State and Society in the Eighteenth Century

Qing Dynasty 清: 1644 - 1911 (last imperial dynasty; ruled by the Manchus, a tribal people whose homeland lies to the northeast of Ming China; consider themselves the successors to the Jurchen Jin dynasty)

Kangxi Emperor 康熙 (r. 1662-1722)

Yongzheng Emperor 雍正 (r. 1723-1735), Yinzhen 胤禛, 4th son of the KX emperor.

Yinreng 胤禎, 2nd son of KX emperor, intended heir apparent until succession controversy.

Yinti 胤禔, 14th son of KX emperor, rumored to have been chosen successor; displaced by Yinzhen.

Qianlong Emperor 乾隆 (r. 1736-1796), Hongli, 4th son of the YZ emperor. Actually ruled until 1799, but abdicated in 1796 so that his official reign would not exceed that of his grandfather.

Jiaqing Emperor 嘉慶 (r. 1796-1820)

Palace Memorials & Routine Memorials: secret palace memorial system begun under the Kangxi emperor; expanded and institutionalized under the Yongzheng emperor; used as a way to get accurate intelligence directly to the emperor.

Bondservants (booi): Technically hereditary slaves attached to the Banner companies, bondservants were entrusted with staffing many of the important positions in the Imperial Household Department and other state monopolies such as the Imperial Silk Manufactories. During the early years after the conquest, highly educated Han bondservants played an important role in mediating between the Manchu ruling elite and the Han social and cultural elite. Many of these bondservants became very powerful and cultivated.

Imperial Household Bureau (Neiufu 内務府); staffed by bondservants; intended to attend to the personal needs of the Manchu imperial family; also takes on some surveillance activities for the Qing state.

Grand Council: The inner body of officials who advised the emperor about policy matters; begins as a body to deal with the huge quantity of palace memorials coming into the court; begun during the Yongzheng reign; always staffed by equal numbers of Manchu and Chinese officials – 3 Manchu and 3 Chinese.

The Complete Writings of the Four Treasuries (Siku quanshu 四庫全書); encyclopedic collection of over 16,000 works from previous dynasties and arranged by the four categories of classics, history, philosophy, and belles-lettres.

Heshen 和珅 (1750-1799): Imperial Bodyguard; gets the confidence of the Qianlong emperor; quickly ascends ladder of official appointment including posts on the Grand Council and Ministry of Revenue; accused of embezzling enormous sums for his private pleasure; traditionally blamed for the failures of the White Lotus Rebellion suppression campaigns.