

A Piece of Qing History

The historical value of a Sibe self-taught historian's collection of genealogies

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Abstract: The roots of the genealogy writing tradition of the Chinese Sibe go back to the Qing Dynasty. This tradition has played a crucial role to create a genealogical community of the Sibe: genealogies were the material carriers of knowledge preserved about their ancestors and their past. However, many of the genealogies were lost during the turbulent time of the twentieth century, and although numerous Sibe clans embark on reproducing their own family trees, it is only the memory of the elderly they can most often draw on. This study is intended to present and highlight the significance a specific collection of genealogies compiled by a self-taught Sibe historian, offering valuable sources for conduct research on the history of the Qing-dynasty and the Sibe.

Keywords: China, Sibe, Qapqal, Qing-dynasty, heritage, genealogy

Introduction

The concept of heritage as a condition of human existence persistently played a key role in the identity-building of individuals and groups,² and the concept only became an all-embracing category in the recent past. Placing the term heritage in a cultural dimension can be regarded a relatively new phenomenon,³ and the concept of world heritage, making headway from the West parallel with the expansion of globalization and the emergence of theories on memory,⁴ also reached China. Heritage as a terminological construction was shaped within specific discursive and organizational frames throughout the decades in China,⁵ gradually adding new value and meaning to the former understanding of the concept.⁶ As the outcome of this process, China's national cultural heritage, declared to be several thousand years old, became the key to legitimating the Chinese state; and the genealogy writing tradition of the Chinese Sibe (Chin. *xibo* 锡伯) ethnic group constituted an integral part of this heritage.

The genealogy writing tradition has always played a crucial role in constructing the self-imagining of the Sibe, who are characterised by particularly unique geographical, demographical, linguistic, and cultural features. The roots of the development of their specific characteristics go back to the Qing (清) Dynasty (1644–1912), and it is thanks to the Sibe's genealogy writing tradition that they can look upon themselves as a “genealogical community”⁷ despite several

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² Smith 2006: 16.

³ Tunbridge and Asworth 1996: 2–3; Lowenthal 1998: 4–5.

⁴ Hartog 2005: 10–11.

⁵ Svensson 2016: 34; Yan 2018: 184.

⁶ Lai 2016: 50–51; 79.

⁷ Zerubavel 2012: 9.

centuries of separation.⁸ We can look at genealogies as carriers the knowledge preserved of ancestors: they help in maintaining contact with ancestors and at the same time mould generations of descendants into a single, common community through keeping knowledge of ancestors alive in memory.

However, many of the genealogies were lost during the twentieth century. Combining analysis of primary sources and text based data with ethnographic observations, this study aims to give an insight and to highlight the significance of a specific collection of genealogies: the heritage preserved by a self-taught Sibe historian, Guan Wenming (关文明).⁹ I am hopeful that all those interested in China and specifically in the Sibe's history, society, language, and culture will be pleased to read it within and beyond the borders of China.

Historical background

The Sibe are one of the officially recognized ethnic minorities in the People's Republic of China. Their language belongs to the southern group of the Manchu-Tungusic languages within the Altaic language family.¹⁰ Sibe social organisation can be considered as traditional, the basic functional unit is the patrilineal subdivision of clans called *gargan*. These are exogamous groups with the same name that trace their descent to common ancestors; they are bound by solidarity and common rituals. They are organized into larger units or clans, called *bala* or *bala-mukūn*.¹¹

The Sibe population within China's borders today is just over 190,000. The majority of them live dispersed in the north-east provinces of Heilongjiang (黑龙江; a population of ~7,600), Jilin (吉林; a population of ~3,100), and Liaoning (辽宁; a population of ~132,400). A larger Sibe group (with a population of ~34,400) lives at a distance of approximately 5,000 kilometres to the west in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Chin. Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu 新疆维吾尔自治区). The separation of the two large Sibe groups was the outcome of a long historical process.

Unearthing the roots of this process, however, runs into difficulties, first of all because the origin of the Sibe is still unanswered.¹² The most frequently cited source in studies focusing on the Sibe's early history is a Manchu-language inscription on a stele.¹³ The writing only reveals that "the Sibe, at the very beginning, dwelt along the reaches of the river called Jalan Tolo"¹⁴ in the south [in the lands] [in the eastern parts of Hailar].¹⁵ A number of theories have been proposed

⁸ I use the concept of "genealogical community" in accordance with Zerubavel's understanding (see Zerubavel 2012) to emphasize that the Sibe's genealogical community is not necessarily biological but much rather based on socially constructed relations.

⁹ In this study, I am writing about Guan Wenming's genealogy collection with his permission, and disclose his name on his request.

¹⁰ As linguist Juha Janhunen has formulated it, the Manchu and Sibe languages "may be classified as a diachronic sequence of a single language" (Janhunen 2012: 6). Linguist Veronika Zikmundová arrives at a similar conclusion by stating that the Sibe language spoken today "is most likely a descendant of the Manchu coinée (Zikmundová 2013: 15). The Sibe language was officially recognised as different from Manchu in 1947, due to reforms of the Manchu language and script ("Xibozu Jianshi" Bianxiezu and "Xibozu Jianshi" Xiudingben Bianxiezu 2008: 137).

¹¹ Shirokogoroff 1924: 17–19.

¹² In the subject area of the Sibe's origin, the crucial question that emerges is whether the Sibe were the descendants of the Tuoba belonging to the Xianbei (鲜卑) who founded the ancient Northern Wei (魏) Empire (386–534) or of the Jurchen regarded as the ancestors of the Manchus who founded the Qing Dynasty.

¹³ The stele was erected in the courtyard of the Taiping Temple in today's Shenyang in 1803; today it is on display in the Shenyang Palace Museum. For the complete translation of the Manchu-language transcription on the stele, see Sárközi 2018: 75–94.

¹⁴ Chin. Zhala Tuoluo (扎拉托罗); for the Chinese-language transcription variants of the river, see Zhao and Wu 2008a: 171.

¹⁵ Chin. Haila'er (海拉尔); an unit of administration in the eastern part of today's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Chin. Neimenggu Zizhiqu 内蒙古自治区).

concerning where exactly this region could be found and which existing river the Jalan Tolo river mentioned on the stele could be identified with today.¹⁶

In fact, the Sibe's history can be reconstructed only from the end of the 16th century. The first historical sources that mention the name Sibe only go back to 1593, where they appear in connection with the War of Nine Tribes (Chin. *jiu bu zhi zhan* 九部之战). At the time, the Sibe, subordinated to the Khorchin Mongols, lived in the area along the Nen (嫩) and Songhua (松花) Rivers. Under the subordination of the Khorchin Mongols, the Sibe fought against Nurhaci (reigned 1616–1626), founder of what was to become the Qing Dynasty, who was striving to unite Jurchen tribes.

The nine tribes, however, were defeated and Nurhaci set about building up his empire and establishing the Eight Banners Army (Chin. *baqi* 八旗; Man. *jakūn gūsa*), the key to consolidating his power. As the outcome of this process, the Manchus equated their army with society: the Eight Banners Army was a complex institution that performed social, economic, and political functions alike.

It took around half a century, from the early to the mid-17th century, to build up the complete system. The first step was the creation of *nirus*¹⁷ (Chin. *niulu* 牛录) as the basic military unit. This was followed by organising the *gūsas* or banners. When the foundations of the new military and administrative units were laid, there were only four banners. These were distinguished by the colour of the banners they carried: yellow, red, white, and blue. By 1615 another four banners were organised: red-bordered yellow, white, and blue banners; and white-bordered red banners.¹⁸ Parallel with the Manchu Eight Banners taking shape, the Mongols and Hans, submitting to Manchu power, also gradually organized their own eight banners units. The complete 'eight banners' system was eventually set up by 1642, and consisted of the Manchu Eight Banners (Chin. *baqi manzhou* 八旗满洲; Man. *manju gūsa*), the Mongol Eight Banners (Chin. *baqi menggu* 八旗蒙古; Man. *monggo gūsa*) and the Chinese Eight Banners (Chin. *baqi hanjun* 八旗汉军; Man. *ujen cooba*).

Apart from some clans that had submitted to the Manchus in the initial stage of building up the Eight Banners Army, the Sibe originally served in the Mongol Eight Banners Army. By the mid-17th century, Tsarist Russia on the northern borders of the Manchu Empire presented an increasing threat, and the Manchu ruler saw it necessary to reinforce defence along the northern border. In the process of military reorganisation, the Sibe were removed from among the Mongols in 1692 and added to the Manchu Eight Banners. They were relocated and stationed in garrisons key to defending borders. This is known as the southern resettlement (Chin. *nanqian* 南迁) in Sibe history, taking place between 1699–1701.¹⁹

Although Manchu power seemed to have consolidated in the north-east by the first third of the 18th century, areas west of the Qinghai Lake were under the control of different tribes. In 1757, the Manchus eventually gained a stronghold in the region. This is when the valley of the Ili River was subjected to Manchu control and the occupation of the Tarim Basin followed in the next two years. By 1762, the forces of the Eight Banners Army set up military headquarters, placing the area under military control.²⁰ However, the military campaigns not only reduced the number of troops available to defend the area to a dangerously low level, but lands lay uncultivated as well. Therefore, it was necessary to reinforce troops, and to bring in an agrarian population that would firmly establish Manchu control over the area. For this end, Sibe troops –

¹⁶ See Zhao and Wu 2008a: 160–163.

¹⁷ The Manchu word *niru* means *arrow* or *shaft*. Originally, the word *niru* designated Jurchen hunting parties; it came to designate a basic military unit in the Eight Banners Army with time (Elliott 2001: 57–58).

¹⁸ Feuerwerker 1976: 5; Uray – Kóhalmi 2000: 6.

¹⁹ Zhao and Wu 2008c: 51–54.

²⁰ Wu and Zhao 2008: 58.

and others – were transferred from the north-east to the area of today's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

A selection was made of 1,000 Sibe soldiers and 20 military superiors – their 3,275 relatives – stationed in the areas neighbouring Shengjing to be relocated to the west.²¹ Equipped with supplies of money, food, and livestock, a total of 4,295 individuals set out in 1764 for the valley of the Ili (Chin. Yili 伊犁) River to arrive there after more than a year of travel.²² Initially, the Sibe set up their camps on the northern bank of the river and then in 1766 they crossed the river and settled on the southern bank to fulfil the orders issued by the military leadership.²³

The Sibe were initially organized into six *nirus* after their arrival. When the cultivation of the lands south of the Ili River and the construction of canals began in the hope of harvesting better crops, the Sibe received permission to organize their six *nirus* into eight.²⁴ These eight *nirus* constituted the core for the historical villages in today's Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County (Chin. Chabucha'er Xibo Zizhixian 察布查尔锡伯自治县; Si. Cabcal Sibe Beye Dasangga Siyan) where the majority of the Sibe population are the descendants of the soldiers that were relocated in 1764 during the so called Great Western Resettlement (Chin. *Da xiqian* 大西迁).

The genealogy writing tradition of the Sibe

Once incorporated in the Manchu Eight Banners, the Sibe adopted not only the Manchu language, but also the practice of recording genealogies after the introduction of the Manchu script (1632). In 1735, Emperor Qianlong (乾隆; reigned 1736–1795) issued orders to compile the descent lines of soldiers and officeholders in the Manchu Eight Banners.²⁵ His unconcealed intention was to reinforce Manchu identity and verify descent. The latter was needed so that people serving in the Eight Banners Army would be able to verify their rank or prove entitlement to hereditary offices. The practice of writing genealogies became popular among men in the flock with time. Earliest evidence of the practice date to the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙; reigned 1662–1723).²⁶ The first written Sibe genealogies date back to this time.²⁷

Regarding their form, the Sibe genealogies can be classified into two groups: *family tree lists* written on cloth and *family tree books* or *book of records* in the form of a book. In the Chinese language, the former is called *pudan* (谱单) and the latter is called *pushu* (谱书) (see Figure 1). However, both forms of genealogies are referred to as *booi durugan* in the Manchu/Sibe languages today, which term is the loan translation of the Chinese term *jiapu* (家谱 = *genealogy/family records*).

Figure 1: Two pages of a family tree book written in Chinese (photo: the author, 2012)

Written genealogies numbered the generations of clans – or the generations of clan branches after clans were split into subdivisions – starting from the first ancestor on record. In addition to names of ancestors, patrilineal descent lines and the order of relationships between members, genealogies sometimes also recorded the history of specific clans or branches and included biographical data. Genealogies were occasionally supplemented with so-called family rules that prescribed proper conduct and norms to be followed by members of clans or clan branches. Surrounded by taboos and safeguarded from others, genealogies also had a key role in the

²¹ Guan 1988: 12.

²² Wu and Zhao 2008: 61.

²³ Guo 2005: 344.

²⁴ Xinjiang Shaoshuminzu Gujiban and Beijingshi Minwei Gujiban 2003: 5.

²⁵ The book was eventually compiled in 1744 (see Hong 2002).

²⁶ Li 2006: 1–4.

²⁷ Tongjia and Wen 2009: 144.

commemorations of the dead.²⁸ Therefore genealogies can be regarded as material carriers for the memory of the dead. A severe blow was delivered to the practice of genealogy writing in 1764 when some of the Sibe were relocated from north-eastern China to the area of today's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which accounts for the current geographical distribution of the Sibe population.

Following the relocation to the west, the two Sibe groups torn apart could no longer preserve the knowledge of their common ancestors and common past. From this point – in the future – neither of the split groups was able to record subsequent clan branches in their genealogies. This was a loss that affected the Sibe that resettled in the north-west to a greater extent: most of the branches that were relocated to the north-west began recording new genealogies, in which their relocated ancestors were named as first ancestors,²⁹ and their knowledge of the past sank into oblivion.

It is the irony of fate that it was to no avail for the Sibe groups that remained in the north-east to have the opportunity to keep the long-gone past in memory alive through this form of remembering ancestors. This opportunity seemed to be diminishing with the approach of the 20th century. On the one hand, many of the Sibe clan's genealogies perished in the late 1800s during the Boxer Rebellion. On the other hand, the use of the Manchu language had declined in the north-east by the end of the 19th century. Consequently, understanding genealogies recorded in the Manchu language and translating them into Chinese or reconstructing lost genealogies ran into difficulties. However, the identity-shaping power of the practice of genealogy writing did not weaken at all. Sources in the Chinese language³⁰ reveal that at the time of the identity crisis caused by the fall of the last imperial dynasty (1912), numerous Sibe clans attempted to reconstruct their genealogies lost during the Boxer Rebellion. All these efforts show how important a role genealogies – as the physical representation of identity³¹ – played in shaping the Sibe's own self-imagining in those turbulent times.³²

A few decades after the wave of having their genealogies (re)constructed, the two large Sibe groups, torn apart in 1764, re-established contacts in the late 1950s.³³ When contacts were re-established, the two large Sibe groups appeared to have drifted so far apart that the gap between them seemed to be unbridgeable: the Manchu/Sibe language and script, as well as most of the Sibe traditions were only preserved by the Sibe that lived in relative isolation in Xinjiang. In contrast, the Sibe in the north-east lived dispersed in the military camps of the Eight Banners Army, exposed to the powerful influence of Han culture and, from the second half of the 1800s, to the growing influence of the West. After re-establishing contacts in this context, formulating a new Sibe identity that would bridge differences between the two large Sibe groups posed a significant challenge to Sibe intellectuals.

The reformulation of the Sibe identity, that is the homogenization of the two large groups torn apart was in the hands of the Sibe knowledge elite; they were a group of Sibe intellectuals who constructed knowledge related to the Sibe's common past in the framework of the nationwide programme for writing the history of the nation, which was launched in 1956 and lasted for several decades. As their main sources in the (re)construction of the past, the Sibe knowledge elite drew on the genealogies and clan histories attached to genealogies members of

²⁸ In terms of rituals, the basic functional unit in the Sibe social organisation, the *gargan* is a group, bound by the dead relatives and divinized ancestors they have in common, which holds rituals together that cannot be attended by members from other branches. One such ritual takes place on lunar New Year's Eve when incense offering is presented to the clan's ancestors, as well as the names of ancestors and the history of the clan are read aloud from the genealogy. Sibe genealogies are traditionally kept locked up in a wooden box for most part of the year and are only put on display during this specific ceremony.

²⁹ Tongjia and Wen 2009: 145.

³⁰ See He et al. 2009.

³¹ Smith 2006: 48.

³² Hackstaff 2009: 183.

³³ See Sárközi 2018: 83–85.

the knowledge elite were allowed to have access to. And perhaps it is even more important that some of the genealogies, although treated as taboo, were revealed to the public and the desire to reconstruct lost genealogies and re-unite clans emerged, contributing to forging the Sibe groups into unity again despite seemingly insurmountable differences.

However, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a campaign was launched against the Four Olds (Chin. *sijiu* 四九), bringing another wave of destruction for genealogies. At the time of the Cultural Revolution, any material remains or carriers of memory that conveyed the slightest association with societies governed by kinship were doomed to destruction. Such were genealogies, most of which were destroyed by clan members themselves, who, in their fear, burnt the records or buried them deep beneath the ground.

However, the power of forgetting ancestral knowledge also constituted the desire to call to life and cherish identity-shaping remembering. A proof of this was the new urge to re-write genealogies that emerged in both large Sibe groups once the Cultural Revolution and the large-scale destruction it brought were over. Although many of the Sibe still adhere to the custom that genealogies cannot be seen by others than members of their own clan, more and more clans were willing to present their treasured genealogies and attached clan histories to the Sibe knowledge elite working with full steam again.

This willingness is exemplified by a book with the title *Shenyang xibozu zhi* (沈阳锡伯族志; The Chronicle of the Sibe in Shenyang) published in 1988,³⁴ which made the genealogies of seventeen clans known to the public.³⁵ A great deal is revealed about the Sibe's interest in family trees by the book entitled *Shengjing yizhu Yili xibo ying xiang hong qi guanbing san dai ding ce* (盛京移驻伊犁锡伯营镶红旗官兵三代丁册; The List of Three Generations of Soldiers in the Bordered Red Banner of the Sibe Camp that Relocated from Shengjing to Ili) published in 2003:³⁶ the original manuscript passed through so many hands that it could not be located in the end. The source publication was compiled on the basis of a photocopied version.

It was also around in the late 1980s and early 1990s that a number of memoirs were committed to paper, which clearly signified that local Sibe communities began to regard their genealogy writing practice as a community-shaping and memory-generating tradition. Regarding its identity-shaping power, the story penned by Han Qikun 韩启昆, the leading figure of the Sibe knowledge elite carried key significance among all the memoirs, and it was republished several times.³⁷ In his memoir, Han Qikun tells the story of the reunification of his clan's genealogy: how members of the branches, separated in 1764, re-established contacts after the Cultural Revolution and how it was possible to prove that these branches belonged together by drawing on genealogies preserved in the clan and thanks to the recollections of the eldest clan member.³⁸

Han Qikun's story and the genealogies preserved in his clan rapidly became symbols. As an outcome of Han Qikun's story, the early 1990s saw an increasing number of Sibe clans, whose genealogies had perished, embark on (re)constructing their clans' history, rewriting their genealogies, and finding their relatives lost in 1764. These efforts gradually moulded the Sibe groups living in the north-east and the north-west together into one "genealogical community", and brought to live an understanding of the Sibe's collective identity that drew on the knowledge the Sibe preserved of ancestors as the key identity-shaping power.³⁹

However, it is an undisputable fact that the process of forgetting, naturally induced by the efforts to destroy genealogies, is irreversible. Official reports estimate that barely over a hundred Sibe genealogies have survived by today, and although several Sibe clans still embark on

³⁴ Shenyang Shi Minwei Minzu Zhi Bianzuan Bangongshi 1988.

³⁵ A book with the title *Zhongguo xiboren* (中国锡伯人; Chinese Sibe people), published in 2010, provides information how the genealogies were collected and who led this work (Na and Han 2010: 1–101).

³⁶ Xinjiang Shaoshuminzu Gujiban and Beijing Shi Minwei Gujiban 2003.

³⁷ See e.g. Han 2004 and Han 2005.

³⁸ See Sárközi 2018: 109–132.

³⁹ Hackstaff 2009: 183.

reconstructing their genealogies, the key sources they can rely on are the recollections of elderly relatives. The loss of genealogies has led to a faded knowledge of kinship not only among the clans torn apart in 1974 but often also among Sibe who live in the same geographical location. Today, many of the Sibe “when they meet they might not be aware that they come from the same clan; members of the same clan might not be aware of the hierarchy; there are some who do not even know who their grandfathers are. And going back on the tracks of the past, it becomes all the more unclear who belonged to which branch.”⁴⁰ This also implies to relatively closed communities like the Sibe living in the historical villages in Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County. This constitutes the significance of Guan Wenming’s family tree writing activity as one form of struggle against forgetting.

Guan Wenming, the self-taught Sibe historian

Guan Wenming⁴¹ from the Gūwargeya clan was born in 1938 in today’s Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County in Xinjiang. This is the region where the Sibe relocated from the north-east to the north-west had settled in the 18th century. When Guan Wenming was born the location still preserved the features of the military camps characteristic of the Eight Banners Army. However, soon after his birth, administration reorganization began, and the area, named Henan (河南) in 1939 and Ningxi (宁西) in 1944, was classified as a county.⁴² After the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China (1949), the Sibe, officially recognized as one of China’s national minorities in the Ethnic Classification Project, managed to have their one-time military camps awarded the title and rank of Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County on 25 March 1954.

The eight historical villages in today’s Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County were initially built in the area along the Ili River. After the construction of the Qapqal Canal was completed (1808), the Sibe moved their villages further south, seeking new opportunities. However, some of the villages were forced to relocate several times owing to unfavourable conditions. Today’s First (Chin. Wuzhu niulu xiang 乌珠牛录乡; Si. Ujui niru) and Third Villages (Chin. Yilaqi niulu xiang 依拉齐牛录乡; Si. Ilaci niru) were built at the westernmost end of the river and never had to be moved; but the Second Village (Chin. Zhayi niulu xiang 扎依牛录乡; Si. Jai niru) between them had to relocate three times and was eventually settled at the east end of the row of villages. The Sixth Village (Si. Ningguci niru) also had to relocate three times, while the Fourth (Chin. Duiyiqi niulu xiang 堆依齐牛录乡; Si. Duici niru), Fifth (Chin. Sunzhaqi niulu xiang 孙扎齐牛录镇; Si. Sunjaci niru), Seventh (Chin. Nadaqi niulu xiang 纳达齐牛录乡; Si. Nadaci niru), and Eighth Villages (Chin. Zhakuqi niulu xiang 扎库齐牛录乡; Si. Jakūci niru) were forced to relocate only once.⁴³

The Sixth Village, officially called Qapqal Town (Chin. Chabucha’er zhen 察布查尔镇), has become the political centre of the area in today’s existing administrative division. The First and Third Villages were merged, raised to the level of township, and are now called Aixinsheli Township (Chin. Aixinsheli zhen 爱新舍里镇). At the same time, the Sibe in Qapqal still refer to all eight settlements as the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth niru. This is how it is remembered that these villages were modelled after the one-time Manchu Eight Banners.

⁴⁰ The sentences quoted were taken from the introduction attached to the genealogy of Han Qikun’s clan mentioned above. For a detailed presentation of the contents of the genealogy see Sárközi 2018: 128–130.

⁴¹ The Chinese family names the Sibe use today are normally formed from the first syllable of their Manchu/Sibe clan names.

⁴² Yu 2005: 162.

⁴³ Guo 2005: 345–346.

Guan Wenming was born in one of the historical villages, in the Fifth Village. “I come from the Gūwargeya clan, I was born into a poor farmer family,” he told me when I recorded one of the first interviews in 2012. “When my father was born? I don’t know. [...] My father was already dead when I was still in my mother’s belly. So, I never met my father,” he continued, but many details about his childhood remained unclear. As the above excerpt from an interview reveals his father died prematurely. Guan Wenming was raised by his mother Beihūwa and a foster father. Guan Wenming was the youngest child, coming after his elder sister called Jiyanghūwa and his elder brother called Socun.

Guan Wenming began elementary school education in the Manchu/Sibe languages at the age of nine in the autumn of 1947, in the village where was born. He pursued studies in the Chinese language only between July 1952 and August 1953 when he studied at the Cadre Training School of the Xinjiang Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Chin. Zhong Gong Zhong Yang Xinjiang Fenju Ganbu Xuexiao 中共中央新疆分局干部学校) in Ürümqi (Chin. Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐), the capital of Xinjiang province.⁴⁴ After completion of his studies, Guan Wenming returned to his home village in August 1953, and until December 1954, he worked as a party functionary responsible for youth issues at the county’s District Commission for Four Districts (Chin. Si Qu Qu Weihui 四区区委会).⁴⁵

He was only 17 years old in 1955 when he was put in charge of the sale of books in the Bookshop Xinhua (Chin. Xinhua Shudian 新华书店) in the town of Yining (see Figure 2). He then had a job at the Xinjiang Iron and Steel Works (Chin. Xinjiang Gang Tie Chang 新疆钢铁厂) between 1958 and 1960. However, he left the city before the Cultural Revolution began. As he put it: “I returned to my own home. They said they would find a place for me. I wouldn’t have gone there. It’s all the same, isn’t it? What’s wrong with coming back to the good old land of mine?” This is how Guan Wenming returned to Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County in 1960; he cultivated the land and never again has left the Fifth Village. He was responsible for the water distribution of the Qapqal Canal (Chin. Apa’er ganqu 阿帕尔干渠), situated south-west of his village, from 1964 to 1968, and then he engaged in pig breeding until 1972. It was already the time of the Cultural Revolution, which deeply affected Guan Wenming’s life too.

Figure 2: Portrait of Guan Wenming (private property of Guan Wenming; reproduced with permission)

Guan Wenming did various jobs to earn a living but he never gave up the interest he had developed at a young age in the history of his ethnic group. He has collected and preserved a number of manuscripts in the Sibe language on the history and religion of the Sibe in Xinjiang. His collection of genealogies in the Manchu/Sibe and Chinese languages contained in fifty-seven folders is also the outcome of several decades of work. However, most of Guan Wenming’s collection perished during the Cultural Revolution. To quote his words: “They took everything during the revolution.” In answer to the question who ‘they’ were, he said “Oooh, well, the Red Guards. It was not a job one person did. They took it all. [...] My books also, they were good books. [...] Not a single person in our Fifth Village knew [about them] I had a book and I lent it to somebody. But who knows how it happened? ... Where did this book come from?” Guan Wenming recalled an exchange in the past in the interview. He then added: “This is how it happened. [...] They took them all.”

The heritage of Guan Wenming

⁴⁴ The institution was officially set up on 7 November, 1949.

⁴⁵ This term refers to the one-time classification of the Fifth Village.

Following the revolution, Guan Wenming resumed collecting and writing genealogies, and although the majority of the genealogies in his collection are not original, they offer valuable sources for research on history.

Firstly, genealogies preserved by the Sibe in Xinjiang despite the Cultural Revolution constituted his first and foremost sources. Guan Wenming frequently devoted many years of work to finding and gaining assent to documenting the genealogies that Sibe clans had preserved, tabooed, and passed on from generation to generation (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Guan Wenming at work, sitting on the kang (photo: the author, 2012)

Secondly, in the absence of genealogies preserved by clans, Guan Wenming relied on so-called background documents that the Sibe, mostly drawing on the memory of old people, put to paper in an attempt to rewrite their perished genealogies after the Cultural Revolution. Both the Sibe living in the north-east and in Xinjiang possess such background documents (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Background document prepared for reconstructing genealogies (private property of Hu Aiping; reproduced with permission)

Thirdly, inscriptions on tombstones erected in cemeteries also served as valuable sources in compiling the collection of genealogies (see Figure 5). Clans and branches each buried their dead in a separate cemetery within burial grounds lying over vast stretches of bare land. The borderlines around the cemeteries of each clan or branch are marked by ditches and the soil removed from the ditches was used to build the burial mounds. The arrangement of these burial mounds follows the model of genealogies: the mounds are organized in successive rows by generation. There are two possible modes for organising the rows. One of the modes can be called *burial facing the future*. In this case, the grave of the first ancestor is the furthest back. His mound lies behind the rows of subsequent generations, and new generations of descendants are buried in rows before the first ancestor. The other mode can be called *burial facing the past*. In this case, the grave of the first ancestor is the first to be encountered, and the mounds for descendants in subsequent generations fall in rows behind him.⁴⁶ No matter which of the two modes the layout of a cemetery follows, it can even be possible to reconstruct the genealogy of a clan on the basis of the inscriptions on tombstones erected before the mounds because in addition to the name of the dead buried there, tombstones often record the names of children, grandchildren or great grandchildren who erected them.

Figure 5: Tombstone erected before a burial mould in a cemetery in the Fifth Village (photo: the author, 2012)

And finally, the fourth group of sources Guan Wenming relied on consisted of printed documents aimed at enumerating Sibe clan names⁴⁷ in an attempt to answer the question whether or not kinship can be assumed between clans and branches designated with the same or similar clan names. It is important to highlight the similitude between some Sibe clan names such as, for instance, Gūwargiya and Guwalgiya or Hūsihari and Hūsihar. In many cases, however, it is impossible to tell today whether these names refer to one and the same clan or not. Moreover, one and the same Sibe clan name is occasionally the equivalent of different Chinese family names; for example, the clan name Hashūri may be the equivalent of the Chinese family names Ha (哈) or Han (韩). And the other way round, the same Chinese family name may refer to different Sibe clans; for instance, the Chinese family name Tong (佟) may as well designate clan members of

⁴⁶ For a detailed description of a typical Sibe cemetery see Sárközi 2018: 51–56.

⁴⁷ See e.g. Gong 2002; Zhao and Wu 2008b: 194–217.

the Tuksuri or the Tumurci clans. The problem is further complicated by the unclarity regarding how some clan names were transcribed into the Chinese language; in the same way it is no longer possible to tell what clan names some Sibe with Chinese family names originally had due to the loss of genealogies in the Manchu/Sibe languages. All these problems stem from lost genealogies, the gradual loss of the language and the transcription of multi-syllable Manchu/Sibe clan names into single-syllable Chinese family names.⁴⁸ For instance, if a clan with the Chinese family name Tong living in the north-east have lost their Manchu-language genealogy, then it is not possible to tell what the original name of the clan was.

Thus, Guan Wenming relied on the above sources when he compiled his collection of genealogies, which he arranged in fifty-seven folders. The folders contain materials gathered among Sibe clans that come from or live in one of the historical villages in Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County. The materials, for most part, were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages and occasionally in Chinese. They can be classified into seven groups:

- (1) original genealogies in the form of family tree books offered for use to Guan Wenming by specific clan members;
- (2) photocopies of original genealogies presenting descent lines;
- (3) copies, in manuscript form, of clan histories and family rules of conduct attached to original genealogies (see Figure 6);

Figure 6: First page of the family rules of conduct attached to the genealogy of the Šumur clan from the Third Village (private property of Guan Wenming; reproduced with permission)

- (4) working drafts made of genealogies preserved by specific clans that revealed their genealogies to Guan Wenming;
- (5) fair copies of working drafts, which often include additions, amendments, and lineage traced to the present day (see Figure 7);

Figure 7: Photo of the first page of the fair copy of the Guwalgeya clan from the First Village (private property of Guan Wenming; reproduced with permission)

- (6) genealogies in the form of family tree lists. For a small part, these are photocopied materials collected from others, but most of these family tree lists were prepared by Guan Wenming on several sheets of paper pasted together – some of these family tree lists are several metres long;
- (7) and brief introductions attached to the above documents (see Figure 8). An introduction generally states the name and dwelling place of a clan in the north east, that is, it provides information regarding which banner of the Eight Banners Army a specific clan was drafted into and where the clan lived.

Figure 8: Introduction written for the genealogy of the Erkele clan from the First Village (private property of Guan Wenming; reproduced with permission)

The total of the above described documents, mainly written in the Manchu/Sibe language, come to about 641 pages. The brief contents of the fifty-seven folders are as follows:

Folder 1: The Tungjiya clan from the First Village and the Tuksuri clan from the Third Village

⁴⁸ This process took place among the Sibe living in the north-east rather than among the Sibe relocated to today's Xinjiang. Examining the names in Guan Wenming's collection of genealogies can also help draw up a more complete picture of this process.

The folder contains the genealogies of two clans that can be assumed to be related on the basis of Guan Wenming's research.

One genealogy belongs to the Tungjiya clan from the First Village, whose "first ancestor" is called Erhetu.⁴⁹ Without the brief clan history attached as an introduction, the genealogy is an eight-page manuscript; five pages can be considered a working draft, three pages are a fair copy. All the documents were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages. Chinese characters can be found on two pages only; they are the Chinese translations of names in Manchu/Sibe mentioned on the specific pages. The genealogy includes references to the origin of the specific clan, for instance, at the top edge on the first pages of both the draft and fair copy.

The other genealogy belongs to the Tuksuri or Tukseri clan,⁵⁰ whose "first ancestor" is called Alenai. Without the brief clan history attached as an introduction, the genealogy is a three-page manuscript. One page can be considered a working draft, which Guan Wenming put to paper in Manchu/Sibe. In the upper corners of the page, there are also notes in Chinese with information about the origin of the given clan and the order of descent. The other two fair-copied pages are written in Manchu/Sibe languages only. The order of generations can be clearly traced on both the working draft and fair copy.

The folder also contains another four pages of manuscripts in Manchu/Sibe languages. The first manuscript describes the circumstances the original genealogy of the north-eastern Tuksuri clan was recorded in. The other two manuscripts, altogether 3 pages, contain the family rules of conduct of the north-eastern Tuksuri clan and that of the Tumurci clan – the connection of the latter material to the specific genealogy needs clarification.

Folder 2: The Guwalgeya clan from the First Village

The folder contains the genealogy of the Guwalgeya clan from the First Village, whose "first ancestor" is called Sidebu. The genealogy consists of a nine-page manuscript and a family tree list on several sheets of paper pasted together.

The nine-page manuscript includes one page with text in the Manchu/Sibe languages, providing information about the clan's history; the records made here can be assumed to reproduce the introductory lines attached to the original genealogy drawn up in 1846. The brief introduction about the clan's history attached to the fair copy was written in Chinese and Manchu/Sibe languages; in addition to the clan's name and dwelling place in the north-east, reference is also made here that the clan's ancestor who relocated to the north-west was called Oljibai. The remaining seven pages of the manuscript can be regarded to consist of three pages of draft and four pages of fair copy.

Folder 3: The Gūwargeya clan from the First Village

According to the short clan history in Manchu/Sibe languages attached to the genealogy as introduction, the "first ancestor" of the Gūwargeya clan from the First Village is called Nayantai, and the clan can be assumed to be related to clans with similar names from both the Fourth and the Fifth Villages. The folder contains a total of forty pages in manuscript form. Two pages are made up of sketches prepared in the clan's cemetery. Another four pages attached to the sketches of the cemetery provide information that can help the reconstruction of the clan history, for instance.

⁴⁹ The use of the term *da mafa* (=first ancestor) is inconsistent in Guan Wenming's collection. Sometimes it is only the records of clan history added to the genealogies that can clarify whether a specific name refers to the ancestor who continued to live in the north-east, or to the ancestor who relocated to Ili.

⁵⁰ Both name variants appear in the genealogy.

Preceding the sketches of the cemetery, a three-page fair copy and a three-page working draft of the clan genealogy in the Manchu/Sibe languages can be found in the folder. In addition, the folder also contains a manuscript in the form of a twenty-seven page family tree book written on green square grid sheets of paper in Manchu / Sibe and Chinese languages.

Folder 4: The Erkele clan from the First Village

The genealogy belongs to the Erkele clan from the First Village whose “first ancestor” is called Lungtu. The folder contains an eight-page manuscript in addition to the attached short introduction specifying the clan’s dwelling place in the north-east.

The genealogy is assumed to be recorded in 1903 and Guan Weming prepared the working draft in Manchu/Sibe languages in 1987. Notes at the top of the draft provides information about the clan’s dwelling place in the north-east. The one-page working draft is followed by a three-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages that can offer valuable information in terms of reconstructing the clan’s history and amending the genealogy, etc.

Folder 5: The Yungtur clan from the First Village

Bahai is the name of the “first ancestor” of the Yungtur clan from the First Village. The genealogy is an eight-page manuscript.

The brief clan history is written in the upper left part on the first page of the four-page draft in Manchu/Sibe languages. Guan Wenming prepared the draft in 1986.

The genealogy is also supplemented with a family tree list on several sheets of paper pasted together. The Chinese language equivalent of the names in Manchu/Sibe are also included in the list.

Folder 6: The Hūshar clan from the First Village

Lederi is the name of the “first ancestor” of the Hūshar clan from the First Village. The genealogy is a five-page manuscript.

The working draft of the genealogy can be found between two manuscript pages with only a couple of sentences in Manchu/Sibe languages helping to reconstruct clan history. The draft was written by Guan Wenming in 1987. A note on the right-hand side of the draft says that the original genealogy was recorded in 1881.

Folder 7: The Gorolo clan from the Third Village

The “first ancestor” of the Gorolo clan from the Third Village is called Nomun Hordi. The folder contains three, edited genealogies in the form of family tree lists on several sheets of paper pasted together.

The first genealogy in the Manchu/Sibe languages provides no clan history records; the name of the “first ancestor” is written as Nomun Hundi in the top left corner of the genealogy.

The second genealogy was also written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The third family tree list was prepared in the same fashion as the first two; Chinese translations are written next to some of the names in the Manchu/Sibe languages. This genealogy bears a short, four-line reference to the clan’s dwelling place in the north-east, in the upper left-hand corner. The name of the “first ancestor” is written as Nomon Hundi here.

Folder 8: The Šumur clan from the Third Village

Fulhan is the name of the “first ancestor” of the Šumur clan from the First Village. The folder contains a ten-page manuscript that can be divided into three parts.

Three pages of working draft in Manchu/Sibe languages were written by Guan Weming in 1986. A note on the right-hand side of the first page of the draft says that the original genealogy was recorded in 1879.

The family rules of conduct are described in Manchu/Sibe languages on two pages, inserted after the draft in the folder. The family rules are followed by four pages of clear copy of the genealogy.

Folder 9: The Tungjiya clan from the Third Village

The genealogy of the Tungjiya clan from the Third Village is a four-page manuscript written in the Manchu/Sibe languages. Guan Wenming put the working draft to paper in 1992, as indicated on the right-hand side of the first page of the draft.

According to the brief introduction attached to the genealogy, family rules of conduct are also part of the genealogy but they are not contained in the folder.

Folder 10: The Anjiya clan from the Third Village

The “first ancestor” of the Anjiya clan from the Third Village is called Arselan. The folder contains rich materials, collected and written by Guan Wenming, which can serve as an important departure point for the reconstruction of the genealogy and clan history.

The first item in the folder is a bilingual genealogy written in the form of a family tree list. It includes reference to the clans origin written in the Chinese language.

The family tree list is followed by a two-page working draft with brief, bilingual introduction to the clan’s history.

The draft is followed by a three-page fair copy and by a working draft again on one page. All the documents were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The documents described above are again followed by a genealogy in the form of a family tree list, which Guan Wenming said was a photocopy of the original version.

This material is complemented by a photocopied, bilingual genealogy consisting of four pages attached together. Presumably, this genealogy was originally written in Chinese, and the Manchu/Sibe language translations of clan members’ names were written by Guan Wenming with a pencil in some places and with a black felt-tip pen in other places. The folder contains another Chinese language genealogy, also stitched together in a book form. It is a ten-page manuscript including the cover page and the introduction to clan history. This genealogy has not been translated into the Manchu/Sibe languages.

On the other hand, coming next after the above document, the two-page manuscript about the history of the clan’s genealogy was written in the Mandchu/Sibe languages. A seven-page working draft in the Mandchu/Sibe languages concludes the materials.

Folder 11: The Yangjiri clan from the Fourth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Yangjiri clan from the Fourth Village contains a single page of fair copy in the Manchu/Sibe languages. The fair copy bears the names of three ancestors from the same generation, Guan Wenming recorded only the lineage that can be traced to the ancestor called Pengsi.

Folder 12: The Hū Hū Ci clan from the Fourth Village

The “first ancestor” of the Hū Hū Ci clan from the Fourth Village is called Tumuci. The folder contains an one-page working draft and a two-page fair copy in addition to the brief introduction – with the name of the folder and naming the “first ancestor” – attached to the genealogy; all the documents were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

Folder 13: The Korot clan from the Fourth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Korot clan from the Fourth Village contains a three-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages in addition to the short introduction that clarifies the clan’s name and residence in the north-east.

Guan Wenming prepared the one-page working draft in 1992.

The genealogy traces the lineages of three ancestors, Ulintai, Jamcu and Jahūstai to the seventh generation.

Folder 14: The Joo clan from the Fourth Village

In addition to a single page clarifying the clan’s name, the folder for the genealogy of the Joo clan from the Fourth Village in the Manchu/Sibe languages contains a two-page manuscript, which Guan Wenming put to paper in 1974, during the Cultural Revolution.

Folder 15: The Tungjiya clan from the Fourth Village

The folder contains an one-page introduction providing information about the name of the clan and their place of living in the north-east, as well as two two-page fair copies with the same content in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The fair copies were made in 1996 and present the lineage of the four descendants of an ancestor called Hoto.

Folder 16: The Guwargeya clan from the Fourth Village

The genealogy of the Guwargeya clan in Folder 16 was not written by Guan Wenming. The typewritten clan history in the Manchu/Sibe languages and the attached genealogy, also typewritten, were photocopied by Guan Wenming.

The clan history compiled and written in 2007, the accompanying introduction, and the genealogy are the work of a clan member, Guwan Šengfu.

As the photocopied version reads, Guan Wenming names the clan as Guwargeya, not Guwargiya, on the handwritten sheet attached to the beginning of the genealogy.

Folder 17: The Gūwargeya clan from the Fourth Village

Among the materials collected by Guan Wenming, the genealogy of the Gūwargeya clan from the Fourth Village takes the form of a family tree book in the Manchu/Sibe languages, which clan members had compiled by 1982. With the cover included, the book consists of a twenty-one-page manuscript.

Folder 18: The Gūwargeya clan from the Fourth Village

In addition to the short introduction, the folder dedicated to the Gūwargeya clan from the Fourth Village contains a two-page working draft and a two-page fair copy, as well as a carefully edited genealogy in the form of a family tree list on sheets of paper pasted together.

According to the notes written at the top of the first page of the draft prepared by Guan Wenming in 1995, the clan may have named itself as Gūwalgeya in the genealogy. The note on the left-hand side provides information about where the clan lived in the north-east; this brief clan history record also makes mention of the Great Western Resettlement. According to the date written on the second page of the draft, the genealogy that served as a model for the draft was completed in 1941. In addition to the names of clan members, we can also find references to social positions, etc. in the draft.

Most of these references have also been transferred to the fair copy. Arsun, whose name also appears in the genealogy of the Gūwargeya clan in the First Village, was named as the “first ancestor” of the clan, both in the draft and in the fair copy.

Folder 19: The Gūwargeya clan from the Fifth Village

The folder contains the extremely rich materials of the genealogy of the Gūwargeya clan from the Fifth Village. This genealogy belongs to Guan Wenming’s clan.

The materials in the folder start with a brief introduction to the clan’s history. In the introduction, the clan’s “first ancestor” is named Nayantai who is also mentioned as “first ancestor” in the genealogy of the Gūwargeya clan from the First Village. The introduction also makes it clear that many branches belonging to the Gūwargeya clan from the Fifth Village can be located in the First and Fourth Villages.

Although Nayantai’s name can also be found on the two-page working draft in the folder, the genealogical connections between the branches begin with the great-grandfather. The name of the clan is recorded as Gūwalgeya in the draft.

The draft is followed by a nine-page fair copy, sketching the branches of the clan. Guan Wenming’s name can be found on the first page of the fair copy.

In addition to the fair copies in the Manchu/Sibe languages, Guan Wenming has also preserved a printed genealogy in the Chinese language, which may be of help in reconstructing the clan’s genealogy. Guan Wenming pencilled the Sibe translations of names written in Chinese characters on the collected material.

The folder also contains a genealogy in the form of a family tree list on sheets of paper pasted together.

Folder 20: The Guwargeya clan from the Fifth Village

In addition to the brief introductions about the clan’s history, the genealogy of Guwargeya from the Fifth Village consists of an eighteen-page manuscript written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The clan history introductions name Burenci as the clan's ancestor in all the records of the genealogy.

Folder 21: The Cunjir clan in the Fifth Village

The folder dedicated to the Cunjir clan in the Fifth Village contains a bilingual genealogy in the form of a family tree list on sheets of paper pasted together.

The genealogy present branches descending from Folocun, born in 1862.

Folder 22: The Anjiya clan from the Fifth Village

The folder dedicated to the Anjiya clan from the Fifth Village contains extremely rich materials. First of these materials is a genealogy in the form of a collected, photocopied family tree book; as far as Guan Wenming can recall, he collected the ten photocopied pages in one of the archives. The family tree book records the clan's name as Anggiya.

The book is followed by an eleven-page working draft, revealing that the clan's branches can be traced to Nakculai and Aimi.

The structure of the four-page fair copy following the draft is similar. The bilingual introduction attached to the fair copy reveals that the clan had another ancestor belonging to the same generation as Nakculai and Aimi. This ancestor was called Baishūlang, however, the branch traced to him only appears in Folder 23. Important references to the social status or military/office post of specific clan members add value to both the draft and fair copy. The clan history records written in the fair copy also reveal that the clan's original genealogy was done in 1893.

The last of the materials in the folder is a genealogy in the form of a family tree list recording clan branches from the fifth generation.

Folder 23: The Anjiya clan from the Fifth Village

Similarly to Folder 22, the folder dedicated to the Anjiya clan from the Fifth Village contains a collected, photocopied genealogy in the form of a family tree book in the Manchu/Sibe languages. In the brief, bilingual introduction attached to the photocopy, Guan Wenming clarifies that Folder 23 contains the genealogy of those branches of the Anjiya clan from the Fifth Village that settled in the Third Village.

The collected material is followed by a thirteen-page fair copy and an one-page draft in the folder.

Similar in structure to the fair copy, the genealogies in the form of family tree lists give a more complete overview of kinship and descent order.

Folder 24: The Heyer clan from the Fifth Village

In addition to the brief introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages, the folder dedicated to the Heyer clan from the Fifth Village includes an eight-page manuscript also in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

A two-page working draft follows branches that can be traced to three ancestors called Mulin, Dele and Sanggacun. The draft is followed by a six-page fair copy. In it, Guan Wenming added to the number of clan subdivisions, thus, the genealogy traces a total of five branches.

The members of these branches were put to rest in the same clan cemetery. At least, this is what three words recorded in the brief introduction to the genealogy refer to: *emu eifu kūvaran* (= *one burial garden*). This means that the tombs erected for deceased relatives of the branches described in the genealogy are located in a cemetery separated by ditches from the cemeteries of other clans within the cemetery for the Fifth Village.

Folder 25: The Heyer clan from the Fifth Village

Similarly to the clan in Folder 24, members of the large branches of this clan are buried in the same cemetery, according to the brief introductions attached to the genealogy.

In addition to the introductions, the folder contains a six-page manuscript, which can be considered a fair copy.

Folder 26: The Heyer clan from the Fifth Village

The folder dedicated to the Heyer clan from the Fifth Village contains extremely rich materials. To Guan Wenming's knowledge, this is one of the Sibe clans in Qapqal that managed to find their relatives in the north-east.

The materials in the folder begin with a photocopied, collected genealogy. The genealogy and the attached brief clan history introduction were both written in two languages; the clan's relocation history in the north-east can be reconstructed quite accurately on the basis of their contents.

In the collected material, Golmingga is named as "first ancestor", and clan branches are also traced to him in the fourteen-page fair copy written in the Manchu/Sibe languages following the photocopied material contained in the folder.

Following the fair copy, the folder contains another collected photocopy of a family tree list. Based on the notes written on the top of the page of the bilingual material, it is probable that the original of the genealogy was written in 1913.

Drawing on the above materials, Guan Wenming also prepared several Manchu/Sibe or bilingual genealogies in the form of a family tree list. These genealogies constitute the concluding part of the manuscripts in the folder.

Folder 27: The Heyere, Tungjiya and Walkara clans from the Fifth Village

The folder contains unfinished genealogies belonging to three different clans - or more likely branches - that could be associated with the Second and Third Villages.

One genealogy belongs to the Heyere clan traced to the "first ancestor" called Lungtu; the second one belongs to the Tungjiya clan whose lineage can be traced to a „grandfather" named Jingsintai; the third one belongs to the Walkara clan whose lineage can be traced to an ancestor called Beji.

Folder 28: The Hūsibari clan from the Fifth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Hūsibari clan contains a fair copy on a total of seven pages, without the brief clan history introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages attached to the fair copy. The introduction says that the deceased descendants of the "first ancestor" called Hūlang were buried in the soil of a common cemetery.

The genealogy includes the description of a number of subdivisions traced to specific clans. Interestingly, the genealogy also records the clan name as Hūshar.

Folder 29: The Tokori clan from the Fifth Village

Attached to the genealogy of the Tokori clan from the Fifth Village, the brief introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages clarifies the clan's dwelling place in the north-east and names Mergen as the clan's "first ancestor".

The folder contains a total of seventeen pages of fair copy. The lines about the clan's history written in the short introduction are repeated on the left-hand side of the first page of the fair copy. Notes on the left-hand side of the page reveal that the original genealogy copied by Guan Wenming was written in 1903.

Folder 30: The Bayara clan from the Fifth Village

The brief introduction attached to the genealogy provides the clan's dwelling place in the north-east and records the clan's name in two different ways: Baijiya and Bayara. The clan traces its branches to Daracun; the names of Daracun's ancestors can also be found on the photocopied material made of the genealogy of the Bayara clan from the Sixth Village kept in Folder 34. Provided that the records included in the introduction are true, Daracun belongs to the fifth-generation ancestors in his clan.

Guan Weming prepared his three-page working draft in 1995 on the basis of the genealogy that was originally recorded in the early 19th century. The most valuable part of the draft is the biographical data that Guan Wenming recorded also in the almost twelve-page fair copy.

Folder 31: The Ujala clan from the Fifth Village

The genealogy in the folder also records the clan's name as Ujala and Ujar. The genealogy consists of a total of twenty-four pages in manuscript form, written in the Mandchu/Sibe languages.

Although the brief introductions to the genealogy clearly specify clans that use the same cemetery for burial, establishing the order of generations requires further research as the clan has numerous subdivisions.

Folder 32: The Ujala clan from the Fifth Village

The branches of the Ujala clan from the Fifth Village did not bury their dead in the same cemetery, according to one of the brief introductions attached to the genealogy. The genealogy consists of a sixteen-page manuscript.

Folder 33: The Hashūri clan from the Sixth Village

The materials in the folder dedicated to the genealogy of the Hashūri clan from the Sixth Village are disorderly, which is not surprising as the genealogy records numerous branches that formerly belonged to different clans with different names. However, members of the specific clans and branches managed to re-unite their branches not only in Qapqal but also in the north-east already

in the 1980s. Until the early 2000s this was the only Sibe genealogy that provided evidence that the clan split in 1764 belonged together.⁵¹

Alongside the introduction with the clan's history in the Manchu/Sibe languages, the folder contains numerous drafts and fair copies, as well as genealogies in the form of family tree lists.

Folder 34: The Bayara clan from the Sixth Village

In Guan Wenming's recollections, the original genealogy of the Bayara clan written in Manchu/Sibe was kept in the Sixth Village. The photocopy in the folder was presumably made of this genealogy. On the top edge of the paper, the image recalling spirit tablets erected for ancestors, pays respect to Ese and Hešen, ancestors in the north-east. Some of the names on the photocopy are also mentioned in the genealogies in Folders 30 and 51.

In addition to the photocopy, the folder contains a total of 18 pages in manuscript form, all of which can be considered working drafts. Clan history records written near the top edge on the first page of the draft refer to the family's dwelling place in the north-east.

Folder 35: The Gonggoro clan from the Sixth Village

The Gonggoro clan from the Sixth Village traces its branches to Keksebu.

The folder dedicated to the clan contains two genealogies in the form of family tree lists. The notes that tell where specific clan members settled add value to the genealogies.

Folder 36: The Nara clan from the Sixth Village

The folder dedicated to the Nara clan from the Sixth Village contains an one-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages, in the form of a family tree list. The genealogy records branches traced to three ancestors, including the branch of one of the most famous Sibe shamans called Elsi (Elsi saman). The fourth ancestor belonging to the same generation had no children.

Folder 37: The Han Jir clan from the Sixth Village

The genealogy of the Han Jir clan from the Sixth Village consists of only a single page of working draft in the Manchu/Sibe languages. The clan's dwelling place in the north-east is described near the edge of the page on the left. According to the records on near the top edge, the clan's name can also be written as Han Jer. The branch included in the draft is traced to Cohotai.

Folder 38: The Fuca clan from the Sixth Village

The genealogy of the Fuca clan from the Sixth Village consists of a fifteen-page manuscript.

Four pages of working draft were put to paper by Guan Wenming in 1994, presumably drawing on the original genealogy recorded in 1962. The note on the left near the upper edge of the draft, written in the Manchu/Sibe languages, describes the clan's dwelling place in the north-east. The draft records the name Etei as the "first ancestor" and a note next to his name makes it clear that Etei was the clan's ancestor living in the north-east.

⁵¹ For the whole story of the clan's "family tree re-unification", see Sárközi 2018: 143–167.

The brief clan history introduction attached to the ten-page fair copy repeats what is written in the draft. In addition to records in the Manchu/Sibe languages, the introduction also includes translation of records in Chinese.

In the fair copy, Guan Wenming traces clan branches from the 12nd generation to the “first ancestor” in the north-east. The first references to the relocation to a place in Ili appear below the names of ancestors belonging to the sixth generation.

Notes recording some of the ancestors’ social status or office held, etc. are an added value of the genealogy.

Folder 39: The Jashūri clan from the Sixth Village

The folder dedicated to the Jashūri or Jashūr clan – both name variants appear in the genealogy – contains a genealogy in the form of a family tree list and seven pages of working draft. The manuscripts were mostly written in two languages, in the Manchu/Sibe and Chinese languages.

Folder 40: The Geyoro clan from the Sixth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Geyoro clan from the Sixth Village contains a three-page fair copy and a brief introduction attached to it. The introduction provides information about the clan’s dwelling place in the north-east and about the ancestors of the clan’s two large branches. The text of the introduction is repeated on the pages of the fair copy.

The contents of these texts reveal that the clan’s two large branches are traced to Marji and Dejin. The folder only contains the genealogy of Dejin’s branch since the members of Marji’s branch live in the Fourth Village.

Folder 41: The Geyoro clan from the Seventh Village

The folder dedicated to the genealogy of the Geyoro clan from the Seventh Village contains a four-page fair copy and a two-page working draft; all documents were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

Both the draft and the fair-copy explains that the genealogy presents eight branches traced to Nesungga; to be more precise, only seven branches are recorded, as the note below Nesungga’s first descendant says *enen akū* (=no descendants), revealing that the ancestor had no children.

Folder 42: The Kunggere clan from the Seventh Village

The folder dedicated to the Kunggere clan from the Seventh Village contains a seven-page fair copy, a three-page working draft, and a genealogy in the form of a family tree list.

The brief clan history introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages attached to these documents and records the family’s dwelling place in the north-east and the names of the earliest ancestors. The “first ancestor” recorded in the genealogy was called Šokto.

The order of generations in the fair copy written in the Manchu/Sibe languages can be clearly followed. Valuable notes next to the names of some ancestors provide information where a specific ancestor did his service and what military/office post he held in the Eight Banners Army.

A brief clan history introduction is also recorded on the left, near the top edge of the first page of the draft written in the Manchu/Sibe languages; on the right, near the edge of the page a note records 1855 as the year when the original genealogy was done.

Folder 43: The Yehe Nara clan from the Seventh Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Yehe Nara clan from the Seventh Village contains a three-page fair copy and two pages of collected, photocopied materials.

The collected materials were translated into Chinese by Tongjia Qingfu, a Sibe ethnographer, based on the original genealogy written in the Manchu/Sibe languages in 1899. The folder encloses the photocopy of his translation of the genealogy and clan history records.

The fair copy prepared on the basis of the translation and the attached brief clan history introduction were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages. The translation of names in the Manchu/Sibe languages on the collected, photocopied genealogy was added in pencil by Guan Wenming.

Folder 44: The Ayara clan from the Seventh Village

The genealogy of the Ayara clan from the Seventh Village records the branches of two ancestors, Amidari and Garama.

The brief bilingual clan history introduction is followed by four pages of clear copy. The information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east recorded in the introduction is repeated near the upper left edge of the first page of the fair copy in the Manchu/Sibe languages. Terms referring to the social status or office of clan members are recorded in many places.

A two-page working draft follows the fair copy. Clan history records can be read also on the left-hand side and near the top edge of the first page of the draft. According to the note on the right-hand side of the page, the genealogy was recorded in 1885.

Folder 45: The Jashūri clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Jashūri – or Jasihūri – clan contains a fourteen-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages. In addition to the brief clan history introduction, the folder contains seven pages that can be considered a working draft and five pages can be considered a fair copy. The remaining one page in the manuscript records the family rules of conduct followed by clan members.

The brief introduction attached to the genealogy repeats the records written near the left edge on the first page of the draft. According to the record near the left edge of the draft, the original genealogy was compiled in 1878 – the year 1824 written in parentheses at the bottom of the page can be assumed to be wrongly calculated. Guan Wenming prepared the draft in 1993.

Folder 46: The Guwalgeya clan from the Eighth Village

The brief clan history introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages attached to the genealogy of the Guwalgeya clan from the Eighth Village provides information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east. Records included here also state that the clans "first ancestor" was called Siderhe.

The nine-page fair copy in the Manchu/Sibe languages following the introduction trace the lineage of another three clans in addition to Siderhe's branch: branches traced to Šerengge, Tacibu and Suyengge.

The two-page manuscript, also in the Manchu/Sibe languages, following the fair copies, may help in reconstructing the clan's history and the circumstances of recording the genealogy. The original text was presumably put to paper in 1911.

The contents of the folder end with a six-page draft, with the first four pages written by Guan Wenming in 1989. The last two pages of the draft in black ink were written in Chinese and in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

Folder 47: The Guwalgeya clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Guwalgeya clan from the Eighth Village consists of bilingual introduction providing information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east and another eighteen pages in the Manchu/Sibe languages in manuscript form.

Seven pages of working draft was put to paper by Guan Wenming in 1987. Near the top edge on the first page of the draft, records referring to the clan's dwelling place in the north-east are repeated. According to the date recorded on the last page of the draft, the original document the draft was based on was probably written in 1919.

Records referring to the clan's history are once again repeated near the top left edge on the first page of the eleven-page fair copy. Notes recorded in the Manchu/Sibe languages next to/below the names of some clansmen offer valuable information regarding social status, office, etc.

Folder 48: The Guwargeya clan from the Eighth Village

The folder dedicated to the Guwargeya clan from the Eighth Village contains a three-page manuscript in addition to the short clan history introduction; all documents were written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The two-page fair copy and the one-page draft, prepared in 1984, record eight generations in the branch traced to the "first ancestor" called Silimboo, who relocated to Ili. The information recorded in the brief introduction attached to the genealogy is repeated on the first page of both the fair copy and the draft.

Folder 49: The Ujar clan from the Eighth Village

The ancestor of the Ujar clan from the Eighth Village is called Arana. The folder for the genealogy contains a six-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages in addition to a bilingual introduction that also describes the clan's dwelling place in the north-east.

Notes relating to the clan's history were recorded near the top edge on the left on the first page of the three-page fair copy.

The folder also contains a three-page working draft, which Guan Wenming put to paper in 1987.

Folder 50: The Ujala clan from the Eighth Village

The folder dedicated to the genealogy of the Ujala clan from the Eighth Village contains three pages in manuscript form, written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

An one-page fair copy follows the brief clan history introduction attached to the genealogy. The text of the introduction can be assumed to have been written on the basis of notes on the

two other pages of the manuscript. Branches that can be traced to Mahūda and Karana are clearly drawn.

The one-page working draft ending the contents of the folder was put to paper by Guan Wenming in 1987.

Folder 51: The Bayar clan from the Eighth Village

The brief clan history introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages attached to the genealogy of the Bayar clan from the Eighth Village provides information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east. The introduction also clarifies that the "first ancestor" of the clan branches traced to Dana in the genealogy is called Arbin, who is also recorded as the "first ancestor" belonging to the Bayara clan from the Sixth Village.

The clan history records are repeated near the top left edge on the first page of the four-page fair copy in the Manchu/Sibe languages following the introduction. The fair copy includes references to clan members' social status or office.

An additional nine pages of working draft in the Manchu/Sibe languages can also be found in the folder for the genealogy. Near the left edge of the first page of the draft, notes in blue ink on the white paper refer to the clan's family rules of conduct in addition to records that help the reconstruction of the clan's history.

Folder 52: The Tokori clan from the Eighth Village

The folder dedicated to the Tokori clan from Eighth Village contains a total of seventeen pages in manuscript form, mostly written in the Mandchu/Sibe languages.

Notes near the top left edge of the second page of the two-page fair copy provide information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east; records written on the right near the top of the page say that the original of the genealogy was written in 1903.

The fair copy makes it clear that the clan's "first ancestor" was Mergen, the same person also designated as "first ancestor" by the Tokori clan from the Fifth Village (see Folder 29). The notes in the Chinese language on the first page of the fair copy help understand which villages different clansmen settled in.

The remaining fifteen pages in manuscript form also give an insight into the structure of the original genealogy.

Folder 53: The Fuca clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Fuca clan contains a total of nine pages in manuscript form, mostly written in the Manchu/Sibe languages.

The brief clan history introduction provides information on the clan's dwelling place in the north-east and names Aturi as the ancestor of the clan. Aturi's descendant was called Temtenge who is designated as *ama* (=father) by Guan Wenming in the introduction. The clan's "first ancestor" who relocated to Ili was called Sergine.

The introduction is followed by a four-page fair copy. Records near the top left edge on the first page of the fair copy repeat clan history information; the record 1901 written near the top right edge on the same page states the year when the original genealogy was done. The same data can also be found in the working draft. Terms recorded below the names of some clan members refer to social status or office posts.

Folder 54: The Geyoro clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the Geyoro clan from the Eighth Village contains a total of twelve pages in manuscript form.

The brief clan history introduction in the Manchu/Sibe languages attached to the genealogy provides information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east. Following the introduction, there are two pages of working draft written in the Manchu/Sibe languages. Guan Wenming put the draft to paper in 1992. The note near the left edge on the first page of the fair copy states 1885 as the year the original genealogy was recorded. The draft traces lineage back to an ancestor called Jaisan.

The same pattern is adopted in the five-page fair copy following the draft. Notes recorded next to some of the names in the genealogy refer to social status or office held by clan members.

The folder also contains an additional three-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages that may help in reconstructing the clan's history.

Folder 55: The Gorgi clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the genealogy of the Gorgi clan from the Eighth Village contains a twenty-one page manuscript written in the Manchu/Sibe languages, describing two major descent lines. Chinese characters can only be found in the brief clan history introduction attached to the first fair copy. The introduction provides information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east and names the ancestors of the descent line described first.

The first fair copy enumerates the descendants traced to two brothers, Ahali and Doho, who relocated to Ili. Terms referring to the social status or office of clan members are recorded below the names of descendants in many places.

The fair copy is followed by a three-page working draft that the fair copy was based on. Guan Wenming prepared the one-page working draft in 1990. Records near the left edge and top edge of the first page of the draft refer to the clan's history. Near the right edge of the page, the date of recording the genealogy clarifying the first descent line can be read. Pencilled in the Manchu/Sibe characters, the year 1891 is difficult to discern.

The above materials in the folder are followed by another fair copy with a clan history introduction. The second fair copy enumerates the descendants traced to the line of Butehe, an ancestor who also relocated to Ili. The arrangement of the four-page fair copy is similar to the above. Guan Wenming prepared the working draft attached to the fair copy in 1991. The note near the top edge of the first page of the draft says that the genealogy for this descent line was compiled in 1890. Thanks to the draft, we can have an impression about the structure of the original genealogy.

Folder 56: The Ilari clan from the Eighth Village

The "first ancestor" of the Ilari clan from the Eighth Village was called Hobitu. The folder for the Ilari clan contains a total of fifteen pages in manuscript form.

Attached to the genealogy, the bilingual introduction provides information about the clan's dwelling place in the north-east; the same references are also recorded near the top left edge on the first page of the five-page fair copy following the introduction.

The fair copy in the folder is followed by a two-page manuscript in the Manchu/Sibe languages, helping the reconstruction of the clan's history, which is then followed by a seven-

page working draft. Records near the top edge on the first page of the draft also refer to the clan's history. Guan Wenming put the draft to paper in 1991.

Folder 57: The Šigeya clan from the Eighth Village

The folder for the Šigeya clan from the Eighth Village contains a total of twelve pages in manuscript form.

Attached to the genealogy, the introduction written in the Manchu/Sibe and Chinese languages provides references to the clan's dwelling place in the north-east. The introduction is followed by a six-page fair copy, drawing up descent lines from four ancestors: Erhujui, Baldasi, Udana and Durbe. Notes relating to the clan's history were recorded near the top edge on the left on the first page of the fair copy.

The five-page manuscript also in the Manchu/Sibe languages following the fair copy is a working draft copied from the genealogy of the Šigeya clan by Guan Wenming; the draft offers an insight into the wording of the original genealogy.

Conclusion

My friendship with Guan Wenming goes back to many, long years. I became acquainted with him in the spring of 2012 while doing fieldwork in the Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County. It was then that he allowed me to have a look at his collection and involved me in his researches aimed at writing the genealogies of the Sibe in Qapqal. At the time, he had the collection in the old, blue house in the Fifth Village. The documents were placed in a big blue suitcase with buckles, which he kept on the edge of the bed he slept in (see Figure 9). In the course of years, we spent plenty of time together; during this time, we visited many people and numerous cemeteries to obtain additional data for specific genealogies. Even back then, Guan Wenming had plans to publish his collection and make it accessible to the general public.

Figure 9: Guan Wenming with genealogies in his safekeeping (photo: the author, 2012)

More than ten years have passed since we first met, and – even if Guan Wenming's genealogical activities came into focus thanks to the intangible cultural heritage programme of the UNESCO – the collection of genealogies was still hidden before the public. Meanwhile, the blue house where Guan Wenming lived was demolished by his family. A new house was built in its place, and boxes swallowed up and held the collection until the autumn of 2017. It was then that I had the opportunity to travel to Qapqal Sibe Autonomous County again and prepare photo documentation of the complete collection upon the request of Guan Wenming (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Guan Wenming at the initial stage of documenting the collection (photo: the author, 2017)

This was the first step taken in preparing the collection for publication, and this study in English is one of the important results of our collaboration. I hope, we hope that this study on the genealogy collection of Guan Wenming – that can be seen as a piece of Qing history – is intended to serve as an important resource for researches on Sibe history, society, culture, and language. Last but not least it would offer an opportunity to understand, process, reconstruct, and continue the life-time work of a self-taught Sibe historian.

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