網羅交至，我同胞處於四面楚歌聲裏猶不自知，此某等為大義之故，不得不愷切勸諭者也。

36 “Hanjian bian”, 50: 所謂真漢奸者，助異種害同種之謂也。[...] 扶清滅明之吳三桂、耿繼茂、尚可喜，助滿洲殲滅太平王之曾國藩、左宗棠、李鴻章等，今日之死漢奸也。

37 Wu was an old general during the Qing regime, but sponsored the anti-Qing revolution, and he was assassinated by the Qing regime.

capital, then the rumour about killing all Han ethnics emerged. However, in fact it was ridiculous, and people when they talked about it were scared.<sup>38</sup>

This is recorded by a Han official of the late Qing, and the author personally experienced the impact of the revolutionary army on the Qing regime. The by-product of the uprising of the anti-Manchurian revolutionary army is that some Manchurian high officials and nobles lost faith in Han officials. Therefore, Hanjian is used here to represent a Manchurian idea of Han people who had betrayed the Qing regime and became Han nationalists, i. e. Han people who spied and grabbed resources from their Manchurian employer like planted agents, or in a shorter expression: “A Han nationalist spy trying to subvert the Qing regime” (Hanzu *de jianxi* 漢族的奸細). Hanjian, thus, in the Manchurian expression emphasizes both the act of betrayal and the ethnic attribute. And it demonstrated in a contrary way that Hanjian according to Manchurian opinion refers to a Han nationalist who acts in the interests of Han ethnicity but hurts the interest of ethnic Manchurians. In the following text this connotation is even clearer through two explicit couplets’ use of Hanjian:

As to those whom Manchurians called Hanjian, they are in fact outstandingly great people of Han ethnicity, that is to say they loved their [ethnic] compatriots and therefore willingly instigated [war against the Manchurians] and repented not even sacrificing their lives. [...] Martyrs Tang Caichang (1867–1900), Lin Shutang (i. e. Lin Xigui 林錫圭 1875–1900<sup>39</sup>) and others of their kind are real outstanding examples of Hanjian; but it is to be regretted that nowadays the numbers of [outstanding Hanjian] are much

38 *Jiuqing suoji*, 7.87: 革命軍起，西南騷，而北都猶宴然也。自某大臣者倡漢奸之說，於是漢官朝士乃紛紛攜眷引避。自吳祿貞反正之訊達於都下，於是盡殺漢人之謠傳，其實無稽也，然談者色變。

39 In “Lin Gui xiansheng biezhuàn”, 237, his age at death is described as 26: 死年二十六歲。In “Lin Xigui Zhuàn”, 231, another biography of Lin Shutang in the same collection, Lin’s birth date is given as 黃帝紀元四千五百八十四年 “The year 4584 in the Emperor Huangdi’s way of numbering the years (i. e. 1887).” This date apparently is wrong: Because the date of Lin’s death is for sure in 1900 when he was decapitated together with Tang Caichang, then if he was born in the year 1887, he was only 13 years old in 1900 which is not possible. However, there two characters after the emperor Huangdi way of numbering the years: Yihai 乙亥, and the year 1875 was the year Yihai in the Chinese era system (Heavenly stems and earthly branches 天干地支). So, combining the two pieces of information from two biographies of Lin, we conclude the year of his birth as 1875.

lower than what Manchurians called Manzhong 滿忠 (persons loyal to the Manchurians) who are multitudinous, well-positioned [in the social strata] and powerful [...]. Then at the beginning of the twentieth century, righteous Hanjian surfaced as innumerable and as uncountable as the sand in the Ganges, and thus rendered the enemy of the people from alien ethnic (i. e. Manchurian) never expected and never prepared, just like Xiang Yu's besiegement [in Gaixia 垓下] on all sides. I dare to say: Within three years, the court of the northern tribe (i. e. Manchurian regime) will be definitely overthrown by Hanjians. [I] Cordially advise Han ethnics do not become self-damaging (害己) Hanjian but be self-loving (愛己) Hanjian. [...] Hanjian of these days, please be encouraged that you do not deny the title of Hanjian because alien ethnics (i. e. Manchurian) people deemed us as Hanjian.<sup>40</sup>

This passage first used Hanjian as an antonym of Manzhong 滿忠, i. e. a person loyal to the Manchurians. In this sense, therefore, Hanjian certainly means betrayal to the Manchurians but loyal to the Han; then the Han people are encouraged to become a self-loving (*ai ji* 愛己) Hanjian rather than a self-damaging (*hai ji* 害己) Hanjian, hence self-loving means loyal to Han ethnics while self-damaging means loyal to Manchurian ethnics. So we see that Hanjian simultaneously has two opposite meanings due to the different users' ethnic group. This makes the term Hanjian semantically very complicated.

To sum up, there were five connotations along with the historical development of the concept of Hanjian.

1. It first appeared as “treacherous [official] to the Han court” (漢室之奸臣) during the Yuan dynasty by a Han scholar.
2. Then, the term was extensively used in the early Qing in the meaning of “guileful people from the Han ethnic group” (漢人之奸詐者).
3. Subsequently, the connotation of Hanjian was broadened into a more general sense, becoming a synonym of in a weak sense, “those who contact foreigners in private” (與外國人私自交往者) and in a stronger sense, “those who establish contacts with foreigners and betray the interest of his country or/and countrymen and benefit from contact with foreigners” (政治共同體的叛徒，同胞利益的背叛者).

40 “Hanjian bian”, 50-51: 至滿洲人之所謂漢奸者，乃漢族中之偉人碩士，即為愛同類之故，甘心戒首，雖犧牲其身而不顧。[...] 烈士唐才常、林述唐等，乃如之人，誠漢奸中之卓卓者矣，惜乎不及今日滿人之所謂滿忠者既庶且多既廷且碩耳。[...] 然後於二十世紀初葉，生出正色漢奸如恆河沙數，使異族之民賊料不及料，防不勝防，如項羽之聞楚歌四面哉。吾敢決之曰：三年之內胡虜朝廷必亡於漢奸之手。敬告漢人慎毋為害己之漢奸，當為愛己之漢奸。[...] 今日漢奸，尚其勉之，不必以異族人之目我為漢奸，遂畏漢奸之名而為之諱也。



4. Later on, two directly opposite connotations, which actually made the conceptual scope narrower than before, were added: “a traitor of Han ethnicity” (漢族之叛徒).
5. Finally, a “Han nationalist spy trying to subvert the Qing regime” (漢族的奸細).

Therefore, these five connotations appeared in the course of history. Of course, after the subversion of the Qing, the connotation of Hanjian continued to change later, but never exceeded these five meanings. In fact, after the Qing, Hanjian became more and more used in the de-ethnic and general sense, as “people who establish contacts with foreigners and betray the interest of their country or/and countrymen and benefit from contact with foreigners” (政治共同體的叛徒，同胞利益的背叛者), i. e. the third connotation in a broader sense, including all ethnic groups. For instance, during the invasion of the Japanese army in the 1940s, those who worked for the Japanese, no matter if they were Han (Hanzu 漢族), Manchurian (Manzu 滿族), Hui (Huizu 回族), or belonged to another ethnic group, were unanimously called Hanjian. The following table renders a quick survey on the term Hanjian and its usages.

**Table 1 Connotations of Hanjian**

1. Connotation of Hanjian 漢奸
  - 1-1 Treacherous [official] to the Han court (漢室之奸臣)
  - 1-2 Guileful people from Han ethnic group (漢人之奸詐者)
  - 1-3 A. in a weak sense, who contact foreigners in private (與外國人私自交往者);  
B. in a stronger sense, who have contact with foreigners and betray the interests of his country or/and countrymen and benefit from contact with foreigners (政治共同體的叛徒, 同胞利益的背叛者)
  - 1-4 A traitor of Han ethnicity (漢族之叛徒)
  - 1-5 Han nationalist spy trying to subvert the Qing regime (漢族的奸細)
2. Emphasis
  - 2-1 Treacherous, betrayal of the Han court, i. e. the royal family (奸詐, 對皇室的背叛)
  - 2-2 Ethnic attribute (民族屬性)
  - 2-3 Betrayal of the common interests of the political community of Manchurian and Han and other ethnic groups (對滿漢 (及其他族群) 政治共同體的背叛)
  - 2-4 Ethnic attribute, betrayal (of Han) (民族屬性, 背叛 (對漢族的))
  - 2-5 Ethnic attribute, betrayal (of Manchurian) (民族屬性, 背叛 (對滿族的))

### 3. Signifying

3-1 Tension between different regimes (royal families)

3-2 Tension between ethnic groups

3-3 Tension between China as a political community and other nation states

3-4 Tension between ethnic groups

3-5 Tension between ethnic groups

### 4. Antonyms or relatively opposite phrase

4-1 Loyal [official] to the Han court (漢室之忠臣)

4-2 Guileful people from non-Han ethnic group (非漢人之奸詐者)

4-3 A. authorized foreign trade agency (洋商)

B. Patriot, Xenophobia (愛國者, 排外者)

4-4 Outstanding great people of Han ethnicity (漢族中之偉人碩士), national/ethnic hero (民族英雄)

4-5 Manzhong (a person loyal to Manchurians) 滿忠

As mentioned in our introduction, this lengthy and tedious research on the historical development and changes in the concept of Hanjian has not been undertaken without reason. It will subsequently help us to better understand why Gong Cheng 龔橙 (1817-1878), was called Hanjian and even reproached for having incited the Western foreigners to burn the Yuanming yuan. It will become evident what different concepts could actually be related to and back up this accusation, different according to varying critiques. The following part of this essay will, thus, frequently refer to this first sub-chapter for reference.

## 2 Gong Cheng and the Rumour of Being a Hanjian

After having clarified the changes in the concept and connotation of the term Hanjian, it is now possible to discuss the issue of the rumours concerning the burning of the Yuanming yuan. The burning of the great Yuanming yuan is undoubtedly a notorious crime of the English and French armies and their supervisors. Groups of conscientious historians, scholars and literati have recorded this historical tragedy, among them Victor Hugo who in his famous “Lettre au capitaine Butler” writes:

Un jour, deux bandits sont entrés dans le Palais d'été. L'un a pillé, l'autre a incendié. La victoire peut être une voleuse, à ce qu'il paraît. Une dévastation en grand du Palais d'été s'est faite de compte à demi entre les deux vainqueurs. On voit mêlé à tout cela le nom d'Elgin, qui a la propriété fatale de

rappeler le Parthénon. [...] Nous, Européens, nous sommes les civilisés, et pour nous, les Chinois sont les barbares. Voilà ce que la civilisation a fait à la barbarie. Devant l'histoire, l'un des deux bandits s'appellera la France, l'autre s'appellera l'Angleterre.<sup>41</sup>

So, it is without any doubt that there are definite criminals to be condemned. But it is strange enough that since the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republic, when people try to trace back the reason for the burning down of the Yuanming yuan, many of them intend to attribute this to Gong Cheng,<sup>42</sup> and of course many other people defend him for his innocence, i. e. having nothing to do with this crime, or his involvement in this crime had excusable reasons. But no matter if Gong Cheng did or did not lead the English and French army to the Yuanming yuan, his name has been mentioned again and again when the burning of the Yuanming yuan is discussed – either in favour or against this claim.

Gong Cheng 龔橙 was the elder son of Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792–1841), a renowned scholar of the late Qing period. Even non-scholarly Chinese people are familiar with Gong Zizhen's patriotism and reformatory thinking, and lots of people can cite his famous poem:

The vitality of the land counted on gales and thunder,  
it is a real pity that tens of thousands of horses are all together silent;  
I beg the Lord of Heaven to once again display vigour,  
and bestow more talents of all types.<sup>43</sup>

41 Hugo's letter is dated 25.11.1861. Cf. Wang, Wang and Ye (2003).

42 As to the date of birth and death of Gong Cheng, the earliest scholarly references probably is: Yang Jing'an, "Ji Gong Banlun": 檢名人生卒年表, 龔橙生於嘉慶二十二年(一八一七), 無卒時年歲。"[I] checked the list for the date of birth and death of celebrities, [and it writes that] Gong Cheng was born in Jia Qing 22nd year (i. e. 1817), but the date of his death was not recorded" Chen Naiqian, "Ji Gong Banlun' buyi", supplemented: 按孝拱卒於光緒四年冬, 年六十二歲。"Xiaogong [i. e. Gong Cheng, Xiaogong is one of his scholarly surnames 字] passed away in the winter of Guangxu 4th year [i. e. 1878] at the age of sixty two." Che Xingjian specified in "Gong Cheng de zhushu yu xueshu", according to Gong's personal statement in Zhao Liewen's 趙烈文 diary *Luobua chunyu chao riji* 落花春雨巢日記, the day of birth to: 嘉慶二十二年九月二十七日 "27th of the 9th month of 1817 [in the lunar calendar]" and, according to *the Genealogical Records of Gong's Family living in Renhe* 仁和龔氏家譜, of his death to 光緒四年十二月十九日 "19th of the 12nd month of 1878 [in the lunar calendar]".

43 *Gong Zizhen quanji*, 10.521: 九州生氣恃風雷, 萬馬齊喑究可哀。我勸天公重抖擻, 不拘一格降人才。

This poem has been recognized as a cordial expression of Gong Zizhen's profound love of his motherland and his desperate prayer for its well-being and strength, while at the same time a criticism of the Qing government for its sluggish despotism. Gong Zizhen, as a strict father, inculcated his son Gong Cheng about not only his academic knowledge but also his patriotic duty,<sup>44</sup> just as many of his poems written to the son have demonstrated. One famous couplet warned Gong Cheng that he should

[...] To be warned by former sayings and foster your morality, do not spend energy and mind for a renowned name of talent.<sup>45</sup>

Like father like son, people had every reason to expect Gong Cheng to become a respectable scholar like his father. But black sheep may also often appear in a dignified family. Gong Cheng has long been accused of leading Englishmen and Frenchmen to the Yuanming yuan and thus the crime of burning it down undoubtedly fell in large part on Gong Cheng's shoulders. As many modern researches have shown, this accusation is actually without any effective evidence, and it is for sure a misdeemed judgment.<sup>46</sup> But, how and why could this accusation without any clear and convincing evidence spread in such a wide scope?

Before answering this question, a further introduction to Gong Cheng himself is necessary. In fact, very few first hand written materials about him by his contemporaries can be found; only many hearsay-relaying records of some literati of Gong's later generation are accessible. Among these few first hand written materials, four are of special value. One is from the records of Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897),<sup>47</sup> the second from correspondence with Gong Cheng by Zhao Liewen 趙烈文 (1832–1894),<sup>48</sup> the third from the biographic epitaph of Gong by Tan Xian 譚獻 (1832–1901),<sup>49</sup> and the fourth from Gong Cheng's own cor-

44 Of course, unconsciously, his unrestrained deportment deeply influenced Gong Cheng's unusual behavior.

45 *Gong Zizhen quanji*, 10.537: 多识前言蓄其德，莫抛心力贸才名。There are four poems written for Gong Cheng as Gong Zizhen noted: 兒子昌匏書來，以四詩答之。“My son Changpao (i. e. Gong Cheng) wrote me a letter, and I replied to him with four poems.” The quotation is from the second poem.

46 Cf. note 42. For details about the clarification of this rumour of Gong Cheng, see for instance, Zhu Weizheng (2008).

47 Wang Tao, “Gong Jiang liangjun yishi”.

48 Zhao Liewen, *Nengjingju riji*.

49 Tan Xian, “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”.

respondence with Zhao Liewen.<sup>50</sup> Because these three scholars are all Gong's contemporaries and his close friends, their memory of Gong are first-hand and also relatively reliable. Therefore, the following short biography of Gong Cheng will mainly be based on the narration of these three persons and Gong Cheng's own correspondence.

As mentioned above, Gong Cheng was born into a scholarly family with great fame. He has several names, scholar names, style titles, such as Xiaogong 孝拱, Changpao 昌匏, Gongxiang 公襄, Taixi 太息, Xiaoding 小定 etc.<sup>51</sup> His birth was hailed with many scholarly expectations and even legendary ones,<sup>52</sup> and his death attended by nothing but helpless poverty and misery.<sup>53</sup> His family enjoyed

[...] a long history and scholarly fame, and boasts naturally an extraordinary family library which is among the best ones in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Many rare books, neither included in the *Siku quanshu* series nor seen in scholars' families, were accessible in Gong's library. [Therefore,] Xiaogong in his childhood immersed himself in these books,<sup>54</sup> and as long as he found rare facts, he transcribed them out in another copy under the lamp. Therefore, Xiaogong dipped into every corner of scholarship and became unfathomably erudite.<sup>55</sup>

Gong Cheng inherited not only his father's talent but also his unstrained personality as marching out of his time, and somehow became too proud to be friendly to common people. In his youth,

[...]as he understands Manchurian and Mongolian, he plays games with those *semu* 色目<sup>56</sup> [different kinds of people (各色各目) people i. e. ethnic

50 Gong Cheng, "Gong Xiaogong yizha".

51 About Gong's names, titles, see Wang Tao, "Gong Jiang liangjun yishi", 39.

52 In Wang Tao's record, a legendary story of Gong Cheng's birth tells us that Gong is a reincarnated evil dragon (*dulong* 毒龍), who is deemed to be uncommon. See "Gong Jiang liangjun yishi", 39; also see *Wang Tao riji*, 138.

53 "Gong Jiang liangjun yishi", 40. Also see Yang Jing'an, "Ji Gong Banlun".

54 This paragraph also appeared in Wang Tao's Diary, but some inconsistency occurred, with no harm to the meaning of the whole text. So the difference will be noted in the format of: (Diary: DIFFERENCE). See *Wang Tao riji*, 137.

55 "Gong Jiang liangjun yishi", 39; also see *Wang Tao riji*, 137: 世族嫺媽，家門鼎盛，藏書極富，甲於江浙。多四庫中未收之書，士大夫家未見之本。孝拱少時，[Diary: an additional character 得] 沉酣其中，每有秘事，篝燈抄錄，別為一書 [Diary: 書 is 本]。以故 [孝拱] 於學無不窺，胸中淵博無際。

56 An expression used under the Mongol Yuan period for the 2nd of the 4-class system, mainly used to describe non-Han ethnics from northern and western China.

minorities] people all the time, chasing each other, shooting clouds with bow and arrow, racing horses against the sun. [All his activities] make him like a guy of ethnic minority origin [but not a Han ethnic].<sup>57</sup>

Later, because of “his unsuccessful career studying classics in order to be an official candidate, and his strategies submitted to the Generals having been turned down, feeling melancholy enough, his talent lacking a room for good use (i. e. a suitable outlet),”<sup>58</sup> he behaved even “weirder” and more unacceptably to his contemporaries, except for his friends. He “then liked to wear outlandish clothes, and drifted to Shanghai.”<sup>59</sup> Because of his talent and knowledge of different languages like Manchurian and Mongolian, Gong Cheng very soon got familiar with European languages, to a degree that “European languages and characters, once seen and heard [by Gong Cheng], [he could soon] grasp the essence.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, with his command of European languages, in Shanghai, his acquaintance with a Cantonese who knew Thomas Francis Wade (1818–1895) changed his life.

In his unsuccessful middle age, [Gong Cheng] lived a poor life, and always had to pawn his zither and books. Being a guest in Shanghai, he made acquaintance with Zeng Jipu 曾寄圃,<sup>61</sup> a Cantonese. At that time, the English envoy Thomas Francis Wade was nominated as Counselor, responsible for [communication and] translation, and he was in need of support from educated Chinese scholars to help with his duties. Zeng Jipu recommended Gong Cheng to Wade, and after an interview, Wade was very satisfied with him.<sup>62</sup>

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- 57 “Gong Jiang liangjun yishi”, 39; also see *Wang Tao riji*, 137: 兼能識滿洲蒙古文字，日與色目人遊戲徵逐 [Diary: this sentence is 日與之嬉], 彎弓射雲，試馬躡日，居然一胡兒矣。Ibid. Note: 1. In Gong Cheng’s time, although different ethnic groups enjoyed nominal equality and mingling together was encouraged to avoid ethnic troubles, those games and sports of ethnic minorities, if exercised by Han people, were deemed by most Han scholars and even common people as idling and doing no decent work. 2. In some other records, Gong Cheng’s language competency is extended to another one: the Tangut language. Cf. “Gong Banlun zhuan”, 106b.
- 58 Tan Xian, “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”: 治諸生業久不遇，以策干大帥不能用，鬱鬱亡所試。
- 59 “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”: 遂好奇服，流寓上海。
- 60 “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”: 歐羅巴人語言文字，耳目一過，輒洞精。
- 61 Cf. note 65.
- 62 Wang Tao, “Gong Jiang liangjun yishi”, 1b-2a (39-40): 中年頗不得志，家居窮甚，恆至典及琴書。旅寄滬上，與粵人曾寄圃相識。時英使威妥瑪膺參贊之任，司繙譯事宜，方延訪文墨之士，以供佐理。寄圃特以孝拱薦，試與語，大悅。

It was, however, his service to an Englishmen that further devastated his reputation, although rumours concerning all aspects of his life spread widely only after his death. For instance, a bad reputation for being only “half ethic” 半倫 diffused later, and he was title Gong Banlun 龔半倫 (Gong, the Half Ethic), because of grapevine stories of his activities, such as: serving “barbarians” 夷人, as disloyal to the emperor, beating his father’s sacrificial tablet (for academic mistakes appeared in his books) as unfilial to his father, forsaking his wife as irresponsible for marriage, ceasing communication with his brother as violating the ethic of brotherhood, and only one thing, a half ethic, remained which was love of his concubine.<sup>63</sup> It is said that he also used this Banlun 半倫 as his alias title later, but there is no evidence to show that Gong Cheng used this title by and for himself.<sup>64</sup>

Gong Cheng was very aware of his maverick personality, and seemed uninterested in clarifying anything about his reputation as long as his academic comrades somehow understood it. As he wrote in his last letter to Zhao Liewen (the 25th of all existent 25 letters), he acknowledged his “laziness” in wording and responding:

My inertia and clumsiness [since the old days]<sup>65</sup> is getting worse [for the moment].<sup>66</sup> The worst of my laziness is indolence at exchanging letters with

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63 According to first hand materials, no sound evidence could be found. This title of “half ethic” is very likely derived from the novel *Niehai hua* 孽海花, which is first published in 1905 and was very influential in the late Qing, and in this novel, the title was clearly aimed at Gong Cheng. Many other later privately compiled history and notes followed this narration, and even claimed that Gong Cheng himself enjoyed this title of “half ethic”. Cf. “Gong Banlun zhuan”; *Qingbai leichao*, vol. 5, “Xingming lei”, 2164-2165; *Xinshi shuo* 6.36ab (474-475), *Shi zai tang za yi*, 78-79.

64 Cf. note 23.

65 A character is originally missing here, but according to the context, this missing character probably is 向 or 昔, which means “past”. Note: Because the here referenced edition of “Gong Xiaogong yizha” is not a photostatic copy (影印本) of the original handwriting of Gong Cheng, many small problems of character recognition occurred in this collection that cannot be solved here unless the original handwritings were accessible. So, some absent characters and obvious misused characters will be rectified only based on the meaning stream in the context. For instance (p. 13), in Gong’s 13th letter, a name Zeng Zhaipu 曾宰圃 is mentioned, which is obviously a printing mistake for Zeng Jipu 曾寄圃. Zeng Jipu was a senior businessman, well known in his time; about his activities please consult: *Xi xue dong jian ji*, 79; *Xu Yuzhai zi xu nian pu*, 9.

66 A character is originally missing here. Note: According to the context, this missing character probably is 今 or 老, means “now” or “in my old age”.

friends. This is the reason for criticism and castigating<sup>67</sup> me, and rumours and calumnies coming between [me and my friends]. But hopefully, still one or two persons who know me might not blame me.<sup>68</sup>

Gong Cheng's academic ability was very high, so that his friends simultaneously had admiration for his erudition and profundity. Here we provide two instances of his academic competency: one is from Wang Tao's comment that

[...] Xiaogong's scholarship in classics and theoretical writings is almost close to the top of academic achievement. In my experience no one can parallel him. And [even though he is so extraordinary,] he is humble and caring to friends. This is rarely seen in recent times.<sup>69</sup>

The other one stems from Zhao Liewen, stating that he is

[...] in my humble opinion, erudite and insightful, and always inquires into the origin. As far as I can see and hear, no one can parallel him.<sup>70</sup>

These are not mere exaggerated complements among close friends. Gong Cheng's learning and cultivation was really outstanding.<sup>71</sup> But his extraordinary academic achievement did not help him to hold back those rumours about his life, instead, tales spread even more widely because of those legendary and unique points in his life, academic ability and his family background. Gong Cheng finally died in Shanghai, in poverty, misery and loneliness with little understanding and acknowledgement. Even his funeral was possible only due to the sale of his collection of books:

He died in Shanghai, his heritage books of was sold for his funeral.<sup>72</sup>

67 A character is originally missing here. Note: According to the context, this missing character probably is 詆, literally meaning "to castigate".

68 "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 16: [向]之嬾拙[今]當更甚。尤嬾者友明[朋]書問。生平以是罪[詆]于人，讒間因之而入。猶異[巽]一二知者或不以為怪耳。

69 *Wang Tao riji*, 164: 孝拱經術文章，皆臻絕頂。以我目中所見，殆無與之匹者。而又虛懷愛友如此，真近今所罕見矣。

70 *Nengjingju riji*, 124: 竊謂先生學博識強，務見原本，耳目之中，罕有兩匹。Zhao's letter to Gong is dated 咸豐九年二月初五日 "5th day of the 2nd month in Xianfeng 9th year (i. e. 1859)".

71 His academic works including almost all aspects of Chinese traditional studies. And his works do have his own theories and expressions different from previous scholars. For this, cf. Che, Xingjian, "Gong Cheng de zhushu yu xueshu".

72 Tan Xian, "Gong Gongxiang zhuan": 君死上海斥賣其遺書舉其喪。



After a brief retrospection of Gong Cheng's life, the above question of how and why could this accusation [of Gong Cheng leading Englishmen and Frenchmen to burn the Yuanming yuan], without any clear and convincing evidence, spread on such a wide scale is ready to be solved. In order to answer this question, we would firstly try to outline the ins and outs of this case by listing our most often quoted materials about this rumour in a temporal sequence according to their written or date of publication. These materials will be limited to the period of the late Qing and the Republic. Subsequently, a table of historical records is supplied.

Table 2 Chronological historical materials  
about Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan

1. WRITTEN YEAR: 1862 (同治元年)<sup>73</sup>

AUTHOR: Gong Cheng 龔橙

SOURCE: "Gong Xiaogong yizha" 龔孝拱遺札 (Collection of correspondences of Gong Xiaogong)

RECORD: What you mentioned is because what westerners love and abominate are different from what Chinese people do. The Englishman who is in charge [of Chinese matters] is willing to learn [Chinese classics] from me. The warfare of the year before last year is a kind not recorded in the Li 禮 (ceremonial regulations).<sup>74</sup> After the armistice was finally signed, my name also arrived at Higher hearings. Outsiders might criticize me just like criticizing a trouble maker, but this is not worth mentioning, for this is just because of their ignorance of things that happened inside the Zhangyi Men [which is the boundary between the outer and inner city of Beijing, and the latter is the place where important political decisions are made.]<sup>75</sup>

73 See the prelude by Ju Tuizhi 瞿兌之 (1894–1973), in "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 7.

74 I. e. a warfare not in accordance with the ancient Li, and therefore illegitimate, and literally implying that according to the Li both the Englishmen and Frenchmen's invasion of Beijing is illegal or the Qing government's reaction was not legitimate [otherwise it would be the winner]. So this sentence has a twofold possible interpretation, because warfare always involves both sides of opponents, if the warfare is itself illegal, then, the illegitimacy of the war could be interpreted in contrary ways. But in Gong Cheng's letter, his expression is clearly an implicit criticism of Englishmen and Frenchmen.

75 "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 10: 承示一節，西人好惡有殊中土。英吉利當事樂從鄙人聞學。前歲之役，通禮不載。合約既成，名亦上達。外人或以責債事者相責，此不知彰義門內事，

2. WRITTEN YEAR: 1871 (同治十年)<sup>76</sup>

PUBLISHING YEAR: 1907 (光緒丁未, xylograph edition without prelude and notes.); 1921 (民國十年, Shanghai Zhenya Shuju 上海鎮亞書局)

AUTHOR: Wang Kaiyun 王闓運 (1833–1916)

SOURCE: *Yuanming yuan ci* 圓明園詞 (Ci-poetry on the Yuanming yuan)

RECORD: Although foes have not yet set fire to the wormwoods outside the Yongmen Gate, a shepherd boy has already seen the fire on Lishan mountain. (Original notes: Barbarians entered the capital and then came to the Yuanming yuan. Once they see the splendid buildings and decoration, they warned each other not to enter the palace in case anything going missing inside the palace would lead to a demand for compensation from them. When barbarians leave [the palace], the destitute noble(s) instigated villains to set it on fire in the name of barbarians, and then the barbarians came back and plundered on a large scale).<sup>77</sup>

3. WRITTEN YEAR: not clear, but after 1878<sup>78</sup>

PUBLISHING YEAR: 1887 (光緒丁亥)<sup>79</sup>

AUTHOR: Wang Tao 王韜 (1812–1897)

SOURCE: *Songbing suohua* 淞濱瑣話 (Trivia Recorded)

RECORD: During the war in the year 1860, when the English navy warships invaded Tianjin, Xiaogong in fact went there with them. And just because of this, he was criticized, and his integrity in later years diminished.<sup>80</sup>

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不足道也。The last sentence has a dubious ambiguity. It could also be possibly interpreted as: “Foreigners might criticize me just like criticizing a trouble maker, but this is not worth mentioning, for this is just because of their ignorance of [Chinese ethics for unconditionally] supporting *yi* 義 (justice) [as a spontaneous responsibility or lit. “things inside the door” (*mennei shi* 門內事)]. And justice is on the side of China”. But as it is also in this text, foreigners were mentioned as *xiren* 西人 (westerners), *wairren* 外人 therefore, to my understanding, probably means “outsider”.

76 See Wang Kaiyun, *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 1399, note 5

77 *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 1410: 敵兵未蕪雅門荻，牧童已見驪山火。[原注:] 夷人入京，遂至園宮，見陳設巨麗，相戒弗入，云恐以失物索償也。及夷人出，而貴族窮者倡率奸民，假夷為名，遂先縱火，夷人還而大掠矣。

78 Surely after 1878, the year of Gong Cheng’s death, because his death is mentioned in the text.

79 Stated in the author’s own prelude.

80 Wang Tao, “Gong Jiang liangjun yishi”, 5.2a (40): 庚申之役，英師船闖入天津，孝拱實同往焉。坐是為人所詬病，晚節益頹唐不振。

4. WRITTEN YEAR: 1887 (光緒十三年)<sup>81</sup>  
 AUTHOR: Tan Xian 譚獻 (1832–1901)  
 SOURCE: *Gong Gongxiang zhuan* 龔公襄傳 (Biography of Gong Gongxiang)  
 RECORD: In 1860, Englishmen invaded the capital. It is said that Mr. Gong was coerced to go there with them as a guide. Gong managed to forcefully persuade the administrator of those barbarians to negotiate an armistice and retreat. But people criticized and calumniate Gong [for his going to the capital with those foreigners].<sup>82</sup>
5. WRITTEN YEAR: First 2 chapters written and published in 1903.<sup>83</sup>  
 AUTHOR: Jin Tianhe 金天翮<sup>84</sup> (1874–1947)  
 SOURCE: *Niehai hua* 孽海花 (Flowers in a sea of sin)  
 RECORD: Because Thomas Francis Wade wanted to study Chinese *Han shu*, and asked someone to teach him, but no one dared to go [to his place]. Xiaoci [i. e. Gong Cheng] then stood out and recommended himself, Wade relied on him greatly. It is said that the burning of the Yuanming yuan was his proposal.<sup>85</sup>
6. WRITTEN YEAR: 1902–1903<sup>86</sup>  
 PUBLISHING YEAR: 1904<sup>87</sup>  
 AUTHOR: Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936)  
 SOURCE: *Qiu shu* (revised edition) 尙書 (重訂本) (The Book Written in Oppression)

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81 Tan Xian stated in his diary, *Futang riji* (328) in a notice to the 24th of the 2nd month of 1887: 撰《亡友傳》。“[I] finished my *Biographies of my Friends who have passed on.*” He added that in *Wangyou zhuan* 亡友傳 he had collected biographies of 19 deceased friends. Gong Cheng is one of them, and his biography is titled “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”.

82 Tan Xian, “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”: 咸豐十年，英吉利入京師。或曰挾龔先生為導。君方以言警長首換約而退。而人閒遂相訾謗。

83 Cf. Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, prelude, 1.

84 The first two chapters of *Niehai hua* were written by Jin Tianhe 金天翮 in 1903, but all other chapters were Zeng Pu’s work. Cf. Zeng, 2001, prelude, 1.

85 *Niehai hua*, 2.10: 因为那威妥玛要读中国《汉书》，请一人去讲，无人敢去，孝琪遂挺身自荐，威酋甚为信用。听得火烧圆明园，还是他的主张哩。

86 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, prelude, 10.

87 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, prelude, 9.

RECORD: Then [Gong Cheng] taught Harry Smith Parkes Han classics, and became his adviser. During the burning of the Yuanming yuan, Cheng rode a horse alone [running into the Yuanming yuan] before [foreign] soldiers did, and took out jade and heavy and precious wares.<sup>88</sup>

7. PUBLISHING YEAR: First 10 chapters published in 1905. Material quoted here is in the 4th chapter.<sup>89</sup>

AUTHOR: Zeng Pu 曾樸 (1872–1935)

SOURCE: *Niehai hua* 孽海花 (Flowers in a sea of sin)

RECORD: Although he [Gong Cheng's father Gong Zizhen] was usually not kind to me, he was after all my father. Therefore an absolutely irreconcilable feud started between myself and the Manchurians.<sup>90</sup> During the incident of 1860, in assisting Thomas Francis Wade, I intended to overthrow the Manchurian regime and kill by myself Ming Shan's descendants. Although my goal was not totally achieved, the burning of the Yuanming yuan somehow fulfilled part of my responsibility as a son. If people call me Hanjian, or call my behavior anti-Manchurian, let it be.<sup>91</sup>

8. WRITTEN YEAR: 1910 (庚戌<sup>92</sup>)

PUBLISHING YEAR: 1910

AUTHOR: Deng Shi 鄧實 (1877–1951)

SOURCE: “Gong Ding'an bie ji shi ci dingben xu” 龔定庵別集詩詞定本序 (prelude for authentic collection of Gong Ding'an's unpublished poetries)

RECORD: Xiaogong once led English soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan, and people commonly blame him for this. But this was a good strategy according to Xiaogong's own understanding, because although one garden was given up in exchange for several hundreds of thousands of people in the capital, it was good in that it spared so many [lives and homes].<sup>93</sup>

88 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, 340 (also in 582): 後以漢文授巴夏禮，為謀主。圓明院[園]之火，橙單騎先士卒，入取玉石重器以出。

89 Cf. Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, prelude 1.

90 In the previous plot of this novel, Gong Zizhen's (Gong Cheng's father) death was introduced as being the work of an assassin with poison, sent by the Manchurian aristocrat Ming Shan 明善 because of his love affair with Gu Taiqing 顧太清, wife of the aristocrat. Cf. *Niehai hua*, 17-20.

91 *Niehai hua*, 20: 他平常雖然待我不好，到底是我父親，我從此就和滿人結了不共戴天的深仇。庚申之變，我輔佐威妥瑪，原想推翻滿清，手刃明善的兒孫。雖然不能全達目的，燒了圓明園，也算盡了我做兒的一點責任。人家說我漢奸也好，說我排滿也好，由他們去吧！

92 Deng Shi, “Gong Ding'an bie ji shi ci dingben xu”, 188.

9. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1913 (民國二年)  
 AUTHOR: Sun Jing'an 孫靜庵 (date of birth and death unclear)  
 SOURCE: *Qixiange ye cheng* 栖霞閣野乘 (Unofficial historical records of Qixia Pavilion)  
 RECORD: Xiaogong, Ding'an's son, was a guest [adviser] of Harry Smith Parkes, and he led English and French soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan. For this, people blamed him. But at that time, nationalism had not yet arrived in our country, and moreover Xiaogong had his own intentions, so he should not be taken as a person like Zhonghang Yue.<sup>94</sup>
10. PUBLISHING YEAR: Ibid.  
 AUTHOR: Ibid.  
 SOURCE: Ibid.  
 RECORD: It is said that Xiaogong was the adviser for burning the Yuanming yuan by Englishmen, and people all over the country pointed him out as a Hanjian. But who knows that at that time, Englishmen wanted to directly attack the inner city of the capital, and Xiaogong made a great effort to stop this attack. He said that there are mountains of precious stuff in the Yuanming yuan where the essence of China converged, and to burn the palace could also vent their anger. For this, the protection of the capital, should count in Xiaogong's.<sup>95</sup>
11. PUBLISHING YEAR: Ibid.  
 AUTHOR: Ibid.  
 SOURCE: Ibid.

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93 *Gong Zizhen yanjiu ziliao ji*, 188: 孝拱嘗引英兵燒圓明園，世人多以此短之；然孝拱自謂實奇計，蓋以一國而易都城數十萬人之生命，其保全為益多也。

94 Sun Jing'an, *Qixiange yecheng*, B.112: 定庵子孝拱，為英人巴夏禮客，導英法兵焚圓明園，世多以為詬病。然此時民族主義尚未發達於吾國，且孝拱用意固別有在，不得以中行說之流概之。Note, the quoted material is in the entry of "Gong Ding'an yishi". Gong Ding'an, i. e. Gong Zizhen 龔自珍, is Gong Cheng's father. Zhonghang Yue was a eunuch in the court of the Han Emperor Wendi 漢文帝 (202 B.C.-157 B.C.). He betrayed his emperor and became a senior advisor of the Xiongnu 匈奴 when he was sent to the Xiongnu as an envoy reluctantly. He became a threat to the Han because he knew all their ins and outs and provided them with strategies against the Han. Cf. *Shiji*, "Xiongnu liezhuan" 匈奴列傳, 110.2898-2904.

95 *Qixiange yecheng*, B.113: 人傳孝拱（誤作洪）於英焚燒圓明園事，為之謀主，海內群指為漢奸。豈知當時英人欲徑攻京城，孝拱（誤作棋）力止之，言圓明園珍物山積，中國精華之所萃，毀此亦可以償所忿矣。是保全都城，孝拱（誤作棋）與有功焉。

RECORD: During the war in the year 1860, when English navy warships invaded the capital and burned the Yuanming yuan, Banlun [i. e. Gong Cheng] in fact went there with them and rode a horse alone [running into the Yuanming yuan before foreign soldiers did], and took out jade and heavy and precious wares. |And just because of this, he was increasingly criticized.<sup>96</sup>

12. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1915

AUTHOR: Xiaohengxiangshi zhuren 小橫香室主人<sup>97</sup> (date of birth and death unclear)

SOURCE: *Qingchao yeshi daguan* 清朝野史大觀 (Unofficial history of the Qing Dynasty)

RECORD: At the end of Xian Feng's reign, the united army of England and France invaded the capital. Gong Cheng, the son of Gong Zizhen, the Secretary in the Grand Secretariat, guided them to burn the Yuanming yuan.<sup>98</sup>

13. PUBLISHING YEAR: Ibid.

AUTHOR: Ibid.

SOURCE: Ibid.

RECORD: During the war in the year 1860, when English navy warships invaded the capital and burned the Yuanming yuan, Banlun [i. e. Gong Cheng] in fact went there with them and rode a horse alone [running into the Yuanming yuan before foreign soldiers did], and took out jade and heavy and precious wares. |And just because of this, he was increasingly criticized.<sup>99</sup>

96 Sun Jing'an, *Qixiagi yecheng*, B.115: 庚申之役，英以師船入都，焚圓明園，半倫實同往。單騎先入，取金玉重器以歸，坐是益為人詬病。Note, the quoted material is in the entry for "Banlun zhuan", i. e. the biography of Gong Cheng.

97 The real name of the author is not known, only his pen name is available. This is possibly because the nature of this book is not an official historiography which should only use texts from official historical records (*zhengshi* 正史), and a privately compiled history is not respected by scholars, so perhaps for this reason the author of *Qingchao yeshi daguan* did not leave his real name.

98 *Qingchao yeshi daguan*, 1.79b: 咸豐末年，英法聯軍入京。內閣中書龔自珍之子龔橙導之燬園。

99 *Qingchao yeshi daguan*, 10.107a: 庚申之役，英以師船入都，焚圓明園，半倫實同往。單騎先入，取金玉重器以歸，坐是益為人詬病。This paragraph is also seen in *Xin shishuo* 6.36b (474). Cf. page 200f.

## 14. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1916

AUTHOR: He Haiming 何海鳴 (1884–1944)

SOURCE: *Qiu xingfu zhai suibi* 求幸福齋隨筆 (Notes of the Happiness-seeking House)

RECORD: Xiaogong therefore became even more dissipated, and even advocated that “it is better to give magnificent China as a present to westerners, rather than to Manchurians.”<sup>100</sup> During the war in the year 1860, when Englishmen invaded the capital and burned the Yuanming yuan, rumour said that it was planned by Xiaogong, and he went [to the Yuanming yuan] and took out jade and heavy and precious wares. And because of this, he was increasingly despised [...]. But being a lecturer to an Englishman and an advocate of anti-Manchurianism, it was at that time a notoriety, but in later times an appraised deed. However, his involvement in the burning of the Yuanming yuan is not without blame. But Banlun did not get rich from then [i. e. taking out jade and heavy and precious wares from the Yuanming yuan], before his death, he only took out a rubbing of a stone inscription which was valued at five hundred golden coins and cut it into pieces. This could adequately demonstrate his indigence. His contemporaries despised him so much and they also detested his habit of scolding people, therefore it is not impossible that they fabricated this rumour of the Yuanming yuan to stigmatize him.<sup>101</sup>

15. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1916<sup>102</sup>

AUTHOR: Cai Dongfan 蔡東藩 (1877–1945)

SOURCE: *Qingshi yanyi* 清史演義 (Historical Novel of Qing)

RECORD: Who do you think Gong Xiaogong is? He is the eldest son of the late Qing scholar Gong Ding'an and his scholarship is not second to his father's. He resided in Shanghai for many years, and he has some knowledge of almost all foreign languages. But due to his eccentric temperament, he does not condescend to talk with people. The Englishman Thomas Francis Wade happened to organize a personnel hunting agency in Shanghai, and Xiaogong was employed as secretary with a monthly salary of one thou-

100 This saying can be seen in an earlier source: *Niehai hua*, 2. 8.

101 He Haiming, *Qiu xingfu zhai suibi*, 60-61: 孝拱因益放浪，嘗倡言：“中國天下與其送於滿清，不如送與西人。”庚申之役，英師入京焚圓明園，謠傳為孝拱所畫策，並飽載金玉重器以歸，於是人益不齒之。[...] 至於就館英人，倡言排滿，在當時為惡德，在後世為美談，惟圓明園一節不無可疵。然半倫並未致富，臨終時僅遺一值價五百金之碑帖碎剪之，足見其窘。當時人鄙棄之過甚，又惡其好慢罵人，或造作圓明園之謠以污之未可知也。

102 Cf. Cai Dongfan's self-written prelude to *Qingshi yanyi*.

sand golden coins. Whenever Xiaogong got the salary, he spent it on geishas without caring about his parents, wife and son, and he took a geisha as his concubine whom he seemed to favour very much. For this, people at that time called him Gong Banlun, the half-ethic, and he himself also took this as his alternative name. Banlun actually means that he does not know the five ethics but only dotes on a concubine, which could be counted as a half-ethic. This man is killable. This time Englishmen invaded northward, and he just followed them to the capital, and the burning of the Yuanming yuan is in fact at his instigation. [Comments by Cai Dongfan:] Harry Smith Parkes is a foreigner and his powerful bullying tactics for the English army is still not uncommon [to understand]. But what Banlun thinks himself is, and even dares to do such a thing [of instigating the burning of the Yuanming yuan].<sup>103</sup>

16. WRITTEN YEAR: Not clear, but before 1906<sup>104</sup>

PUBLISHING YEAR: 1919

AUTHOR: Li Boyuan 李伯元 (1867-1906)

SOURCE: *Nanting biji* 南亭筆記 (Nanting Notes)

RECORD: Xiaogong, son of Gong Ding'an, changed his name many times, and each time changed into a stranger one, like Cheng, like Lashua, which are laughed at by people who saw them. [Xiaogong] was good at classical poems and poetry, but followed an unsuccessful scholarly career for twenty years. Later, he was cordially invited by Thomas Francis Wade. It is said the burning of the Yuanming yuan was at Gong's instigation and proposal. For this he is despised by people.<sup>105</sup>

17. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1922 (民国十一年)

AUTHOR: Yi Zongkui 易宗夔 (1875-?)

SOURCE: *Xin shishuo* 新世说 (New tales of the world)

103 *Qingshi yanyi*, 490: 你道龔孝拱是何人？他是晚清文人龔定庵長子，他的學問，不亞乃父，旅居上海多年，各國語言文字，統知一二，只性情怪僻得很，不屑與人談話，巧遇了英人威妥瑪，在上海開招賢館，延為秘書，月致千金。孝拱得了脩脯，便去孝敬歌妓，父母妻子，一概不管，只納了一個妓女為妾，頗稱眷愛，時人叫他龔半倫，他亦以半倫自號。半倫的意義，說他生平不知五倫，只寵愛一個小老婆，算作半倫。此人可殺。這次英人北犯，他恰跟了入京，燒圓明園，實是他唆使。[原注:] 巴夏禮是外人，恃強逞威，尚不足怪，半倫何物，乃敢出此？

104 The author Li Boyuan died in 1906.

105 Li Boyuan, *Nanting biji* 6. 7b: 龔定庵之子孝拱，生平改名者屢矣，乃愈出而愈奇，曰橙，曰刺刷，見者皆笑。工詩古文詞，潦倒名場凡二十年，後為英使威妥瑪禮聘而去。或曰圓明園之役，即龔發縱指示也。以是不齒於人。



RECORD: During the war in the year 1860, when English navy warships invaded the capital and burned the Yuanming yuan, Banlun [i. e. Gong Cheng] in fact went there with them and rode a horse alone [running into the Yuanming yuan before foreign soldiers did], and took out jade and heavy and precious wares. | And just because of this, he was increasingly criticized.<sup>106</sup>

18. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1924

AUTHOR: Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929)

SOURCE: “Ba ‘Gong Xiaogong shu heng’e” 跋《龔孝拱書橫額》(Postscript on Gong Xiaogong’s calligraphy)

RECORD: Xiaogong is the son of Ding’an. In the war of the Yuanming yuan, he is suspected as a spy, and has since long been reviled. But it is also said that it is not true, because Xiaogong had learned English and thus was libelled. Xiaogong’s scholarship and behaviour much resembled his father’s.<sup>107</sup>

19. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1930<sup>108</sup>

AUTHOR: Chen Wenbo 陳文波 (date of birth and death unclear)

SOURCE: “Yuanming yuan canhui kao” 圓明園殘毀考 (The ruins of the Yuanming yuan)

RECORD: There are two kinds of sayings about the ruins of the Yuanming yuan by Englishmen and Frenchmen: first, the reason why Englishmen and Frenchmen plundered and burned the Yuanming yuan is because of the guide Gong Banlun. Banlun’s name is Cheng, son of Zizhen. He is fond of magniloquence and acts uninhibitedly. He found himself in a predicament when he was in the capital, so managed his way to Shanghai and became secretary of the English consulate. When the English army marched northward, Gong guided them saying that “the essence of the Qing regime is assembled in the Yuanming yuan”. Therefore, as the capital was occupied, English and French soldiers went directly to the Yuanming yuan, while the

106 *Xin shishuo* 6.36b (474): 康申之役，英以師船入都，焚圓明園，半倫實同往，單騎先入，取金玉重器以歸。坐是益為人詬病。

107 *Yinbingshi heji*, Vol. 5, 44B.34: 孝拱為定庵子，圓明園之役，有間諜嫌疑，久為士林唾罵。或曰並無其事，孝拱嘗學英語，以此蒙謗耳。孝拱學行皆有父風。

108 In the last sentence of his article, Chen Wenbo writes: 見《清華周刊》十五周年紀念增刊。“See the Memorial Supplement for the 15th Anniversary of *Tsinghua Weekly*.” Cf. “Yuanming yuan canhui kao”, 188. As the first issue of *Qinghua zhoukan* was published in 1915, its 15th anniversary is 1930.

inner city of the capital averted a disaster. It is held by some people that this is owing to Gong Banlun's dedication. This story is still popular and old men could relate the details. And the imperial edict of the 2nd day of the 8th month of 1860 wrote that "this barbarian [country] is tens of thousands of li from ours, and originally came for commercial exchanges. Only because the perilous Hanjian provoked [barbarians] by all means, the breakup became irretrievable." This clearly pointed to the imperial edict of the emperor Wenzong (i. e. Xianfeng 咸豐), then "the perilous Hanjian" must mean something.<sup>109</sup>

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109 Chen Wenbo, "Yuanming yuan canhui kao", 168: 圆明园之毁于英法也，其说有二：一为英法所以焚掠圆明园者，固有龚半伦为引导。半伦名橙，自珍子。为人好大言，放荡不羁，窘于京师，辗转至上海，为英领事纪室。及英兵北犯，龚为响导曰：“清之精华在圆明园。”及京师陷，故英法兵直趋圆明园，而大内得免于难者，说者谓龚半伦之赐也。此种传说，至今故老多能道其详。而咸丰十年八月癸亥之谕，亦曰“该夷去国万里，原为流通货物而来，全由刁恶汉奸，百端唆使，以至如此决裂。”则汉奸唆使之词，出于文宗诏谕，当有所指。In Chen's essay, 169, the second account of the burning of the Yuanming yuan concerns the whole episode of the burning: 二为焚圆明园之经过，有谓京师既陷，文宗北狩，于是园中大乱。其初小民与宦官争夺之，其后英法大掠之。有谓夷人入京，遂至园宫，见陈设巨丽，相戒勿入，云恐以失物索偿也。乃夷人出而贵族穷者，倡率奸民，假夷为名，遂先纵火，夷人还而大掠矣。（见王闿运《圆明园词》小注）。有谓法人之掠，散乱无方，英人则结队分组，搜掠为多。有谓园宫虽乱，尚不至糜烂。及奸民欲渔利，乃引英法兵而大掠之。有谓时有洋人兑金钱于海甸，因事冲突，解送圆明园，兵忿而夺之，于是大肆焚掠矣。有谓英参谋巴夏礼在通议和，为僧格林沁所捕，英人索巴攻海甸，巴出欲泄忿，于是焚掠圆明园。至今传说虽多，吾以王氏之说为较有根据。“The second kind of opinion is about the course of burning of the Yuanming yuan. There is one saying that after the capital fell into foreigners' hands and Wenzong [the emperor Xianfeng 咸豐] moved out to the north, there was chaos inside the palace, and at first mobs struggled with officers [for treasures], then followed up by Englishmen and Frenchmen who plundered on a large scale. There is a saying that when barbarians entered the capital and then came to the Yuanming yuan, once they saw the splendid buildings and decorations, they warned each other not to enter the palace in case anything lost inside the palace would cause a demand of compensation from them. When barbarians left [the palace], the noble(s) in destitution, instigated villains to set it on fire in the name of barbarians, and then the barbarians came back and plundered on a large scale. (Original note: see Wang Kaiyun's *Yuanming yuan ci*). There is a saying that the Frenchmen's plunder was scattered and disordered while that of the Englishmen was very organized in groups, therefore they looted more things. It is also said that although there was chaos inside the palace, it is not to the extent of uncontrollable disorder, until treacherous villains wanted to take advantage of the chaos, which then led to plunder on a large scale by English and French soldiers. There is a saying that some westerner(s) exchanged money in Haidian, but for some reason got into trouble with Chinese people, and then were arrested and sent to the Yuanming yuan,

## 20. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1942

AUTHOR: Yang Jing'an 楊靜齋 (date of birth and death unclear)

SOURCE: "Ji Gong Banlun" 記龔半倫 (A note on Gong Banlun)

RECORD: In December of 1860, when the united army of England and France captured Tianjin, he [Gong Cheng] was the secretary of Thomas Francis Wade. It is said that the burning of the Yuanming yuan was his advocate for revenge. But how could the act of the united army be influenced by a Chinese secretary? The whole story must be a groundless tale.<sup>110</sup>

## 21. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1944

AUTHOR: Wang Jiayi 王家吉 (date of birth and death unclear)

SOURCE: "You wulun shuodao erlun yilun banlun" 由五倫說到二倫一倫半倫 (Talking from five-ethics to two-ethics, one-ethic and half-ethic)

RECORD: At the end of Xian Feng's reign, the united army of English and France burned the Yuanming yuan. Xiaogong was in the service of Thomas Francis Wade, and he himself took part in the war. He took a great deal of treasures from the palace, and went south to Shanghai.<sup>111</sup>

## 22. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1944

AUTHOR: Mao Heting 冒鶴亭 (1873–1959)

SOURCE: "Niehai hua' xianhua" 孽海花閒話 (Casual Notes on the Niehai hua)

RECORD: When English envoys were in the hall of the Ministry of Rites for peace negotiations, Gong Cheng also attended. [Gong Cheng] put up innumerable obstacles which made Prince Gong very impatient and said: "Gong Cheng, you and your family received infinite royal graciousness for generations, and why do you hold a candle to the devil?" Gong answered

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however this triggered the anger of foreign soldiers, and then they plundered and set fire on a large scale. There is a saying that when Harry Smith Parkes, on the staff of the army, was negotiating for an armistice in Tongzhou, he was arrested by Sengge Rinchen (i. e. Borjigit Seng-ko-lin-ch'in, also Senggelingqin 僧格林沁 Lion-Precious in Tibetan, 1811–1865), and the Englishmen attacked Haidian for retrieving him, and after his release, the plunder and burning of the Yuanming yuan began. There are many editions of this story, but I take the story of Wang Kaiyun as more grounded.

110 Yang Jing'an, "Ji Gong Banlun", 27: 咸豐十年(一八六〇)十二月, 英法聯軍破天津的時候, 他正作威妥馬(Thomas Francis Wade)的司書, 據傳焚燬圓明園, 便是他的復仇主張。不過聯軍的舉動豈能為一華人司書所左右, 事必無稽。

111 Wang Jiayi, "You wulun shuodao erlun yilun banlun", 17: 咸豐末, 英法聯軍火燒圓明園。孝琪[拱]侍威妥馬, 躬與其役。得到清宮巨量珍寶, 南來上海。

harshly: My father could not be an official in the Imperial Academy and I was so poor that I had to earn bread from foreigners, and what is the royal graciousness my family received? Prince Gong stared at the sky with no words [to reply]. Tan Zhongxiu (i. e. Tan Xian 譚獻) said that he once saw Gong Cheng's collections, among which many were originally from the Yuanming yuan, but later all these were sold.<sup>112</sup>

23. PUBLISHING YEAR: 1948

AUTHOR: Raogong 堯公 (即 謝興堯) (*Pen name* of Xie Xingyao) (1906–2006)

SOURCE: “Gong Xiaogong yu Yuanming yuan” 龔孝拱與圓明園 (Gong Xiaogong and the Yuanming yuan)

RECORD: The opinion of Xiangqi (i. e. Wang Kaiyun), and the sayings of the old man Lu Chunyuan, are very reliable. The burning of the palace, although directly set fire to by western soldiers, had something to do with Banlun, because he was then a secretary of the barbarian enemy and therefore avoided any suspicion for its instigation. All the world had eyes on him as a Hanjian and called him the chief plotter. But even if Banlun had a hand in this plot, Englishmen always adhered to their own opinion; it is not convincing to see their ready adoption of Banlun's suggestion.<sup>113</sup> [...] Although the diaries are not absolutely reliable, those accessible foreigners' memorandums all claimed the burning of the Yuanming yuan was for revenge. But the memorandums from Chinese sources maintained that the “destitute noble(s)” together with local villains committed robbery by taking advantage of the chaos, and tried to cover their traces, then set the Yuanming yuan on fire. Foreign soldiers followed them and began to plunder. But about the story that Gong Banlun planned this plunder and burning, it is either taken as a hearsay or taken as a deed done for saving the inner city of the capital; neither is credibly grounded. As to the notorious name of a Hanjian given to Gong Cheng, it is because people hated him for his service to the barbarian enemy and his coming northward [for the 1860 war] with westerners, so people fabricated the story of his guiding and his scheme [to plunder and burn the Yuanming yuan].<sup>114</sup>

112 Mao Heting, “Niehai hua' xianhua”, 41 (1944), 3: 英使在禮部大堂議和時，龔橙亦列席，百端刁難，恭王不堪，曰龔橙世受國恩，奈何為虎傳耶？龔厲聲曰，吾父不得官翰林，吾貧至餬口於外人，吾家何受恩之有？恭王瞠目看天，不能語。譚仲修云，嘗見其收藏多圓明園中物，後亦斥賣盡淨。

113 “Gong Xiaogong yu Yuanming yuan”, 21 (210).

114 “Gong Xiaogong yu Yuanming yuan”, 21 (211): 湘綺之說，與老人陸純元之語，所云極可信。是園宮之焚，雖出於洋兵之手，實與半倫有關，因其為敵夷記室且有唆使之嫌，世以

The above table is a chronological list of sayings and ideas concerning Gong Cheng and the burning of the Yuanming yuan, and of course it is neither exhaustive nor all-inclusive. But it is still comprehensive enough for our study on this topic. From this table, we can see that although in fact no one knows who was the first one to accuse Gong Cheng of leading barbarians to the Yuanming yuan, the first possible written materials that may instigate this accusation could be originally traced back to three contemporaries of Gong Cheng: Wang Kaiyun 王闓運 (1832–1916), Wang Tao and Tan Xian. In these accessible materials, almost all accusations are somehow related to Wang Kaiyun's poem *Yuanming yuan ci* 圓明園詞 (Ci-poem on the Yuanming yuan), Wang Tao's *Gong Jiang liang jun yishi* 龔蔣兩君佚事 (Untold stories of Gong and Jiang) and Tan Xian's *Gong Gongxiang zhuan* 龔公襄傳 (Biography of Gong Gongxiang).

In the poem *Yuanming yuan ci*, some words in the prelude and two stanzas and notes on them are directly related to the scene of burning of the Yuanming yuan.<sup>115</sup>

1. In the prelude, it is stated:

Treacherous villain(s) availed himself/themselves of the chaotic opportunity to set fires alight and pillage in the palace, and barbarians followed. Fires were burning in all the gardens, and burned for three days and nights. Our officers in charge of the guards did not interrogate this, let alone the leader of the barbarians.<sup>116</sup>

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漢奸目之，並稱其為主謀。半倫即有此謀，英人行事，向執己見，亦未見其遽爾聽信而采用之。[...] 所記雖未足盡信，然可見凡外人所記，均稱園宮之燬，志在報復。國人所述，則云先有貴族窮者與當地奸民之乘亂搶劫，欲蓋其跡，繼以焚燬。洋兵繼之，乃大燒大掠。至謂乃龔半倫所主使，或只流言傳聞，或又許其欲保全大內均無所據。而其漢奸名號之由來，世人蓋疾其為敵夷作事，且隨[洋]人北來，遂附會其為嚮導為主謀也。

115 In the first edition of *Xiangqilou shiji* 湘綺樓詩集, the poetry anthology of Wang Kaiyun whose style title is Xiangyi 湘綺, there are no prelude and notes of this poem. (Cf. *Xiangqilou shiji*, xylograph edition by Mozhuang Liushi 墨莊劉氏, Changsha, 1907 (光緒丁未), pp. 13b-15b. But in the later edition (Shanghai Zhenya Shuju 上海鎮亞書局, 1921 民國十年) a prelude under the name of Xu Shujun 徐樹鈞 (another story is that the prelude was written by Wang himself under Xu's name) and notes on the stanzas of the poem were added according to Wang Kaiyun's handwritten draft. But the 1921 edition is not easily accessible, my quotation therefore is based on the recent edition edited by Ma Jigao *et al.*

116 *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 1401: 奸人趁時縱火，入宮劫掠，夷人從之。各園皆火發，三晝夜不熄。非獨我無官守詰問，夷帥亦不能知也。

## 2. In the poem, a couplet goes:

Although foes have not yet set fire to the wormwoods outside the Yongmen Gate, a shepherd boy has already seen the fire on Lishan Mountain.<sup>117</sup>

and the notes on this couplet:

Barbarians entered the capital and then came to the Yuanming yuan. Once they see the splendid buildings and decoration, they warned each other not to enter the palace in case anything going missing inside the palace would lead to a demand for compensation from them. When barbarians leave [the palace], the destitute noble(s) instigated villains to set it on fire in the name of barbarians, and then the barbarians came back and plundered on a large scale.<sup>118</sup>

It is noticeable that it is mentioned in the note of “the destitute noble(s)” (*guizu qiongzhe* 贵族窮者) who is/are accused of stirring up mobs to maraud the Yuanming yuan, finally resulting in the plunder by Englishmen and Frenchmen. It is clear that Gong Cheng’s name is *not* mentioned at all in Wang Kaiyun’s poem and notes, but that later on, people condemned Gong Cheng as being “the destitute noble”, and gradually charged him with the crime of arson and treason. Moreover, although Wang Kaiyun did not mention the name of “the destitute noble” in his poem and note, he actually referred to him as a Hanjian in other written material. Liu Yusheng 劉禹生 (1876–1953) said that he had read a poem written by Wang Kaiyun which is not included in Wang’s published anthology, and after Wang’s death he obtained some handwriting fragment of Wang’s about this poem. In this fragment it mentioned Gong Cheng directly as a Hanjian:

I did not inscribe on the scroll of painting [by Lichen], instead I recorded a poem on a separate paper, because I did not participate in the banquet that followed. When Lichen was in his heyday, he invited a wide range of guests, but he failed to ask Li Huangxian to come. Indeed Huangxian was also not a man of decency. But in the scroll, it is rare to see the inscription of Hanjian Xiaoyingweng and Paosou (Gong Cheng’s style name). Other people [who are inscribed in the scroll] are all preeminent. The inscription on the scroll in my name was not my personal handwriting. This is a supplementary note of the truth.<sup>119</sup>

117 Wang Kaiyun, *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 1410: 敌兵未蒸雍门萩，牧童已见驷山火。Cf. material number 2 in Table 2.

118 *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 1410: 夷人入京，遂至園宮，見陳設巨麗，相戒弗入，云恐以失物索償也。及夷人出，而貴族窮者倡率奸民，假夷為名，遂先縱火，夷人還而大掠矣。

From this material, it is clear that Wang Kaiyun naturally mentioned Gong Cheng's name after the title "Hanjian". In fact, the title was given to Gong Cheng for several reasons, but the most important one is his service to foreigners as a secretary and teacher to the Englishman Thomas Francis Wade. Then, Gong Cheng as a Hanjian must be an unquestionable fact to Wang Kaiyun. As we have seen, Gong Cheng's relationship to foreigners is clearly recorded in his own letter and Wang Tao's essay.

During the war in the year 1860, when English navy warships invaded Tianjin, Xiaogong in fact went there with them. And just because of this, he was criticized, and his integrity in his later years diminished.<sup>120</sup>

It is clear that in Wang Tao's record, on the one hand, he did not mention that Gong Cheng had suggested to westerners to plunder and burn the Yuanming yuan, but on the other hand, Wang Tao proved the credibility of the fact that Gong went to Tianjin with English warships in the war of 1860. As a close friend of Gong Cheng, Wang Tao's comment on him is certainly regarded as a reliable historical material for anyone who talks about Gong Cheng. Therefore, this material from Wang Tao must be an important source which actually explained that Gong Cheng is regarded as a Hanjian not just for his normal service to foreigners as a bread earning job, but because of the fact that he participated in the 1860 war as a servant to the enemy. So it is very plausible that in Gong Cheng's time, his service to enemy foreigners incurred his notorious title of Hanjian, and the rumour of his suggestion to barbar-

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119 Liu Yusheng, *Shizaitang zayi*, 78: 此卷予未題跋，以別紙錄小詩，因襖飲時未預也。筮臣盛時，廣致賓客，不能致李望仙，望仙亦非清流，中有漢奸銷英翁及鮑叟書，最為難得，余皆一時之彥。題圖非我親筆。補記於後。One thing must be clear that Wang Kaiyun had a divergence of opinion with Zhang Lichen for the evaluation of Zeng Guofan and his army *xiangjun* 湘軍, because Zhang made a critical comment in his *Xiangjun zhi* 湘軍志. Guo Songtao's 郭嵩燾 (1818–1891) letter to Chen Shijie 陳士杰 (1825–1893) quoted Zhang's criticism. (cf. Xu Yishi, *Yishi leigao*, 4.) So this fragment from Wang tells us two pieces of information: Firstly, Wang wanted to show his relationship with Zhang was not close even before the book commentary came out, because he did not inscribe the painting scroll of Zhang and did not participate in the banquet. Secondly, people invited by Zhang included two Hanjians, and one person of non-decency.

120 Wang Kaiyun, *Xiangqilou shiwenji*, 40: 庚申之役，英師船闖入天津，孝拱實同往焉。坐是為人所詬病，晚節益頹唐不振。Cf. number 3 in Table 2.

ian foreigners that they plunder and burn the Yuanming yuan is derived from this Hanjian title.

Tan Xian, another close friend of Gong Cheng, tried to plead for him, but only ended up by supplying further evidence for Gong Cheng's moral conviction. Tan Xian wrote a biographic epitaph of Gong, in which he argued that

In 1860, Englishmen invaded the capital. It is said that Mr. Gong was coerced to go there with them as a guide. Gong managed to forcefully persuade the administrator of those barbarians to negotiate an armistice and retreat.<sup>121</sup>

Tan Xian by saying this actually wanted to demonstrate that Gong Cheng was not only the person to be criticized, but was to be admired for his effort to get the armistice signed. But his defence is just counter-productive to his intention. When we contrast the record of Wang Tao and the biographic epitaph by Tan Xian, we can easily find a difference in the places they mentioned: Wang Tao stated

During the war in the year 1860, when English navy warships invaded Tianjin, Xiaogong in fact went there with them.<sup>122</sup>

Therefore, here Wang Tao confirmed that Gong Cheng went to Tianjin; but Tan Xian further confirmed that Gong Cheng also went to the capital where the Yuanming yuan located. And moreover, Tan Xian unconsciously repeated a possibly already existing rumour about Gong Cheng:

It is said that Mr. Gong was coerced to go there with them as a guide (to the capital or even possibly to the Yuanming yuan palace).<sup>123</sup>

Once this word of mouth was written down and published by a scholar and a friend of Gong Cheng, it became a more realistic story and spread more widely, although Tan Xian quoted this as an antithesis to be argued. Therefore, in Tan Xian's text, new evidence was actually supplied for the spread of the rumour about Gong Cheng.

So, Wang Kaiyun's insinuation of "the destitute noble" 貴族窮者在 his poem and his outspoken title of "Hanjian" for Gong Cheng,

121 Tan Xian, "Gong Gongxiang zhuan": 咸豐十年, 英吉利入京師。或曰挾龔先生為導。君方以言警長酋換約而退。Cf. material number 4 in Table 2.

122 Wang Tao, "Gong Jiang liangjun yishi", 40: 庚申之役, 英師船闖入天津, 孝拱實同往焉。

123 "Gong Gongxiang zhuan": 或曰挾龔先生為導。



in addition to the fact confirmed by Wang Tao that Gong Cheng went to Tianjian with Englishmen in the war of 1860, and supplemented by Tan Xian that Gong Cheng went on further to the capital as a guide, all these have created a subtle connection between the burning of the Yuanming yuan and Gong Cheng's part in it. First, "the destitute noble" is directly convicted as a demagogue in the plunder and burning of the Yuanming yuan; second, Gong Cheng is directly called a Hanjian for his service to the English enemy during the war of 1860; third, this Hanjian Gong Cheng went to Tianjin and Beijing and was in Beijing as a guide. These three points evidently converged to a possible connection: Hanjian Gong Cheng who served the enemy is also the anonymous "destitute noble" who instigated the mob to plunder and set fire to the Yuanming yuan, and he also possibly guided the enemy to plunder and burn the Yuanming yuan palace.

These connections and implications, however, are still indirect, although a slightly later text, *Niehai hua* 孽海花, clearly represented these connections in a direct way and influenced people on a very large scale. This text *Niehai hua*, a famous realistic novel, is in fact not a serious historical narration, but was written by a scholar and was based on many unofficial historical records, so immediately after its publication it became very influential, and was even reprinted fifteen times.<sup>124</sup> Almost all roles in the novel had their archetypes in real life. Gong Cheng is one of these roles. He was named in this novel as Xiaoqi 孝琪 which is an alias of Xiaogong 孝拱. In the novel, Xiaoqi is also the son of Gong Zizhen and people talked about him:

It is said that the burning of the Yuanming yuan was his proposal.<sup>125</sup>

And the novel also stated that Xiaoqi did this as revenge for his father's assassination by the Manchurian aristocracy:

Although my goal is not totally achieved, the burning of the Yuanming yuan somehow fulfilled part of my responsibility as a son."<sup>126</sup>

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124 Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, prelude, 2.

125 *Niehai hua*, 10: 听得火烧圆明园, 还是他的主张哩。Cf. material number 5 in Table 2.

126 Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, 20: 虽然不能全达目的, 烧了圆明园, 也算尽了我做儿的一点责任。Cf. material number 7 in Table 2.

If this novel is just a story, although its author wrote it with supporting historical materials, and it is not credible enough to literati, then, a famous scholar's straightforward narration would certainly make up for any shortcomings in the novel. Zhang Taiyan, a student of Tan Xian, further developed his teacher's narration and vividly and ironically depicted Gong Cheng's action during the burning of the Yuanming yuan:

“During the burning of the Yuanming yuan, Cheng rode a horse alone [running into the Yuanming yuan] before [foreign] soldiers did, and took out jade and heavy and precious wares.”<sup>127</sup>

Zhang Taiyan's description, because of his fame in academic circles, certainly influenced lots of literati, in addition to the novel *Niehai hua*. After the publication of *Niehai hua* and Zhang Taiyan's *Qiusbu*, lots of essays, unofficial historical records and scholarly notes concerning the rumour came out.<sup>128</sup> Such as, *Qixiage yecheng* 栖霞閣野乘, *Qingchao yeshi daguan* 清朝野史大觀, *Xinshi shuo* 新世說, and etc.

Therefore, from the above analysis, we can see that Gong Cheng getting his bad reputation resulted from a procedure from generalization to specification. That is to say, first general information and accusation of possibly being a Hanjian is supplied; then, a suitable person is located or specified as the incarnation of the general information supplied in advance. This process can be easily seen from a chronological list of quotations about this accusation of Gong Cheng.

127 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, 340, also in 582: 圓明院[園]之火, 橙單騎先士卒, 入取玉石重器以出。Cf. material number 6 in Table 2.

128 More or less later records, comments and notes about Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan are based on the writings by Wang Kaiyun, Wang Tao, Tan Xian and Zhang Taiyan, and also the novel *Niehai hua*. Many later scholars might also have read Gong Cheng's letter to Zhao Liewen, in which Gong Cheng actually confirmed his involvement in the armistice negotiation: 前歲之役, 通禮不載。合約既成, 名亦上達。“The warfare of the year before last is a kind not recorded in Li 禮 (ceremonial regulations). After the armistice was finally signed, my name also arrived at Higher hearings.” (Cf. material number 1 in Table 2.) But as this text is a personal letter, so its influence could not be on a very large scale, for only those collectors who got these letters from Gong Cheng could read this material. Only after “Gong Xiaogong yizha” was published, the information contained in this text spread widely.

Generally speaking, there are three kinds of ideas on the rumor about Gong Cheng during the late Qing and early Republican period: first, the assertion of Gong Cheng's involvement in the burning of the Yuanming yuan; second, the assertion of his innocence in this matter; third, leaving this question open as a remaining doubt. In Table 2, twenty three materials are provided, and we can put them into these three groups respectively by their number in Table 2:<sup>129</sup>

**Table 3 Three Attitudes towards the rumour**

Confirmation of Gong's involvement			Confirmation of Gong's innocence	Open
Total: 19 pcs			Total: 3 pcs	Total: 1 pc
For criticism	For justification	Neutral, not sure or no direct link, but providing possible connection.		
6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21	4, 7, 9, 10	1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 19, 22	14, 20, 23	17

From table 3, it is clear that materials in favour of Gong Cheng's involvement in the 1860 warfare and the Yuanming yuan incident are predominantly more than the other two groups. And the fact is, although within the group containing "confirmation of Gong's involvement" there are three different attitudes, and criticism of Gong's involvement only accounted for 8 out of 19 items of material, when the relationship between Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan became firmly established. What people remembered was this relationship between Gong Cheng and the burning of the Yuanming yuan, and they simply forgot about any criticism or justification for it. The "sleepers effect"<sup>130</sup> must have played an important role in the spread of the rumour.

<sup>129</sup> But some materials among them did not directly mention the relationship between Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan, however, as mentioned above, implications can still be seen; they will be put into the group of "Confirmation of Gong's involvement", as a sub-group "unintentional mention".

<sup>130</sup> "Sleepers Effect" describes such a phenomenon: due to the span of time, people tend to forget the source, comments and attitudes toward any information relating to him/her, but only vaguely remember the content of the information received. Concerning this concept, cf. Capon and Hulbert, "The Sleepers Effect: An Awakening"; Eagly and Chaiken, *The Psychology of Attitudes*.

### 3 Identity: Crisis, Deconstruction and Reconstruction

From materials in Table 2 in the second chapter, it is clear that during the spread of the rumour about “Gong Cheng’s guiding of western soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan”, attitudes toward it have undergone changes which can indeed reflect the identity changes during that time.

The following passages will focus on the vicissitude of the Zeitgeist and a reflection of the deconstruction and reconstruction of Identity presented by the case of Gong Cheng, with the help of above mentioned historical materials, and with a probably too detailed classification of the connotation of the concept of Hanjian. Two facts must be made clear first: 1. Gong Cheng’s service to Westerners is a fact, and he was involved into the negotiations during the 1860 war, although the role he played in it was not necessarily as big as he himself and outsiders thought; 2. Gong Cheng guiding English and French soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan is an absolutely fabricated rumour which a number of written works and research results have proven.<sup>131</sup>

Gong Cheng’s lifetime overlapped with a very particular time span when the Qing empire had passed its heyday, external threats gradually became apparent, an entire besiegement by Western powers had almost taken place, and internal stability had gradually eroded and brought about tremendous internal unrest. In 1839, when Gong Cheng was 22 years old, the famous event of the burning of opium by Lin Zexu at Humen in Canton (Lin Zexu Humen *xiao yan* 林則徐虎門硝煙) occurred. In fact this marked the start of a conflict between a rising British Empire on which the sun never set and that was eager to expand its interests in Eastern Asia and the declining Empire of the Middle Kingdom that was struggling to hold on to power. And the burning of opium at Humen was in fact a catalyst to the First Opium War (*Diyici yapian zhanzheng* 第一次鴉片戰爭) in 1840 which served to highlight the domestic strife and foreign aggression more clearly to the Qing regime. In general, before the first Opium War, the Qing regime could still manage to control the situation, but after that the whole situation started to collapse

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131 Here we can also provide a continuous record by a scholar Li Ciming 李慈銘, who personally experienced the event. Li Ciming’s diary clearly showed the whole process of the burning of the Yuanming yuan. Cf. the appendix at the end of this article.

irreversibly. The first year of Xianfeng 咸豐 was also the first year of the Taiping tianguo 太平天國, when the insurrectionary army spelt serious trouble for the Qing regime. In such an age of turbulence in a particular condition when the governors were non-Han ethnics, it was natural that an identity crisis should appear which would have great repercussions on everyone. Gong Cheng, as a man with noteworthy conduct and of an independent character, together with his own identity and comments on his doings in fact reflected the problem of self-identity and identity affiliation, and therefore became an interesting phenomenon to be studied.

Above all, Gong Cheng was unsuccessful in the imperial examinations (*keju bude zhi* 科舉不得志), and at the same time he was living in an age of strong western political and cultural impact, therefore his sense of affiliation in a way was split and caused confusion of his self-identity. There is no doubt that Gong's knowledge was based on traditional Chinese scholarship, such as study of the *Confucian classics* (*jingxue* 經學), philology (*xiaoxue* 小學) and epigraphy (*jinsixue* 金石學) which was all in keeping with his family's tradition of scholarship. His father's broad horizons and peculiar understanding of Chinese frontier history and the alternation of dynasties, as well as his attitude toward imperial examinations, greatly influenced Gong Cheng and his life. The reason for Gong Cheng's continuous failure in imperial examinations was mainly because his style of writing and content for were inconsistent with the examination regulations and ideological boundaries, and therefore he "failed to be acknowledged by pursuing his scholarly career".<sup>132</sup> Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 even mentioned hearsay about Gong Cheng's innuendo on the illegitimacy of the Manchurian regime in an entrance examination for the Imperial Academy (*Hanlin yuan* 翰林院):

It is said that in an entrance examination for the Imperial Academy, the subject was decided to be the *Ode for the Hall of Audience* (lit. Hall of Justice and Honour) but its rhyme had been forgotten, Gong Cheng said: "I know it: in the luxuriance of forests and the exuberance of grasses, birds and animals live."<sup>133</sup>

132 Tan Xian, "Gong Gongxiang zhuan": 治諸生業久不遇。

133 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol.3, 340 (also in 582): 人傳館試《正大光明殿賦》，忘其韻。橙曰：「吾知之：“長林豐草，禽獸居之。”」Here Gong Cheng uses the metaphor in a sa-

If Zhang had got it right, then Gong Cheng was obviously not at all happy with the dominance of the Manchurians. From later historical materials, we find that Gong Cheng was at least disgruntled with the ruler, if not particularly emphasizing the ruler's ethnic attributes. For instance, Mao Heting 冒鶴亭 (1873–1959) wrote:

When English envoys were in the hall of the Ministry of Rites for peace negotiations, Gong Cheng also attended. [Gong Cheng] put up innumerable obstacles which made Prince Gong very impatient and said: "Gong Cheng, you and your family received infinite royal graciousness for generations, and why do you hold a candle to the devil?" Gong answered harshly: "My father could not be an official in the Imperial Academy and I was so poor that I had to earn bread from foreigners, and what is the royal graciousness my family received?"<sup>134</sup>

No matter if Gong Cheng did or did not say those words, or whether his help to Englishmen for negotiations with the Chinese is a fact, Gong Cheng's service to foreigners is itself a reflection of his identity crisis. For if he was a traditional Confucian scholar, then being loyal to the emperor, filial to his parents and fraternal to his brothers (*zhong, xiao, you, ti* 忠孝友悌) is, if not an entirety, a supremely important component in forming his identity. But Gong Cheng as a Chinese served foreigners at a time when working for foreigners was almost synonymous with being Hanjian. In fact first he had violated one of the common tenets of Confucianism. Dogma such as Cheng Yi's 程頤 (1033–1107) "Starving to death is a very small thing, but being disloyal is a great thing"<sup>135</sup> has long since been a Confucian ideal to be followed by Confucian scholars. Then, Gong Cheng could be regarded as not being a Confucian. Yet judging from his lifetime scholarship, he is a real Confucian. His *Shi benyi* 詩本誼 (*The original meaning of the Shijing*) is unique and creatively different. For instance, he classified the meaning of poems into several groups, such as the author's meaning (*zuo shi zhe*

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tirical way: 禽獸 birds and animals are used to signify Manchurians and forest and grassland. China. People in this land are not the real owners, because birds and animals (a derogative expression for those uneducated by confucianism) were the ones who really occupied and dominated the land (China).

134 Mao Heting, "'Niehai hua' xianhua", 3: 英使在禮部大堂議和時，龔橙亦列席，百端刁難，恭王大不堪，曰龔橙世受國恩，奈何為虎傳耶？龔厲聲曰，吾父不得官翰林，吾貧至餬口於外人，吾家何受恩之有？

135 *Er Cheng ji*, "Henan Chengshi yishu" 22B.301: 餓死事極小，失節事極大。

*zhi yi* 作詩者之誼), the reader's meaning (*du shi zhe zhi yi* 讀詩者之誼), collector's meaning (*cai shi zhe zhi yi* 采詩者之誼) etc., and even some opinions might be astoundingly unacceptable to normal scholars – as Tan Xian said “normally also to be criticized by the world”.<sup>136</sup> But if we read his interpretation of *Shijing* 詩經, it is easy to find a typical Confucian hue in it. For instance, he argued that

The original meaning of the poem *Guan Ju* 關雎 is about the wish to have a gentle woman to match a gentle man. Because the way of Heaven and Earth is derived from the conjugal life of husband and wife. Therefore the way of straightening at the beginning and the foundation of the royal cultivation are all first dependent on it. That is why Zhou Gong adopted it as a chapter of the Ode and Confucius decided it was to be the first chapter of the Folksongs classification.<sup>137</sup>

A relatively strong Confucian flavour can be sensed in this interpretation, and similar examples are numerous in his book. Therefore, we can say that Gong Cheng's interpretation of the *Shijing* is still within the category of Confucian scholarship. Moreover, he loved inscriptions and sealcutting so profoundly that he tried to collect good rubbings from stones whenever he could.

During the Qing Xianfeng and Tongzhi era, Gong Xiaogong was tired of the Englishman Thomas Francis Wade, but he still sojourned in a rented house in Shanghai. His home was always full of guests, so he was always pawning his belongs to buy liquor [to treat these guests]. He was fascinated by inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets, so whenever he saw a rare one from other people, he appreciated it and applauded enormously. When Yang Xingwu (1839–1915) had just arrived at Shanghai from Beijing, with several bamboo baskets of inscriptions of stone tablets, Xiaogong visited him and asked him to show him what was inside the baskets. He picked out good ones and paid a good price for them, and he also paid Yang Xingwu's travelling expenses.”<sup>138</sup>

136 Gong Cheng, *Shi benyi*, postscript, 1b: 要亦為世詬病而已。

137 *Shi benyi*, postscript, 1a: 關雎思得淑女配君子也，天地之道造端夫婦，正始之道王化之基，莫先乎此，故周公用之樂章，孔子定為風始。Also in his prescript, Confucianism is often recognized.

138 Xu Ke, *Qinghai leichao*, vol. 9, “Jianshang lei” 4, 4446: 咸、同間，龔孝拱既為英人威妥馬所厭，而仍質廡於滬，然坐客恆滿，常典質以沽酒。酷好碑版文字，見人一善，贊之不絕。

This example not only shows that Gong Cheng's academic appetite was deeply imbued with traditional Chinese scholarship, but also tells us about his generous and chivalrous treatment of people.<sup>139</sup> These characteristics are also repeatedly mentioned by Wang Tao.<sup>140</sup> All these have shown his strong identification with traditional scholarship and his personality and demeanor like silhouettes of Wei Jin 魏晉 scholars. His despised name Banlun 半倫, the Half-ethic, in my opinion, is mainly due to his "disloyalty", i. e. serving Englishmen rather than the Qing regime. His "impiety" to his parents does not hold water and the other three ethics are not convincing because a lot of people did not enjoy a good relationship with brothers, couples and friends, was not necessarily regarded as Banlun. Therefore, the key is Gong's service to Englishmen. To Gong Cheng, who failed in his attempts to become an official, being of service to Westerners as a means of earning a living would not be seen as particularly problematic. In fact, considering his failure to serve the "country" in an official position and his unruly personality, it is hardly surprising that Gong Cheng lost his political affiliation to the Qing, let alone loyalty to the emperor personally. He himself is clear about his academic views being controversial and expected people "to acknowledge me or to criticize me is for future judgments".<sup>141</sup> However, once he was regarded as a rebel against orthodoxy by traditional literati and officialdom for his service to foreigners, in addition to his controversial academic views, he was excluded from the academic community. As a reaction, Gong Cheng reacted by distancing himself from that academic community, although his scholarship and academic interests were very much in keeping with that community, inside which crisis and disaccord between conservatives and revolutionaries already existed. The self-identification crisis encountered by Gong Cheng appeared more clearly in another issue: because of the Taiping tianguo movement, the Qing government tried to ask Western armies

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口。楊惺吾方自京師至滬，載碑帖數大麓。孝拱訪之，請出其麓，檢佳拓本，酬以善價，且為供旅費焉。

139 This example was from an unofficial historical record, and its credibility is in question, but from other records, like those of Wang Tao and Tan Xian, it is a credible truth that Gong Cheng loved stone inscriptions and he treated his friends very generously.

140 Cf. *Wang Tao riji*, 141, 157, 164, 167, etc.

141 Gong Cheng, "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 9: 知我罪我有後世在。



to help them to suppress the uprising and Gong Cheng played a mediating role in this case. Zhang Taiyan mentioned this in his article:

When the Qing regime asked the Western armies to capture the area of Suzhou and Songjiang in order to cut the downstream retreat roads of Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全, (the leader of the Taiping tianguo movement), Gong Cheng actually contributed his efforts. All the world positively appraised his unique posture.<sup>142</sup>

But Zhang Taiyan did not think like most people did:

Looking at his relationships with Europeans and Manchurians, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, it is his effort to show off his capabilities [as he was in an adverse situation, not successful in an orthodox career], and what is his contribution to our China and Chinese people.<sup>143</sup>

Zhang's viewpoint is not unreasonable, as he pointed out Gong's effort to help the Qing to suppress the uprising was merely an alternative way to demonstrate his value following his lack of success in the imperial examinations. It is noticeable that Zhang's comment is based on a modern nationalism which judges Gong Cheng's relationships with Europeans and Manchurians are not of benefit to the Han people. But it is just from these seemingly contradictory activities that Gong Cheng's self-identity was confirmed in a reverse direction: he does not belong to the Qing scholars and literati community, so his status is serving as an assistant to Westerners, but not an official of the Qing regime, during the negotiations between the Qing government and the united armies of England and France. He himself mentioned in his letter that he actually contributed his efforts in order to help the Qing government sign the armistice; he was not a Westernized person, because his academic interests and hobbies are really traditionally Chinese, although he loved to dress in a western way, and even his dietary habits and demeanour resembled more those uninhibited scholars of the Wei and Jin period.<sup>144</sup> On one hand, Gong's sigh of emotion shows his nostalgia and cherished memory of the motherland and his lament to the decline of the Qing as a political community:

142 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, 340 (also in 582): 及清乞西師陷蘇、松，斷洪氏下游，橙與有力焉。世皆多其奇氣。

143 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, 340 (also in 582): 觀其出入歐、滿，一彼一此，坎廛以求逞者，於中夏何有？

144 Cf. note 140.

Lamenting for the homeland on a depressed rainy day (i. e. for the decline of the homeland) is of course related to mankind, but is it not also related to Heaven.<sup>145</sup>

On the other hand, his disappointment and discontentment with the status quo of China at that time is also very strong:

The coming of the remote Westerners is really a suitable remedy, or a timely straightener, to the pernicious tendency of frivolousness and indolence of China. Moreover, opium has poisoned China to date, and the great way always renders retribution, so that it is perhaps China's fate to remove all calamities first and then give birth to talents for driving barbarians out[of China].<sup>146</sup>

The most unique example is his correspondence to Zhao Liewen which showed his multiple levels of identity contradiction. He said to Zhao Liewen:

In order to live, you play the jackal to the tiger and use this experience as a means of promotion in the command office, but all these are not what I dare to be informed[ to do].<sup>147</sup>

This is a straightforward criticism of his friend Zhao Liewen for his service to Zeng Guofan, a loyal high official of the Qing regime, so it seems to show Gong's hearty stance and contempt for "politicians" involved in politics, and to some extent his disapproval of service to the Manchurian rulers. However, in the same letter, he also said:

Seeking help from a foreign army is what I initiated, and just because of a public announcement from Westerners, we are saved from being hair-dishevelled [like followers of the Taiping tianguo Uprising are].<sup>148</sup>

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145 Cf. *Wang Tao riji*, 147: 悶雨又抱故國之悲，雖曰人事，豈非天哉？ It is noticeable that the date of this diary is 22nd of the 3rd month of 1860, only several months before the burning of the Yuanming yuan. From Gong's melancholy we can understand his unwillingness to see the collapse of the Qing as a political community. And this is also another material to refute the rumor about Gong and the burning of the Yuanming yuan.

146 Gong Cheng, "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 10: 中國浮偽偷惰之習，泰西人來，正是對證發藥，矯枉之藥。且以鴉片毒中國至于此日，天道好還，或者冥冥令為中國除難而後生攘夷狄之才者乎。

147 "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 10: 足下為衣食計，為虎作倀，乃又以為進身幕府之資，皆非所敢知。

148 "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 10: 乞師之舉，鄙人所發，今日得不被髮，賴西人一紙之揭。

This might point to his complacency at his involvement in politics, because he thought it was him who had supplied a good strategy to suppress the Taiping tianguo Uprising by borrowing a Western army; and at the same time it shows his apprehensions towards the Taiping tianguo movement, an uprising by Gong's fellow ethnics, and his willingness to help the Manchurian rulers, an alien ethnic group, to suppress it. Although he worked for Englishmen, he called Englishmen, Frenchmen and Americans "barbarians" (*yi* 夷),<sup>149</sup> which may indicate his psychological alienation from Westerners. Therefore, for such a person in such an era, it is not possible to generalize and claim he had just one identity.

From the above narration, we can see the confusion about Gong Cheng's self-identity. But similarly confusing, if not worse, are people's views on Gong Cheng and his activities and which also reflects the identity crisis in late Qing. Gong Cheng's contemporaries – for instance, the abovementioned Wang Kaiyun – regarded him as Hanjian, which is certainly because of the service he rendered to Englishmen. Recalling the above analysis on the connotations of the term Hanjian, we see that Wang Kaiyun was putting Gong Cheng in the third category: Gong Cheng's service to foreigners betrayed the political community of the Qing. In Wang Kaiyun's judgement the Qing, although becoming decadent, as a political community of Manchurian and Han and other ethnic groups, were legitimate and this shows the absence of anti-Manchurian thinking on his part. Although the Qing regime was on the verge of collapse, the common identity for the multi-ethnic political community established in their early period remained effective till then. The Qing dynasty from the very beginning had tried to sidestep the issue of their ethnic background. Yongzheng, for instance, had tried to argue the legitimacy of the Manchurian reign in China with his *Dayi juemi lu* 大義覺迷錄 (Great righteousness resolving confusion). Their efforts were rewarded with a rather successful new identity for their empire: they not only organized the Han people, the biggest ethnic group in both population size and cultural influence, into a new political community, but also brought in those frontier ethnic

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149 In his letters to Zhao Liewen before and after the burning of the Yuanming yuan. Cf. "Gong Xiaogong yizha", 9 and 14.

groups with a small population but vast territory, such as the Mongolians, Tibetans and Uyghurs. However, in order to achieve this, no violence was spared. For instance, the “Tifa ling” 薙髮令 (Haircuts Act), stipulating that hair was to be cut and clothes were to be changed, was relentlessly carried out and aimed at destroying the old identity of the ethnic Han Ming dynasty. However, this new identity is in fact de-ethnicized, a political but not cultural one. This elaborately, sometimes brutally, built empire identity is neither equal to the Han cultural identity nor to the later Western nation-state identity which is based on the theory of “one state, one nationality”. It is rather similar to what Mongolians of the Yuan dynasty wished but failed to realize; for example, Genghis Khan (between 1155 and 1227) and Khubilai Khan (1215–1294) were respectfully called and regarded as Cakravartin-rāja 轉輪王<sup>150</sup> or the common ruler of the world, with a wish to build a unified world of diversified traditions. This kind of identity on the basis of universal emperors to some extent satisfied the traditional and psychological need for the Great Union (*da yitong* 大一統) of Han Confucians, and met the need of Manchurian rulers for geopolitical security of the empire as well. Therefore, sidestepping the distinctiveness of their ethnic attribute but emphasizing the interests of the political community was an effective strategy for the successful establishment of a new identity for their empire. And this new identity can be said to be one of the important reasons that in early Qing Manchurian rulers stabilized the newly conquered vast land and consolidated the regime. It is in this context of an established political community of Manchurians and Han ethnics in one common identity of the empire that Wang Kaiyun referred to Gong Cheng as Hanjian and thought Gong’s service to foreigners damaged the common interests of the Manchurian-Han political community and therefore excluded himself out of the community. As many examples in the second chapter of this article have already shown, Wang Kaiyun’s idea was a

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150 Herbert Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: The Legitimation of the Yüan Dynasty*, 52. It is interesting enough that Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 also claimed to be a reincarnation of Cakravartin-rāja. Cf. Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*, ch. 5, “The Wheel-Turning King”, 232-236.

prevalent phenomenon and basically reflected a common attitude towards foreigners and their Chinese compradors.

If the Hanjian Gong Cheng, in Wang Kaiyun's eyes, as a symbol showed the validity of the identity of the Qing empire, then later diverged opinions on Hanjian Gong Cheng's doings to a certain extent reveal the breakdown of this empire identity, or in other words: the deconstruction of this empire identity. As mentioned above, the Manchurian rulers by playing down their ethnicity but emphasizing the interests of the political community quite successfully established a new empire identity which came to be accepted as natural and spontaneous, even if it was attended by violence and heavy-handedness at the beginning. Yet in fact during the whole Qing era, a hierarchical order of ethnic groups and their interests substantially existed. For instance, vacancies for officials are differentiated into two categories, namely Manchurian and Han, and even for the same position it is the Manchurian official who has more power than his Han counterpart; intermarriage between Manchurians and Hans was forbidden, or more exactly, female Manchurians were forbidden to marry Han males, but male Manchurians were allowed to have Han wives, in order to maintain the so-called purity of blood lineage, etc. All these disparities in early Qing were quelled into apathetic invisibility by violent means, and no Han person or official dared to disagree. When entering the middle period of the Qing, people (especially Han people) had got used to the hierarchical *status quo*, so no grudge and strife was strong enough to damage the identity of the empire. But after the Opium War and the Taiping tianguo movement as well as many other peasants' uprisings, the Qing regime found itself on the edge of collapse, and these disparities of ethnic interests surfaced and became an important headstream to various social contradictions and antagonistic relations. Although in the last years of the late Qing, the regime still tried to solve the problem of hierarchical ethnic status which had not been a big problem in the middle period, the deconstruction of identity became unavoidable. It is noticeable that in the late Qing those who advocated the rescission of the privileges of Manchurians included not only many Han officials like Zhang Yuanji 張元濟 (1867–1959), Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909), Liang Dingfeng 梁鼎芬 (1858–

1920),<sup>151</sup> etc., but also many Manchurian aristocrats and officials, and the most famous representative among them, Duan Fang 端方 (1861–1911).<sup>152</sup> But this phenomenon very paradoxically revealed the dual character of the problem: on the one hand, the identity of the empire faced the dangerous situation of breakdown caused by ethnic privileges and hierarchical social order in favour of Manchurians; but on the other hand, both Manchurian and Han officials tried to maintain the empire's identity through abolishing those ethnic privileges, and this joint effort tells us that at least at that time the empire's identity for the Qing as a political community was still to some extent effective, though in crisis. The duality of the fact itself illustrates the reality of identity crisis and the inevitable deconstruction of identity. In other words, when a contradiction arose between the ethnic identity and the identity of the political community, Manchurian and Han elites were holding to a large extent the same standpoint, that priority must be given to the identity of the political community and, if necessary, its ethnic identity had to be forsaken. But this effort itself has already demonstrated in reverse the beginning of the deconstruction of identity. Alongside the rising of the anti-Manchurian movement, emphasis on ethnic identity became an effective strategy to realize political goals, or in other words, utilizing the disparity of ethnic identities to deconstruct the identity of the political community is a practical weapon for political purposes. In this historical context, opinions on the rumoured "fact" of "Gong Cheng's guiding Western soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan" in fact reflected the identity crisis of the late Qing. It is interesting that an influential opinion expressed this in a form of a novel which appeared in the last days of the Qing regime, the *Niehai hua*. In this novel, Gong Cheng as a character argued for himself:

During the incident of 1860, I, in the assistance of Thomas Francis Wade, intended to overthrow the Manchurian regime and kill by myself Ming Shan's descendants. Although my goal has not been totally achieved, the burning of the Yuanming yuan somehow fulfilled part of my responsibility as a son. If people call me Hanjian, or call my behaviour anti-Manchurian, let it be.<sup>153</sup>

151 Cf. *Wuxu bianfa dang'an shiliao*, 44-45; *Zhang Zhidong quanji*, vol. 2, 1421-1422.

152 Cf. *Xinbai geming*, vol. 4, 39-47. Because Duan Fang was Manchurian and had influence on the Empress Dowager, Cixi 慈禧, his suggestion had an important impact on the decision about the ethnic issue of the Qing regime.

It is especially noticeable that this confession of Gong Cheng in the novel not only confirmed the “truth” of his taking Western soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan, but also justified his motive for doing so. But in this quoted paragraph, Hanjian is used in the sense of the relationship between Gong Cheng and Westerners, i. e. in the sense of the third connotation of Hanjian mentioned above. Then it seems that the identity of the Manchurian and Han political community still functioned at that time. But the next phrase “anti-Manchurian” (*pai Man* 排滿) highlights the existing phenomenon at that time: the Han ethnic identity substituted that of a Manchurian and Han political community and became a new identity for revolutionists. As mentioned above, Zhang Taiyan’s comment on this issue shows that the antagonism of the Han people towards the ethnic Manchurians became a vigorous weapon to summon and unite the Hans:

In observance of his relations to Europeans and Manchurians, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other side, it is his effort to show off his capacity [as he was in an adverse situation, not successful in an orthodox career], and what is his contribution to our China and Chinese people.<sup>154</sup>

Three separate concepts are involved in Zhang’s comment, namely Europeans, Manchurians and China and Chinese people revealed the identity deconstruction: the identity of the Manchurian and Han political community is to radical nationalistic revolutionists, such as early Zhang Taiyan, no more than an effective common identity. From the case of Gong Cheng, the symbol of the deconstruction of identity is clear and the political collapse of the Qing is foreseeable.

The deconstruction of identity in the late Qing has brought with it various political predicaments, for instance, frontier problems, ethnic relations etc., which became an urgent issue to be solved as soon as possible around the time of the revolution of 1911 (*Xinbai geming* 辛亥革命). A simple ethnic identity is effective for the purpose of the anti-Manchurian movement, but after the overturn of the Manchurian regime and the founding of a new Republic, fron-

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153 Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, 20: 庚中之变，我辅佐威妥玛，原想推翻满清，手刃明善的儿孙。虽然不能全达目的，烧了圆明园，也算尽了我做儿的一点责任。人家说我汉奸也好，说我排满也好，由他们去吧！

154 *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 3, 340 (also in 582): 觀其出入歐、滿，一彼一此，坎廛以求逞者，於中夏何有？

tier crisis and ethnic contention were the issues that really needed to be solved. Because ethnic identities could no longer supply a legitimate identity for the new Republic, it was once again emphasizing the *common* identity of the political community based on the *common* interests of different ethnic groups that was called for. Therefore, revolutionists put forward the slogan of “Five races under one union” (*wuzu gonghe* 五族共和) to settle the identity crisis brought about by the anti-Manchurian movement thus reconstructing a new identity. Sun Yatsen (1870–1935) announced earnestly in his declaration as an interim president of the Republic of China on New Year’s Day of 1912:

The basis of a country is the people. To unify the Han, Manchurian, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan regions into one country is in fact to unify Han, Manchurian, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan people into one people, that is called the union of nationality.<sup>155</sup>

This declaration was exactly what Sun Yatsen’s debate opponent, Liang Qichao argued: A so-called identity of a “Zhonghua minzu” 中華民族 (Chinese nationality) needed to be built, which is at the same time a political identity and an ethnic one. This identity theory was stated by Liang Qichao:

Therefore, if we talk about nationality in China, then [we should] advocate ‘major’ nationalism [or nationality in a broad sense] in addition to ‘minor’ nationalism [or nationality in a narrow sense]. What then is minor nationalism? This is when the Han ethnic group deals with other ethnic groups within China. What is major nationalism? This is when the union of all ethnic groups in China as a nationality deals with foreign nationalities. From now on, if China were conquered and disappeared [then nothing is to be said], but if China persisted in its existence, then it will have to follow the empire’s political strategy to deal with the world: to unite Han, Manchurian, Mongolian, Hui, Miao and Tibetan to form one big nationality.<sup>156</sup>

155 *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, vol. 2, 2: 國家之本，在於人民，合漢、滿、蒙、回、藏諸地為一國，即合漢滿蒙回藏諸族為一人——是曰民族統一。

156 由此言之，則吾中國言民族者，當於小民族主義之外，更提倡大民族主義。小民族主義者何？漢族對於國內他族是也。大民族主義者何？合國內本部屬部之諸族以對於國外之諸族是也。[...] 自今以往，中國而亡則已，中國而不亡則此後所以對於世界者，不得不取帝國政略，合漢合滿合蒙合回合苗合藏，組成一大民族。Liang Qichao, “Zhengzhixue dajia



This theory is obviously stimulated by contemporary Western nation-states' theories and practices and their powerful state capacity. And thanks to Liang Qichao and others' political debates, the revolutionists changed their revolutionary slogan from a Han-Chauvinist "Revolution and Anti-Manchurianism" (*geming pai Man* 革命排滿) to "Five Races Under One Union" (*wuzu gonghe* 五族共和), and defended themselves by emphasizing that their "anti-Manchurian" movement was not aimed at all Manchurian ethnic people, but only the Aisin Gioro royal family.<sup>157</sup> Thanks to the timely established construction of the idea of "Zhonghua minzu nationality" after the foundation of the Republic, a new identity with a modern connotation incorporated all ethnic groups into one political community, and this new identity was to a large extent a reconstruction of the old empire's identity in a modern form, just as was the above mentioned Liang Qichao's prophecy. Moreover, the reconstructed identity was strengthened by an interim constitution which regulated the equality between ethnic groups. The 5th article of the interim constitution (*Zhonghua Minguo linshi yuefa* 中華民國臨時約法) of the Republic of 1912 (by Sun Yatsen 孫中山) regulated:

All citizens of the Republic are all equal, with no differentiation of races, classes and religions.<sup>158</sup>

These efforts played an important and positive role in the strengthened "Zhonghua minzu nationality" identity and the integrity of the territory. For instance, a public statement by attendants of Western Mongolian tribes meeting in 1913 deprecated a call for separation and claimed:

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bolunzhili zhi xueshuo", 75-76, an analysis of theories developed by Johann Caspar Bluntschli.

157 For instance, see "Chou yixing, bu chou yizu lun", 104: 居今之中國，所為革命之本義維何，則仇一姓不仇一族是也。夫為我漢族不共戴天之仇者，就廣義言之，厥為滿族，更進而言之，則實滿族中之愛新覺羅之一姓。"In nowadays China, what is the essence of revolution? To hate a family but not an ethnic group. Those sworn enemies of our Han people, in a broad sense, are Manchurians, but if speak more specifically, it is the royal family of Aisin Gioro, one family of the Manchurian people."

158 *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, vol. 2, 220: 中華民國人民一律平等，無種族、階級、宗教之區別。Even the 4th article of the constitution of the Republic of 1914, *Zhonghua Minguo yuefa* 中華民國約法, which is notorious for the authoritarian power entrusted to the President of the Republic, namely, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916), regulated: 中華民國人民，無種族、階級、宗教之區別，法律上均為平等。"All citizens of the Republic, with no differentiation of races, classes and religions, are all according to the law equal."

We Mongolians are a member of the Zhonghua minzu, therefore we should together contribute our efforts to safeguard the Republic to march forward.<sup>159</sup>

Thanks to the belief of ethnic equality and the concept of “Zhonghua minzu nationality”, people began to acknowledge the new identity of the Republic. In other words, an identity of the new political community was established in the form of a quasi-ethnic identity: “Zhonghua minzu nationality”. Of course the historical situation and reality are more complicated than the above narration, but a brief recapitulation is aimed to supply a background of the reconstruction of identity at that time.

Just in background, comments on Gong Cheng underwent changes. Sun Jing’an 孫靜庵 may be cited as a typical example. Sun wrote:

Xiaogong, Ding’an’s son, was a guest [adviser] of Harry Smith Parkes, and he led English and French soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan. For this, people blamed him. But at that time, nationalism had not yet arrived at our country, and, moreover, Xiaogong had his own intention, so he should not be taken as a person of the kind of Zhonghang Yue.<sup>160</sup>

Although Sun mistook Harry Smith Parkes as Thomas Francis Wade and credulously accepted the rumour about Gong’s guiding English and French soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan, his comment shows that in the early Republic people with destructed identity were influenced by the reconstruction of identity: when Sun Jing’an mentioned “nationalism” (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主義), he actually used this phrase in the sense of what Liang Qichao referred to as big nationalism (or nationality in a broad sense). That is to say: Sun Jing’an confirmed the common interest of Manchurian and Han in facing the English and French army, although he justified Gong Cheng’s reason for the burning of the Yuanming yuan as being to protect the capital.<sup>161</sup> But Sun’s confirmation of the common interests of the Manchurian and

159 *Ximeng huiyi shimo ji*, 43: 我蒙同系中華民族，自宜一體出力，維持民國，與時推進。In this statement, 10, is also claimed: 我蒙二百年來即為中華領土，環球各國共見共聞 “The territory of our Mongolians for two hundred years has been a part of Zhonghua China, and this fact has been known and admitted by all countries throughout the world.”

160 Sun Jing’an, *Qixiaye ye cheng*, 112: 定庵子孝拱，為英人巴夏禮客，導英法兵焚圓明園，世多以為詬病。然此時民族主義尚未發達於吾國，且孝拱用意固別有在，不得以中行說之流概之。

161 Sun Jing’an, *Qixiaye ye cheng*, 113.

Han is not from an old empire identity angle, but from a new Zhonghua minzu angle with certain reactivated old empire identity factors. In contrast, He Haiming 何海鳴, a former revolutionary military officer, regarded the incrimination of Gong Cheng for the burning of the Yuanming yuan to be a rumour:

During the war in the year 1860, when Englishmen invaded the capital and burned the Yuanming yuan, rumour has it that it was planned by Xiaogong, and he went [to the Yuanming yuan] and took out jade and heavy and precious wares. And because of this, he was increasingly despised.<sup>162</sup>

And he argued:

But being a lecturer to Englishman and an advocate of anti-Manchurians, was at that time a notoriety, but in later times an appraised deed.<sup>163</sup>

He Haiming's comment shows that in the early Republican period, many revolutionists were unaware that when nationalism in a narrow sense destroyed the characteristic of the old Qing empire, it also caused an identity crisis for the new political community at the same time. Cai Dongfan's 蔡東藩 (1877–1945) comment on Gong Cheng is similar to Sun Jing'an's, but his literati attribute made his a throwback to the old Qing empire identity, namely as a Manchurian and Han political community:

This time Englishmen invaded northward, and he just followed them to the capital, and the burning of the Yuanming yuan is in fact at his instigation. [Commentary by Cai Dongfan:] Harry Smith Parkes is a foreigner and his powerful bullying tactics for the English army is still not uncommon [to understand]. But what Banlun thinks himself is, and even dares to do such a thing [of instigating the burning of the Yuanming yuan].<sup>164</sup>

From Cai's wording and rhetoric, we can see that the old empire's characteristic of being a Manchurian and Han political community still had a certain inertial influence on certain old styled literati. But people like Liang Qichao are very clearly aware of the fact that a new identity

162 He Haiming, *Qiu xingfu zhai suibi*, 60-61: 庚申之役，英師入京焚圓明園，謠傳為孝拱所畫策，並飽載金玉重器以歸，於是人益不齒之。

163 *Qiu xingfu zhai suibi*, 60-61: 至於就館英人，倡言排滿，在當時為惡德，在後世為美談。

164 Cai Dongfan, *Qingshi yanyi*, 490: 这次英人北犯，他恰跟了入京，烧圓明園，实在是他唆使。[原注:] 巴夏礼是外人，恃强逞威，尚不足怪，半伦何物，乃敢出此？

for all the people in China was urgently needed. This is reflected in his comment on Gong Cheng:

Xiaogong is the son of Ding'an. In the war of the Yuanming yuan, he is suspected of being a spy, and has since long been reviled. But it is also said that it is not true, because Xiaogong learned English and thus was libelled. Xiaogong's scholarship and behavior much resembled that of his father.<sup>165</sup>

When Liang Qichao depicted Gong Cheng as “suspected of being a spy”, his standpoint was a newly reconstructed national identity, for Gong's suspected undertakings might damage the common interest of the political community of Manchurian and Han, although Liang also expressed his doubt on the credibility of this “fact” about Gong.

Entering into the middle period of the Republic, its new identity, based on the idea of “Five races under one union” and the “Zhonghua minzu nationality”, was firmly consolidated and generally effective. Therefore comments on Gong Cheng and his actions gradually converged: no matter if people agreed or disagreed with the facticity of Gong Cheng and his exploits, they basically made their judgments on what Gong had actually done which damaged the common interests of their political community, not with any anti-Manchurian emotions, as was the case in the early Republican period. And even if there were any anti-Manchurian emotions they were limited to the sense of “anti-Aisin Gioro royal family” but not the whole Manchurian ethnic group. For instance, Yang Jing'an mentioned this rumour about Gong and denied it at the same time:

In December of 1860, when the united army of England and France captured Tianjin, he [Gong Cheng] was the secretary of Thomas Francis Wade. It is said that the burning of the Yuanming yuan was his way of getting revenge. [...] The whole story must be a groundless tale.<sup>166</sup>

In Yang's narration, Gong's “revenge” is obviously not in the sense of revenge for the whole Han people but a family revenge on behalf of his father, therefore no identity contention appeared. Rao Gong also mentions:

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165 Liang Qichao, “Ba ‘Gong Xiaogong shu heng’e”:  
孝拱為定庵子，圓明園之役，有間諜嫌疑，久為士林唾罵。或曰並無其事，孝拱嘗學英語，以此蒙謗耳。孝拱學行皆有父風。Cf. note 107.

166 Yang Jing'an, “Ji Gong Banlun”, 27: 英法聯軍破天津的時候，他正作威妥馬的司書，據傳焚燬圓明園，便是他的復仇主張。[...] 事必無稽。

As to the notorious designation of being a Hanjian given to Gong Cheng, it is because people hated him for his service to a barbarian enemy and his coming northward [for the 1860 war] with Westerners; so people fabricated the story of his guiding and his scheme [to plunder and burn the Yuanming yuan].<sup>167</sup>

In other words, Rao Gong believed that the reason why Gong Cheng was called Hanjian was just because of his being in the service of a “barbarian enemy” (*diyì* 敵夷), a fact that violated the common interests of the political community of the Zhonghua minzu. Hanjian here signifies a traitor to the political community of all ethnic groups. Therefore, we can say that the reconstruction of identity in the Republic is, in a certain sense, the rebirth of the Qing identity of Empire, but following the concept of a modern nation-state.

#### 4 Conclusion: Rumor Mirrors Identity

It is somehow stale to describe the repetition of history, but the ironical thing is that once a historical issue is studied, a tedious repetition automatically surfaces. From Gong Cheng’s case, the history of the construction of identity in the late Qing and early Republican period is partly visible. The deconstruction and reconstruction of identity of the Chinese is mirrored somehow in the spreading of the rumour about Gong Cheng. A short *Ideengeschichte* of the concept of Hanjian also supplied a viewpoint backdrop for the relationship between the rumour and the changes of identity.

To sum up, generally speaking, before the rise of the anti-Manchurian movement, the rumour about Gong Cheng and the burning of the Yuanming yuan was still incubating, albeit the service he provided to Englishmen as secretary had been denounced by people. As a friend of Gong Cheng, Tan Xian did not use the term Hanjian to blame him. Tan Xian even tried to euphemistically defend Gong against criticism by saying that Gong Cheng had been forced to do what with reluctance: “It is said that Mr. Gong was coerced to go there with them as a guide”.<sup>168</sup> However, Gong Cheng’s self-identity crisis is easily seen through his actions, and comments about him before the anti-Manchurian movement are negative, except those coming from his

167 Xie Xingyao, “Gong Xiaogong yu Yuanming yuan”, 21 (211): 而其漢奸名號之由來，

世人蓋疾其為敵夷作事，且隨[洋]人北來，遂附會其為嚮導為主謀也。

168 Tan Xian, “Gong Gongxiang zhuan”: 或曰挾翼先生為導。

friends. These negative comments are in fact based on the identity of the Qing Empire as a political community.

But along with the rise of the anti-Manchurian movement, the rumours about Gong Cheng and the Yuanming yuan became more concrete. However, what he did was to a large degree pardoned or even applauded. The rumour was formed following the appearance of the novel *Niehai hua*, because in it is here that a clear connection between Gong Cheng, Hanjian and the burning of the Yuanming yuan was established. However, this novel using a character's narration gave its own sympathetic understanding to Gong Cheng:

When people abused him as Hanjian, he refused to admit it; when people flattered him as a revolutionist, he did not acknowledge that either. He said that his proposal for burning the Yuanming yuan was only meant as revenge for his father's death.<sup>169</sup>

Another defensive example is Deng Shi's justification from another angle for Gong Cheng taking Western soldiers to burn the Yuanming yuan:

Because although one garden was given up for the exchange of several hundreds of thousands of people in the capital, it was good for reserving so many [lives and homes].<sup>170</sup>

It is clear that the novel *Niehai hua* defended Gong Cheng from an anti-Manchurian viewpoint, but Deng Shi defended him still from the angle of regarding the Qing as a united Manchurian and Han political community. Contradictory views on Gong Cheng have clearly shown the identity crisis caused by antagonism towards the Manchurians and revealed the deconstruction of the old Qing Empire identity.

With the foundation of the Republic of China, anti-Manchurian thoughts ebbed away after the overthrow of the Qing regime had been successful. The idea of "the republic of five-ethnic groups" became the dominant ideology for identity. Attitudes towards the rumour concerning Gong Cheng emerged in a diversified way, and both appraisal and criticism existed. But on the whole, scholars tended to be more reasonable towards the rumour as, for example, the cases of Sun Jing'an 孫靜庵, He Haiming 何海鳴 and Liang

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169 Zeng Pu, *Niehai hua*, 16-17: 人家罵他漢奸，他是不承認。有人恭維他是革命，他也不答應。他說他的主張燒圓明園，全是替老太爺報仇。

170 Deng Shi, "Gong Ding'an bieji shici dingben xu", 188: 蓋以一園而易都城數十萬人之生命，其保全為益多也。

Qichao may show, while novelists and the public either remained focused on a sensationally uncommon phenomenon or harked back to their old Qing identity, as had Cai Dongfan 蔡東藩, *Xiaobeng xiangshi zhuren* 小橫香室主人 or Yi Zongkui 易宗奎.<sup>171</sup> But ironically enough, these two major attitudes, namely positive and negative ones, were in fact based on the same basis of identity, i. e. of all different ethnic groups of China as a common political community.

Gong Cheng was identified as Hanjian in a very historical context by people of different, even contrary, thoughts. Therefore different comments and interpretations on the actions of the same Gong Cheng echoed the complicated process of the deconstruction and reconstruction of identity for the Chinese people during the late Qing and early Republican period.

### Appendix: Materials from Li Ciming's 李慈銘 diary

Diary of the 23th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十三日, i. e. Oct. 7, 1860:

“Barbarians occupied Haidian. They burned the Yuanming yuan, the fire lit up the whole night.”<sup>172</sup>

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171 But in the middle and late Republican period, though some rational academic voices can be heard, due to the invasion of Japan and the resentment to those Hanjians who serve Japanese enemy, Hanjian became an intolerable target. Gong Cheng as an imagined Hanjian figure was criticized relentlessly. If someone wishes to argue for Gong, he should consider the involved emotion towards Hanjian. Thus a tension between rational argument and emotional criticism appeared, and those defenders for Gong will have to think over for their own identity attribute and situation. For instance, Yang Jing'an 楊靜齋 published in *Gu jin* journal an article about Gong Cheng, mainly tried in circumbendibus to absolve Gong from Hanjian condemnation. But as contributors to *Gu jin* are mostly comrades and friends of Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883–1944), president of the puppet government under the Japanese control, for instance, Chen Gongbo 陳公博, Liang Hongzhi 梁鴻志, Zhou Fohai 周佛海 who are usually regarded as Hanjian and Japanese servers, therefore, articles published in *Gu jin* are especially carefully fabricated and depolitical. But this still made Yang's arguing for Gong Cheng a case of Hanjian journal argues for Hanjian people, and this even made the rumor about Gong Cheng more complicated. Even to date, if people search Gong Cheng on the websites, most articles and information are negatively against him as a Hanjian. Few academic and neutral and rational articles are spread widely.

172 Li Ciming, *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1483: 夷人踞海淀。夷人燒圓明園，夜火光達旦燭天。

Diary of the 24th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十四日, i. e. Oct. 8, 1860:

"It is said that barbarians only burned houses of officials and residents outside the Yuanming yuan. It is also said that Elgin, leader of barbarians, expects to enter the city to exchange a treaty tomorrow."<sup>173</sup>

Diary of the 25th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十五日, i. e. Oct. 9, 1860:

"Outside the city, robbery and pilferage happen frequently, even a person with nothing more than shabby clothes is to be robbed."<sup>174</sup>

Diary of the 26th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十六日, i. e. Oct. 10, 1860:

"It is said that barbarians are not yet in the city."<sup>175</sup>

Diary of the 27th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十七日, i. e. Oct. 11, 1860:

"It is said that after barbarians looted the Yuanming yuan, guileful people also took the chance to take remaining objects, even using carts to take things away. Precious collections of the Court totally dispersed. After the barbarians had retreated the day before, guardians then dared to come out, and many guilty people were arrested and executed."<sup>176</sup>

Diary of the 28th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十八日, i. e. Oct. 12, 1860:

"It is said that barbarians will enter the city from the Anding Gate to the Donghua Gate, and the treaty will be announced in the Fahuasi temple."<sup>177</sup>

Diary of the 29th of the 8th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年八月二十九日, i. e. Oct. 13, 1860:

"Barbarians with five thousand soldiers entered the inner city."<sup>178</sup>

Diary of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 9th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年九月初一, i. e. Oct. 14, 1860:

"It is said that the treaty only contains sixteen articles."<sup>179</sup>

173 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1483: 聞夷人僅焚[圓明]園外官民房。又聞夷首額爾唎期以明日進城換約。

174 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1486: 蓋城外劫盜四起, 隻身敝衣, 悉被掠奪。

175 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1489: 聞夷人尚未入城。

176 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1490: 聞圓明園為夷人劫掠後, 奸民乘之, 攘斂餘物, 至挽車以運之。上方珍秘, 散無孑遺。前日夷人退, 守兵稍敢出禦, 擒獲數人, 誅之。

177 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1490: 聞明日夷人自安定門入至東華門, 法華寺宣合議。

178 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1490: 夷人率兵五千入居內城。



Diary of the 2nd of the 10th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年九月初二, i. e. Oct. 15, 1860:

“I recorded the sixteen articles in the Englishmen’s treaty [as follows].”<sup>180</sup>

Diary of the 5th of the 10th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年九月初五, i. e. Oct. 18, 1860 (the date of the burning of the Yuanming yuan):

“It is said that the armistice has been submitted to the throne, and has been approved. Princes and high officials will exchange the treaty with the leaders of the barbarians. But the barbarians go back on their word, and they want to add some extra articles. [I am] afraid that the thing will not be successful.”<sup>181</sup>

Diary of the 6th of the 10th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年九月初六, i. e. Oct. 19, 1860:

“The fire outside the Xizhimen since yesterday has still not been extinguished. It is said that the Heishi (Undermarket) is on fire; it is said that barbarians burned the Dazhong Temple; it is also said that they burned the buildings on the Wanshou Hill.”<sup>182</sup>

Diary of the 7th of the 10th month of 1860 咸丰庚申年九月初七, i. e. Oct. 20, 1860:

“Yesterday barbarians burned the Palace on the Wanshou Hill (original small size note: i. e. the Weng Hill), i. e. the Qingyi Parc (original small size note: the Kunming Lake is beside it). [The fire] also destroyed those temples on the Yuquan Hill (original small size note: the local Jingming Parc is also supposed to be burnt). They also burned the Zhengda Guangming Hall (lit. Hall of Justice and Honour, i. e. the Hall of Audience) of the Yuanming yuan, and the Qinzhen Hall (lit. Hall of Diligent Government) was completely looted. Barbarians put absurd placards inside and outside the city, saying that because China broke its promises for many times, so to [burn those palaces and buildings] was to vent their resentment.”<sup>183</sup>

179 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1491: 聞和約僅十六條。

180 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1491: 錄得暎人和約十六條。

181 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1496: 聞和議已請，旨得，準。諸王大臣與夷酋期以明日換約。而夷人翻覆，又欲增加數條。恐明日不得成矣。

182 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1499: 自昨日西直門外火迄今不滅。或云黑市災，或云夷人焚大鐘寺，或云燒萬壽山宮室。

183 *Yuemantang riji*, vol. 3, 1500: 昨日夷人燒萬壽山宮（原小字注：即甕山），即清漪園也（原小字注：昆明湖在其側）。連及玉泉山諸寺（原小字注：地有靜明園當亦連及矣），又焚圓明園之正大光明殿，勤政殿略盡。夷人張偽示于城內外，言中國屢失信義，故借此洩憤。

Note the last material shows clearly: the “barbarians” claimed that “because China had broken its promises many times, so to [burn those palaces and buildings] was to vent their resentment.”

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