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|  | **2011** |
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| **[Who are the Han? ---- Discourses on nation, race, ethnicity, and the Han among Chinese intellectuals in Late Qing and Early Republican China]** |
| Paper prepared for the AACS conference 2011 |

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**Introduction**

Over the past few decades, social identities related to ideas of nation, race and ethnicity have been analysed extensively across different academic disciplines. Most researches have focused on the way in which Westerners, and in particular “white” Westerners, are viewing other people around the world and constructing them as inferior *Others*. Far less attention, however, was paid to how these “*Others*” are reacting to and appropriating the Western gaze, and how they are themselves constructing their own identity and their own *Others*. In view of this, my project focuses on Chinese representations of the Self and the Other, and in particular on the social construction of the Han Chinese, which constitute the largest group in the Chinese population.

An estimated 1182.95 million live today in the People's Republic of China, which accounts for 90.56% of the population (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2006). In contemporary English language literature on the topic, the Han are customarily referred to as an 'ethnic group'. However, this label does not correspond to the different terms used in Chinese language literature on the Han. In fact, it is difficult to link the Han exclusively to a single social category, be it a nation, race or ethnicity. Instead, different authors describe the Han in different ways, often using a combination of the above terms. Given the approach adopted in this study, much of the literature on ethnicity, race and nation may not be directly applicable. This is due to the fact that when discussing the relations between ethnicity, race and nation, scholars often treat them as static and mutually exclusive categories, and attempt to clarify the differences between them. However, a growing number of authors are critical of such an approach, and instead suggest understanding race, nation and ethnicity as overlapping and inter-related categories of social inclusion and exclusion (Wigger, 2007, Yuval-Davis and Macmillan, 1992).

Therefore, instead of attempting to provide a definitive answer to the question of whether the Han are an ethnic group, a race or a nation, this project seeks to identify the competing ways of categorizing and describing the Han, and to investigate their social significance in a particular historical and social context.

In this paper, I would like to discuss three important Chinese intellectuals’ discourse on race, nation and ethnicity during the period of late Qing and early republic, to analyze their perceptions of the Other and Us, based on different marked social categories. I will firstly discuss each of the chosen intellectuals individually. Each chapter starts by briefly outlining some of the key facts from the intellectual’s biography, and then moves on to discussing the key characteristics of his thoughts on the Han, nationhood and race, all in relation to the shifting political and social context at the time. This is followed by a chapter that provides a comparative analysis of the key ideas of the three intellectuals, and highlights the key differences and similarities.

**Discourses on nation, race, ethnicity, and the Han among intellectuals in late Qing an early republican China**

Historically, the writings of Chinese intellectuals played an important role in the shaping of public discourses about Han and Chinese identity, as well as about nation and nationalism, race and ethnicity. On the one hand, these writings directly reflect the different opinions of these scholars as individuals, on the other hand, they also indirectly - by either supporting/promoting or opposing/criticizing - provide an insight into popular ideas about issues of identity, nationhood and race in China at the time.

The conflict between the Manchu and the Han had existed for a long time in Chinese history, yet became acute after the failures of the Manchu government in the wars with the Western powers, which showed a weakness and reluctance of the government in national issues. This fact was radically criticized by some of Han intellectuals, e.g. Zhang Binglin. During the period of the late Qing dynasty, Chinese intellectuals shared similar views on and attitudes towards foreign colonial powers. Yet their opinions varied in regards to the inner relationship between the Han and other groups living within the Chinese territory - especially the Manchu, who were then in the position of power. There were two basic camps in the debates on ethnic relationships; one was arguing for the integration of and equality between the Manchu and the Han, the other was opposing the Manchu court, aiming to restore the Han government (e.g. Chang, 1987, Zhao, 2004 and others).

Facing the changing social reality, the Chinese intellectuals, who were deeply influenced both by traditional perceptions, particularly those rooted in Confucian philosophy, and by their encounters with the West – either by travelling to the West or reading the Western literature – were seeking to rescue their country from the Western invasion that led to increasing social divisions. The increasingly unstable social conditions in the Chinese society, as well as their personal experiences of the Chinese social instability, altered their opinions and views of both the outside world and the China itself. The interrelated perceptions of the *Other* and *Us*, based on social categories of race, nation and ethnicity, expressed in their writings, echoed contemporary discussions of nationhood, race and ethnicity among Western academics (Metzger, 1977), and bore the imprints of traditional Chinese teachings.

In the following sections, I am going to analyze the writings of three leading Chinese intellectuals active during the late Qing and early republican period, namely Zhang Binglin, Liang Qichao and Sun Zhongshan. By returning to the original, primary sources — namely their writings themselves – I aim move beyond interpretations predominant in the existing secondary literature on these thinkers in both Chinese and English.

Existing research on Chinese intellectuals in this historical period mostly regards them as divided into two camps: ‘reformists’ and ‘revolutionists’ (e.g. Chang, 1987, Zhao, 2004 and etc.). This distinction is based on their attitude to the Manchu[[1]](#footnote-1) government. ‘Reformists’ (who were also called *baohuang pai* [loyalists] ) are those who asserted to maintain and strengthen the Manchu government, while the ‘revolutionists’ argued that the precondition of solving Chinese problem is to expel the Manchu court (*ibid*). However, this division relies entirely on the intellectuals’ attitudes towards the Manchu government, and provides a rather limited and one-sided understanding and explanation of their ideas as a whole. A close reading of the intellectuals’ writings quickly reveals that even an intellectual who would most likely be labelled ‘reformist’ could express some revolutionary ideas, while the most radical ‘revolutionist’ could also have some reformist ideas. For example, Zhang Binglin, who is commonly labelled as a revolutionist, in his early age supported Kang Youwe in his efforts to promote the *bianfa* (reform) movement, advocated by the *Guangxu* Emperor.

In contrast to existing literature on Chinese intellectuals in this period, the aim of my analysis is to distinguish between different intellectuals’ positions with respect to their conceptions of the Han – and, in connection to that, with respect to their understanding and use of identity categories such as ‘nation’ and ‘race’. It is important to note that most Chinese intellectuals at that time faced a similar dilemma, namely whether to focus on the academic research or political aims. Most of them opted for the latter, and this is why intellectuals played a significant role in major political events in Chinese history. Clarifying the relationship between these scholars’ academic research and their political ideas is an important aim of my analysis. However, my main task is focused on their interpretation of Han, and on studying how and in what ways it is related to their understandings of nation, "race", ethnicity and their interconnections. I argue that these divergent conceptions of the Han can help better elucidate the different attitudes toward reform and revolution among Chinese intellectuals, and allow for a more differentiated understanding of their debates at the time. By linking political positions to different understandings of collective identity and difference (or us and them) we can demonstrate that definitions of collective identity are intimately linked to the field of politics, and more broadly to the socio-historical context within which the intellectuals operated.

The following chapters first discuss each of the chosen intellectuals individually. Each chapter starts by briefly outlining some of the key facts from the intellectual’s biography, and then moves on to discussing the key characteristics of his thoughts on the Han, nationhood and race, all in relation to the shifting political and social context at the time. This is followed by a chapter that provides a comparative analysis of the key ideas of the three intellectuals, and highlights the key differences and similarities. **Zhang Binglin**

Zhang Bingling is recognized as one of the most important intellectual figures in late Qing and early republican China and is known for advocating new perceptions of social reality and new solutions to existing social problems. He and his work feature in much of existing research on this historical period. His radical and sometimes controversial ideas were debated intensively, and also gave rise to confusion. Zhang’s own intellectual complexity and radically revolutionary attitude have made it difficult to understand his ideas fully. Some scholars, for instance Huang Xing[[2]](#footnote-2), even called him Zhang *fengzi* – that is*,* Zhang the madman (Fu, 2005: 17). Regardless of that, it cannot be denied that Zhang made an important contribution to the history of the Chinese revolution in many aspects.

As far as political attitudes are concerned, Zhang Binglin was widely viewed as a representative of the intellectuals who promoted the idea of *pai-*Man (expelling the Manchu). Zhang believed that the Han had been suffering under Qing's government for a long time and concluded that there had never been 'equality between Manchu and Han' (1977 [1901]: 151). However, these convictions were not shared by all Han intellectuals. Many of them either remained loyal to the Manchu government, like Kang Youwei, or claimed to eliminate the boundary between the Han and Manchu, like Liang Qichao, or regarded resistance to foreign invasion as the primary task for Chinese people, like Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen.

When analyzing Zhang’s works - as well as other Chinese intellectuals’ work - I noticed the complexity of and interconnections between different markers of identity and social categories - including nation, race and ethnicity - in the construction of self-identity. To put it differently, when examining Zhang’s writings, I often encountered biological identity markers – such as for instance ‘smelly’ – and it often proved very difficult to distinguish between cultural and biological markers. Yet mainstream literature on Chinese history leaves one with the impression that the idea of a Chinese superiority at the time - which mostly appears in the form of beliefs in Han superiority - is rooted primarily in notions of cultural and civilisational rather than biological superiority. For instance, one author argues: ‘The principal considerations whereby the Chinese have distinguished themselves from other peoples have been concerned neither with race, colour nor religion. Attention has been fixed simply on the degree of civilization, as this is illustrated by a people’s behaviour and mores’ (Loewe, 1966: 248).

Similar views can be found both in older as well as more recently published literature about this historical period. For instance, to Zhao (2004) the self-image of Chinese people before the 19th century was "culture-centric" rather than nationalistic: 'A sense of Chinese identity was based on a Confucian cultural system of ancestor worship' (41). Harrison (1969) also used the term "culturalism" to describe the dominant worldview of China before the collapse of the traditional Chinese order that happened in the 19th century (*ibid*: 2). Thus, Han identity could be considered as a kind of cultural pride based on the assumed superiority of Han standards of civilization, embodied in Confucian ideals. Moreover, Harrison suggests that rather than thinking that distinctions between human groups are based in nature, Han people, according to the Confucian scheme, believed that ‘all members of the human race can be improved by means of education and discipline, and all barbarians who can be subjected to these process are to be included under the imperial aegis’ (*ibid.:* 249). This means that once a person considered a 'barbarian' received sufficient Confucian education and behaved completely according to the Confucian standard, s/he would and should be included into the traditional Han society. Dikötter (1999) instead, made an effort in discussing the development of racial thought in China from a historical perspective. Although he mainly focused on the research on "race", he admitted that those definitions, e.g. "race", nation, ethnicity and etc., 'possess a high degree of flexibility and may vary considerably as a result of the changes in the perceptions and the valuations that the ingroup has about outgroups’(425).

It is indeed true that the idea of cultural superiority - which is more compatible with the idea of the nation as typically understood today among Western scholars - is widely present in Chinese intellectuals' writings on Han identity. Nevertheless, this does not mean that racial or ethnical elements, which have more to do with the biological and physical factors, are absent. My study clearly showed the interconnections and overlaps among these ideas. The following quote from Zhang Binglin’s work is a case in point: ‘The smelly enemy Manchu does not belong to the same nation as we do. Thus, whether the Manchu government will pursue the reforms or not, whether the Manchu government an rescue Chinese lives or not, we should carry out the revolution and expel them’ (1977 [1903]: 233). These words clearly show that Zhang was using biological markers – i.e. markers we typically associate with racial discourses – when defining the Chinese nation. In other words, the Chinese nation was identified with the Han, and defined in opposition to a biologically – not only culturally – different group, the Manchu.

Another aspect of Zhang’s thinking that speaks in favour of this interpretation is his use of the ancient Chinese idea of *Hua-yi zhi bian*. *Hua-yi zhi bian* is a historical concept used to genetically and culturally differentiate the classic “China” (*Hua/Huaxia*, which is regarded as the origin of Han) from the “*Yi*” (barbarians/others/non Chinese) (Liu, 2004: 11~12). This idea clearly produced a boundary, which was based on the belief in the superiority of Han culture and civilization. However, although the Hua-Yi distinction referred primarily to cultural and civilisational differences, it could easily assume more explicitly racial and biological overtones. In the following paragraphs, I am going to examine the different identity markers and identity categories used by Zhang in more detail, to demonstrate that cultural and biological makers of identity were indeed closely intertwined in his work.

Based on the preliminary analysis of Zhang's works, I have divided the development of Zhang’s political thought and the understanding of the Chinese social reality into three main stages. The first stage encompasses the period between 1894 and 1898. During this period Zhang was an outspoken anti-Manchu scholar, but he did not yet argue for the expulsion of the Manchu. The second period starts with the erosion of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and lasts until the establishment of the early Chinese republic in 1911. During this period, Zhang argued in favour of expelling the Manchu as well as against Western imperialism. The third stage starts in 1911 and lasts until 1915. During this period Zhang’s attitudes towards the Manchu softened and he expressed a clear desire to establish a Republic. While dividing Zhang’s work in this way I do of course also acknowledge that there were important continuities in his thinking across all the three periods. However, it makes sense to distinguish between them analytically for the sake of the clarity of the argument.

**1. Period I: 1894-1898**

During the first period Zhang Binglin was widely viewed as a representative of anti-Manchu revolutionists (Hao, 1987). However, it is rarely acknowledged that during this same period, Zhang was also actively supporting the *Bairi weixin* (The Hundred Days' Reform) organized by the reformists such as Kang Youwei in 1898. At this stage, Zhang was attempting to find an adequate reform that would help the Manchu government to resist the threat of Western imperialism. In other words, instead of arguing for the expulsion of the Manchu court, Zhang actually agreed that the Manchu should continue to be the official government of China. He believed maintaining the Manchu government was necessary in order to promote the cooperation among all the Chinese to resist Western imperialism (1977 [1899]: 86). As we will see, this idea appeared again in his work after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. He abandoned anti-Manchuism soon after the *Wuchang* uprising and instead concentrated his energy on resisting what he considered the threat of the Western imperialism. Clearly, the intensity of Zhang’s anti-Manchu varied depending on his concerns over the threat of Western imperialism.

In order to make his views about maintaining the Manchu government publicly known, Zhang published a large number of articles on the *Shiwu Newspaper* (The Newspaper of the Current Issues) during this period. This newspaper was sponsored by the Self-strengthening Society (*qiangxue hui*), which was one of the institutions of the Manchu government. The *Shiwu Newspaper* mainly published the articles about the ways improving and strengthening the Manchu governmental power. This also indicates Zhang's support for the Manchu court in this period.

Let us now consider how Zhang’s attitudes towards the Manchu during this first period related to his views on the Han and Chinese identity. Zhang intended to provide the framework for clarifying boundaries between different human groups by drawing upon both cultural as well as biological factors. He noted, ‘While human beings vary in their height, colours as well as morals and customs, they are all biologically different from animals, and this is something shared by all civilized nations [*zu*]. However, only we own the rich territory, elevated morals and righteous characteristics bestowed by God, own the complete and advanced moral system, as well as the righteous religion, our race [*zhong*] is the noblest and the most honourable’ (1977 [1887]: 8). We could see that, Zhang did not judge other races exclusively by assumed biological factors such as skin colour; instead, he admitted the legitimacy of the civilizations of other groups. However, he clearly attempted to construct a standard moral and cultural hierarchy among the Han and all the rest group of "human beings". Han undoubtedly stood the highest position while all the rest were inferior.

In drawing boundaries between large-scale human groups Zhang also often referred to geographical boundaries. For example, he claimed that ‘the world is divided into five continents with the clear boundaries. All kinds of animals, as well as human beings, exist independently on each continent. Therefore, the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains should be used as the territorial boundary that differentiates Asia from Europe and the yellow race from the white race’ (1977 [1897]: 5). As this quote suggests, geography was an important marker of race for Zhang; to him, racial units can be mapped onto territorial units. Zhang believed races to be intimately, almost organically related to different (clearly identifiable) territories, to the point that he believed these territories were literally 'owned' by different races. This kind of understanding, of course, leaves little room for migration and 'inter-racial' mixing.

Zhang’s writings from this period are also full of references to skin colour. This is particularly clearly evident in Zhang’s arguments about the necessity of Chinese cooperation with other Asian countries which belonged to the same ‘yellow’ race, in order to resist the threat of the Western imperialism. The following quote is a case in point: 'if there is anyone who decides to raise a war, this is actually the inner conflict among our yellow race, which could only lead us to become the corpses of the white race’ (1977 [1897]: 6). He even warned that if we regard to expel the Manchu as our main task currently, ‘the White will take this opportunity to devour our territory’ (1906 [1900]: 61). It is clear from these quotations that Zhang was constructing the yellow race in opposition to the white race, and called for the cohesion of the former to protect itself from the threat of the imperialistic white race.

Apart from physical and biological elements such as territory and skin colour, Zhang also often included cultural factors and more specifically religious factors, in his discussion. He also believed the weakness of the Chinese nation, namely its inability to resist foreign invasion, is rooted in the weakening of Chinese traditional religion:

foreign religions are brought into China, which have only little influence, however, when they come across inequality, they fight by using their sword and bow, which is due to the prosperity of their church. Chinese Confucian intellectuals stagger on the street without relying on anything… Although we have talents; we are not able to occupy the official position… The weakness of the race [*zhongzu*]; *here he actually means Han*] is due to the decline of Confucianism. (1977 [1897]: 8~9)

In the same text, he also argued that ‘we own the complete and advanced moral system, as well as the righteous religion’ (*ibid.*). Combined with the last quotation, it is not difficult to understand that the religion he referred to here is Confucian, and that he sees this religion as the basis of Chinese morals and strength.

To conclude, during this period, Zhang Binglin showed a lack of interest in the distinctions and conflicts between the Han and the Manchu, and was in favour of maintaining and strengthening the Manchu government by promoting reform and the unification of the Yellow Race, in order to resist the Western threat. As a consequence, his writings in this period regularly included references to the category of race, and to the similarities and differences between the Yellow and the White race. However, it would be misleading to conclude that Zhang's writing was somehow more explicitly racist in this period, and that he later, when his interest shifted to relationships between the Han and the Manchu, became more of a nationalist. Instead, this particular use of the category race in this period was linked to his political preferences and the broader political context at the time.

When considering who represented a greater evil for China, the Manchu or the West, he clearly believed that it was the latter who represented the biggest threat. It is due to that that he tended not only to regard the Manchu court as the legitimate government of China, but even tried to include Japan and other Asian countries into the same racial group [*zhong* or *zhongzu*] with China (1982 [1897]: 5). ‘Race’ was therefore not a category that included only the Han, or only the Manchu or the Japanese; instead, it was a category that was stretched to include all of these groups among ‘us’. By using the category of race and the deictic expression ‘us’ in this way, Zhang attempted to call for the assistance of other Asian countries in the anti-West struggle.

Zhang's understanding of the Han identity was thus clearly related to the specific political context at the time, and echoed the specific social environment in which Zhang operated. In other words, his focus on defining the Chinese race as against other races - rather than looking into differences between the Manchu and the Han - was in line with his tolerance of Manchu government and his worries about the impact of the West. In this period, therefore, differences between the Han and the Manchu are pushed aside due to the presence of a dangerous common enemy - the West.

**2. Period II: 1898-1908**

The beginning of the second period in the work of Zhang was marked by the result of the First Sino-Japanese War, which destroyed Zhang’s only hope for the maintenance of the Manchu government. Zhang decided to break with the Qing court in 1901, when it signed the Boxer Protocol with a number of Western countries: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherland, Russia, Spain, and the United States. According to this unequal treaty, the Qing government was required to pay 450 million taels of silver, which is approximately equal to US$ 6.653 billion today (Hurst, 1972)[[3]](#footnote-3). Zhang was disappointed by the weakness of the Qing court. Since then, he adopted a more negative attitude to the Manchu government. On the one hand, he criticized the Manchu government for its poor performance in resisting the Western threat; on the other hand, he also condemned the Manchu’s rulers for persecuting the Han - for instance during the Boxer Uprising - in order to consolidate their political power. It is in this context that his theoretical interest shifted from the relationship between the Chinese and the West to differences and conflicts between the Manchu and the Han.

The shift in Zhang’s political ideas appears very clearly in his writings. In the article *kedi kuangmiu* (The Mistaken Understanding of the Guest Emperor[[4]](#footnote-4)), published in 1900, i.e. before the signing of the Boxer Protocol, he argued that the Manchu government should be maintained and strengthened if the Qing emperor acknowledges past mistakes of national oppression and supported Confucianism (1973 [1900]: 120). In 1901, however, he published *zheng chouman lun* (The Modification of the Argument on the Hatred towards the Manchu), and in this essay he noted:

we now exclude Manchu, which means that we reclaim our garden and house that have been occupied by others in violation of the contract. Meanwhile, those three provinces in Northeast China are Manchu territory. This is why we argue for excluding Manchu instead of wiping out the Manchu. [1973 {1901}: 94, 97])

This suggests that Zhang believed the Han were the only legitimate master of the Chinese territory.

In 1902, Zhang organized a protest rally held in one of the parks in Tokyo, Japan, and held a speech in which he emphasised that it had been 242 years since the Chinese nation came under Manchu rule. He argued that the downfall of the Ming Dynasty 242 years ago was a ‘loss for the Chinese nation [*zu*]' because the Manchu was an alien nation [*zu*] comparable to the Europeans and the Americans. This position differs from the one dominant in the first period, when Zhang saw the Manchu as part of a wider 'self', faced with a common enemy - the West. Now he rejected the legitimacy of the Manchu rule and encouraged the Chinese people to expel the Manchu and fight for the restoration of a Han-dominated Chinese nation. Zhang also believed this understanding of the relationship between the Manchu and the Han, and the associated understanding of the Chinese nation, should be reflected in the historiography, as this would allegedly help advocate Han patriotism. It is due to this that he suggested to Liang Qichao, who was planning to systematically compile a Chinese national history, to include a volume about race/nation [*zhongzu*] (1973 [1902]: 168).

Zhang’s understanding of the term race/nation [*zhongzu*] in this period become clearly apparent in his attempts to distinguish between recovery and revolution. He equated the anti-Manchu movement with the recovery, reconstruction or restoration of the lost Chinese state, and not with revolution. In line with this, he emphasized the need to use the term reconstruction/recovery/restoration [*guangfu*] rather than revolution [*geming*] when he argued for the necessity of anti-Manchuism:

the conflicts within the same race/nation [*tong zu*] are defined as revolution; while the conflicts between different races/nations [*yi zu*] are defined as destruction. Improving the institution and government of the same race/nation is named a revolution; while expelling the different race/nation means honorable recovery [*guang fu*]. Given the fact that China has been destroyed by the enemy Manchu, we should commit ourselves to the honorable recovery instead of revolution. (1973 [1903]: 193)

Here he actually claimed the necessity of the thorough exclusion of Manchu from the Chinese nation, while some other intellectuals, e.g. Kang Youwei, considered that the only method to solve the Chinese social problem was to carry out the revolution without expelling the Manchu government.

In this period, Zhang tried hard to clarify the distinction between the Han and the Manchu. He drew a clear racial line between the Manchu and his own race from biological perspectives, including the different origins and distinct biological characteristics. Manchu, according to Zhang, were a 'smelly', 'barbarian racial group' (1973 [1903]: 233), which was distinct from the Han. By identifying Han and Manchu as two distinct racial groups, Zhang aimed to expel the Manchu from the Chinas. He argued: 'The exotic Manchu who constitute the current government, are actually far removed and distinct from the Chinese (1977 [1899]: 87). The Manchu were reconceptualized as an exotic group different from the Han, which were defined as the authentic Chinese.

However, although Zhang did mention physical differences between the Manchu and the Han, this was not the main focus of his writing in this period. Rather, his anti-Manchuism was based primarily on his arguments about history and culture. According to Zhang, Manchu was the 'alien' (*ibid*) rule, which should be opposed since their culture is alien (Xiao, 1975:905). In his famous article *zheng chouman lun* (The Modification of the Argument on the Hatred towards the Manchu) (1973 [1901]: 94, 97), he reviewed the history of Manchu's violent government of the Hanese. Thus, Zhang claimed that Manchu were a violent, less civilized, and, most importantly, alien government. He concluded that the hatred of the Manchu government was a precondition of the Chinese revolution:

we Chinese nationals [*zhongguo ren*] are the masters of the nation [*guojia*]. If the government cannot undertake to discharge itself of all the responsibilities of the public/civil servant, and to the contrary, it is satisfied with destroying and ravaging the people, then it is no different to a rascal and a robber… That is why I said we Chinese cannot claim revolution without the hatred of the government. Do we Chinese have the inborn characteristics of slaves and the quality of being cows and horses? Should we Chinese be benumbed when the government nibbles our body and tramples our territory? (1973 [1903]: 229)

We can therefore summarize two main reasons that contributed to the forming of Zhang's anti-Manchu ideas: on the one hand, during the Qing dynasty, the Hanese were kept under continuous violent subjugation from the Manchu court, who lived a privileged existence segregated from the Han and who benefited from the government policy of political discrimination; on the other hand, in Zhang Binglin's eyes, the Manchu rulers were not only becoming more corrupt and oppressive, they were also too weak to defend China's territory against rapacious Western imperialism.

Zhang's anti-Manchuism reached its peak between 1904 and 1907. For the occasion of the commemoration party in celebration of the establishment of the *Min* Newspaper, he rethought the whole history of China, excluding the Yuan Dynasty established by Mongolia and the Qing Dynasty established by Manchu (1973 [1906]: 326). He was actually making an effort to establish a pure Han Chinese history. Yet again, he claimed that ‘the extinction of Manchu is the fortune and happiness to Hanese’ (1973 [1906]: 343). During this period, he frequently used the term 'great Han' (*ibid* and 310,336, 345 and etc.) expressing a conception of superiority. Zhang further summarized Manchu's abuse: 'The greed of Manchu is ten times bigger than that of the Hanese' (1973 [1908]: 423). One of the core values of the Hanese, argued Zhang, was their admiration for the intellectuals, while the Manchu valued business. This allegedly led to a stronger sense of morals among the Hanese, and a mocking attitude towards morals among the Manchu. For instance, on one occasion, Zhang described the Manchu as a group of 'horse thieves ' (1973 [1908]: 423), who got rich by stealing people's graves. Indeed, we could see that Zhang was using both cultural and biological markers when distinguishing between the Han and the Manchu, though he put more emphasis on the cultural elements.

Let us now look more closely at Zhang’s views about the Han. Zhang argued that 'it has been widely accepted that China consists of a number of assimilated nations [*minzu*] and it is hard to define China in a national way, we need to consider the majority national group as the main body of the Chinese kinship. This is because the fact that the Chinese kinship originates in Chinese culture' (1973 [1904]: 173). According to Zhang, 'the majority national group' and 'the main body of the Chinese kinship' were respectively referred to as the Han and the Han culture, which should be viewed as the standard of Chinese civilization. These vies are clearly reflected also in his arguments about Chinese history:

… from the ancient time, (China) tried hard to construct a culture which absorbs alien races [*wai zu*], set their lineages in order, and made effort to civilize them in a Chinese way. Those people [*ren*] who were originally different, after standardization of the written language and the social customs, became one race [*zu*] and composed the present China (Zhang 1982 [1904]: 39).

Zhang’s arguments about the need to expel the Manchu government were closely intertwined with his arguments about the necessity of a re-construction of the national identity of Han. He defined the Han from a historical perspective and claimed that over time, the Han absorbed different alien nations and made them follow the Han moral system. Zhang also believed that the Han were actually ‘civilizing’ the ‘barbarians’ by making them use the Han language and follow Han social customs (1900: 2~7). This view was rooted in his understanding of the hierarchy of civilizations in both biological and cultural ways and obviously demonstrated Zhang's perception of cultural superiority of the Han over the Manchu. His comparison on the Manchu and the Han was also found in another example:

Although the Han regime is weak at the moment, the people would fight for and even die for it since they are of the same origin. The Manchu are however inferior and less civilized, which is why they were radically and essentially despised by the people, and thus they will definitely be annexed by Europe and America. (1982 [1900]: 90)

Given his belief that the Manchu were inferior, evil and weak, Zhang argued about the necessity of a re-construction of the national identity of the Han. He summarized two key factors in promoting Han patriotism, 'one is to enhance national morality by increasing the confidence using the traditional religions; the other is to motivate the national sense/consciousness [*zhong xing*] and to promote patriotism by publicizing/educating the cultural quintessence of China’ (1973 [1906] 272). In order to promote Han patriotism, Zhang criticized the theory claiming nation/nationalism is something purely created. He argued, ‘without admitting that the nation is something physically existent, it is confusing and chimerical to claim patriotism’ (1973 [1907]: 306). The restoration of the national identity of Han was very important in Zhang's view. He believed that China could not survive as a nation without clearly defining its identity. This definition was based on a sense of national identity. Zhang, when he claimed the necessity of advocating the national cultural quintessence of the Chinese, understood and explained the 'national cultural quintessence' as the history of the Han. Meanwhile, he referred to the Han language/character to explain the Chinese language/character and criticized those Westernisers who had lost their loyalty to the nation and the race. In the foreword to *Han Flag Periodical* (1973 [1906]: 345), he defined China as a pure Han nation, and noted: 'after the coming of the robber Manchu, Han lost its own rules, however, the name of Han is like the contrary of the so-called Manchu’ (345). His effort to exclude Manchu out of the national identity of China was closely tied to his attempts to restore a pure Han government within the Chinese territory.

As evident from the above, during the second period, Zhang was concerned primarily with clarifying the differences between the Han and the Manchu. However, this does not mean that he forgot about the threat of Western imperialism altogether. Instead, even during the time when he most radically stressed the necessity of expelling the Manchu government, he never forgot what he considered as the danger of White imperialism, which was – from his perspective – the real driving force of modern Chinese nationalism. In some articles, for example, *Fanzhen lun* (1973 [1899]: 99~100), Zhang frequently mentioned the term *baozhong* (The protection of the *zhong*). In this article, Zhang encouraged the Chinese to resist the invasion from the 'Whites' (1973 [1899]: 99~100) to promote our race [*zhong*], which he meant to be the Yellow race. This is evident in his claim that China should treat Japan as the *tong zhong* (same race), and that it was important to incorporate Japan in the attempts to resist the invasion from the Whites. Zhang argued:

The conflict between Japan and us is different from and much less serious than the deep-seated resentment to Britain and France. It is easily understood that Japan is a country that belongs to the same race [*tongzhong*] as ours, which is close to the East China Sea. However, the disturbances to our frontier produced by those European people are long-standing, and we are totally out of support without Japan, who shares the same destiny with us. In regards to the current situation, the hatred between Japan and us is far less serious than what we have with the White race [*bai zhong*]. That we brothers fight with each other will only benefit others. (Zhang 1973 [1899]: 54~55)

He therefore appeals to his readers to support cooperation with Japan, and even generously give up on some of Chinese territories and hand them over to China:

…if China becomes more powerful, it will collectively benefit both of us; on the other hand, if China will be weak, it only benefits Japan on its own, without doing any other good…It is better to let Japan occupy the Northern Shandong than let Russia and Germany to capture it; it is better that we presented it as a gift to Japan than that Japan occupies it after war. Then why not present our stagnant regions as a large gift to Japan? (ibid.: 55)

Zhang's idea to "present" some part of Chinese territory as a gift to Japan was very distinct and very different from ideas advocated by most of other Chinese intellectuals at the time. Giving national land to other countries as a gift was obviously not an easily accepted opinion. This demonstrates Zhang's serious worry about the threat of Western imperialism.

To conclude, Zhang’s writing in this period was focused primarily on distinguishing between the Han and the Manchu. This was closely liked to his political views in this period. In drawing distinctions between the two groups Zhang was using both biological and cultural markers, and both the categories of nation and race. At the same time, he also occasionally continued to use the word race [*zhong*] to refer to the larger unity with other Asian groups, in particular the Japanese, and distinguish between this larger unity and the White race. In both cases, the distinctions between us and them were rooted in his perception of the social hierarchy of races, i.e. the biological and cultural superiority of the Han race (vis-à-vis the Machu) and the Yellow Race (vis-à-vis the White race). This echoed Western social sciences research at that time.

This flexible use of the category race confirms that the terms race and nation were partly interconnected and even interchangeable at the time. Instead of treating these terms as distinct and mutually exclusive social categories, which refer to clearly distinct kinds of social groups, it is therefore better to see them as partially overlapping representations of social identity and difference (inclusion and exclusion, belonging and non-belonging) without a clearly defined, fixed meaning. Instead of defining the Han by using exclusively one of the concepts – be it ‘race’, nation or ethnicity – Zhang combined various social categories and markers and used them differently depending on context, although each time with the aim to clarify the boundaries between us and other.

**3. Period III: 1910-1915**

The third period of the development of Zhang's ideas began in 1910. From this year onwards his anti-Manchuism became less radical, and he started differentiating between the Manchu government and the Manchu people. He explained that anti-Manchuism was aiming at overthrowing the Manchu government rather than expelling the whole Manchu people (1982 [1910]: 520).

The changes in Zhang's attitude are yet again closely related to his perception of the Western imperialist threat. When considering the major threats that the Chinese nation allegedly faced at the time - the Manchu on the one hand, and the Western invasion on the other hand - Zhang argued that their relative importance had shifted, and that the latter became far more serious:

it seems that the Manchu was considered as a greater danger than the Western threat in the revolution, however the truth is that the Westerners are actually ten thousand of times more dangerous than the Manchu at this moment. (1915 [1909] vol 3: 43)

Zhang also believed that other nations that were similarly occupied or invaded by Western forces were in a similar situation as the Han: 'We are concerned not only about the Han nation [*zu*] but also those nations [*yi zu*] whose territories were occupied, whose national rights [*minzu zhuquan*] were usurped and whose people [*ren*] are enslaved' (*ibid*). Among other nations suffering under the foreign yoke he mentioned India which was colonized by the British Empire, and Vietnam which was colonized by France. This shared suffering, argued Zhang, was the basis for a particular form of compassion among nationalists from different nations. On onr occasion, he even argued that : 'a real nationalist [*minzuzhuyi zhe*] is the one who sympathises with other nations [*minzu*] that are experiencing the same excruciation as his own nation' (*ibid*). Ideas of this kind were characteristic of the third stage of the development of Zhang's ideas.

Zhang's understanding of the Han changed as well during this period. As demonstrated in the previous section, his nationalist claims about Han superiority were initially based on the belief in the superiority of Han customs, language and culture. Apart from these cultural markers, he also regularly referred to biological markers of difference, such as skin colour, to differentiate between the Han and the Manchu. However, after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, he started associating Han identity and Han nationalism with the construction of state, and put less emphasis on the cultural aspects of Han identity and on the idea that the Han are the only group entitled to govern China. Instead, following Sun Zhongshan's ideas – which will be discussed at a later point in this chapter - Zhang started advocating the political unification of the Han, the Manchu, the Mongols, and Tibetans.

In this period, Zhang believed that national interests [*guojia liyi*] were more important than personal feelings. He wanted to include as many people as possible into the group of 'Chinese', and presented this as something that is in the interest of the Chinese as a whole. In his letter to Chinese students in Japan in 1910 he noted: 'the aim of the national revolution [*minzu geming*] is to reconstruct our national identity [*zhuquan*], and thus prevent being captured by others; this neither means massacring all the Manchu and making them die sonless nor treating them as slaves’ (1973 [1910]: 519). Further on in the same latter, Zhang clearly stated that the Manchu are part of the Chinese nation, and even claimed that they should enjoy the same right as the Han: ‘Our Manchu are also Chinese, enjoying equal rights of undertaking farming, engaging in commercial activities, using language as well as being election’ (*ibid*). When arguing for the equal treatment, Zhang appealed to the values and nature of the Han:

It is in our Hanese nature to be peaceful and humane. We have no whish to massacre other nations [*zhongzu*], nor do we hold prejudices against different classes. Given that within our territory, there are Mongols, Uyghurs, as well as Tibetans, who are all treated equally, why we only unjustly treat the Manchu? (1973 [1910]: 520).

Interestingly, the Hanese values Zhang was appealing to – e.g. peacefulness - were the very same values he associated with the Han already in the previous period. However, in the previous period these values were used to foster hatred against the Manchu, while now he used them to argue for the equal treatment of the Manchu.

Zhang's national ideas became especially clear after the uprising of the *Xinhai* Revolution (known as the Chinese Revolution) in 1911. During that time, Japan showed a clear desire to occupy Manchuria, which was the home of the Manchu. In contrast to his early effort to locate the Manchu into a distinct racial/national group from Han, Zhang now highlighted the historical connection between Manchu and Han: '[although] Japan and Russia made an utmost effort to penetrate Manchuria, the historical bond between [*the Manchu and us*] cannot be broken' (*Da gonghe ribao* [The Great Republican Daily], 1/11/1912: 3). He also called for the construction of a racially united Chinese republic (1977 [1910]: 520).

**4. Conclusion**

Zhang was regarded as one of the most radical revolutionists in late Qing and early republican China, especially marked by his anti-Manchu ideas. He made a great effort in advocating new perceptions of social reality and new solutions to existing social problems. Zhang’s own intellectual complexity and radically revolutionary attitude have made it difficult to understand his ideas fully, and this is true for many other Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing. However, no matter how much Zhang’s standpoint was changing (in line with the changing political and social reality), he always used various identity markers in order to define the Han, us and to clarify the boundaries with others.

In his first period, Zhang was actively supporting the reform in order to help the Manchu government to resist the threat of Western imperialism. Instead of arguing for the expulsion of the Manchu court, Zhang actually agreed that the Manchu should continue to be the official government of China. He believed maintaining the Manchu government was necessary in order to promote the cooperation among all the Chinese to resist Western imperialism (1977 [1899]: 86). However, this standpoint was based on his belief that 'only we own the rich territory, elevated morals and righteous characteristics bestowed by God, own the complete and advanced moral system, as well as the righteous religion, our race [*zhong*] is the noblest and the most honourable’ (1977 [1887]: 8). Although Zhang was in favour of maintaining the Manchu government, it is evident from the quotation above that he undoubtedly believed that the Han stood in the highest position in a moral and cultural hierarchy among the various groups of "human beings".

In the second period, Zhang was disappointed by the weakness of the Qing court. He adopted a more negative attitude to the Manchu government. On the one hand, he criticized the Manchu government for its poor performance in resisting the Western threat; on the other hand, he also condemned the Manchu’s rulers for persecuting the Han - for instance during the Boxer Uprising - in order to consolidate their political power. During this period, Zhang's construction of us and them was frequently shifting: he absolutely paid much attention to the conflict between the Han and the Manchu; yet simultaneously, he never forgot to highlight the danger of the Western threat.

Zhang's anti-Manchuism became less radical in the third period. He started differentiating between the Manchu government and the Manchu people and explained that anti-Manchuism was aimed at overthrowing the Manchu government rather than expelling the whole Manchu people (1982 [1910]: 520). The changes in Zhang's attitude are yet again closely related to his perception of the Western imperialist threat. When considering the major threats that the Chinese nation allegedly faced at the time - the Manchu on the one hand, and the Western invasion on the other hand - Zhang argued that their relative importance had shifted, and that the latter was 'ten thousand of times more dangerous than the Manchu' (1915 [1909]). **Sun Zhongshan**

Sun Zhongshan (12.11.1866 ~ 12.03.1925) is widely recognized in contemporary China as the "Father of the Chinese nation". This indicates the crucial role of Sun in the Chinese nation building process, especially in overthrowing the Man-Qing government in 1911. He was the first provisional president of the Republic of China, established in 1912. Sun’s effort in promoting the Chinese revolution gained him the high reputation in both mainland China and Taiwan.

Distinct from other Chinese intellectuals during the period of late Qing, Sun Zhongshan was born and educated in the USA. This unique experience contributed to the complexity of his ideas, especially to his attitudes to the West. On the one hand, he was aware of the impact of Western imperialism on the Chinese society; on the other hand, in order to achieve his aim of anti-Manchu movement, Sun relied to some extent on Western help. These two aspects co-influence Sun's academic and political ideas, which showed a considerable diversity and are at times contradictory.

In order to study the changes of Sun's ideas, influenced by the changing social and political background, I will divide the development of Sun's ideas into three periods. The first period was from the erosion of the First Sino-Japanese war to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. During this period he defined the self identity in a considerably narrow sense and expressed a clear radical attitude towards the Manchu government, namely he considered that the Han was and should be the only representatives of China. The second period was from to 1914, and during this period Sun argued that 'the purpose of the establishment of the Republic of China is to advocate the free power of the trillion of nationals [*guomin*], which contains the Han, Manchu, Mongolia, Hui and Tibet' (1985 [1911] vol 2: 23~24). The national unity was his main emphasis during this period. The third period was from 1914 to 1919, and in this period Sun believed that all Chinese people should be equally treated without being differentiated by 'nation [*guojia*], race [*minzu*], class and religion' (1985 [1911] vol 2: 106).

**1. Period I: 1890-1811**

From the last decade of the 19th century to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, could be roughly summarized as the first period in the development of Sun Zhongshan's ideas. Sun was deeply disappointed by the result of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894. During he war, the Man-Qing government put up a fairly low resistance to the Japanese. The Manchu court not only totally lost the long-term control on Korea, but also ceded the Liaodong province, which was known as the origin of Manchuria. In the same year, the China Revival Society was established by Sun Zhongshan in Honolulu. Sun introduced a slogan as the task of the Chinese revolution: 'Expel the barbarian, restore China, and establish the united government' (1994 [1894]: 83).

The Western imperialist threat, which was actually one of the main reasons that led to the fall of the Manchu government, became one of the main motivations for public criticisms of the Manchu government, especially among radical revolutionists such as Sun Zhongshan. He believed that, the inner reforms carried out within the Qing court would not really help save China and Chinese people. Instead of maintaining and strengthening the Man-Qing government, it was necessary to establish a "pure" China, which was based on the Han and excluded the Manchu. Sun Zhongshan was definitely one of those who advocated the establishment of such a pure-Chinese nation at the time: 'we should promote nationalism among the non-Manchu Chinese, which is my lifetime responsibility. Once this spirit (of nationalism) is awakened, the Chinese nation will inevitable arouse the power of its 4 hundred million people, to forever expel the Manchu Dynasty' (1985 [1902] vol 3: 2).

In Sun’s eyes, the weakness showed by the Manchu court in the wars with the foreign nations, especially the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, contributed to the spreading of the Han Chinese nationalism and an ardent desire to re-establish a pure Han Chinese government. This distinguished Sun's ideas from those of the other two intellectuals I discuss in this chapter, Zhang Binglin and Liang Qichao, both of whom initially advocated maintaining and improving the Manchu government. It could be concluded that Sun Zhongshan never expected anything from the Manchu government throughout his life. Furthermore, he never gave any chance to the Manchu court to improve their governmental abilities. This is because from the very start, Sun Zhongshan declined to accepted the Manchu as Chinese: 'China was subjugated by the Manchu for more than 260 years' (1981 [1906] vol 1: 311~312). Therefore, 'Our nationals [*guomin*] who are patriotic, must make their effort to smash the Manchu to restore our nation [*zuguo*]. If there is anyone who works for the Manchu, he is actually against his nation [*zuguo*]. China should be the Chinese China, but was conquered by the Manchu' (1981 [1906] vol 1: 312). In another essay, Sun explained that 'the true meaning of China is the Chinese China, the Chinese politics and should be governed by the Chinese', which requires the expel of the Manchu and restoration of the Han national sovereignty (1985 [1907] vol 1: 233).

As indicated by the above, Sun considered that Chinese people had a strong passion for their nation, but a very weak sense of their national identity. This apparently contradictory phenomenon was addressed by other Chinese scholars at the time. For instance, Liang Qichao (another scholar I will discuss in the next chapter) argued that, 'we Chinese always existed as a uniquely independent nation [*minzu*], which was called by us Chinese ‘the whole world under the sky/heaven’ [*tianxia*] instead of Chinese nation. As there is no nation [*guo*] but the whole world under the sky/heaven [*tianxia*] instead, how can we say nationalism then' (1990 [1899]: 270)? Indeed, Liang Quichao is correct to point to the fact that the Chinese historically referred to themselves as ‘the whole world under the sky’. Yet this was due to the fact that at the time, they did not constitute a nation in the modern sense of the world. As we will show in our analysis of Chinese textbooks, the sense of identity was at that time tied primarily to Confucian values, i.e. to religion rather than nationhood. Or, to return to Liang Quichao: the lack of national consciousness was not simply a consequence of the absence of a national identity label, but stemmed from the fact that nationhood as such simply did not exist in its modern form.

Another factor that helps explain the relative lack of national consciousness that Sun notes in his work lies in the Chinese political system at the time. Although China had a very long historical tradition of the centralized political system, the central government (Man-Qing court) of that time was rather weak (Zhao, 2004: 71), which contributed the weakness or relatively late development of the consciousness of national identity. In the long run, however, the weakness Man-Qing government vis-a-vis Western powers also provided the basis for national mobilisation – led, among others, by intellectuals such as those explored in this chapter – and thereby strengthening of the consciousness of the national identity of Han. I will discuss these issues at greater length in my analysis of Chinese textbooks.

Sun’s understanding and use of the categories nation and race were closely tied to his political ideas at the time. As evident from the above, the remarkable characteristic of this period was Sun's radical attitudes towards the Manchu and a strong emphasis on promoting the anti-Manchu movement. These attitudes were rooted in his understanding of the Manchu and the Chinese. For Sun, the Manchu were first, a foreign group from the perspective of the lineage, and second, a 'rude' (1981 [1896] vol 1: 46), 'barbarian' and 'uncivilized' (1981 [1903] vol 1: 232), 'tyrannous' (1981 [1897] vol 1: 172) community from the perspective of morality.

In one of his essays, Sune wrote: 'the current occupants of the important posts in the throne, the government and the army, all belong to the foreign nation[*yizu*] ' (1985 [1896] vol 2: 224), and also '[It is necessary] to entrust China to the pure Chinese to govern' (1985 [1896] vol 2: 236). The term Chinese here refers to the Han. These two quotations represented two meanings: one is that the Manchu is a foreign nation, which is different from us Han; on the other hand, they also mean that the Manchu is not and should not be included among the Chinese. The following quote provides another example of this kind of reasoning: ‘'The Manchu government which we always mention is totally different from the Chinese government. There is no government in China, thus the two terms (Manchu government and Chinese government) can never be alternatively used. If anyone who directly used to the term Manchu government (referring the Chinese government), it is wrong in law' (1981 [1904] vol 1: 244). Apart from the clear opposition to the Manchu government, Sun further claimed it is necessary to expel all the Manchurian out from "our" territory (1985 [1903] vol 2: 250~251).

Apart from seeing the Manchu as foreign, Sun also referred to them as a rude, barbarian, tyrannous, uncivilized nation from the perspective of morality. He argued: 'regarding the Manchu thief, which has governed China for more than 300 years, they view fooling the Hanese as the principle of their government. They also suck the blood of the Hanese, bind the hands and feet of the Hanese' (1981 [1897], vol 1: 172). Sun expresses in this passage that he considers Manchu as having a 'parasitic' and paralysing status, 'sucking their blood' and binding the Hanese. The reason Sun said the Manchu government was 'fooling' the Hanese was because the Manchu tried to promote their own culture as well as their lifestyle in Chinese society, which were very distinct from and also inferior to the traditional Han customs. Sun believed that his also went against the long-term process of national integration between the Han and others since the minority groups were always required to follow the standard of Han civilization, including the culture, lifestyles and etc.

In contrast to the Manchu, Sun believed the Han to be very peaceful, morally superior, and civilised. In one essay, he preached that the 'Chinese [*here he referred to the Hanese*] are the most peaceful nation [*zhongzu*] in the world' (1981 [1903] vol 1: 219). He also put particular emphasis on the power of the Chinese cultural morality, and regarded it as the reason of the submission of the neighbouring nations to China (*ibid*). By representing the Han in this way, he was clearly constructing a very positive image of the self (the Han) and a very negative image of the other (the Manchu). In Sun’s view, these stark differences between the Han and the Manchu made it impossible to support the Manchu government in any shape or form. He thus opposed Zhang Binglin's ideas to protect and maintain the government of the guest emperor: 'it is impossible to protect the "guest emperor" and reconcile (ourselves) to be the eternally doomed slaves. The incompatibility between the Manchu and Han is like the difficulty of firing an ice mountain' (1981 [1903] vol 1: 232).

These views about the Hand and the Manchu were reflected also in Sun’s views on Han and Manchu history. According to him, ''Manchu were originally a nomadic group and a barbarian and a currish race [*jian zhong*] while we Han are a race [*zhongzu*] that has a 4000 years long history of civilization' we Han own the 4000 years civilization (1981 [1903] vol 1: 232). This kind of thinking is characteristic of a long-term traditional thought held by the Hanese that Han culture and moral system defined the proper standard of civilization. Although the Manchu constituted the government of China at that time, Sun actually believed they under civilized. This lack of civilisation was yet another reason that made him argue that the Manchu were unfit to govern China.

As evident from the above Sun's negative attitudes towards the Manchu were based on two grounds. One is Manchu's allegedly violent style of governance and more generally oppression of the Hanese, as well as their low status in the civilisation hierarchy. The other, which is more important, is that the Manchu do not count as pure Chinese in Sun's opinion, and thus any Manchu government, no matter how advanced, is illegitimate.

How about Sun’s views about Westerners? These were also based on racial categories. This is clearly evident from the following quote: 'The territory of five continents is mostly swallowed by the white race [*bai zhong*]. The current only survivors are Japan and Man-Qing' (1981 [1905] vol 1: 260). Although Sun notified the danger of the Western threat to China, in his opinion, expelling the Manchu government and re-constructing a pure Han Chinese government should be the principle of the Chinese revolution. In the establishment of the United League of China, Sun claimed: 'the reason for promoting the Chinese revolution is that China is currently conquered by the Manchu… The Qing emperor is (from) an exotic nation [*wai zu*]. The Hanese who are able to clarify the national distinction [*zhong zu zhi bian*], would never treat a thief as his/her father' (1981 [1910] vol 1: 442~444). Sun believed that after expelling the Manchu court, all other problems would be automatically solved (1981 [1897]: 172~173). Manchu was indeed conceptualized as another racial/national/ethnical group differed from Han. He believed that only the Han can be the representatives of the true China.

The emphasis on expelling the Manchu, and the emphasis on sharp differences between the Hand and the Manchu, is one of the most significant characteristics of Sun's political and academic ideas in this period. Yet surprisingly, Sun is famous primarily for his attempt at promoting the integration of Han, Manchu, Mongolia, Hui and Tibet, which was, as we will see, a key trait of his ideas later in his life. In contrast, his ideas to expel the Manchu out of "our" Chinese territory were less often mentioned and discussed. Distinct from other Chinese intellectuals during the period of late Qing, for example, Zhang Binglin and Liang Qichao, who expected to maintain and strengthen the governmental power of the Manchu court in their early age, Sun Zhongshan never acknowledged the legitimacy of the Manchu court.

**2. Period II: 1911-1914**

The second stage in the development of Sun's ideas started with the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. In his view, the purpose of the establishment of the Republic of China was i ‘to advocate the free power of the trillion of nationals, which contains Han, Manchu, Mongolia, Hui and Tibet, that means the unity of nation' (1985 [1911] vol 2: 23~24). We can easily notice that his attitude to the minority nationalities, especially the Manchu, was now totally changed. It is difficult to judge if this statement was due to the changes of Sun's national ideas or motivated purely by his political considerations at the time. Sun's shifting ideas could be explained by Brass (1991: 8) theory of the "ethnic nationalism" (Brass, 1991: 8), which emphasizes the instrumental sue of nationalist discourse by political elites. According to Brass, nationalism is almost exclusively as a product of manipulative elites, rather than something that also arises due to the particular requirements of modern economies and states. Although Brass' theory is often criticized to be too instrumentalist, and the instrumental behaviour of the elites could not be seen as the only source of nationalism, it is clearly demonstrated that the intellectuals' discourses are closely linked to the social reforms and changes.

After the power was back in hands of the Han, Sun abandoned his former attitude and calls for expelling the Manchu out from the Chinese territory. In one of his writings from this period, he claimed: 'the Republic of China is established today. Whoever belongs to the Manchu, Mongolia, Tibet, Tsinghai or Hui, who used to suffered from despotism, gains the national political rights, and become the owner of the Republic' (1985 [1911] vol 3: 66). Having included the Manchu, Mongolia, Tibet, Tsinghai and Hui into the composition of the Chinese identity, Sun further argued for the necessity of equality and assimilation among these nations: 'the current five nations (Han, Manchu, Mongolia, Hui and Tibet) are unified and equal' (1985 [1911] vol 3: 72) and also '(we should) strictly promote the assimilation among the nations' (1985 [1911] vol 2: 35). Sun thus defined China in the following way: 'today China from Guangzhou (a Southern city of China) to the Manchuria (the Northern China), from Shanghai (an Eastern city of China) to the national boundary (in the West), is absolutely a single state and a single nation' (1985 [1911] vol 3: 87).

As I have discussed above, the changes of Sun's ideas of Chinese nationalism happened with the fall of the Qing court and the establishment of the Republic of China. He no longer emphasized the cultural/political uniqueness of the Han; instead, he clearly opposed the social dominance of the Han in the Chinese society. Sun's rejection of the Han dominance and his attempt to establish a multiethnic political community were actually both a representation of his belief in the existence of the Han superiority. Echoing Liang Qichao, Sun made an effort to seek for the historical evidence in order to show that China has long been a multiethnic nation, which was very different from his ideas in his early age. However, he still frequently criticized the violent government of the Manchu during this stage: 'it has been 268 years since the Manchu stole China. During this period, (the Manchu's) governmental violence cannot be counted' (1981 [1912] vol 2: 8). This demonstrates that his views about the Manchu government remained unchanged, and were still based on the belief that the Han should be the unique government of China.

**3. Period III: 1915-1919**

Further changes in Sun's idea were strongly influenced by frontier conflicts in the border of the Chinese territory and the Western threat to China. The third stage of the development of Sun's ideas was inosculated with the second. Following his argument of the integration of the Han, Manchu, Mongolia and other minority nationalities, Sun further claimed, 'the Chinese people are all equal, without being differed by the nation, race, class and religion' (1994, vol 2: 106).

The New Cultural Movement, which became influential in 1919, and which imported a large number of competing Western ideologies into China, especially the ideas of democracy and freedom, deeply influenced the Chinese intellectuals of the time. Many of them (for example, Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and etc.) paid more attention to constructing a liberal, democratic politically unified republic, instead of emphasizing the racial or ethnical characteristics of the central government. Sun also was one of them. He also criticized Hanism (the Great-Han nationalism):

we have finished the task that to expel the Manchu and restore the Han, however, this only achieves the passive aim of nationalism [*minzu zhuyi*]. (We) should make our effort from now onwards to achieve the positive aim of nationalism. What is the positive aim (of nationalism)? It is that the Han nation [*Han zu*] should sacrifice its lineage and history, as well as its national superiority [*zizun, zida*], be genuine to the people of the Manchu, Mongolia, Hui and Tibet, in order to be unified and be fired in the same stove, to construct a new Chinese nationalism. (1985 [1919] vol 2: 335)

Sun showed in this quote, that he considered it as a completed and necessary task of Chinese nationalism to have expelled the Manchu government, and restored the power of the Han. He was one the one hand promoting the integration and assimilation of different groups to achieve national unity, and discussed in this respect about their equal status. However, it is important to note that at the same time, his vision of the Chinese nation was clearly based on Han superiority and leadership, which has not changed from the beginning to the end.

This was the first time Sun publically criticized Hanism. It was because of the fact that Hanism was widely and deeply accepted among the Chinese intellectuals as well as the mass public at the time. Hanism appeared in different forms before and after 1911: before 1911, it manifested itself in anti-Manchuism; while after 1911, i.e. after the Manchu court was expelled, it underpinned calls for the assimilation of minority nationalities, based on the acceptance of Han culture and the Han standard of civilization (for example, Zhang Binglin, 1970).

**4. Conclusion**

Sun Zhongshan was closer to the core of Chinese revolution than any other intellectual discussed in this chapter, thus his discourses more seriously impacted the process of Chinese revolution. Although his standpoint was changing in different periods, to echo distinct social background and to achieve different political aims, he used various social markers in order to define the Han, the us and to clarify the boundaries with others.

By discussing the development of Sun's ideas by periods, we could find that the main theme was the growing range of 'us'. At the very beginning, according to Sun Zhongshan, ‘us’ only consisted of the pure Hanese, which were the only group that could be considered as the Chinese. He used both biological and cultural markers in clarifying the difference between the Manchu and 'us', and excluding the Manchu from the Chinese nation. To him, the Manchu was more deleterious to China than the Western imperialism. The emphasis on expelling the Manchu was one of the most significant characteristics of Sun Zhongshan's political and academic ideas in his early life.

However, his main focus hass changed after the establishment of the Republic of China. Instead of supporting the anti-Manchu movement, and emphasizing the cultural and biological uniqueness of the Han, he clearly opposed Han nationalism and promoted the establishment of a multiethnic Chinese political community.

In his third stage, he went further to claim that the Chinese people are all equal, without being differentiated nation, race, class and religion (1994, vol 2: 106). To achieve this goal, he considered that Han nation should abandon its lineage and history, as well as national superiority (1985 [1919], vol 2: 335). However, although Sun clearly criticized Hanism and made effort in promoting the integration between the Han and other groups, his vision of the Chinese nation remained clearly based on Han superiority and leadership.

**Liang Qichao**

Liang Qichao (1873~1929) was born in a small village in the Guangdong province. Liang showed a great intelligence when he was a child. He passed the traditional Chinese official examination in the provincial base and obtained the title of *Juren[[5]](#footnote-5)* when he was only 16. In 1890, he went to the capital and became a student of Kang Youwei (Wu, 2004), who was one of the most important chancellors in Guangxu Emperor’s court. After having read various translations of the works written by Western and Japanese intellectuals, Liang was deeply influenced by the modern Western ideas in social sciences. Liang shared considerable similarities with Kang Youwei’s political standpoints. They both advocated constitutional monarchy and Western democracy within the Man-Qing court as well as Chinese society. Their differences arose from the failure of the 100 Days Reform, after which Kang Youwei was still loyal to the Qing emperor and government, while Liang became more and more a revolutionary rather than a royalist (*ibid*).

The mainstream of Liang’s ideas, were two standpoints. 1) He advocated the fivefold racial classification of mankind, and aimed to clarify the racial boundaries in both biological and cultural ways. 2) Liang was mostly critical of anti-Manchurinism, but occasionally conceded that anti-Manchu sentiments were justified in some circumstances. This set him apart from the other two Chinese intellectuals (Zhang Binglin and Sun Zhongshan) discussed in the previous chapters, Liang showed a strong loyalty to the imperial authority of the Manchu court. Neither Zhang Binglin nor Sun Zhongshan had ever been very close to the core of the national power in the imperial court.

The development of Liang’s representations of the Han was not marked by any radical changes. Instead, his perception of the Han developed in a continuous line, and referred to interconnected racial, national and ethnic markers of difference. Rather than following a chronologic pattern of analysis, I will hence examine Liang's ideas bay discussing central themes in his work, focusing on 1. his reflections on ‘history’; 2.his discussion of China’s position in and its relationship to the world; and 3. his discussion of Chinese national integration and the role Han played in it.

**1. An analysis of Liang’s reflections on ‘history’**

In regard to the Chinese history, Liang attempted seeking historical evidence to show that China has long been a united nation. This was his preoccupation especially after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. To respond to the argument on the national distinction between the Han and other minority groups, Liang repeatedly emphasized ideas of national integration rather than of differences. Many of his efforts were aiming at the conclusion that the concept of the Chinese nation was based on a long-term historical idea of unification and required a wide acceptance of what was considered the dominant Han culture.

To include the Manchu into the Chinese nation from historical perspective, Liang summarized the development of Chinese history, with the list of all the dynasties: ‘those so-called Tang, Yu, Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing, are names of various dynasties’ (1990 [1900]: 410). Here Liang included the Qing dynasty in his concept of Chinese history, following a perspective very different to Zhang Binglin's, who refused to mention the Yuan Dynasty (which was established by the Mongols) and the Qing dynasty (which was established by the Manchu) when he summarized the periods of Chinese history. This showed Liang’s efforts in seeking for evidence to support the argument that China has long been a unified community.

When reflecting on the history of China, Liang clearly and directly referred to racial markers. In his opinion, history and human development were mainly constructed by inclusions and exclusions shaped by race:

What is history? History is nothing else than the account of the development and strife of human races [*zhongzu*]. There is no history without race… I have no idea if we can enjoy the great harmony of mankind without being differentiated by racial boundaries in the future. However, it is not exaggerated at all to claim that racial conflict [*zhongzu douzheng*] is the most severe problem in the current world… The essence of history is to demonstrate and treat the rise and fall of every race in the thousands of years while the spirit of history is to uncover the reasons for this rise and fall. (1997 [1901], vol 9: 11~13)

As evident from this quote, Liang perceived history as something created and determined by race; and the development and fall of human groups essentially as a matter of their 'racial qualities'.

At the same time, Liang’s views on history and race were also shaped by culturalism. Culturalism is a term used to described the sense cultural superiority held by the Chinese intellectuals for over 2000 years (e.g. Zhao, 2004: 41). From the early Qin dynasty, the distinction between us “*Huaxia*” (China) and other “*Yidi*” (Barbarians) was establihsed based on criteria of culture and civilization, which were ‘based on the historical heritage and acceptance of shared values’ (Harrison, 1969: 2). This culturalist understandings are clearly apparent in Liang's work. As he mentioned more than once, ‘China was always united, surrounded by various small barbarian groups. There have not been any serious external threats though some inner conflicts did existed’ (1990 [1896]: 12, see also 1990 [1898]: 235). This lack of serious internal conflicts among different Chinese groups was he believed due to the fact that apart from the Han, other minority groups in China had no historical civilization and culture.

These views demonstrate are characteristic of Liang's conception of Han historical and cultural superiority and of his perception of minority groups as barbarians. For him, Chinese history was actually a process of Hanization, through which the minority groups were more and more assimilated into the Han. He argued that even when minority groups governed China, they were not able to assimilate China when they entered into China, instead, they were assimilated by China' (1990 [1899]: 257~260). In Liang’s view, this was due to the lack of culture and civilization among these minority groups: ‘the exotic nations which used to govern China, which were all nomadic inferior groups, were all assimilated by China without exception. Their degrees of civilization were all far lower than that the degree of civilization in our China (1990 [1899]: 316)’. Both of these quotes show that according to Liang, all other groups which used to govern China were culturally inferior to the Chinese, and were assimilated by a China which he constructed as characterized by a higher, superior degree of civilization.

We could see from the above that, Liang’s historical proposition was impacted by his understanding of cultural differences. His definition of civilization was determined by the Han culture, which was in his view the only standard of civilization. This will be discussed in the third part of this chapter.

**2. Liang’s discussion of China’s position in and its relation to the world**

Liang was was one of the intellectuals who first used the term nation [*minzu*]. This word appeared in his *The Monthly East Book*, published in 1899, in which he mentioned the *dongfang* *minzu* (the Eastern nations) and *minzu jingzheng* (national competition). Liang was also influential in introducing Western theories about nation and nationalism to the Chinese society. Liang Qichao was inclined to emotionally support nationalism in China. He argued that ‘nationalism is the brightest, most open and upright, and most justified ideology, which allows neither the invasion from other nations, nor the invasion from our nation to the others’ (1936, vol.1: 19).

However, in line with his opposition to the anti-Manchu movement, Liang actually paid more attention to the classification of mankind based on racial distinctions, and did not have much to day about differences between different *minzu*. The concept of race was one of the important perspectives and criteria in analyzing Societies for many Chinese intellectuals of that time, and it was central to Liang Qichao's reflections on China's position in the World. Influenced by modern discourses on race in the Western sciences (include references to race discourse in European Sciences), Liang saw humankind categorized into different groups by racial markers.

Liang repeatedly advocated the racial classification of mankind, focusing on biological and cultural factors, and much of his account of mankind was informed by what would be considered vulgar stereotypes in contemporary society. It is noteworthy that in an 1897 article *Lun zhongguo zhi jiangqiang* (About the future power of China) (vol 2: 13), Liang tried to explain the differences among races using (supposedly objective) scientific knowledge. He argued that the races were biologically different in the microcosmic way and that the ‘*xueguan zhong zhi weishengwu*’ (microbes in the blood vessel) were distinct among different races. This argument was an obvious echo of the research results in the Western natural sciences and social sciences at that time.

An antagonism, opposition and battle between what he considered the "yellow race" and the "white race" formed the core of Liang's racial classification of the human species. This racial antagonism underlined his calls for an integration of different groups in a racial 'yellow' community under Chinese leadership. It informed his attitude to the Manchu government, and his suggestion to include it in Chinese history.In this context, Liang argued, that the 'Western threat' was much more dangerous to Chinese society than the Manchu, and that only a united yellow race could resist the threat of white domination:

The unskillful fighter, without the awareness of the danger of the large exotic nations [*yi zhong*], concentrated on the wars with the small exotic nations, which could be compared to the fact that when the snip and the calm grapple, it is the fisherman who stands to benefit. The bloody battle between the yellow race [*Huang zhong*] and the white race [*bai zhong*] will definitely happened in 100 years… The Chinese population counts for 70~80 percent of the population of the yellow race, thus the integration of the (yellow) race must be started from China. (1990 [1896]: 54)

The conflict and racial struggle Liang that constructs here shaped his perception of the yellow race, which he as a result, ‘defined in direct opposition to the white race’ (1990 [1896]: 52) He intensively advocated the integration of the yellow race in order to resist white domination, and emphasized the important role of China and the Chinese population within what he considered the yellow race: ‘The Chinese population counts for 70~80 percent of the of yellow race, thus the survival or extinction of the yellow race is determined by the survival or extinction of China’ (*ibid*).

Another example of Liang's attempts to promote the integration of the 'yellow race' in opposition to the 'white race' can be found in an article written by Liang in 1901 in which he is referring to he Filipino as members of the yellow race: ‘the Filipino had wars with the whites for two times and belong to the same continent and same race as ours’ (year?: 469). Here Liang is trying to demonstrated that the Filipino were closer to us than Westerners since they were geographically closer to *our* territory and shared the same racial identity with *us*. In the same context, Liang also made efforts to promote the communication with Japan: ‘The national danger of our China has reached the peak today. Anyone who expects the independence of our yellow race should obey the following principles…[We should] closely communicate with Japan, promote the friendship between two nations’ (1990 [1898]: 187).

Influenced by Western ideas that different standards of civilization could be ascribed to different human races, Liang argued: ‘The Westerners summarize the different degrees of civilization into three categories: the first is the civilized [*you jiao*], the second is the non-civilized [*wu jiao*], while the third is semi-civilized [*ban jiao*]’ (1990 [1896]: 150). China is the one which was defined by him as semi-civilized. According to Liang Qichao, it is undoubted that China is more civilized than the black race in Africa or the red race in Australia, and this is evident from its various valuable historical cultural relics and traditional standard social rules. However, it is less civilized than the whites because of the corrupt social morality, the narrow mind of the intellectuals, and the stupidity of the ordinary people (1990 [1896]: 150).

This quote demonstrates Liang's effort to classify and interlink racial categories with ‘cultural norms to form a system of hierarchical order which seemingly reflected natural difference’ (Hund, 2008, 171~203). Liang’s proposition of defining and describing others as ‘non-civilized’ barbarians, which referred to Australians and Africans, was constructed on the basis of his superior sense of Han-culture, as well as its origin. He considered Han culture as something in-born which was determined by the skin colour and fixed for the Han, and distinguished the Chinese from both the far-away others (Australian and African) and closer others (the Manchu and other minorities in China).

Liang's construction of a racial hierarchy underlined by biological, and cultural markers of difference clearly indicates their discursive interconnection and overlaps. It also demonstrates the impact of the Western racist ideology of White Supremacy (e.g. Mills, 1997 and Fredrickson, 1982) on Chinese intellectual discourse. Although Liang was very sensitive to the danger of the Western imperialist threat, he shared the belief in White supremacy. In his opinion, the Western civilization consisted of various Western nations and could be viewed as a “white civilization” as a whole, and he considered this civilization to hold justly the highest position in the racially determined world-wide hierarchy. Liang believed that the White race was superior in various ways: morally, intellectually and culturally. All this completely echoes the thinking about the racial hierarchy that was widespread in the West at the time , and which ‘involved numerous patterns of differentiation and status enhancement which identified whiteness as a normative indicator for membership in an aesthetically as well as morally, intellectually and culturally privileged part of humankind’ (Hund, 2008: 202).

**3. Liang’s ideas on Chinese national integration**

In this section, I will mainly discuss Liang’s ideas on Chinese national integration, how Chinese society was shaped, and the role played by the Han in it. Liang’s basic proposition in regard to Chinese national integration was characterized by his invention of twin Chinese terms: *da minzu zhuyi* (large nationalism) and *xiao minzu zhuyi* (small nationalism), based on which he thus advocated the adoption of large nationalism and the abandonment of small nationalism, as a means of confronting the threat of imperialism. As we will see, thus distinction between two types of nationalism was also central to his understanding of the relatio0nship between the nation and the state.

Anti-Manchuism was one of the most important themes among the Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing. Liang had also contributed to some of the anti-Manchu discourses. For instance, in one of his essays he argues that: ‘in order to awaken the spirit of nationalism, it is unavoidable for us to fight against the Manchu. Anti-Manchuism is the best idea for current China, comparable to the anti-Tokugawa movement in Japan’ (1920: 62).

Although the above quotation showed Liang’s involvement in anti-Manchu discourse, it cannot not be understood in isolation. It is important to consider that Liang to some extent also tried to question those who promoted anti-Manchuism and treated it as the principle of solving all the problems in the Chinese society: ‘The current Chinese intellectuals, irritated by the closed-door policy of the Manchu government, promoted the claims to exclude the Manchu government and clarify the boundaries between the Manchu and the Han. Is this really beneficial to China’ (1990 [1896]: 52)? He further claimed it to be important for the prosperity of Chinese society to ‘overlap the boundaries between the Manchu and the Han’, which ‘is absolutely the first step for achieving the self-improvement’ (1990 [1896]: 53). In response to other Chinese intellectuals, e.g. Zhang Binglin, who showed a radically critical attitude towards the Manchu government, as well as the Manchurians, Liang asked: ‘of the current Han and Manchu, which is a superior nation while which is an inferior one? There is no standard answer to the question’ (1990 [1896]: 51).

Moreover, when the revolutionaries (for example, Zhang Binglin) repeatedly made efforts to clarify the racial differences between Han and Manchus with reference to physical anthropology, Liang Qichao tried to opposed Zhang Binglin's construction of racial differences between the Han and the Manchu; instead he constructed the Han and the Manchu as sharing the same racial identity "yellow race". Liang Qichao suggested: ‘the Qing Dynasty was originated from the Tungus… Compared with the white, brown, red and black races, they definitely belong the yellow race as us’ (1997 [1901] vol 9: 13). He further argued:

…it has been said that the Manchus and we [*here he referred to the Han*] are completely different races, which is however not a strict truth. In fact, the Manchu has been definitely assimilated into us in four out of the six elements which are applied to the criteria of defining a race. In the remaining two elements, it is not easily at all for anyone to draw a conclusion that they and we are different... We therefore conclude that, judging from the sociological definition of race, the Manchu has already assimilated into the Han and has been sufficiently qualified to be one of the members of our mixed nation. (1997 [1902] vol 19: 21)

However, Liang’s attempts to include the minority groups in his construction of a Chinese national community and identity in his discourses, do not mean that he believed in the equality of all the national groups. Although he claimed that it was hard to conclude if either the Han or the Manchu were superior (1990 [1896]: 51), he simultaneously (1990 [1896]) and frequently pointed out that groups other than Han were historically inferior. As argued in earlier in this chapter, he believed that minority groups actually had no civilization or culture to speak of, and that they were instead assimilated into Han civilization. This demonstrates that according to Liang, all other groups, including those that used to govern China, were culturally inferior to the Han Chinese, and were assimilated by a them. In other words, the precondition of the equality he was taking about was the prior assimilation of all minorities into Han civilization.

Although Liang suggested that the Hanese needed to some extent to give up their cultural privilege in order to achieve the national integration of the Chinese nation, he seemed at the same time convinced that the Han were culturally superior. In this respect, the principle of the unification of the traditional Chinese nation for Liang involved the acceptance of the dominance of Han culture, as well as its standard of civilization. He argued: ‘There are various nations within China, though with the same origins of the academic ideas, which is the acceptance of being the posterities of the Yellow Emperor’ (1990 [1902]: 563). However, the boundary between China and other communities belonging to the yellow race defined by him, was not fixed or static; instead, it was open to changes, adaptation, and inclusion of 'the other', if they adopted Han Chinese culture and behaved like Han Chinese. For Liang, once they totally accepted the Han culture and its moral system, they became Chinese. In other words, the process of national assimilation was actually the process of Hanisation.

To Liang Qichao, Han China was constructed by its cultural contents, and was the only civilized group in the traditional China, while all the other entities in the region were uncivilized barbarians, which were never equally viewed. This superiority, in his view, was also the reason for lack of national consciousness among the Chinese. Liang noted: 'there have been hundreds of millions of people lived in this *guojia* (country) for several thousand of years, and until today they have not had a name for their country yet. Even the word, *zhongguo* (China), is what peoples from other *zu* (races) call us, which is not what the people in this country have used to name themselves' (1935 [1900]: 15).

Liang was very worried about the lack of national consciousness in China and promoted nationalism. He attributed the key factor of the development of the West to the spread of nationalism: ‘Since the 16th century, the development of Europe as well as the world was due to nothing else but the enormous power of nationalism’ (1990 [1902]: 656). The military weakness of the Chinese brought about the consciousness of the weakness of culture and sciences. The Chinese intellectuals at that time had to seek for some new ideas to foster the Chinese revolution. Liang advocated the idea of nationalism: ‘Nationalism is the most luciferous, righteous and equitable *ism* in the world. (It means) that the violation of our national freedom by other nations is not allowed, meanwhile the violation of others’ national freedom by us is not allowed as well’ (1990 [1901]: 459). Hence he concluded that ‘it is necessary for us to promote the our own nationalism, in order to save our nation from the threat of the Western national imperialism’ (1990 [1902]: 656).

Liang’s understanding of nationalism is of particular interest to us, among other things also because it yet again demonstrates how closely intertwined the categories of nation and race were at the time. Liang explained the term nationalism in this way: ‘What is nationalism [*minzu zhuyi*]? It is defined by the same race [*zhongzu*], same language, same religion, same customs as well as the attitude viewing each other as compatriots. Nationalism is an expectation to establish and organize an independent and complete government, in order to seek for the common good and to join force to resist the violation from other groups’ (*ibid*). It is evident in this quote that nationalism was closely related to "race", culture and religion.

Similarly as his ideas about race, Liang’s ideas about nationalism were also strongly influences by Western thinking. Liang’s understanding of nationalism was related directly to Johann Caspar Bluntchli’s (1808~1881) thesis of ‘no State, no Nation’. Bluntchli argued that ‘[t]he Nation comes into being with the creation of the State. It is the consciousness, more or less developed of political connection and unity which lifts the Nation above the People. A Nation which leaves its own country may be imagined as continuing to be a Nation, but only provisionally so, until it succeeds in forming a new State in a new country. Again, the Nation may precede the State ...’ (Bluntchli, 1885: 86). From 1899 to 1903, Liang published various articles introducing and promoting Bluntchli's theories on *Xinmin Congbao* (Xinmin Series Newspaper), e.g. *guafen weiyan* (The prophecy of Chinese Division) (1899, vol 30), *guojia sixiang bianqian yitonglun* (The Discussion on the Changes of the similarities and differences in national ideas) (1901, vol 94~95) and *zhengzhixue dajia bolunzhili zhi xueshuo* (The Theory of Political Scientist Bluntchli) (1903). While being influenced by Western theories, Liang's national ideas were of course shaped also by China's experience arising from the modern frustration and the plight of the Chinese. Whether revolution or reform, a democratic republic or a constitutional monarchy, in Liang's view these are all means and strategies to build State. This was the main focus of Liang's ideas, and building a state – using whatever means – was to him the main goal: 'The meaning of freedom refers to the group's freedom, rather than the individual's freedom ... The value of individual freedom lies in the promotion of the rich and powerful national-state' (1984 [1902]: 227).

The supremacy of state over nation and society allowed Liang Qichao to argue against the divisive racialist republican revolution directed towards the Manchu Dynasty. His ideal of a Chinese nation, including Han, Manchu, Mongo, Xinjiang and Tibet, as well as the rest of minority nationalities in the country, represents the origin of contemporary dominant national values that are shared by Chinese academics to this day.

Liang thus conceptually clarified the term nation and state by differentiating the two different degrees of nationalism. As mentioned earlier, he distinguished between *da minzu zhuyi* (large nationalism) and *xiao minzu zhuyi* (small nationalism), and argued: ‘small nationalism is used to describe the opposition between Han and other national groups within China while large nationalism is used to describe the opposition between the united China consisted of all the nations and all the foreign nations (*guowai zhi zhuzu*) (1990 [1903]: 1069~1070). He thus advocated the adoption of large nationalism and the abandonment of small nationalism, as a means of confronting the threat of imperialism. He claimed: ‘It is the fact that the Manchu has been fully assimilated into China, although this is the issue neither the anti-Manchuists nor me are pleased to mention… there is now seldom a Manchurian within China who can speak and write Manchurian language… [Thus], the construction of the Chinese state, has nothing to do with anti-Manchuism’ (*ibid*).

In line with his support for ‘large nationalism’ Liang believed that China is a unified nation composed of various groups. He argued for the necessity of diminishing the boundary between the Han and Manchu. This is because he believed the key reason of the weakness of the Chinese society was the conflicts between the Han and Manchu: ‘The weakness of China, is not because of the Manchu government, instead, it is because that the Manchu governed China that resulted in the deeply boundaries between the Manchu and the Han. The Chinese nationals are suspicious and jealous of each other due to the boundaries between the Manchu and the Han’ (1990 [1900]: 424). He thus advocated the social equality of all the Han and Manchu, as well as other minority groups (*ibid*), to resist the invasion from foreign nations. However, as argued earlier, Laing’s vision of national integration was based on the very idea of Han's cultural and racial supremacy, and dominance. When he claimed that the ‘Chinese state should allow the merging of Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan, Miao and Tibet, to construct a large nation, which accounts for one third of the world population’ (1990 [1903]: 1070), he simultaneously predicted and looked forward to complete Han domination:

‘If this dream comes true, this large nation will be definitely centered around the Hanese and it will be undoubtedly in the control of Hanese. It is not worth arguing about this. In order to achieve this goal, we have to temporarily abandon the narrow revanchist nationalism, and to make use of and include the Manchurian… In the future, there will be only two possibilities: the Han and Manchu may be both reduced to the slaves; otherwise Han will definitely become the host of the national-state’ (*ibid*).

**4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have mainly studied three main themes apparent in Liang Qichao's work. The first is his reflection on "history". In order to construct the Chinese identity, Liang made an effort to seek historical evidence to show that China has long been a united nation. To respond to the argument about distinctions between the Han and other minority groups, Liang repeatedly emphasized ideas of national integration rather than of differences. In line with this, he was emphasizing that Chinese history was a history of unification and integration, premised on the assimilation of all minority groups into Han culture.

The second focus of this chapter was Liang's discussion of China's position and its relation to the West. Liang showed a critical attitude to the Western civilization and imperialism. On the one hand, Liang was very sensitive to the danger of the Western imperialist threat. He considered that "Western threat' was much more dangerous to Chinese society than the Manchu, and that only a united yellow race could resist the threat of white domination (1990 [1896]: 54). On the other hand, Liang admired Western civilization and believed it rightly enjoyes the highest position in the racially determined world-wide hierarchical order.

The third focus was Liang's ideas on Chinese national integration. Liang Qichao tried to opposed Zhang Binglin's construction of racial differences between the Han and the Manchu; instead he constructed the Han and the Manchu as sharing the same racial identity "yellow race". However, Liang’s attempts to include the minority groups in his construction of a Chinese national community do not mean that he believed in the equality of all the national groups. Although he claimed that it was hard to conclude if either the Han or the Manchu were superior (1990 [1896]: 51), he he believdd minorities were essentially without a civilization of their own (1990 [1896]: 12). Although Liang suggested that the Hanese needed to some extent to give up their cultural privilege in order to achieve the national integration of the Chinese nation, he seemed at the same time convinced that the Han were culturally superior. In this respect, the principle of the unification of the traditional Chinese nation for Liang involved the acceptance of the dominance of Han culture, as well as its standard of civilization (1990 [1902]: 563). Liang’s basic proposition in regard to Chinese national integration was characterized by his invention of a twin Chinese terms: *da minzu zhuyi* (large nationalism) and *xiao minzu zhuyi* (small nationalism), based on which he thus advocated the adoption of large nationalism and the abandon of small nationalism, as a meas of confronting the threat of imperialism.

**A comparative study of Zhang Binglin's, Sun Zhongshan's and Liang Qichao’s works**

As Liang Qichao said in 1898, ‘the 4000-years dream of our nation was actually awakened by the *Jiawu* War[[6]](#footnote-6) (1990: 234). My comparative study on the national/racial/ethnical ideas in the Chinese society thus mainly focuses on the period of 1895-1919, during which the Chinese nation and its people were struggling for survival. Chinese society then experienced a substantial reform in both physical and spiritual ways. The traditional Chinese moral system which had controlled the Chinese people for more than one thousand years for the first time met the powerful challenge from Western ideas. These factors and massive social changes in Chinese society make this period of Chinese history a particularly significant period for analysing Chinese intellectuals' perceptions of nation/race and Chinese identity.

In order to study the representation of Han, which is the main theme of my whole project, this chapter is generally consisted by three parts. In the first and second part, I will respectively discuss about Chinese intellectuals’ attitude towards the Manchu and the West, to analyze in what ways the Han identity was constructed and represented in the opposition of the defined-Other. The third part of the chapter will mainly focus on the construction of Han superiority in the national and racial ways, and the role played by the Han within the Chinese national community.

1. **Han and anti-Manchuism**

Anti-Manchuism played an important role in regards of the Chinese intellectuals’ ideas during the late Qing period. It contributed to the forming of a racial consciousness among the Chinese people and stimulated some significant revolutionary movements until the 1911 Revolution, which ended the Man-Qing government and brought about the establishment of the Republic of China.

The conflict between a long-term tradition of the Han superiority and the fact that the whole of China was governed by the Manchu, which was considered to be an exotic, foreign group, had existed for long and became extremely radical after the erosion of the First Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese intellectuals were disappointed with the weakness showed by the Manchu court in response to the invasion of the West. They thus promoted anti-Manchu ideas in different ways by quoting different perspectives and theories, some of which were from the traditional Chinese culture while others were a product of their encounter with modern Western ideas.

In regards to anti-Manchuism, Zhang Binglin and Sun Zhongshan adopted a more radical attitude, though neither of them held this attitude throughout their life. Both Zhang and Sun directly and absolutely advocated the necessity of expelling the Manchu government. Zhang and Sun both argued that it is necessary to clarify the distinction between the Manchu and Han in both biological and cultural ways, although the latter was given more attention. For example, Zhang wrote: ‘nationalism is prosperous during the 20th century. The smelly enemy Manchu does not belong to the same race/nation [*zhong*] as we do. Thus, whether the Manchu government will pursue the reforms or not, whether the Manchu government could rescue the Chinese lives or not, we should carry out the revolution to expel them’ (1977 [1903]: 233). Sun went even further in claiming to expel the Manchu: ‘Manchu was originally a nomadic group and a barbarian and a currish race [*jian zu*] while us Han is a race/nation [*zu*] owns 4000 years history of civilization’ (1981 [1903] vol 1: 232). He thus opposed Zhang Binglin’s ideas to protect and maintain the government of the guest emperor: ‘it is impossible to protect the guest emperor and reconcile (ourselves) to be the eternally domed slaves. The incompatibility between the Manchu and Han is like the difficulty of firing an ice mountain’ (*ibid*). We could see that they both constructed the Other Manchu in a racial way by contrasting them with Us Han.

The idea of cultural superiority was one of the main characteristics shared by Chinese intellectuals of that time, which will be discussed in a detail in the following part. Both Sun and Zhang referred to racial markers to construct a difference between the Han and the Manchu, which included both biological and cultural elements. Race for Sun is culturally charged, hierarchically structured, and closely linked to concepts of culture and civilisation. In Sun’s opinion, the social construction of Han racial superiority was grounded in a perception of their supreme culture and civilisation, and a concept of a racial inferiority of the Manchu, based on what he labelled as their 'barbarian' racial status. Sun distinguished between the two in terms of a racial differentiation, in which cultural and biological markers are interrelated.

Zhang was the one who was most radical in advocating Han culturalism: ‘(All) are human beings; though they vary in their heights, colours as well as morals and customs. [However], only we [*here he refers to the Hanese*] own the rich territory, elevated morals and righteous characteristics bestowed by God, Thus, we Han race/species [*zhong*] is the noblest and the most honourable’ (1982 [1897]: 8). This quote shows Zhang’s racialised perception of the Han. It also echoes Sun’s vision of the Han as a culturally superior race, compared to the Manchu, and also any other groups in the world.

Sun also highlighted the allegedly dominant role of biological features in the composition of Chinese national identity. He put emphasis on the role of ‘lineage’, and thereby defined Chinese identity in a racialised way in line with the predominant modern discourses on race popular in the West at the time. He argued that ‘the forming of a nation [*minzu*] is influenced by all sorts of complex factors, among which lineage is the most important element. The Chinese are yellow because of the yellow lineage. The lineage will eternally pass to generation to generation from the ancestor’ (1981 [1904]: 210~212). It is farfetched to equatel the Chinese to the yellow race. This passage clearly indicates that Sun's concept of the Chinese puts a strong emphasis on race. It in fact corresponds with his hierarchical concept of the Han and the Manchu, as two different races to which he attributes different superior and inferior cultural characteristics.

However, unlike Sun, Zhang Binglin drew a special distinction between the Manchu public and Manchu government. In *Zheng chouman lun* (The Modification of the Argument on the Hatred towards the Manchu), he showed an even more radical attitude to Manchu. He represented Manchu as both a different *minzu* (nation) and *zhong* (race) outside the Chinese people, and thereby excluded them from his construction of Chinese identity. This attempt to socially exclude the Manchu as an outside threat was linked to an ideological call for a revolt against the allegedly 'evil outsiders'. Stating that Manchu was illegally ruling China, he explained that 'when the government which is established by a nation [*minzu*], is robbed by another nation, it is more than fair to revolt' (1960 [1901]: 94). Another quotation similarly indicates that Zhang regarded the Manchu as an external invader who was ruling China without any legitimacy, and constantly robbed Han territory.

It seems that Sun showed a comparatively greater tolerance in dealing with the relationship between Han and Manchu identity (and other groups within the Chinese territory). However, this tolerance was actually limited, insofar as it is created on the basis of an assumed Han superiority and also considers the Manchu an 'outside group'. Sun suggests, in regard to the Chinese population, ‘there are 400 million in total, among which … the total amount of “outside group” (including Manchu, Tibet, Mongolia and Turkic) is no more than 10 million’ (*ibid*). Thus, ‘we could say these 400 million Chinese are totally Hanese, who are sharing the same lineage, same language, same religion, same customs that absolutely belong to a specific nation [*minzu*]’ (*ibid*). In this way, the national integration Sun was promoting was not based on the communication and cultural integration among different groups within China. Instead, he promoted unification at the expenses of ignoring and loosing the specific cultures of non-Han people and minority groups.

Liang’s views on the relationship between the Han and the Manchu were considerably different from the ones advocated by Zhang and Sun. In his article *Lun bianfa bi zi ping manhan zhi jie shi* *(The Discussion on the fact that the recovery of the boundary between Man and Han is the precondition of the reform)* (1898), Liang clearly stated that, 'there might be numbers of slightly different ethnicities [*zuqun*] within a nation [*minzu*]; while also numbers of greatly different ethnicities outside the nation' (1936: 80). He combined nationalism with the loyalty to the *Guangxu* emperor, and even regarded the loyalty to *Guangxu* as the precondition of nationalism. Liang saw ‘the equality between Man and Han’ as the priority of social reform (1936: 77~92). According to him, there was no essential difference between the Manchu and the Han. Instead, he believed that the Chinese society was challenged by outside groups, who differed from both the Han and the Man, and were considered as a threat to society.

However, Liang’s proposition to form an alliance between Han and Man does not suggest that he completely ignored the conflict between Man and Han. Rather, Liang’s attitude to include Man into the composition of the Chinese nation was more based on a practical and realistic approach. In the same article, he noted, ‘the identical conflicts epidemically increased in these years…those who are specialized in war, are well aware of the importance of conjoining the inner groups in order to compete against the outside groups, thus they put enough emphasis on the communication with the inner groups. [In contrast], those who are blindfold to the threat of outside groups, and focus on the enemy within the inner group, could well be described as creating a conflict between the snip and the calm, which only benefits the fisherman’ (1936: 80). He also noted, that ‘the Chinese population stands for 70 to 80 percent of the Asian population. Thus, the integration of identity of the Asian should be started from the integration of the identity of China’ (1936: 88). Both of these two quotations show his standpoint of supporting the cooperation between the Han and other minority groups.

To summarize, both Sun and Zhong were in favour of expelling the Manchu and excluded the Manchu from the Chinese race/nation, though their attitudes changes over time., While Sun was initially an ardent supporter of expelling the Manchu court from Chinese territory, he changed his opinion after the establishment of the Republic of China, and argued for the integration of all the national groups within the Chinese society, in order to resist Western imperialism. Zhang’s attitude was always changing. In his early stage, he argued it would be a proper way to maintain the Manchu government (although the Man-Qing emperor was a guest emperor). Afterwards, he clearly pointed out that the object of the Chinese national revolution is expelling the Manchu (1990 [1908]: 426~428). He changed again to promote the national integration and national equality after the establishment of the Republic of China. Liang Qichao instead held a basic standpoint that the Manchu should always be included into the construction of Chinese identity as well as the Chinese history.

We can see from the above that, although these three intellectuals emphasized different factors, *i.e.* Sun Zhongshan paid attention on the relationship between the territory and the national identity, while Zhang Binglin was more focused on the cultural uniqueness of the Han, and Liang instead showed a more tolerant attitude towards the Manchu in social way, they all adopted the same markers (biological, cultural, historical) in interpreting us and them. In defining the Han self in opposition to the Manchu other, all of them tended to use the same social categories (nation, race and sometimes ethnicity) to distinguish between the Han and Manchu, although they held different political views. All of them also constructed the Han as culturally and racially superiors. The detailed discussion of how the three authors construct the Han will follow at the beginning of section 3.

**2. The attitude to the West**

After the erosion of the First Opium War in 1840, the West performed an important role in the reforms of Chinese society. On the one hand, more and more Chinese noticed the necessity to study Western advanced technologies in both civil and military industries; on the other hand, modern Western ideas in social scientific research, especially the development of the ideas of nation and “race” had a deep impact on the Chinese intellectuals. Meanwhile, the relationship between the Han and the West, the Chinese nation and the West as well as the East and the West, were widely discussed by Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing.

Zhang provided a framework for clarifying the boundaries between what he considered to be different races, referring to colours and geographical boundaries as markers of racial differentiation. For example, he claimed that, ‘the world is divided into five continents with the clear boundaries. All kinds of animals, as well as human beings, exist independently on each continent. Therefore, the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains should be used as the territorial boundary that differentiates Asia from Europe and the yellow race from the white race’ (1977 [1897]: 5). He considered that it would be necessary to enhance the cooperation with other Asian countries which belonged to the same yellow race as well, in order to resist the threat of Western imperialism: ‘if there is anyone who decides to raise a revolution, this is actually the inner conflict among our yellow race, which could only lead us to become the corpses of the white race.’ (1977 [1897]: 6). He even warned that, if we regard the expelling of the Manchu as our main task, ‘the White will take this opportunity to devour our territory (1906 [1900]: 61). This quote comes from the period when he was less negatively disposed towards the Manchu.

A similar idea was held by Liang Qichao. Liang argued, the world was also categorized into different groups by racial markers. Liang repeatedly advocated the racial classification of mankind, focusing on biological factors, and much of his account of mankind was suffused by what is considered by the Chinese intellectuals and public to be vulgar stereotypes. For example, Kang Youwei (1858~1927), who was Liang Qichao's teacher and one of the most acclaimed scholars of the late Qing, described the African as 'the looks of pigs, with iron faces, silver teeth, slanting jaws, full breasts and long hair, look like an ox from the front' and also 'their hands and feet are dark black, they look stupid like sheep and swine' (1956 [1902]: 118~122). He thus further claimed the intermarriage for whites and yellows with blacks, since this can achieve the 'purification of mankind' and contributed to an 'improvement of the races' (*ibid*).

It is noteworthy in an 1897 article *Lun zhongguo zhi jiangqiang* (About the future power of China) (vol 2: 13), Liang tried to explain the differences among races using his own scientific knowledge. He argued that the races were biologically different in the microcosmic way and that the ‘*xueguan zhong zhi weishengwu*’ (microbes in the blood vessel) were distinct among different races. This argument was an obvious echo of research results in the Western natural sciences and social sciences at that time.

However, despite these general similarities in their perceptions of world-wide racial hierarchies, the authors differed in the emphasis they put on different markers of difference. For instance, in discussing the distinction between us (which sometimes referred to the Han, while in more cases referred to China as a whole) and the West, Zhang Binglin was mainly focused on biological factors and political needs for the integration of the Eastern nations in order to oppose the Western imperialism; while Liang paid attention also to cultural elements. He argued: ‘the Westerners summarize the different degrees of the national civilization into three categories: the first is a civilized (nation), the second is a non-civilized (nation), while the third is a semi-civilized (nation). China is a nation [*guo*] that is semi-civilized. There is no doubt that China is more civilized than the black in Africa or the red in Australia due to its various valuable historical cultural relics and traditional standard social rules. However, (it is obviously) less civilized than the whites because of the corrupt social morality, the narrow mind of the intellectuals, and the stupidity of the ordinary people’ (1990 [1896]: 150). As thus quotation suggests, Liang considered China to be less civilized than the West because he used the Western definition and criteria of “civilization”.

In contrast to Zhang and Liang, Sun, who was educated in America, and kept a close relationship with a few governments of Western countries, initially considered the Manchu to be more dangerous than Western imperialism, and even made efforts in seeking Western help for the Chinese revolution. For example, in one of his letters to his family (1981 [1900]), he noted 'I will gain the support from the Japanese Embassy when I go back to China this time' (199). However, after the failure of these efforts, he became disappointed with the West and changed to focus to promoting the Chinese revolution on its own.

It is shown from the above that, although the three intellectuals emphasized different elements in regards of the West, and even expressed totally different attitudes towards the West, they all used similar markers, both biological and cultural, in clarifying the distinction between us (the Chinese, the Han, the Yellow race) and the Western other.

**3. Constructing Han superiority and the Chinese national community**

Although Liang, Zhang and Sun developed different political ideas about the relationship between the Han and the Other – largely due to distinct political convictions they held - all of them represented the Han as superior to the other groups. Zhang and Sun clearly shared and promoted a perception of Han superiority based on a combination of racial and cultural markers. They both referred to the Han to a superior race, and grounded their perception of Han superiority in the idea that the Han had a long tradition of civilisation and culture. At the same time, they also pointed towards biological and physical differences or lineage when they distinguished the Han and the Manchu. Liang also promoted an ideology of Han supremacy, but mainly emphasised some similarities and communalities between the Han and other groups. Instead of arguing for different lineages of the Han and the Manchu, he claimed they shared the same history and memory.

‘(Some say that) there is no patriotic sense among us Chinese, which is not the truth. If it seems that the Chinese have no consciousness of nationalism [*minzu zhuyi*], it is due to the fact that they have no idea about what is a nation [*minzu guojia*]. China was always united. It was surrounded by various small barbarian groups without civilizations and cultural heritages as well as national regimes, and without being recognized as nations. Hereby we [*here he means the Chinese*] never equally viewed them as nations as us [*i.e. China*]. (Liang, 1990 [1899]: 270)

Although not supported by empirical evidence, the above quotation provides an interesting and partially correct insight into the evolution of Chinese national consciousness. According to Liang,, the consciousness of Chinese identity was not clearly present until modern time, when the recognition of the Other was highlighted and strengthened. We could therefore argue that it is only when the Chinese were faced with the threat from modern Western imperialism that the need arose for the promotion of nationalism and national consciousness in its modern sense of the word, especially after the establishment of the Republic of China. I will return to this issue again in my analysis of Chinese textbooks from the late Qing and early republican period.

The tendency to claim cultural superiority was one of the most important ideas shared by Chinese intellectuals for over 2000 years. From the early Qin dynasty, the distinction between us “*Huaxia*” (China) and other “*Yidi*” (Barbarians), based on perceived cultural and civilisational differences, historical heritage and values, was rather common (Harrison, 1969: 2). Among these three intellectuals, Zhang was the one who was most radical in advocating Han culturalism; as mentioned earlier, he believed the Han were ‘the noblest and the most honourable’ race (1982 [1897]: 8). Sun Zhongshan’s views were similar, and he use culturalist arguments to contest the legitimacy of the Manchu government.

In contrast to Sun and Zhang, Liang Qichao showed a moderation in advocating the Han superiority in both cultural and social ways, He even argued that it is necessary to overlap the boundaries between the Manchu and Han and believed the Man-Qing Dynasty formed an integral part of the Chinese history. Yet although Liang claimed the Hanese should abandon their social superiority in order to achieve Chinese national integration, it is not difficult to find the evidence to prove his cultural superiority of Han. To him, the precondition of the unification of the traditional Chinese nation was the acceptance of the dominance of Han culture, as well as its standard of civilization. In his view, the boundary between China and other (‘barbarian’) groups was not fixed or static; rather, these groups could be included among the Chinese, if they adopted Chinese culture and behaved like the Chinese (which in this context meant Han culture and Hanese behaviour). Once they totally accepted the Han culture and its moral system, they became Chinese. This means in fact a complete cultural assimilation of the other groups.

Despite differences in their interpretations of the status of the Han in the Chinese nation, Zhang, Sun and Liang shared similar views about the Han as a part of the yellow race. All of them were clearly aware of the dangerous threat of Western imperialism to the Chinese society. For example, Liang argued: ‘The bloody battle between the yellow race and the white race will definitely happen in 100 years… The Chinese population accounts for 70~80 percent of the population of the yellow race, thus the integration of the (yellow) race must start from China’ (1990 [1896]: 54). Sun also noted ‘day and night [I am] worried about the decline of the yellow race day and night; (I) feel heartache about the weakness of China (1985 [1902], vol 3: 2). Zhang went even further to argue that Asian countries should treat each other as the teeth and lips (1982 [1897]: 2). In the process of constructing the Western Other, they all made an effort in the construction of the Han, by promoting the cooperation among the yellow race, which according to them should be led by the Han Chinese.

Another significant similarity they shared was that all of them deeply believed that the Han would dominate the Chinese nation, as well as the yellow race in the future. For instance, Liang noted the ‘Chinese state should allow the merging of Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan, Miao and Tibet, to construct a large nation, which accounts for one third of the world population … If this dream comes true, this large nation will definitely be centred around the Hanese and it will undoubtedly be under the control of the Hanese’ (1990 [1903]: 1070). This actually indicated that they all constructed the Han as superior with reference to other groups in what they perceived to be the Yellow race.

**4. Conclusion**

The comparative study on the works of three intellectuals illustrates that although their political standpoints varied, they were all using similar social categories and markers in defining us and clarifying the boundaries between us and them.

In regard to their early stage, Zhang Binglin and Sun Zhongshan were obviously more radical in the discussion on the relationship between the Manchu and Han. Both of them clearly promoted the anti-Manchu movement, while Liang Qichao instead argued to eliminate the boundary between the Han and Manchu. However, although Liang Qichao argued in favour of cooperation between the Manchu and Han, he used the same markers as Zhang and Sun did in defining the distinction between the Manchu and Han. Although Liang claimed the Hanese should abandon their social superiority in order to achieve the national integration of the Chinese nation, it is not difficult to find evidence to prove his belief in the cultural superiority of Han. To him, the main principle of the unification of the traditional Chinese nation was the acceptance of the dominance of Han culture, as well as its standard of civilization.

In their late stage, on the other hand, all three intellectuals showed a clear support for national integration among all groups involved. Among them, Sun Zhongshan and Liang Qichao went furthest and argued that the Han should abandon their social and cultural superiority. This is particularly clearly evident in Liang Qichao's support for ‘large nationalism’, i.e. a pan-Chinese nationalism, and his critical attitudes to ‘small nationalism’, i.e. the tensions between the Han and the Manchu (e.g. 1990 [1903]: 1069~1070). Liang argued for the overriding importance of large nationalism because of the threat of Western imperialism, which required for a stronger state to defend the nation. He therefore argued that the Chinese nation-state should also include Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan and Tibet. It is worthy to mention that Liang wrote his essay on large nationalism and small nationalism in 1903, when both Zhang Binglin and Sun Zhongshan were still opposed to this idea. However, less than 10 years later, they both changed their position to support this idea.

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1. Manchu is a large Tungusic ethnicity, which was originated in Manchuria (today's Northeast China). They arose during the seventeenth century, and conquered the Ming Dynasty and established the Qing Dynasty (1644~1912). Qing Dynasty governmentally ruled China until its abolition in 1911 by the *Xinha*i Revolution, after which ROC (the Republic of China) became the government of China. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Huang Xing (1874~1916) was one of the founders of the Kuomingtang (KMT) and the Republic of China. His position was next to Sun Zhongshan and they were known as Sun-Huang during the *Xinhai* Revolution.

The Imperial examinations in Imperial [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) determined who among the population would be permitted to enter the state's [bureaucracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureaucracy). The Imperial Examination System in [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) lasted for 1300 years, from its founding during the [Sui Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sui_Dynasty) in 605 to its abolition near the end of the [Qing Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qing_Dynasty) in 1912. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Jiawu War is officially named as the First Sino-Japanese War between China and Japan, happened in 1894 and ended in 1895. The Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed afterwards. According to some clauses in the treaty, China had to admit the complete independence and autonomy of Korea. Meanwhile, China was required to cede the full sovereignty of the Penghu and Taiwan and pay 200,000,000 Kuping taels to Japan (Hurst, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Manchu was widely considered not to be the traditional government of China, Zhang thus argued that Qing emperor should be only named as a guest emperor (1973 [1900]: 120). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Juren* is an identity shows one's capacity as a scholar in the Imperial Examinations. The Imperial examinations in Imperial [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) determined who among the population would be permitted to enter the state's [bureaucracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureaucracy). The Imperial Examination System in [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) lasted for 1300 years, from its founding during the [Sui Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sui_Dynasty) in 605 to its abolition near the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1912. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The *Jiawu* War is officially named as the First Sino-Japanese War between China and Japan, started in 1894 and ended in 1895. The Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed afterwards. According to some clauses in the treaty, China had to admit the complete independence and autonomy of Korea. Meanwhile, China was required to cede the full sovereignty of the Penghu and Taiwan and pay 200,000,000 *Kuping* taels to Japan (Hurst, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)