

A TECHNIQUE FOR ESTIMATING THE NUMERICAL
STRENGTH OF THE EARLY MANCHU
MILITARY FORCES¹

CHAOYING FANG 房兆楹

I

THE PROBLEM

The early documents of the Ch'ing dynasty relating to the military affairs of the Manchus seldom mention either the total number of men serving in the standing army or the number of men sent out on expeditions. When a reference is given to indicate the numerical strength of the army, it is usually given as "so many men from each Company."² Unless we know the number of Companies in a particular year, we can make an estimate of neither the potential strength of the Manchu Army, nor how many men took part in an expedition.

During the Manchu expedition to inner Mongolia in 1634, thousands of Mongols were recruited to serve under Mongolian as well as Manchu Banners.³ The combat troops sent on this expedition were recorded as being composed of eight guards and twenty cavalymen from each Company.⁴ The strength of the standing army under the Manchus is also recorded as "so many men from

¹ Prepared for the Chinese History Project in connection with the military section of the book to be published under the title: *History of Chinese Society: Ch'ing (1644-1912)*. The project is under the sponsorship of the University of Washington in cooperation with Columbia University.

² A Company, the basic unit in the organization of the Eight Banners, was called *niru* in Manchu and *tso-ling* 佐領 in Chinese. It is a unit that includes not only the original group of warriors but also their families, and all their descendants. T. F. WADSWORTH in "The Army of the Chinese Empire" (*Chinese Repository*, XX, 5, May, 1851, p. 257) did not venture any translation but simply called it *tsoling*. Later it was translated as "Company" (BRUNNERT and HAGELSTRÖM, *Present Day Political Organisation of China*, Shanghai, 1912, No. 726, p. 326). Lacking a more suitable English equivalent, this translation is used here.

³ *Ch'ing T'ai-tsung shih-lu* 清太宗實錄 (hereafter referred to as *CSL II*) 18/23a-25b, 22/17b-21b.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18/22a; see note 21.

each Company." The *K'ang-hsi Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*, completed in 1690, is the first official publication containing information on this matter. It records the number of soldiers in the standing army at that time as being eighty-nine men from each Manchu or Mongolian Company and forty-seven men from each Chinese Company.⁵ However, since it does not give the number of Companies, it is impossible to make a calculation. The key to the numerical strength of the Manchu army in a given year is the number of Companies existing during that year.

The Manchus began to organize their men into Companies in 1601.⁶ By 1615 there were approximately two hundred Manchu Companies divided into eight Banners.⁷ As they conquered Chinese and Mongolian territories, the soldiers of these nationalities who surrendered to them were organized into Companies and Banners. There was a Mongolian Corps in 1626 which expanded into two Banners before 1631⁸ and into eight Banners in 1635.⁹ Similarly, two Chinese Banners organized in 1637 expanded into four Banners in 1639 and into eight Banners in 1643.¹⁰ The number of Companies of each nationality was increased, until in 1735 there were 678 Companies in Peking under the Eight Manchu Banners, 207 under the Eight Mongolian Banners, and 270 under the Eight Chinese Banners.¹¹ This increase in the number of Companies, in the period from 1601 to 1735, was a gradual one. The need for the Manchu Army declined after 1735, and the number of Companies remained almost unchanged from

⁵ *K'ang-hsi Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* 康熙大清會典 81/12b-13a.

⁶ *Ch'ing T'ai-tsu Wu-huang-ti shih-lu* 清太祖武皇帝實錄 Peking, 1932, 2/1b-2a.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2/9a.

⁸ There is no record of the creation of the Mongolian Banner nor any record of its division into two Banners. The first time the Mongolian troops were mentioned as a separate unit was in 1626 when Unege 吳訥格 (d. 1635) was made commander of the Mongolian troops from the Eight (Manchu) Banners (*Man-chou shih-lu* 滿洲實錄 8/198-199). In 1631 two Mongolian Banners were mentioned as being in the siege of Ta-ling-ho, one Banner under Unege and the other under Obondoï 鄂本兌 (*CSL II* 9/22a-b).

⁹ The Eight Mongolian Banners were mentioned for the first time in 1635 (*CSL II* 22/19a-21a).

¹⁰ *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih (ch'u-chi)* 八旗通志(初集), 1739, 1/14a-15a.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, *ch'ian* 3-16.

then until 1912. In the 1880's there were 675 Manchu Companies, 204 Mongolian Companies, and 266 Chinese Companies.¹² The official publications after 1735 listed the number of Companies under the Twenty-four Banners, and the records of military matters usually mention the total number of men from the Banner Forces. Therefore, it is only for the period between 1601 and 1735 that the actual number of Companies is necessary in determining the numerical strength of the Manchu army for each year.

II

THE SOLUTION

In the early years, i. e., the seventeenth century, the Manchus kept the number of their Companies a military secret. Only in a few instances before 1735 did they indirectly indicate it in publications. Hence to determine the number of Companies in an earlier period, it is necessary to consult works published after 1735. One method is to discover, if possible, the number of Companies existing in one of the earlier years and the number of newly created Companies for each additional year. During the Ch'ing dynasty one scholar is known to have used this method to compile a list of the number of Companies year by year. This man was WANG Ch'ing-yün 王慶雲 (1798-1862), who mentions in the *Shih-ch'ü yü-chi*,¹³ his book on the government of the Ch'ing dynasty, that during the winter of 1840 he compiled such a list by the use of information given in *chüan* 837 of the Chia-ch'ing edition of the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*. He was extremely cautious in revealing a military secret which the Manchus had guarded so well during the early days. He claimed that he had made only one copy of the list to be shown to some friends and that no duplicate copy should be made by anyone. He did not publish this list in his book.

The Chia-ch'ing edition of the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*, mentioned by

¹² *Kuang-hsi* 光緒 *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*, 1890, 84/3a-4b. This passage is identical with the Chia-ch'ing *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* of 1813 (67/3a-4a), even as to the mistake of giving the total number of the Manchu Companies as 681, which should be 675.

¹³ *Shih-ch'ü yü-chi* 石渠餘紀, reprint of about 1933, 2/22b-23b.

WANG Ch'ing-yün, lists the number of Companies as of 1643 and adds the number of newly created Companies from 1644 to 1813.¹⁴ The Ch'ien-lung edition of the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*, printed in 1764, begins the list with 1614 instead of 1643.¹⁵ The figures given in these two editions are otherwise the same. The information given in the 1764 edition of the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* has been used for the compilation of Table I.

A study of this table reveals that in some instances it does not agree with earlier and definitely reliable sources, such as the *Ch'ing shih-lu*. As an example, in 1615 there were approximately two hundred Companies, all Manchu, but the *Ch'ien-lung Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* estimates that in 1614 there were 308 Manchu Companies, 76 Mongolian Companies, and 16 Chinese Companies totaling four hundred Companies.¹⁶ The *T'ai-tsung shih-lu* states that an expedition of four hundred soldiers, one soldier from each Company,¹⁷ was dispatched in 1634. Therefore in 1634 there should have been four hundred Companies, but the figures given in the *Ch'ien-lung Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* total 446 for that year.¹⁸ From these discrepancies we have concluded that the figures in the *Ch'ien-lung Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* are unreliable for the earlier period. Table I is included for comparison with the results obtained by a different method described below.

The other work used to calculate the number of Companies during any year in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is the first edition of the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih*, "General History of the Eight Banners." Printed in 1739 in 250 *chüan*, it contains information about the Manchus and their Eight Banner system from the late sixteenth century to 1735. *Chüan* three to sixteen of this work contain the history of each Company, the time of its creation, the nationality or origin of its members, and the names of the men holding captaincy in the Company. Of the 1155 Companies existing in 1735, the year of formation is given for 718. For the remaining 437 Companies, the year of formation is either not mentioned or is indicated in a vague way, such as "formed

¹⁴ Chia-ch'ing *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (事例) 837/3b-18a.

¹⁵ *Ch'ien-lung Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien ts'ü-li* (則例) 171/1a-8b.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 171/1b.

¹⁷ *CSL* II 21/21b-22a.

¹⁸ See Table I.

at the beginning of the dynasty," or "formed with the surplus men from such and such a Company when so and so was serving as captain." The following three methods have been used to determine the approximate year of formation for these 437 Companies:

- (1) Studying the biography of the first captain of the Company, when such a biography is available, may sometimes determine the exact year of formation.¹⁹
- (2) In determining the year in which a group of men belonging to a Company joined the Manchus, an approximate year can be established.²⁰
- (3) By counting the number of captains in a Company and comparing it with the number of captains of Companies whose year of formation is known, an approximate time may be assigned.

¹⁹ The Sixteenth Company of the Second Regiment of the Bordered White Banner may serve as an example. It is recorded in the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* (7/11a) as being formed by men taken from Holohoi's Company. According to Holohoi's biography he was executed in March 1651, hence the new Company could not have been formed later. The First Company of the Fifth Regiment of the same Banner is recorded in the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* (7/23a) as formed with the surplus men from four other Companies. Its first captain was vice-president of a board—Icangga 伊常阿. According to the tables of high officials of the Six Boards in the *Ch'ing-shih-tao* 清史稿 (186/12b-13a), Icangga served as junior vice-president of the Board of Revenue from 1682-1683. Hence this new Company could only have been created during those two years or shortly thereafter, because of the practice of addressing a man by his highest rank even after he left his office. As 1684 was the year of the creation of the largest number of new Companies, this one is also put in the group under that year.

²⁰ To this group belong most of the Companies whose year of formation is given as *kuo-ch'u* 國初 (in the early years of the dynasty), which may mean any year from 1601 to 1643. For example, Eidu (1562-1621) joined T'ai-tsu as early as ca. 1583. His descendants held the hereditary captaincy of nine Companies in the First Regiment of the Bordered Yellow Banner, and among these Companies three were in the *kuo-ch'u* group (*Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* 3/1b-5a). These were all put under 1601, the earliest year of formation of the Companies. The First Company of the Fourth Regiment of the same Banner is recorded as formed with men from Hada. Hada was conquered by T'ai-tsu in 1600, and it was partially to organize the large number of captives from that region that the system of Companies was introduced (*Ch'ing T'ai-tsu Wu-huang-ti shih-lu* 2/1b). This and other Companies of people from Hada are listed under ca. 1601. In 1610 a large group of people from the valleys of the Ussuri and Hurka Rivers in eastern Kirin joined T'ai-tsu, and these men were organized into Companies with their former chiefs as captains (*ibid.*, 2/4b). The Companies of this group, such as the Thirteenth Company of the First Regiment of the Plain White Banner (*Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* 5/1a) are all listed under the years 1602-1614.

By these methods the year of formation for each of the 437 Companies is determined, as shown in Table II. After testing, the number of Companies listed in this table are found to be more in accord with the known facts than those in Table I. For example, the number of Companies in 1615 was 199, a difference of one, and that for 1634 was four hundred, which is exactly the number indicated in the *Shih-lu*. There is one other source for the period prior to 1735 which gives an indication of the number of Companies. This is the *Ch'in-ch'eng p'ing-ting Shuo-mo fang-lieh*, a collection of documents concerning Emperor Sh'eng-tsu's expeditions against Galdan, Khan of the Olot Mongols, to gain control of the Khalkha Mongols in the years 1690 and 1697. In *ch'üan* seventeen, pages 15a to 16a, there is a description of the dispatch of one detachment of Manchu and Mongolian soldiers from Peking late in 1695. It states that the total number of the detachment was 3470 and that they were composed of four men from each Manchu and Mongolian Company. Hence the number of Manchu and Mongolian Companies in Peking in 1695 should have been 867.5. Table II gives the number as 867, but Table I has 864, proving that the figures in Table II are more correct than those in Table I.

III

DEMONSTRATION OF THE USE OF TABLE II

The following examples demonstrate the use of Table II in estimating the numerical strength of the standing army under the Manchus and in estimating the number of men dispatched on various campaigns during the seventeenth century.

Example 1

In the *K'ang-hsi Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*, *ch'üan* eighty-one, pages 12b-13a, there is a section entitled *Pa-ch'i chia-ping* 八旗甲兵, "The Soldiers (i. e., non-officers) in the Banner Forces," which records:

From each Manchu and Mongolian Company there are selected two vanguards, two bodyguards, seventeen guards, six cavalry sergeants, forty cavalry-

men including one bowyer, two sergeants of the infantry, eighteen infantrymen, and two ironsmiths. From each Chinese Company there are selected four cavalry sergeants, thirty cavalymen, one sergeant of the infantry, and twelve infantrymen.²¹

This implies that the standing army of the Manchus in the 1680's was composed of eighty-nine men from each Manchu and Mongolian Company and forty-seven men from each Chinese Company. Table II for the year 1690 places 797 Manchu and Mongolian Companies and 263 Chinese Companies in Peking. Multiplying 797 by 89 we find 70,933 men in military service under Manchu and Mongolian Banners. Forty-seven times 263 equals 12,361, or the number of soldiers under Chinese Banners. Therefore in 1690, at the time the Manchus began their contest with Galdan for the control of the Khalkha Mongols, they had a potential army of 83,294 men in Peking.

We also know that at this time the Manchus had the following number of men in each of the branches of the Banner Forces:

(1) The two vanguards divisions	(2 x 797)	1,594
(2) The bodyguards	(2 x 797)	1,594
(3) The eight guards divisions	(17 x 797)	13,549
(4) The sixteen cavalry divisions	(45 x 797)	35,865
(5) The infantry corps	(20 x 797)	15,940
(6) Bowyers and ironsmiths	(3 x 797)	2,391
Total Manchu and Mongolian		70,933

²¹ In translating the titles of the officers, the classes of soldiers, and the branches of arms of the Banner Forces, I have not followed BRUNNERT and HAGELSTRÖM (*op. cit.*) except in the case of vanguard for *ch'ien-feng* 前鋒 and guard for *hu-chün* 護軍. In the list below are found the new translations of categories of soldiers as well as the units to which they belonged.

1. Bodyguard, *ch'in-chün* 親軍, is of two categories: the Imperial Bodyguards drawn from the Companies belonging directly to the throne; and the bodyguards to a prince of higher rank, drawn from the Companies belonging to his household. (*Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* 26/3b, 34/5b-6a, 12b-15b.)

2. Cavalryman, *ma-chia* 馬甲 or *hsiao-ch'i* 驍騎, of the 24 *hsiao-ch'i-ying* (營), cavalry divisions.

3. Cavalry sergeant, *ling-ts'ui* 領催, of the same divisions.

4. Infantryman, *pu-chün* 步軍, of the infantry corps, *pu-chün-ying* (營).

5. Sergeant of the infantry, *pu-chün ling-ts'ui*.

6. Bowyer, *kung-chiang* 弓匠.

7. Ironsmith, *t'ieh-chiang* 鐵匠.

(7) The eight Chinese firearms divisions	(34 x 263)	8,942
(8) The infantry corps	(13 x 263)	3,419
Total Chinese		12,361

Total standing army of Banner Forces in 1690 83,294

The organization of the Manchu and Mongolian Companies was alike, but the men from the Chinese Companies were organized differently. The differences were due to the fact that the Manchu and Mongolian combat soldiers were cavalymen armed chiefly with bows and arrows. The Chinese combat soldiers, although called cavalymen, formed the firearms corps, using muskets and artillery pieces.²² Therefore, in Manchu, the Chinese Banner Forces were called the *ujen cooha*, "troops with heavy equipment." An early document referring to the vanguards or the guards means the men from Manchu and Mongolian Companies. If it refers to the cavalymen, without specifying the nationality, it usually means the men from all the Companies: Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese. The documents specify whether the Chinese Banners or Companies were involved in the period after the 1660's.

Example 2

In 1629 T'ai-tsung invaded China with his army, laid siege to Peking for a month early in 1630, and returned to Mukden in April. During this expedition he captured four cities east of Peking, where he then left garrison forces. After his return, he sent new garrison forces to relieve the ones already there. In June 1630 the four cities were recaptured by the Chinese, and the Manchu garrison forces were driven from China, sustaining serious losses. When this news reached T'ai-tsung he was furious and bewailed the defeat to an assembly of his lieutenants. The *Ch'ing T'ai-tsung shih-lu* (II: 7/6a-b) gives the following account:

²² The corps of the Chinese Bannermen was called the Han-chün Huo-ch'i-ying 漢軍火器營 in the K'ang-hsi period (*Ch'in-cheng p'ing-ting Shuo-mo fang-lieh* 17/17a; Ura Ren'ichi 浦廉一: *Kangun (Ujen cooha) ni tsuite* 漢軍(烏真超哈)ニ就イテ in *Kwabara hakushi kanreki kinen Tōyō-shi romō* (1931).

On the day *jén-yin* [T'ien-ts'ung 4/5.23-July 3, 1690] His Majesty came to the Throne Hall, assembled the princes, officers, and the people, and said to them: "In our last expedition each Company supplied either fifteen or twenty armored men. We destroyed strong frontier walls of the Ming Empire, swept into their territory, and by the grace of Heaven took their strongly fortified cities. The so-called selected troops of their empire were defeated in every engagement. After Heaven gave us [the cities], Tsun-hua, Yung-p'ing, Luan-chou, and Ch'ien-an, I ordered each Company to send three guards and twenty armored men to garrison these places. The numerical strength was greater than before.

Here there is a comparison of numbers. There were fifteen to twenty men from each Company in the first expeditionary force and twenty-three men from each Company in the second. In that year there were 235 Companies. The number of men in the Banner Forces taking part in the first expedition was from thirty-five hundred to forty-seven hundred. This is a good guess. In the second expedition twenty-three men from each Company totaled 5205 men.

Example 3

The following is also translated from the *Ch'ing T'ai-tsung shih-lu* (18/23a-24a):

On the day *ping-shên* [T'ien-ts'ung 8.3.10-April 7, 1634] His Majesty asked the princes and high officials what route should be taken by the expeditionary force to invade the Ming Empire. They replied that they had agreed on the highway through Shan-hai-kuan. His Majesty said, "This report of the princes and high officials does not agree with the military situation. Our army should proceed directly to Hsüan-hua and Ta-[t'ung] . . ." Then the Banner commanders, officers, and sergeants were assembled at the Throne Hall to be given the orders for the expedition. Each Company was to send twenty cavalrymen and eight guards.

This was the Manchu expedition to inner Mongolia which recruited thousands of Mongols into the Banner Forces, thus making it possible to expand the two Mongolian Banners to eight Banners. The expedition was composed of eight guards and twenty cavalrymen from each Company. In 1634, cavalrymen were taken from four hundred Companies. Companies for the Manchu and Mongolian guards numbered 367. The total strength was 367 times 8, or 2936 guards and eight thousand cavalrymen.

Example 4

Late in 1673 Wu San-kuei rebelled in Yunnan, and in a short time the rebellion spread to nine provinces. It was crushed after more than seven years of fighting, the Manchu army forming the bulk of the combat troops. In referring to the numerical strength of their army, the Manchus refrained from giving the total number and mentioned only the number of men from each Company. The first Banner Army dispatched to fight the rebels was sent early in 1674, soon after the news of the rebellion reached Peking. Rather than a full translation of the original account requiring extensive notes, a summary is given here. The original text is in the *P'ing-ting san-ni fang-lüeh*.²³

The army was composed as follows:

- (a) From the vanguards' division: half of the officers and men (i. e., one vanguard from each Manchu and Mongolian Company in addition to the officers)
- (b) From the guards' divisions: 152 officers, 7 men from each Manchu and Mongolian Company
- (c) From the cavalry divisions: 120 officers, 10 men (including two sergeants) from each Manchu and Mongolian Company
- (d) From the Chinese firearms divisions: 32 officers, 5 men (including one sergeant) from each Chinese Company

Because this army was dispatched early in 1674, the number of Companies for 1673 should be used. In Table II, for the year 1673, there were 527 Manchu and Mongolian Companies and 213 Chinese Companies. Hence we know that:

(1) From the Manchu and Mongolian Companies:	
(a) One vanguard from each Company	527
(b) Seven guards from each Company	3,689
(c) Ten cavalrymen from each Company	5,270
	9,486
(2) From the Chinese Companies	
(d) Five men from each Company	1,065
	10,551
Total men, excluding officers	10,551

²³ *P'ing-ting san-ni fang-lüeh* 平定三逆方略 60 *chüan*, in *Süi-k'ü-ch'üan-shu* *chên-pên ch'u-chi* 四庫全書珍本初集.

By the same method, the total number of Banner troops sent from Peking between 1674 and 1681 is found to be over fifty thousand. In addition there were about twenty-six thousand men from inner Mongolia and four thousand men from Manchuria who took part in this campaign, totaling eighty thousand men. If we count the number of officers and retainers (one for each soldier and from two to over a hundred for the officers, depending on rank), the total number of Banner Forces sent to the various fronts during the seven years of this war should have been from one hundred and sixty to two hundred thousand men.

IV

FURTHER REMARKS

(1). On examining Table II, one notes sudden increases in the number of Companies during certain periods. These occurred in the years 1601 to 1614, 1634, 1642, 1667 to 1674, 1683 to 1684, and 1695. The explanation lies in the fact that since the Manchu army was composed of a number of men from each Company, any increase in the number of Companies meant an expansion of the army. The Manchus began their military conquests with a small population. In the process of expansion they had to maintain a growing army, and in order to maintain that army they had to take captives to replace the losses and to increase the army's strength. At first the captured enemy soldiers were organized into new Companies. This happened between 1601 and 1619 when the soldiers of the tribal states of Hada, Hoifa, Ula, and Yehe were absorbed. It happened again after the wars against the Mongols and the Chinese in the 1630's.

Because the size of the army was in direct proportion to the number of the Companies, the Manchus in preparing for a major war, created new Companies to increase the strength of their army. Thus in 1634 the increase of sixty-four Companies was a measure taken to prepare for the expeditions to Mongolia in 1634-1635. The creation of a hundred Chinese Companies in 1642 was intended to aid in the conquest of China, which began less

than two years later. The increase of 115 Companies from 1667 to 1673 proves that long before the Wu San-kuei rebellion, the Manchus had been prepared. From 1681 to 1685, as many as 246 Companies were formed, partially to absorb the former soldiers under the feudal princes in southern China and partly in preparation for war with Russia over the control of northern Manchuria and with the Olot Mongols over the control of the Khalkha Mongols. Russia agreed to recognize a boundary between Siberia and Manchuria in 1689, and although a few battles took place on the Amur River, actual war did not materialize in that sector. The war with the Olot Mongols was fought from 1690 to 1697, and resulted in the Manchus' gaining control of all Mongolia. The bitterest conflict took place during 1695 and 1696. Table II shows that 1695 was a year in which a large number of Companies was formed.

(2). Why did the Manchus stop forming Companies after 1735? A larger army meant increased expenditures for its support; for financial reasons there had to be a limit to the size of the military forces. After 1735 the Manchus began to depend more on the Chinese provincial troops, called the Lü-ying or Army of the Green Standard, to serve as combat troops for the campaigns inside China. In these cases a small number of Banner troops acted as guards for the headquarters. The last time the Banner troops served as the main combat force was in 1755-1759 during the conquest of Sinkiang. Even then a large part of the expeditionary force was made up of Mongolian troops not in the Banner Forces. Thus the sparing use of Banner troops and long periods of peace resulted in the loss of the kind of training which only the battlefield could afford. Because of the changed conditions, there was no need for creating new Companies.

(3). The number of Companies given in Table II includes only those called by the Manchus *wai tso-ling* 外佐領, "Companies belonging to the State." These were Companies that supplied the combat troops. There were Companies belonging exclusively to the households of the Emperor and the members of the Imperial Family. These were the so-called *pao-i tso-ling* 包衣佐領, "Companies of the Household." A number of men from each of

these Companies also served as military guards but only to the persons to whom they belonged.²⁴ The Emperor on an expedition, or a prince sent off to battle, might bring the soldiers from his own Household Company as personal guards, but, except in the earlier days, not usually as combat troops. Besides the Household Companies there were also Companies in the garrison cities of China and Manchuria, called the *chu-fang tso-ling* 駐防佐領.²⁵ When the men of a garrison were mobilized for war duty, it was usually done with the entire garrison force as a unit rather than individual Companies of the garrison. There is no need to tabulate the number of such Companies in order to determine the total numerical strength.

(4). How many men constituted a Company? There is no positive answer to this question although there are references stating the number as three hundred men of service age and their families.²⁶ Probably before 1644 the regulation provided for some three hundred men of service age in a Company. The general practice was to take one of each three men for military service. In time, when the number of men in a Company multiplied to double its size, the surplus men were taken out to form a new Company, or the surplus men from several Companies were combined to form a new Company. There was also an organization known as *pan-kê tso-ling* 半個佐領, "Half-Company," which was formed with one hundred or less men and which was changed to a full Company when there were enough men.²⁷ This was the situation before 1644. After that year, because of the large number of troops sent to various points in China on permanent garrison duty, the number of men required to constitute a full Company was from one to two hundred. This was still true in the 1720's.²⁸

(5). In order to determine the total strength of a Manchu army in the field, the number of retainers and horses must be

²⁴ *Kuang-hsi Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* 86/20a-21a; 95/5a-9b.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 86/4b-8b.

²⁶ *Man-chou shih-lu* 3/55, 4/85; *Ming-Ch'ing shih-liao* 明清史料, 8d series, 1/51a.

²⁷ *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* 3/17a-b, 28b-29a, 12/9b, *passim*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 36/21a; *Ch'ing Shih-tsung shih-lu* 清世宗實錄 60/27b.

included. Before 1644 each Company supplied its soldiers with weapons, horses, and equipment, and each soldier could bring a junior member of his family or bond-servants from his own household. The spoils of war, including captured men, animals, and goods, were distributed among the soldiers as rewards, similar to the treatment of animals killed or captured during a hunting expedition. After 1644, when the law against pillaging was gradually enforced, the soldiers began to receive monthly payment in silver and rations. Horses and equipment were then supplied by the state. Limitations on the number of retainers and horses had to be set, and in 1695 it was proclaimed that a soldier on an expedition was allowed one retainer and four horses: two horses for riding and two for packing.²⁹ The number of retainers allowed an officer depended on his rank. The regulation as of 1695 was from two retainers for a lieutenant to ten retainers for a general.³⁰ Such regulations probably changed from time to time,³¹ but we can safely say that in an expedition before 1735 the number of soldiers should be multiplied by two and the number of officers by 4.1³² in order to get the estimated total of men taking part. The number of horses was at least twice the total number of men.

²⁹ *Ch'in-ch'eng p'ing-ting Shuo-mo fang-lüeh* 17/15b.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16/26a.

³¹ This can be seen from the number of horses allowed an officer in 1658 (*Ch'ing Shih-tou shih-lu* 清世祖實錄 114/11a-12a).

³² This ratio of 4.1 retainers to an officer is reached by dividing the total number of 2048 retainers by the total number of 497 officers, as given in the *Ch'in-ch'eng p'ing-ting Shuo-mo fang-lüeh* (16/23b-27a).

TABLE I

NUMBER OF COMPANIES IN THE BANNER FORCES
(According to the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* of 1764)

YEAR	NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES	NUMBER OF MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU AND MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES	NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL COMPANIES
1614	—	308	—	76	384	—	16	400
1616	2	310	—	76	386	—	16	402
1622	1	311	—	70	387	—	16	403
1623	—	311	1	77	388	—	16	404
1629	1	312	—	77	389	—	16	405
1630	—	312	10	87	399	2	18	417
1631	—	312	1	88	400	—	18	418
1632	—	312	3	91	403	—	18	421
1633	—	312	1	92	404	—	18	425
1634	4	316	4	96	412	16	34	446
1635	1	317	25	121	438	10	44	482
1636	—	317	1	122	439	1	45	484
1637	—	317	1	123	440	6	51	491
1638	—	317	—	123	440	2	53	493
1639	—	317	1	124	441	3	56	497
1640	—	317	1	125	442	2	58	500
1642	—	317	3	128	445	100	158	603
1643	1	318	—	128	446	9	167	613
1644	1	319	2	130	449	4	171	620
1645	2	321	2	132	453	12	183	636
1646	—	321	1	133	454	17	200	654
1647	—	321	—	133	454	4	204	658
1648	—	321	—	133	454	13	207	661
1650	—	321	2	135	456	1	208	664
1651	3	324	—	135	459	2	210	669
1653	—	324	1	136	460	1	211	671
1662	1	325	1	137	462	—	211	673
1664	1	326	—	137	463	—	211	674
1665	2	328	1	138	466	—	211	677
1666	3	331	—	138	469	—	211	680
1667	12	343	2	140	483	—	211	694
1668	8	351	3	143	494	1	212	706

TABLE I—Continued

YEAR	NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES	NUMBER OF MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU AND MON-GOLIAN COMPANIES	NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES ADDED	TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL COMPANIES
1669	23	374	6	149	523	2	214	737
1670	6	380	2	151	531	—	214	745
1671	—	380	1	152	532	—	214	746
1672	27	407	10	162	569	—	214	783
1673	7	414	—	162	576	3	217	793
1674	35	449	4	166	615	—	217	832
1675	1	450	1	167	617	3	220	837
1676	1	451	—	167	618	—	220	838
1677	1	452	—	167	619	—	220	839
1679	—	452	—	167	619	5	225	844
1680	3	455	—	167	622	1	226	848
1681	2	457	—	167	624	5	231	855
1682	6	463	2	169	632	—	231	863
1683	5	468	—	169	637	24	255	892
1684	139	607	25	194	801	5	260	1061
1685	3	610	—	194	804	5	265	1069
1686	1	611	1	195	806	—	265	1071
1687	1	612	1	196	808	—	265	1073
1688	—	612	1	197	809	—	265	1074
1694	5	617	—	197	814	—	265	1079
1695	41	658	9	206	864	—	265	1129
1697	2	660	—	206	866	—	265	1131
1698	—	660	1	207	867	—	265	1132
1699	1	661	—	207	868	1	266	1134
1701	2	663	—	207	870	—	266	1136
1701	1	664	—	207	871	—	266	1137
1704	1	665	—	207	872	—	266	1138
1706	—	665	—	207	872	1	267	1139
1722	3	668	—	207	875	—	267	1142
1723	1	669	—	207	876	—	267	1143
1724	1	670	2	209	879	—	267	1146
1730	3	673	—	209	882	—	267	1149
1731	—	673	—	209	882	5	272	1154
1734	1	674	—	209	883	—	272	1155
1735	1	675	—	209	884	—	272	1156

TABLE II
NUMBER OF COMPANIES IN THE BANNER FORCES 1601-1785
(IN MANCHURIA 1601-1644 AND IN PEKING 1644-1785)
(According to a Study of the *Pa-ck'i-t'ung-ch'it* of 1789, *ch'üan* 8-16)

YEAR	NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES		TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES	NUMBER OF MONGOLIAN COMPANIES ADDED		TOTAL NUMBER OF MONGOLIAN COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF MONGOLIAN AND MANCHU COMPANIES	NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES ADDED		TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL COMPANIES
	Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate		Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate			Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate		
C.a. 1601			80			80				80	
1601-14			199			199				199	
1616	2		201			201				201	
1622	1 (?)		202			202				202	
1623			203			203				203	
1626			202			202				202	
1629	1		205			205				205	
1630			203			203				203	
1631			208			208				208	
1632			218			218				218	
1633			218			218				218	
1634	4		217			217				217	
1635	2		229			229				229	
1636			269			269				269	
1637			269			269				269	
1638			269			269				269	
1639			269			269				269	
1640	1		270			270				270	
1642			275			275				275	
1643	1		278			278				278	
1644	1		280			280				280	
1645	2		280			280				280	
1646			280			280				280	
1647			280			280				280	
1648			280			280				280	
1650			284			284				284	
1651	3		284			284				284	
1655			285			285				285	
1656	1		286			286				286	
1655	1		286			286				286	
1666	3		289			289				289	

TABLE II—Continued

YEAR	NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES		TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU COMPANIES	NUMBER OF MONGOLIAN COMPANIES ADDED		TOTAL NUMBER OF MONGOLIAN COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF MANCHU AND MONGOLIAN COMPANIES	NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES ADDED		TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE COMPANIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL COMPANIES
	Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate		Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate			Year of Formation Known	Year of Formation Approximate		
1667	12		901			129				480	
1668	8		909			192				441	
1669	23		932			196				468	
1670	6		938			197				475	
1671			938			198				476	
1672	26		968			192				520	
1673	7		975			192				527	
1674	34		421			160				581	
1675	1		422			161				583	
1676	1		423			161				584	
1677	1		424			161				585	
1679			424			161				585	
1680	3		427			161				588	
1681	2		429			161				590	
1682	6		435			163				598	
1683	8		443			163				606	
1684	196		597			192				789	
1685	3		600			193				793	
1686	1		601			194				795	
1687	1		602			195				797	
1689	1		602			196				798	
1694	8		610			196				806	
1695	40		661			206				867	
1697	2		668			206				869	
1699	1		664			206				870	
1700	1		665			206				871	
1701	3		668			206				874	
1704	1		669			206				875	
1706			669			206				875	
1723	5		675			206				881	
1724	1		676			207				883	
1731	1		676			207				883	
1733			676			207				883	
1734	1		677			207				884	
1735	1		678			207				885	

APPENDIX

I.

The first part of Table II is partially based on a study of two Japanese works on the early history of the Manchus, which have been recently acquired by the East Asiatic Collection of the Columbia University Library. The first work is a Japanese translation of the early documents in the Manchu script, known as the *Man-wên lao-tang* 滿文老檔. These documents had been partially incorporated into the *Ch'ing T'ai-tsu shih-lu* as early as 1635 and were indifferently translated into Chinese in the 1920's. A part of this Chinese translation appeared in a volume published by Chin-liang 金梁 in 1929 under the title *Man-chou lao-tang mi-lu* 滿洲老檔秘錄; another part appeared in serial form in the Palace Museum Weekly (故宮周刊, nos. 245-459, 1933-1935). This new Japanese translation was made by FUJIOKA Katsuji 藤岡勝二 (1872-1935). It was published in 1939 by facsimile reproduction of Dr. FUJIOKA's manuscripts under the title *Mambun rôtô*, in three volumes of 1757 consecutive pages. Although still in need of much editing in its present form, this Japanese version is the most complete and reliable one available and is of great value to those already familiar with the *Shih-lu* and other works on the early Manchus.

While I was studying the *Mambun rôtô* and extracting the information concerning the Companies in the Manchu war machine, Dr. YANG Lien-sheng of Harvard University called my attention to the second Japanese work, ABE Takeo's 阿部健夫 partially published study of the Manchu Company system in the Eight Banners entitled "Hachihata Manshû 'niru' no kenkyû" 八旗滿洲ニルの研究 in *Tôa jimbun gakuho* 東亞人文學報 (Vol. 1, No. 4, Feb., 1942, pp. 799-875, and Vol. 2, No. 2, July, 1942, pp. 174-238).

These two works, especially the *Mambun rôtô*, enabled me to revise the first part of Table II as it now stands. In its original form, I assigned thirty-two Companies to the period 1619-1626, which was too early. Some of these Companies were recorded in the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih ch'u-chi* (6/24a, 158/16a, *passim*) as being formed in these early years, which was in a sense true because they were formed as "Boo-i niru" or Household Companies that served the princes or high officers and not as regular Companies rendering military service to the state. It was probably after 1626 that these Companies were gradually changed to regular Companies. For example, Tushi, who came from Yehe in 1619, was made Captain of a Household Half-Company in 1624, and in 1635, because he had died of wounds received in battle, his son was given an additional one hundred men to form a full regular Company. This was the Seventh Company, Fifth Regiment, Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner (CSL II 20/1a, 22/7b, *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih ch'u-chi* 3/23b, 144/2a). Another example is the Fourth Company of the Second Regiment, Plain White Banner, which was formed with the Yehe people about 1619 as a Household Company

but was changed to a regular Company in 1635 (CSL II 22/8b, *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih ch'u-chi* 5/9a, *Pa-ch'i Man-chou shih-tsu t'ung-p'u* 氏族通譜 22/5a).

In any case, according to the *Mambun rôtô*, the system of two hundred regular Manchu Companies for military service was maintained from 1616 to at least 1623, as shown in the following references:

1) In 1616 there were two hundred Companies, for a corps of six hundred men to build boats was formed in that year by calling three men from each Company (*Mambun rôtô*, p. 61; ABE in *Tôa jimbun gakuho* 2: 2/186).

2) In 1621 the two hundred Companies were mentioned (*Mambun rôtô*, p. 310; ABE, *op. cit.*).

3) In 1622 there were still two hundred Companies, for a corps of four thousand men to transport grain was formed by drawing twenty men from each Company (*Mambun rôtô*, p. 424; ABE, *op. cit.*).

4) In 1623 there were still only two hundred Companies, because a garrison of two hundred men was composed of one man from each Company (*Mambun rôtô*, p. 511; ABE, *op. cit.*).

5) In 1632 there were over 217 Companies. A hunting expedition was conducted in December of that year consisting of thirteen hundred men, six from each Company (*Mambun rôtô*, p. 1427; not mentioned in the published parts of ABE's work).

From these references it can be seen that from 1616 to 1623 the number of Manchu Companies for military service was constantly referred to as, or accounted on the basis of, two hundred. Sometime from 1623 to 1632 the basis of accounting changed to 217 or more Companies. It was on this positive evidence that the first part of Table II (from 1616 to 1635) was revised.

II.

ABE, in his work, makes a great effort to sum up all the known references to the Manchu military organization. His approach to the problem of the number of Companies, which forms only a small part of his study, is not by tracing the history of the individual Companies, as I did, but by finding out the total number in existence in the early years (1616-1644), especially the quota number for each Banner. He included in his work a table giving the quota number of Manchu Companies for ten of the twenty-nine years from 1616 to 1644 (ABE in *Tôa jimbun gakuho* 2: 2/186-187). A summary of his table is as follows:

Year	Quota Number of Manchu Companies by Banner	Main Source of Information
(1) 1616	200	<i>Mambun rôtô</i> , p. 61
(2) 1620-21	200	Korean sources
(3) 1621	200	<i>Mambun rôtô</i> , p. 310

(4)	1622	200	<i>ibid.</i> , p. 424
(5)	1623	200	<i>ibid.</i> , p. 511
(6)	1624	240	K'ang-hsi and Yung-ch'eng editions of the <i>Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien</i>
	("by inference")		
(7)	1633	240	<i>T'ien-ts'ung</i> [ch'ao] <i>ch'ên-kung tsou-i</i> 天聰朝臣工奏議 in <i>Shih-liao ts'ung-k'an ch'u-pien</i> 史料叢刊初編
(8)	1634	240	<i>T'ai-tsung shih-lu</i> , <i>ch'üan</i> 20
(9)	1634	308	<i>ibid.</i> , <i>ch'üan</i> 21; <i>Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih</i> [hsü-pien 續編], <i>ch'üan</i> 32
		(of a total of 400)	
(10)	ca. 1644	309	<i>Chia-ch'ing Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih li ch'üan</i> 337
		(in addition to 18 Half-Companies)	

The figures in the first half of this table, items 1-5, based mainly on the *Mambun rôtdô*, are correct, as already discussed in connection with the revision of Table II. In item 9, ABE is also correct in stating the total number of regular Companies for 1634 as four hundred, the source of which is the *T'ai-tsung Shih-lu*. However, his assignment of 308 Manchu Companies to 1634 in item 9 and 309 to about 1644 in item 10, is questionable, for he took these figures from the second edition of the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* of 1799, and the *Chia-ch'ing Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* of 1813. The *Ch'ien-lung Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* of 1761 is the first work that invented the breakdown of the four hundred Companies into 308 Manchu, 76 Mongolian, and 16 Chinese, and assigned it to 1614. The editors of the *Chia-ch'ing hui-tien* and presumably those of the second edition of the *Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih*, accepted this breakdown of the four hundred Companies but found that the year 1616 was too early for such a large number of Companies, and so grouped them under the ambiguous period of *Kuo-ch'u* 國初 which included both the reigns of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung. Since none of the earlier works but the *Ch'ien-lung hui-tien* mentioned the figure of 308 Manchu Companies for any of the years from 1616 to 1644, it has to be regarded as suspicious.

Items 6, 7, and 8 in ABE's table for the years 1624, 1633, and 1634 respectively, are related to each other and will be discussed together. His inference that there were 240 Companies in 1624 is drawn from the following paragraph in the *Yung-ch'eng Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* (30/42b): "Early in our dynasty. . . It was also instructed that with the newly added able-bodied men in the Eight Banners, each Banner was to organize [additional Companies until the total reached the quota of] thirty Companies; . . ." There is no indication that this instruction was issued in 1624. To the contrary, immediately preceding this instruction is an edict which I found to be dated November 19, 1630

(*ibid.* 30/42a; *CSL* II 7/27b-29a). Since under each topic in the *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien* the laws and institutes are always chronologically arranged, there is no doubt that the instruction in question could not have been issued before 1630.

ABE's assignment of the quota of 240 Manchu Companies in 1633 is correct. His references are two contemporary memorials written by Chinese Banner-men, both mentioning the organization of six regiments in each Banner. Assuming that five Companies formed a regiment, there should have been a quota of 240 Companies in all. The first of these memorials is dated the twenty-first day, third month, or April 28, 1633, and it says: "The high and low officers of the Eight Banners have already been appointed according to the [organization of] six regiments [to each Banner]" (*T'ien-ts'ung ch'ao ch'ên-kung tsou-i* 中 /6b). The second one, dated the twenty-second of the twelfth month, or January 21, 1634, reads: "Now that in our government we have established the six Boards and the Secretariat and have divided [the men among the] six regiments and eight Banners, there is only lacking the Censorate. . ." (*ibid.* 中 /43b). The wording of both memorials seems to indicate that the system of six regiments to each Banner is new. Hence I think the order to have six regiments instead of five to each Banner, i. e., to raise the quota from two hundred to 240 Companies, was given sometime after 1630 and before 1633, but certainly not in 1624. It has already been shown that there were about 217 Manchu Companies late in 1632 (p. 211). Perhaps that was very close to the time of the order to increase the quota of Companies in each Banner from twenty-five to thirty.

The last item of ABE's table to be discussed, is the 240 Companies for 1634, based mainly on an instruction by T'ai-tsung, from which ABE quotes only a few sentences. It is a very important document relating to the power politics among the princes of the Eight Banners and to the institution of *hontoho* or Half-Company, and is hereby translated in full.

"On *chia-hsü* day [of the ninth month—November 11, 1634] His Majesty, on the matter of the unassigned captives, sent [secretaries] Inggüldai, Longsi, and Mucengge to confer with the Senior Prince Daišan and the other princes. The following instruction was given them [the three secretaries]:

"Regarding these captives, we do not have to follow the former practice of making a division into eight equal lots [i. e., giving one lot to the prince or princes of each of the Eight Banners]. They should be given to the Banners short of able-bodied men in order to make up their quota. In the organization of the Companies in the Eight Banners, the regulation has stipulated the quota number of thirty Companies [to each Banner]. When one Banner exceeds that quota, the supernumerary Companies should be taken away to complement the deficient Banners. If there is a Banner that has less than thirty Companies, it ought to select a young man qualified for a Captaincy and commission him according to his ability. Let him command the able-bodied men already assigned to him and live in a separate fortified village to

await the allotment of future captives to fill up his quota [of men in a regular Company]. My idea is not to make any equal division of the men already there [in the Eight Banners]. But the newly captured men should be allotted to those Banners short of quota. If the Eight Banners are not kept uniform and one Banner is permitted to exceed the others [in strength], what do they (i. e., the princes of that Banner) intend to do?'

"Daišan and the others all agreed that this method of division was most appropriate, that a re-division of the existing men seemed to be inexpedient, and that the future captives should as a matter of course be allotted for making up the quota of the under-strength Banners. . . ." (CSL II 20/28b-29a).

This document reveals that in 1634 some Banner had more than thirty Companies and probably was increasing its strength at a rapid rate so as to constitute a threat to T'ai-tsung's dual position as Khan and as one of the princes in control of the Eight Banners. In any case, there was a close relationship of the number of Companies in a Banner to the power politics among the Manchu princes from 1631 to 1636, and probably in or about 1634 there was a scramble among the ambitious princes to increase their own military strength. We may assume that the Banners after 1632 expanded at different rates and that the quota number of thirty Companies to a Banner was not observed. (My notes on the number of Companies in each Banner in 1643 show that the Plain Yellow Banner had thirty-one, the Bordered Yellow thirty-three, the Plain Red forty, the Bordered Red thirty-six, the Plain White twenty-nine, the Bordered White thirty-three, the Plain Blue thirty-seven, and the Bordered Blue thirty-five; a total of 274.)

T'ai-tsung's instruction of 1634 also reveals the process of forming a new Manchu Company at that time. Such a Company was created by detaching from a Household Company, or from an existing regular Company, a qualified young man and the men belonging to him, to form a nucleus, probably at only a half or less of the strength of a full Company. It was called a Half-Company (*hontoko*). Then by receiving allotments of new captives and by natural growth it would reach full strength. This fact, however, creates another problem in the estimation of the number of Companies, for a Half-Company should supply only half the quota called for service. As an example, there is a passage in the *Shih-lu* (November 15, 1635, CSL II 25/25b-26b), specifying that an expeditionary force was to be composed of five men from each [Manchu?] Company in addition to two men from each "Old Mongolian" Company, but giving the total number of soldiers as follows:

From the 2 Yellow Banners.....	297 soldiers
From the 2 Red Banners.....	305 soldiers
From the 2 Blue Banners.....	298 soldiers
From the 2 White Banners.....	337 soldiers
Total	1,237 soldiers

According to my notes, the "Old Mongolian" Companies in the Manchu Banners before 1644 numbered eighteen. Assuming that all were in existence in 1635 as Full Companies, then 36 men are accounted for. The remainder, or 1201 men, would then mean 240 Manchu Companies. But if we take into consideration a small number of Half-Companies, as well as the 18 Mongolian Companies, the total number of Companies in the Manchu Banners in 1635 should be somewhere between 260 and 270. However, the basis for accounting for 1635 should be at most 249, i. e., 240 full Manchu Companies and about nine full Mongolian Companies.

HARVARD JOURNAL OF ASIATIC STUDIES

EDITED BY

SERGE ELISSEEFF

FRANCIS W. CLEAVES EDWIN O. REISCHAUER
LIEN-SHENG YANG JAMES R. HIGHTOWER

VOLUME 13

HARVARD-YENCHING INSTITUTE

CAMBRIDGE 38, MASS., U. S. A.

1950