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**SLAVERY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MONGOLIA:
TRANSACTIONS IN PEOPLE AND NOTIONS OF
PROPERTY ACCORDING TO THE QANGGIN
BANNER ARCHIVES**

Working Paper, ISSN 2747-9331
Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies
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Working Paper 2022/10
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Slavery in Eighteenth Century Mongolia: Transactions in People and Notions of Property
According to the Qanggin Banner Archives

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"Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) im Rahmen der
Exzellenzstrategie des Bundes und der Länder – Exzellenzcluster Bonn Center for
Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Projektnummer: 390683433"

"Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation)
under Germany's Excellence Strategy – Cluster of Excellence Bonn Center for Dependency
and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Project No.: 390683433"

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Abstract

This paper investigates moments of transition in which people were forced into dependency, or had to change from one relationship of asymmetrical dependency to another. It is argued that these transitions were backed by state law, but were rooted in practices which predated the establishment of the Qing dynasty (1636–1911). In order to understand the social, legal and economic constellations in which people were recruited or transferred to other dependency relationships, the study draws on a micro-historical approach based on records from a local archive in Inner Mongolia (China). On the basis of these findings, it develops categories of transition, and discusses the meaning of property rights in settings of multi-level dependencies.

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* Research for this paper was generously supported by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

I. Aims and Categories

I.1. Property and Asymmetrical Dependency

In the history of slavery, Mongols play an important part. During the time of the Mongolian conquests in the thirteenth century, groups and individuals were uprooted by armed conflicts and forced migrations at an unprecedented scale, and many of them had to fulfil the demand for slaves and other dependents in the expanding empire.¹ After the dissolution of the Mongol empire, slavery flourished in the successor states and connected them with other parts of the Eurasian continent. Likewise, Mongolian rule over China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw the expansion of slavery, and for Wyatt, this “conformed to the general pattern that characterized periods of nomad domination.”² The present paper deals with a different period of Mongolian history, in which Mongols did not dominate China, but the majority of Mongolian societies had become part of the Qing empire (1636–1911). What became of Mongolian slaving practices in the eighteenth century, when there no longer was a supply of war captives in the Mongolian territories, and the Qing emperor, who resided in Beijing, had laws for the Mongols drafted by Manchu and Chinese officials?

Slavery can be regarded as an extreme form of asymmetrical dependency, which, according to the research agenda of the BCDSS, is marked by the ability of one actor to more or less fully control another actor’s actions, resources and physical mobility, and is usually maintained and enforced by an institutional background.³ This condition cannot be simply reduced to a property relationship, which, among other reasons, may be explained with the vagueness and versatility of this category.⁴ Property claims can imply a variety (or “bundle”) of rights and duties in different contexts and are constructed and negotiated in the context of power relations.⁵ Therefore, in order to relate notions of property to slaving practices and asymmetrical dependency, it is necessary to define what property claims meant at a given time and place.⁶

When David Sneath argues that “Western economic orthodoxy is at odds with indigenous Mongolian concepts of ‘property’ and ‘ownership’,” he emphasizes the close links between

¹ Michal Biran, “Forced Migrations and Slavery in the Mongol Empire (1206–1368),” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 2, AD 500–AD 1420, ed. Craig Perry, David Eltis, Stanley L. Engerman and David Richardson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 98; Michael Zeuske, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Sklaverei. Eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 2nd ed. (Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2019): 324–25.

² Don J. Wyatt, “Slavery in Medieval China,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 2, AD 500–AD 1420, ed. Craig Perry, David Eltis, Stanley L. Engerman and David Richardson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 127.

³ Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler and Stephan Conermann. “On Asymmetrical Dependency,” *Concept Paper 1*, Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (2021), https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/images/pdf-files/concept-papers/bcdss_cp_1_on-asymmetrical-dependency.pdf [accessed 18.10.2022]: 8.

⁴ Orlando Patterson, “Revisiting Slavery, Property, and Social Death,” in *On Human Bondage. After Slavery and Social Death*, ed. John Bodell and Walter Scheidel (Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons Inc, 2017): 217; Matthias van Rossum, “Slavery and Its Transformations: Prolegomena for a Global and Comparative Research,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 63, no. 3 (2021): 589.

⁵ Hannes Siegrist and David Sugarman, “Geschichte als historisch-vergleichende Eigentumswissenschaft. Rechts-, kultur- und gesellschaftsgeschichtliche Perspektiven,” in *Eigentum im internationalen Vergleich, 18.–20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hannes Siegrist and David Sugarman (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999): 11.

⁶ Peter Hunt, “Slaves or Serfs? Patterson on the Thetes and Helots of Ancient Greece,” in *On Human Bondage. After Slavery and Social Death*, ed. John Bodell and Walter Scheidel (Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons Inc, 2017): 58.

economic and political spheres in Mongolian culture, the fact that private property is comprehended as “shares of a whole,” and the “custodial understanding” when it comes to rights in land.⁷ Going back in history, the incongruity of property concepts becomes even more plain when we consider what a person’s or family’s property could possibly consist of. In eighteenth-century Mongolia, the term *ömči* (property, possessions) was frequently applied to dependent people, while, on the contrary, land or real estate could not be claimed as *ömči*. Land was considered to belong to the emperor, or, depending on the viewpoint, to local deities, and was managed by ruling noble families or by monasteries.⁸ In other words, up to the eighteenth century, Mongolian concepts of property not possibly included land, but, of course, human beings.

When this paper takes up the issue of property, it does so because legal documents related to property relations are among the few sources which allow us to get closer to the lives of people who were forced into forms of asymmetrical dependency. What was the relationship between dependency and property? Who were the people against whom property claims were made, and what was the extend of these claims? Who were the people who referred to others as their property, and in what kind of situations did they do so? In the Mongolian context, by far not all dependent people, who had to perform unfree labor, were referred to as *ömči* (property), as this term seems to have been reserved to those otherwise designated as slaves and “boys of the yurt.”⁹ The documents investigated for this paper show that these people cannot be considered as a uniform group as some of them managed to keep their own cattle, make their voice heard in court and achieve considerable social standing. For Orlando Patterson, the ability or inability to establish claims on property is crucial for a person’s legal status.¹⁰ In the Mongolian context, however, to be regarded as the object of property did not necessarily prevent one from becoming the subject of property. Property could be helpful for disentangling oneself from a relationship of asymmetrical dependency, and lack of property could bring oneself or a family member into that very form of relationship. What was the role of property in settings of multi-level dependencies? Why were some people able to gain property and utilize it in constellations of asymmetrical dependency while others were not?

1.2. Why the Focus on Transactions in People?

The intertwining of actors, practices and institutions becomes most obvious, when the social status of an asymmetrically dependent actor changes, and the dependent person as well as those, who regard themselves to be in a legal relationship with her, re-negotiate terms of

⁷ David Sneath, “Mongolia in the ‘Age of the Market’: Pastoral Land-Use and the Development Discourse,” in *Markets and Moralities. Ethnographies of Ethnographies of Postsocialism*, ed. Ruth Mandel and Caroline Humphrey (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002): 192–97, 202.

⁸ David Sneath. “Commonwealth, Inalienable Possessions, and the *res publica*: The Anthropology of Aristocratic Order and the Landed Estate,” *History and Anthropology* 29, no. 3 (2018): 335, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2018.1459598>.

⁹ For the Mongolian terminology see section II.1. Classical Mongolian is rendered according to Nicholas Poppe, *Grammar of Written Mongolian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1954) except that j is used for j̄. Mongolian in Cyrillic is transliterated according to the transliteration table in Ines Stolpe, Judith Nordby and Ulrike Gonzales, eds., *Mongolian Responses to Globalisation Processes*, Bonner Asienstudien 13 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2017): 8. Well-established terms and names like Aimag, Chinggis Khan, Khalkha, Khan, sum and Taiji are exceptions to these rules.

¹⁰ Patterson, “Revisiting Slavery, Property, and Social Death”: 271; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018): 28.

dependency. Transactions are the moments, in which dependent people become visible in the sources, and are presented in their relationships prior to and post of the instance of transaction.¹¹ A focus on these moments of transition allows us to better understand the constellations through which people were forced into dependency,¹² in that it gives insight into the interconnections of dependency relationships on the local level, as well as the interaction of state law and other legal practices. A closer look at these crucial transitional instances will reveal practices in everyday life, which were protected by state law, but rooted in established procedures, and reinforced by the social web of local society.¹³

In Qing dynasty Mongolia, the law of the Qing state, hereditary rights of the Mongolian aristocracy as well as privileges granted by the Qing court contributed to a complex legal situation, which encompassed different modes of normativity.¹⁴ Changes in dependency relationships had to be registered with the local administration. While human trafficking across the boundaries of the administrative unit of the banner (*qosiyu*)¹⁵ was strictly forbidden, transactions within the confines of the banner were tolerated (see section II.3.). By filing transactions with the banner office (and carefully avoiding any suspicion of inter-banner trafficking), members of the community tried to achieve legal certainty by making use of the given structures of the Qing state.

Due to the different modes of normativity, dependency could be negotiated in different legal realms. In order to better understand practices and strategies of historical agents, this paper adopts a micro-historical perspective, focusing on transactions in people documented between 1747 and 1782 in the office of Qanggin (Hanggin) banner district, an administrative unit in the Ordos region, which today is part of Inner Mongolia, China. The way people were recruited or transferred to other dependency relationships, shows certain patterns, which can be fruitfully studied as categories established by the historical actors themselves.¹⁶ In addition to gender and seniority, which can be regarded as fundamental organizing principles in Mongolian society,¹⁷ class and status were likewise important markers in the production and reproduction of asymmetrical dependency.¹⁸ For example, we find fully ordained monks on both sides, among the people who enslaved others, and among those, on whom others claimed property rights. What was their position in local networks of dependency?

¹¹ Van der Linden defines recruitment and termination (“entry” and “exit”) as the two important moments for differentiating between different forms of coerced labor relationships. The Mongolian sources are remarkably silent on the extraction of productive labor or other types of services of dependent people. This does not reduce the significance of the transitory moment for the nature of the relationship (Marcel van der Linden, “Dissecting Coerced Labor,” in *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodríguez García [Leiden: Brill, 2016]: 315).

¹² Winnebeck et al., “On Asymmetrical Dependency”: 15–16.

¹³ Harriet T. Zurndorfer, “Economic, Social, and Legal Aspects of Slavery and Indentured Labor in Late Ming China (1550–1645): What the Huizhou Documents Tell Us,” in *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia, 1250–1900*, ed. Richard B. Allen (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2022): 146.

¹⁴ Thomas Duve, “What is Global Legal History?,” *Comparative Legal History* 8, no. 2 (2020): 105–6.

¹⁵ The banner was the main unit of Mongolian administration during the Qing period.

¹⁶ Christian G. De Vito, “History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective,” *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 242, no. S14 (2019): 360–61.

¹⁷ David Sneath, *Mongolia Remade, Post-socialist National Culture, Political Economy, and Cosmopolitics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018): 37.

¹⁸ Christoph Antweiler, “On Dependency, Dependence, and a Dependency Turn,” *Discussion Paper 1*, Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (2022), <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/images/pdf-files/discussion-papers/dp-1-antweiler.pdf> [accessed 18.10.2022]: 14.

Van Rossum points out that more flexible informal slavery regimes should not be discarded as “local” or “special,” but should rather be investigated as to their transformative potential and their adaptability to internal and external pressure.¹⁹ Even though this paper has a micro-historical approach, it will be argued that the specific constellations of Qanggin banner had multiple connections to people in the surrounding Mongolian banners and beyond.²⁰ Moreover, the practices documented in the local office show certain regularities, which are reminiscent of concepts of dependency and property documented for Mongols in the thirteenth century. Under the conditions of the eighteenth century, however, the trajectories of slavery within the Mongolian territories changed.

Transactions here are understood as moments of transition, in which people are forced into dependency, or change from one dependency relationship to another. The commercial character of (some) transactions in people in a given community should not lead us to construe the commercial character as defining moment of a slavery regime.²¹ The transactions discussed in this paper could have the character of a commercial transaction, with payments predominantly made in kind, mainly in livestock, but sometimes also with other household items.²² In addition, people were also presented to others as gifts, or were given away to make up for material loss or to pay off debts. In some cases, if there was a substantial gap in status and power between the parties taking part in the transaction, the terminology of buying and selling was carefully avoided, and dependent people were rather “offered” to a member of the elite by commoners, who in return received a “reward.” Frequently, manumissions were likewise framed as transactions, in that they implied the transition from one dependency relationship to another. Instances of manumission are investigated with regard to the motives of people releasing their dependents and possible return services.

People designated as slaves or “boys of the yurt” could be acquired, given away or released individually, but transactions could also be conducted in units of households. What significance does the individual/group aspect have for the relationship between dependents and their alleged owners? As Peter Hunt argues with regard to ancient Greece, people who were sold individually, were rather regarded as property, and had difficulty to maintain social relations.²³ An examination of the way how family ties were maintained (or disregarded) in the transaction in human beings will therefore shed light on notions of property and belonging. Possibly, this will also allow us to differentiate within the group of slaves and “boys of the yurt,” and make distinctions with regard to their respective linkage to the household of their owner.

II. Mongols as Part of the Qing Empire

II.1. Terminology of Slavery

The Mongolian terminology of slavery, which had been developed during the time of the Mongol empire, was retained during the Qing period, but, over time, its meaning changed.

¹⁹ Van Rossum, “Slavery and Its Transformations: Prolegomena for a Global and Comparative Research”: 574.

²⁰ De Vito, “History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective”: 356.

²¹ Joseph Miller, “History as a Problem of Slaving,” in *Critical Readings on Global Slavery*, ed. Damian Alan Pargas and Felicia Rosu (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 231.

²² According to Bawden it was only in the second half of the 19th century that Mongolia became a money economy (Charles Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968]: 149).

²³ Hunt, “Slaves or Serfs? Patterson on the Thetes and Helots of Ancient Greece”: 68.

The two most common terms related to slaving were *boyol* (“slave”)²⁴ and *ger-ün köbegün/köbegüd* (“boy/boys of the yurt”). During the time of Chinggis Khan, the term “slave” was used as a political term designating a category of submission.²⁵ Its legal implications and criminal consequences are not completely clear, but the Secret History, the earliest and most significant source on Mongolian society in the thirteenth century, already relates on the different treatment of murder according to the social position of the culprit.²⁶ According to Michal Biran, during the time of the Mongol empire, the status of “boys of the yurt” was between free men and slaves. This term often referred to artisans who had been spared during military campaigns and who were regarded as useful in some way or another. They could receive payment for their services, but nevertheless were treated as property, which could be transferred according to the will of their owners.²⁷

While during the time of the Mongol empire, the two terms *boyol* (slave) and *ger-ün köbegün/köbegüd* (boy/boys of the yurt) seem to refer to different groups of people, in seventeenth century sources overlaps in terminology are striking. The Mongolian law code circulated by the Qing government in 1695, for example, makes repeated reference to *boyol* (slaves), *ger-ün boyol* (slaves of the yurt), *jaruča* (servants), *ger-ün jarči* (servants of the yurt), *ger-ün boyul jaruča* (slaves of the yurt and servants), *ger-ün köbüd* (boys of the yurt) and *ger-ün kümün* (person of the yurt), but makes no distinctions in the legal treatment of these people. This suggests that in Qing Mongolian law, “slaves,” “servants” or “boys” all belonged to the same legal category. While this observation is based on the normative source of the legal code, it is conspicuous that in administrative communication at the local level, the term “slave” (*boyol*) is used much less frequent than terms like “boys of the yurt,” “people of the yurt” or simply “boys.” It seems that the term “slave” was a derogatory term used condescendingly for people considered to be of low social status. In this sense, it may have been an insult to people who understood themselves as “people of the yurt” or “boys of the yurt.”²⁸ In the present paper, the term “slave” is used as a translation of the Mongolian language term *boyol*, as it eventually occurs in official correspondence. Elsewhere, the literal translation of “boys of the yurt” is retained.

Patterson & Zhuo point out that forced movement is a central feature of trafficking.²⁹ In the case of Qanggin banner, forced displacement was limited to the confines of the local administrative unit, and in some cases, it is not even clear, in what way people’s living conditions changed with the transaction. For this reason, the present paper refers to “transactions” rather than human trafficking. However, this should not conceal the coercive character of practices, by which children, women and men could be forced into a new

²⁴ On the etymology of this term from the Chinese word *pu* 僕 (slave, servant) see Bass, *Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia*: 78–79.

²⁵ Tat’jana D. Skrynnikova, “Boghol, A Category of Submission at the Mongols,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58, no. 3 (2005) [= *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Mediaeval History of the Eurasian Steppe: Szeged, Hungary May 11–16, 2004*: part 3]; Biran, “Forced Migrations and Slavery in the Mongol Empire (1206–1368)”: 79.

²⁶ Veronika Veit, “Some Remarks on the Offence of Murder in the Mongol Legal Tradition (Thirteenth to Nineteenth Century),” in *Miscellanea Asiatica. mélanges en l’honneur de Françoise Aubin*, ed. Denise Aigle, Isabelle Charleux, Vincent Goossaert and Robert Hamayon (Nettetal: Steyler-Verlag, 2010): 577.

²⁷ Biran, “Forced Migrations and Slavery in the Mongol Empire (1206–1368)”: 81–82.

²⁸ In different context, to refer to oneself as “slave” was a common self-deprecatory expression.

²⁹ Orlando Patterson and Xiaolin Zhuo, “Modern Trafficking, Slavery, and Other Forms of Servitude,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 44 (2018): 412.

environment and different constellations of dependency, without being given the chance of raising an objection.

II.2. Dependency Relationships in Qing Dynasty Mongolia

In the eighteenth century, Mongolian society under Qing rule was characterized by three major divisions of social class.³⁰ While slaves and “boys of the yurt,” who are in the focus of the present article, ranged at the bottom, the ruling class was made up of high incarnate lamas and of the aristocracy claiming descent from Chinggis Khan and his brothers. In between was a large group of tax- and duty-payers. They were subsumed under terms like *arad*,³¹ *albatu* or *sumučin* (“commoners,” “duty-payers” or “members of the *sum*”³²) as well as *qamjily-a* (“personal serfs of the nobility”) and *šabi* (“subjects of monasteries and reincarnated lamas”). “Commoners,” “duty-payers” and “members of the *sum*” were expected to perform duties for the administration, such as postroad, guard and militia duty, while “personal serfs of the nobility” and “subjects of monasteries and reincarnated lamas” were obliged to in-kind payments and labor services to their noble lord or monastic estate respectively. In principle, slaves and “boys of the yurt” could be in a dependency relationship with members of the aristocracy, lamas, commoners, “tax- and duty-payers” as well as “personal serfs.”³³ There is no indication that Qing legislators tried to restrict property rights over “people of the yurt” to the elite. On the contrary, in 1686, the Qing emperor ruled that people who were spared from capital punishment “should be given to very low and poor commoners as slaves.”³⁴ To belong to people of low social standing was meant as an additional punishment.

It has to be recognized that the divisions outlined above cannot be taken for granted for the early Qing period. The restriction of Mongolian noblemen’s authority over their subjects and the establishment of legal categories did not come at once with Mongolian acknowledgement of Qing overlordship, but as a process, with differences according to the time and circumstances of the integration of the respective confederation into the empire. For Northern (Khalkha) Mongolia, the years 1783–89 – about a hundred years after the Khalkha nobility’s formal submission –, are considered to have been a turning point, at which

³⁰ Wei-chieh Tsai, “Mongolization of Han Chinese and Manchu Settlers in Qing Mongolia, 1700–1911” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2017): 4–5; Christopher P. Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York: Facts On File, 2004): 507–9; Sneath, *Mongolia Remade, Post-socialist National Culture, Political Economy, and Cosmopolitics*: 85.

³¹ On the concept of *arad*, Ines Stolpe, *Schule versus Nomadismus? Interdependenzen von Bildung und Migration in der modernen Mongolei* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008): 173–77.

³² The *sum* (*sumu*) was the lowest administrative unit in Qing dynasty Mongolia, and was fixed as a unit of 150 households.

³³ Sh. Natsagdorj, “Geriiin hüvüüdiin uchir [On Boys of the Yurt],” *Shinlekh uhaany medee [Scientific Reports]* 2 (1965): 85.

³⁴ Dorothea Heuschert, *Die Gesetzgebung der Qing für die Mongolen im 17. Jahrhundert anhand des Mongolischen Gesetzbuches aus der Kangxi-Zeit (1662–1722)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998): 242–43; *Mongyol-un čayajan-u bičig [Mongolian Code]*, undated woodprint preserved at the National Library in Ulaanbaatar under the following note of registration: Үадаяду монгол-ун төрө-йи жасагу ябудал-ун яамун-ун энгке амуйуланг-ун үй-е-дү 1693 он-ду кebleгсен, дотор-а 1629 он-ача екileгед уday-а daray-а qayad-ун үй-е-дү jarlaysan čayaja-ud-i jasamjilaysan mongyol-un čayajan-u bičig [Mongolian Statute-Book, Which has Corrected the Laws Proclaimed in the Time of the Successive Emperors from 1629 Onwards and Which Was Published in 1693 During the Time of Kangxi by the Lifanyuan]: 113a/b.

noblemen were demanded to divide their subjects along the lines of Qing social categories into “state duty-payers” and “personal serfs.”³⁵

In the office of every banner, registers were kept on male members of the nobility as well as their male dependents. As O. Oyunjargal argues, after the establishment of a legal category of “personal serfs,” the ruling nobility attempted to reserve this category for their own dependents and saw to it that dependents of lower and non-ruling noblemen were entered in the registers as “boys of the yurt,” just as the dependents of commoners. After protest among members of the lower nobility, this practice changed and all dependents of noblemen claiming descent from Chinggis Khan and his brothers were registered as “personal serfs.”³⁶

These findings are interesting because they reveal a more nuanced picture with less clearly defined categories and more flexible practices. To have one’s dependents registered as “personal serfs” obviously was more prestigious than to have them registered as “boys of the yurt.” This indicates a certain degree of arbitrariness. The duty to perform “forced” or “unfree labor” affected many people in Qing dynasty Mongolia, and was not a distinguishing feature of slave or “boy of the yurt” status, an observation, which Reid also made for other parts of Asia.³⁷ What impact did social categorizations have on labor relations?

In Qing dynasty Mongolia, families were structured along the lines of patriarchy. Towards the end of the dynasty, with accelerating impoverishment and an increasing number of males taking religious vows, formal marriage became less frequent and many households were headed by women.³⁸ Encampments usually comprised not just one family, but also extended family members or dependents. Sneath, discussing labor relations in Mongolia in historical perspective, makes out two types of arrangement: 1) the procurement of additional labor through the extension of the household or rather the encampment, which could be achieved by adoption or the marrying-in of a son-in-law, but also by the engagement of retainers or “client” households; 2) placing livestock with another household, who in compensation retained a certain amount of the produce.³⁹ In contrast, Christopher Atwood distinguishes three types of labor relations in Qing dynasty Mongolia: 1) a poorer family living close to the camp of a richer family (who often claimed higher social status) giving labor while benefitting from their resources; 2) the placement of herds with another household, which in return was allowed to keep a certain amount of the surplus for itself; and 3) contract labor provided by people from outside the community.⁴⁰ Both models make no reference to slaves or “boys of the yurt,” but it’s fair to assume that they could be tied into all types of relationship (though I have no example for type three defined by Atwood). In what way labor conditions of “boys of

³⁵ Ochir Oyunjargal, “Süm hamjlagyg yalgah shaardlaga: Saishaalt Erööltiin üeiin Tüsheet han aimgiin jisheen deer [The Demand to Divide Commoners into *Sumu* and *Qamjily-a*: The Case of Tüsiyetü Khan Aimag in the Jiaqing Period],” in *Chin uls ba Mongolchuud [The Qing dynasty and the Mongols]*, ed. Sampildondovyn Chuluun, Hurts, Hiroki Oka (Sendai: Center for Northeast Asian Studies, 2014): 103.

³⁶ Ochir Oyunjargal, “House Slaves and Legislation: The Case of Qalq-a during the Qing Period,” Paper presented at the 16th Annual Conference of the Central Eurasian Studies Society, 2015: 7; Samuel H. Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia” (PhD. Diss., Indiana University, 2021): 212–26.

³⁷ Anthony Reid, “Slavery and Forced Labour in Asia: *Status Quaestionis*,” in *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia, 1250–1900*, ed. Richard B. Allen (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2022): 33–35.

³⁸ Christopher P. Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*: 174.

³⁹ David Sneath, “Producer Groups and the Decollectivisation of the Mongolian Pastoral Economy,” in *The History of Mongolia*, ed. David Sneath and Christopher Kaplonski (Folkestone: Global Oriental Ltd, 2010): 1081–82; Sneath, *Mongolia Remade*: 92.

⁴⁰ Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*: 508.

the yurt” differed from those of “personal serfs” or subjects of monasteries, is still open to question. There is no indication that they performed labor which differed in principle from the work of other herders.

II.3. Transactions in People and the Law

Mongolian laws, promulgated by the Qing court and, over the course of the dynasty, published in codes,⁴¹ frequently address hierarchies, dependencies and social distinction. For people referred to as “slaves,” “servants” or “boys,” Qing legislation for Mongols could become relevant in a number of situations, such as when their master committed a crime and they were given over to the offended party as compensation, or by ensuring their protection in case they had testified against their delinquent master. In cases of murder or injury, the personal hierarchical relationship between perpetrator and victim was important:⁴² For killing their master, persons with the status of “slave,” “servant” or “boy” faced the maximum penalty – execution by slicing – while crimes against them were sanctioned less severely than in the case of commoners or noblemen.⁴³ However, hate crimes against “slaves of the yurt and servants” (*ger-ün boyol jaruča*) resulting in death, were defined as a special offence with punishments stated for commoners and ruling Mongolian noblemen alike.⁴⁴ Interestingly, what is absent from Qing Mongolian legislation are regulations for manumission, which, of course, does not mean that there were no established practices of manumission. As records from Khalkha Mongolia show, manumission was frequent and regularly adjudicated by local representatives of Qing administration.⁴⁵

People from all strata of Qing Mongolian society could be involved in transactions in human beings. Some of these practices became the target of the Qing legislation, but not all of them were illegal. Legislative measures and attitudes of the Qing court towards transactions in human beings in Mongolia have been addressed by the Japanese scholar Mamoru Hagihara in a recent article. Hagihara maintains that, in the eyes of the Qing, human trade networks threatened social stability and for this reason called for severe punishments. This is congruent with the findings of Claude Chevalyere, who argues that in late imperial China human trafficking was associated with “banditry.”⁴⁶ Transactions in human beings which were motivated by the need to incorporate new family members, however, were regarded as

⁴¹ Dorothea Heuschert, *Die Gesetzgebung der Qing für die Mongolen im 17. Jahrhundert anhand des Mongolischen Gesetzbuches aus der Kangxi-Zeit (1662–1722)*; Dorothea Heuschert, “Legal Pluralism in the Qing Empire: Manchu Legislation for the Mongols,” *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (1998); Frédéric Constant, “The Legal Administration of Qing Mongolia,” *Late Imperial China* 40, no. 1 (2019).

⁴² On this legal concept, Geoffrey MacCormack, *The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996): 69; Claude Chevalyere, “Acting as Master and Bondservant: Considerations on Status, Identities and the Nature of ‘Bond-Servitude’ in Late Ming China,” in *Labour, Coercion, and Economic Growth in Eurasia, 17th–20th Centuries*, ed. Alessandro Stanziani (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013): 243–44.

⁴³ On a similar regulation in the Tang Code, Don J. Wyatt, “Slavery in Medieval China,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 2, *AD 500–AD 1420*, ed. Craig Perry, David Eltis, Stanley L. Engerman and David Richardson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 278.

⁴⁴ *Mongyol-un čayajan-u bičig*, 46 a/b.

⁴⁵ Dorothea Heuschert-Laage, “Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft: Zu Adoption und Erbe in der Qalqa-Mongolei im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Zentralasiatische Studien des Seminars für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens* 38 (2009); Bass, “The Bound Steppe.”

⁴⁶ Claude Chevalyere, “Human Trafficking in Late Imperial China,” in *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia, 1250–1900*, ed. Richard B. Allen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2022): 169.

tolerable and were conceptualized differently than long distance trafficking networks driven by economic interests.⁴⁷

Within its legislation for Mongols, the Qing government tackled human trafficking as early as 1683.⁴⁸ Subsequently, the Mongolian code of 1789 includes several articles outlawing trafficking.⁴⁹ Notably, sanctions differed according to the descent or origin of the victim: Trafficking a Chinese person was a graver offence than trafficking a Mongol. Selling a Mongol as slave, maid servant, wife, concubine or heir, was punished with flogging and a severe penalty in cattle. If committing the same crime to someone “from the inner territories” – the core regions of China –, this penalty was established only for accomplices, while the ringleaders had to face capital punishment. Likewise, Mongolian victims of enslavement were punished with flogging, while victims “from the inner territories” were only punished if they had consented to the transaction.⁵⁰ The reason why Qing legislators in the context of human trafficking in the Mongolian territories established more severe punishments for Mongols – both offenders and victims – than for their other subjects is not completely clear. According to my assessment, officials of central government agencies, who were the ones who drafted the regulations, considered Mongols to be more prone to transactions in human beings and for this reason saw the need for regulations with a stronger deterrent effect.

The ambiguous attitude of the Qing government towards transactions in people in the Mongolian territories becomes clear in a regulation enacted in 1772, and also included in the Mongolian code, which entails that transactions in humans in the Mongolian territories were not necessarily a punishable offence. Only transactions which involved people from other banners or from the “inner territories” were considered illegal. Buying and selling people, who had not entered population registers, was explicitly permitted if the transaction took place within the confines of the administrative unit of the banner.⁵¹ As Hagihara argues, the 1772 regulation pertained only to people not registered for corvee labor, thus indicating the concern of the Qing government to secure the performance of state duties.⁵²

Even though there were strict laws against human trafficking across the boundaries of the local administrative unit in the Mongolian territories as in China, it of course could not be prevented altogether. Case files preserved in the extensive Qanggin archives and other Mongolian archives show, that especially the selling of women was a recurring problem, which – if detected – was taken seriously by judicial authorities and entailed severe punishment.⁵³ The material investigated below does not concern criminal cases of trafficking, but rather records on lawful transactions. The cases make clear that, even before the law enacted in 1772,

⁴⁷ Johanna S. Ransmeier, *Sold People. Traffickers and Family Life in North China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017): 103–4; Chevalyere, “Human Trafficking in Late Imperial China”: 164.

⁴⁸ Mamoru Hagihara, “Shindai Mongoru ni okeru jinshin baibai kisei-hō [Legislation on Human Trafficking in Qing dynasty Mongolia],” *Tōhōgaku = Eastern Studies* 139 (2020): 24; Da Qing Huidian [Collected Institutions of the Great Qing Dynasty], 1690, 162 chap. (Woodprint preserved in the Harvard-Yenching Library): 145, 5a/b.

⁴⁹ Hagihara, “Shindai Mongoru ni okeru jinshin baibai kisei-hō”: 24–29.

⁵⁰ Batsūhiin Bayarsaihan, *Mongyol čayajin-u bičig [The Mongolian Statute Book]* (Ulaanbaatar, 2004): 220–21. On the overlap of “ethnic” and “territorial” categories in Qing law see Heuschert, “Legal Pluralism in the Qing Empire: Manchu Legislation for the Mongols”: 317–20.

⁵¹ Bayarsaihan, *Mongyol čayajin-u bičig*: 84–85; Hagihara, “Shindai Mongoru ni okeru jinshin baibai kisei-hō”: 26–27.

⁵² Hagihara, “Shindai Mongoru ni okeru jinshin baibai kisei-hō”: 30–31.

⁵³ QQJYD: V, 497–98 and 512–13 (case from 1739); LFYTB: XIX, 34–43 (case from 1789).

transactions in people at the local level were not kept secret, but were regarded as administrative matters for which local officials were responsible.

III. Case Studies From Eighteenth Century Qanggin Banner, Ordos, Inner Mongolia

III.1. Banner Archives as Sources for the Study of Dependency

The Qanggin banner records on transactions in people demonstrate how coercion, poverty and dependency were negotiated at the level of the local community, and for this reason are among the sources, which allow us to get closer the realities of slaving in everyday life.⁵⁴ In Qing dynasty Mongolia, while transactions in human beings across administrative boundaries were strictly forbidden, transactions of and between people who belonged to the same administrative unit, were tolerated. They were obviously viewed as internal matters of the banner. The insignificance of these transactional activities in the eyes of central government officials, however, did not change the fact that, in order to be legally secured, they had to be documented with the local authorities. In contrast to other administrative and judicial procedures, transactions in people at the level of the banner were not subject to a review process. For this reason, it is only through the opening of local archives that information on practices of forceful displacement among Mongols on the level of the community and the family becomes available.

Qanggin banner, on whose archives the present paper is based, was (and is) situated on the Ordos plateau, and, in the Qing dynasty, belonged administratively to Yeke Juu league, which in the eighteenth century was one of the six leagues of Inner Mongolia. Within Yeke Juu league, Qanggin banner was rather large in area, and its Mongolian population probably numbered in the region of twenty thousand persons.⁵⁵ Qanggin banner was headed by a hereditary nobleman, who was in regular contact with central government offices and was responsible for civilian and military administration. Within the extensive collection of archival material from Qanggin banner published in Inner Mongolia in 2016, the present paper concentrates on records of decisions of the banner administration from two different time spans, from 1747 to 1758 and from 1774 to 1782.⁵⁶ In more or less regular meetings, with intervals ranging from several days to several months, the head of the banner recorded issues brought forward by the banner population, which concerned changes in dependency relations. Expressions like *niyur tulju dangsalaba*⁵⁷, *niyur tulju dangsan-dur temdeglebe*⁵⁸ *bey-e-ber niyur tulju dangsan-dur temdeglebe*⁵⁹ (“recorded in the files during a face-to-face meeting”) indicate that the issues were taken to the records in the presence of the persons concerned. So far, the records have not received scholarly attention.

The Qanggin banner archives are not the only Mongolian archives from the Qing period which include proceedings on transactions in people filed by local people. A comparable collection

⁵⁴ Van Rossum, “Slavery and Its Transformations: Prolegomena for a Global and Comparative Research”: 594; Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 21–23.

⁵⁵ There are no reliable data for the eighteenth century. According to Atwood 2002: 196, by the end of the dynasty the Mongolian population of the seven banners of Yeke Juu league has been estimated of about one hundred thousand people.

⁵⁶ QQJYD: XXV, 119–320.

⁵⁷ QQJYD: XXV, 287.

⁵⁸ QQJYD: XXV, 246.

⁵⁹ QQJYD: XXV, 253.

of documents on adoptions, manumissions and inheritance involving dependent people in Qing dynasty Mongolia are preserved in the archives from the office of the Northern left-wing banner in Khalkha Mongolia's Tüsiyetü Khan Aimag. Published in Ulaanbaatar in 1971 by Sh. Natsagdorj, the documents from Khalkha Mongolia date from 1738 to 1792 and have been investigated as an important source on kinship relations, slave emancipation and changes in dependency structures in Qing dynasty Mongolia.⁶⁰ Compared to these documents from Khalkha Mongolia's Tüsiyetü Khan Aimag, which reproduce the reports of individuals in detail, the entries in the Qanggin banner archives are much shorter, giving only basic information on the transaction. In return, the number of entries in the Qanggin banner archives is much greater, allowing it to observe regularities in the categories of transaction.

III.2. Categories of Transaction

III.2.1. Debt Slavery

According to Alain Testart⁶¹, "debt slavery is a form of bondage resulting from a situation of debtor insolvency." As in the practices described by Testart, dependency resulting from debt among Mongols was a concomitant of extreme poverty. From the Qanggin archival records we learn that debt slavery in the Mongolian territories was closely connected to compensation practices. Secondly, the effects of the debt were often transferred to one or more dependents of the debtor, a situation, which Testart relates to intrinsic forms of dependency, which were rooted in family structures.⁶²

For children in Qing dynasty Mongolia, to have parents accused of a crime entailed the risk of being given away in debt slavery. This practice was in accordance with Mongolian legal thinking, in which compensation of the victim was mandatory.⁶³ From the thirteenth century, it is well known that in case of poverty, family members of the debtor were given to the offended party at a certain exchange rate instead of cattle.⁶⁴ The Qanggin banner archives prove that this practice was continued under the Qing:

On the same day, it was taken to the records that because Tuuqai of Baruuqai *sum* does not have livestock to give as compensation for stealing a horse from Taiji⁶⁵ Nasu of Sanjab *sum*, he has given his four-year-old son as compensation.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Hiroshi Futaki, "Shindai Haruha Mongoru no dorei kaihō bunsho ni tsuite [Qing Dynasty Khalkha Mongolian Manumission Documents]," in *Tōyōhōshi no tankyū: Shimada Masao hakase shōju kinen ronshū* [*Studies in Asian Legal History in Honor of Shimada Masao*], ed. Shimada Masao hakase shōju kinen ronshū kankō iinkai (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1987); Heuschert-Laage, "Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft: Zu Adoption und Erbe in der Qalqa-Mongolei im 18. Jahrhundert"; Bass, "The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia."

⁶¹ Alain Testart, "The Extent and Significance of Debt Slavery," *Revue française de sociologie* 43, Supplement: An Annual English Selection (2002): 175, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3322762>.

⁶² Testart, "The Extent and Significance of Debt Slavery": 178–79.

⁶³ Françoise Aubin, "Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation Among the Mongols (13th–21st Centuries)," in *Central Asian Law: An Historical Overview. A Festschrift for the Ninetieth Birthday of Herbert Franke*, ed. Wallace Johnson (Topeka, KS: Society for Asian Legal History, The Hall Center for the Humanities, 2004): 131–32.

⁶⁴ Aubin, "Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation Among the Mongols (13th–21st Centuries)": 136–37.

⁶⁵ Taiji constituted the aristocracy and claimed descent from Chinggis Khan and his brothers.

⁶⁶ QQJYD: XXV, 235. March 6, 1774 (tngri-yin tedkügsen / Qianlong (1736–1795) [referred to hereafter as QL] 39, 24th day of the first month of spring). On the term *yal-a* see Aubin, "Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation Among the Mongols (13th–21st Centuries): 142–43.

On the same day, it was taken to the records that because Dorjimu of Majur *sum* had been caught stealing sheep of the *Kiy-a* guard⁶⁷ Dural and had no livestock for compensation, he gave his thirteen-year-old daughter to Dural and [in return] received one cow.⁶⁸

The last entry gives the impression of a mutual agreement between debtor and the offended party. The debtor, however, was under compulsion to offer compensation, and for this reason agreed to a transaction which he very likely had otherwise rejected. What is presented here as an agreement reached between two actors in order to make up for the damage one side has inflicted on the other, actually conceals the power imbalance between a destitute herder and the banner authorities. The records also show that in cases of debt slavery, a third party, usually a wealthy or influential personality, could be involved in the compensation process:

On the same day, the matter of Lubsang of Darji *sum* was decided in court, who after he had stolen a horse of Kisigtü of Dalad banner, had killed and eaten it, and was caught red-handed; because Lubsang owned absolutely no livestock, after nine animals were taken in the name of the responsible Janggi⁶⁹ of the *sum* [named] Darji, and presented to the owner of the [stolen] cattle Kisigtü, two sons of the thief Lubsang aged thirteen and nine years old were given to the Janggi Darji and were made ‘people of the yurt’ and this was taken to the records.⁷⁰

While in many other cases the question, in what capacity the debtor’s children entered the new household, is left open, for Lubsang’s sons to be given away as compensation clearly entailed a change in status. Lubsang belonged to the large group of “tax- und duty-payers” (see section II.2.), and Darji was responsible for him in his capacity as official on the level of the *sum*. Through the transactional agreement, Lubsang’s two sons became “people of the yurt” of Darji. Their change in status was not temporary, but permanent. They had to render a debt, which their father had become guilty of and which could not be reimbursed through labor, but bonded them for life. Darji was not a member of the aristocracy (in that case the file had identified him as Taiji), so he could not own “personal serfs.” He nevertheless was willing to pay quite a high price, nine animals given to the aggrieved party, in order to have the two boys registered as his “people of the yurt.” The case illustrates how local power relations reinforced the formation of dependency relationships. Initially, Darji was not involved in the case, but in the outcome, the number of his personal dependents was increased as a result of the compensation deal. Notably, the case was negotiated between two different banners: The offender Lubsang belonged to Qanggin banner, while Kisigtü, the victim, belonged to Dalad banner. If the compensation had been given directly, this had meant for Lubsang’s sons to move to another banner. Another case likewise shows that inter-banner transactions were avoided:

That same day, Bunikeü of Dorji *sum* made the following report: ‘Last year, in the matter that Sirab of Majur *sum* stole a horse from Urad [banner] and his guilt was proved beyond doubt, Taiji Daicing made the decision that because Sirab had no “people of the yurt” nor any livestock to give as compensation, he should sell his fifteen-year-old daughter to me

⁶⁷ *Kiy-a* guards were personal guards in the service of a noble family (Bass, Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia: 132).

⁶⁸ QQJYD: XXV, 248. August 27, 1775 (QL 40, 2nd day of middle month of autumn).

⁶⁹ Official in the banner administration.

⁷⁰ QQJYD: XXV, 308–9. March 5, 1782 (QL 47, 22nd day of first month of spring).

and one horse and objects worth three *lang*⁷¹ [money] should be given as compensation.’
For this reason, the matter was taken to the records accordingly.⁷²

The offended party, which did not belong to Qanggin but to Urad banner, was compensated with livestock and objects. These were provided by someone from the banner community, who in turn raised the claim to have bought the debtor’s daughter. The quote above makes clear the order, in which dependent people, livestock and children were seized in order to gather the required amount of compensation. “People of the yurt” were given away first, while children were only claimed if the debtor owned no livestock.

For the sake of completeness, it should be noticed that not only dependent people and biological children could be forced into debt slavery. Younger siblings and in one case even the mother of the offender could likewise be coerced into dependency. The Qanggin banner records consulted for this essay include only three cases, in which the offender himself had to face debt slavery. In one case, a camel thief became a “boy of the yurt” of the victim,⁷³ while in the other cases, the debtor did not directly enter into a dependency relationship with the offended party, but became a slave (*boγol*)⁷⁴ or “boy” (*köbüd*)⁷⁵ of other people within the banner, who in turn had to provide compensation for the offended party.

Debt slavery was known among Mongols already in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁷⁶ In contrast to that time, the practices observable in Qanggin banner in the eighteenth century frequently involved a third party. Very likely, this development was in context with increasing impoverishment in the Mongolian territories, where stolen livestock often was immediately killed and eaten. A household, which had become victim of livestock theft, was deprived of its means of subsistence. In this situation, compensation in form of another mouth to be fed was of no avail. Well-to-do members of the community, who provided the offended household with cattle to make up for the damage, while forcing family members of the debtor into dependency, stepped in as intermediaries.

III.2.2. Household Extension and Acquisition of Labor

The Qanggin archival records include only scarce information on the capacity, in which people, who were forcefully displaced, entered a new household, and what services they were expected to render. In the discussion on dependency relationships in Mongolia (see section II.2.), it was argued that one way of acquiring labor force was the extension of the encampment, which could be achieved by the forceful displacement of people. However, there is evidence for a rural labor surplus in Qing dynasty Mongolia,⁷⁷ and this should caution us to relate all transactions in human beings to the acquisition of labor. In order to better understand the motives and circumstances of displacement, this section investigates who the actors were and in what relationship they were with each other. An important aspect in this context is the social integration of the displaced person: Children, women and men could be

⁷¹ Unit of currency.

⁷² QQJYD: XXV, 253–54. April 27, 1776 (QL 41, 10th day of last month of spring).

⁷³ QQJYD: XXV, 290. July 22, 1779 (QL 44, 10th day of last month of summer).

⁷⁴ QQJYD: XXV, 309. March 5, 1782 (QL 47, 22nd day of first month of spring).

⁷⁵ QQJYD: XXV, 316. March 5, 1782 (QL 47, 22nd day of first month of spring).

⁷⁶ Aubin, “Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation Among the Mongols (13th–21st Centuries)”: 131–32; Biran, “Forced Migrations and Slavery in the Mongol Empire (1206–1368)”: 87.

⁷⁷ Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*: 328.

forced into dependency individually, but also within the unit of their household. We may assume that persons who became object of a transaction in association with family members, were in a position of 'client' households.⁷⁸ The situation of persons, who were uprooted alone and who usually lived in the same household as their alleged owner, however, is much more difficult to assess. Among those, who entered a new household alone, boys adopted as heirs were probably in the most favorable position.

Qing law explicitly restricted Mongolian women's inheritance rights, and allowed adoption only of (male) agnatic kinsmen.⁷⁹ Male persons, who did not belong to the patrilineal kin group, could only claim entitlement to inherit, if there were no male agnatic relatives, and if they had been registered in the banner office during the lifetime of the testator as adoptees.⁸⁰ The need to have the names of non-biological (or extramarital) sons recorded in the banner office is reflected in the Qanggin archival records, and, among the changes in dependency relations, quite a number of entries concern the registration of heirs. In most cases, the adoptees are presented to the administration as agnatic kin, but there are also a number of entries in which the adoption of a boy with no family ties is requested with no information on the existence (or non-existence) of agnatic candidates for adoption.

On the same day, it was taken to the records and approved that Barimad of Bičaqai *sum*, who in the 21st year of Qianlong (1756) had bought a one-year-old boy from Sundui of Majur *sum*, made a report on the first day of the middle month of autumn of the 40th year of Qianlong (1775) with the words: 'I want to adopt (*köbegünčiley-e*) that boy'.⁸¹

On the twenty-fourth of the middle month of winter, it was taken to the records that Badma of Tegüsküleng *sum* adopted (*köbegünčilen*) the eight-year-old Jamsu, son of the 'boy' (*köbüd*) Bayar of Sabdandorji of Jeb *sum*, and gave a horse and a *deel*⁸² to Bayar.⁸³

While in other parts of the Qing empire, the law, which forbid adopted children of slave status to change into the group of commoners, was strictly enforced,⁸⁴ the last entry indicates that in the Mongolian territories this was not always the case. Badma adopted the son of another man's 'boy'; the gift, which was exchanged on this occasion, was given to the biological father of the child. As several other passages likewise show, Mongolian adopting parents were not anxious to conceal the origin of their adoptees. This is in contrast to the observations of Watson on transactions in people in South China, where it was considered crucial that birth parents would not be able to locate their child.⁸⁵ According to the Qanggin records, usually favors were given to the adoptee's biological family, and the boundary between payment and gift is not clear. As the following entry shows, the terminology of buying and selling was sometimes carefully avoided:

⁷⁸ Sneath, "Producer Groups and the Decollectivisation of the Mongolian Pastoral Economy": 1081–82.

⁷⁹ On inheritance in Qing dynasty Mongolia, Heuschert-Laage, "Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft: Zu Adoption und Erbe in der Qalqa-Mongolei im 18. Jahrhundert."

⁸⁰ Bayarsaihan, *Mongyol čayajin-u bičig*: 70–75.

⁸¹ QQJYD: XXV, 247–48. August 27, 1775 (QL 40, 2nd day of middle month of autumn).

⁸² Mongolian coat.

⁸³ QQJYD: XXV, 250–51. January 14, 1776 (QL 40, 24th day of middle month of winter).

⁸⁴ Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Slavery in Early Modern China," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 3, AD 1420–AD 1804, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 188.

⁸⁵ James Watson, "Transactions in People: The Chinese Market in Slaves, Servants, and Heirs," in *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, ed. James Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 233.

When, in times of distress, Šarabdan of Zambu *sum* took his newborn son and abandoned him in the wilderness, Taki of Damčuy *sum* found him, took care of him and raised him and gave to his father Šarabdan one neutered goat, four buckets of grain, one piece of coarse linen and one brick of tea; the transaction⁸⁶ was not taken to the records [at the time], but now his responsible Taiji Jamsan has received one large livestock, which he had demanded from Taki, and the thirteen year old boy Obungkeü is taken to the records as [Taki's] son.⁸⁷

Obviously, in this case the adopting family got in trouble, because they had not registered their adoptive son with the responsible Taiji in time. Considering the items given to the biological family of the adoptee, the handling fee of one large livestock seems to be fairly high and may be due to the procrastination of the case. Moreover, the case stands out for its ambiguity to present the adoption of Obungkeü as both, an act of charity and an economic transaction.

While boys when they entered a new household had a certain change of being acknowledged as son, for girls the situation was different. According to the Qanggin archives, girls were sold more frequently than boys, and in most cases, the sellers were their fathers.

That same day, it was taken to the records that Mayitai of Čerinčüü *sum* sold his seven-year-old daughter to Cambu Gelüng of Sonom *sum* and took three *lang* [money].⁸⁸

That same day, it was taken to the records that Baljur Gelüng of Kiraqai *sum* bought the twelve-year-old daughter of Nasun of Lubsang *sum* for two cattle and one piece of coarse linen.⁸⁹

In both cases, the buyers were *gelüng*, i. e. fully-fledged monks. In Mongolia, only a minority of monks lived in monasteries, and it was not uncommon for a *gelüng* to return to the countryside and live with a woman and children. The information on the transaction is extremely sketchy, but it is likely that the girls entered the respective households as servants. They were, of course, vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

In cases of parents selling their children, the documents frequently adopt a language of desperation with set phrases, which refer to “bad times” (*caγ-un mayuu-dur*)⁹⁰ and situations of desperateness and extreme poverty, such as “having lost livelihood” (*aju törökü ary-a-ügei-degen*).⁹¹

It was taken to the records that Dalaijab of Quduy *sum*, because he did not have the means to raise her, sold his three-year-old daughter to Namulai of Kibsüng *sum* for two pieces of cloth.⁹²

It was taken to the records during a face-to-face meeting that Biligtü of Erinčin *sum* said: ‘I have nothing to live on’, and sold his eleven-year-old son named Sayitu to Janggi Bilig

⁸⁶ Literally „the giving and taking” *öggüged abuysan*.

⁸⁷ QQJYD: XXV, 266–67. December 22, 1777 (QL 42, 23rd day of the middle month of winter).

⁸⁸ QQJYD: XXV, 183. February 22, 1753 (QL 18, 20th day of first month of spring).

⁸⁹ QQJYD: XXV, 235. March 6, 1774 (QL 39, 24th day of the first month of spring).

⁹⁰ QQJYD: XXV, 288.

⁹¹ QQJYD: XXV, 286 and 291. For a similar observation on the language in Chinese legal material see Ransmeier, *Sold People. Traffickers and Family Life in North China*: 5.

⁹² QQJYD: XXV, 224. March 10, 1757 (QL 22, 21st day of the first month of spring).

for one cow, grain worth of two *lang* [money], one piece of coarse linen and one [brick of] tea.⁹³

It was taken to the records that Qoura of Čoytai *sum* sold his younger sister to Taiji Sunjin for items worth of three *lang* [money].⁹⁴

Notably, the eleven-year-old boy Sayitu was sold at the highest price, and, among the children coerced into dependency, he is also the only one who is referred to by name. This may be seen as further indication that male children were valued higher than female. Women, however, were not only victims of transactions in people, but could also claim property rights over others.⁹⁵ As the Qanggin archival records confirm, they did so especially as widows acting on behalf of their deceased husbands:

That same day, it was taken to the records, that the lady of the deceased Taiji Dondoy gave four people, Saranjab, Toyar, Somonai, and Bayar, to her grandson, Taiji Darmasiri as his property (*ömči*).⁹⁶

We do not know, what reasons the lady had to transfer dependent people to her grandson, who at some point would have been among the rightful heirs anyway. It is likely that she wanted to make sure a safe transfer or that other parts of her wealth were passed on to other family members not mentioned in the record.⁹⁷ The entry makes plain, that the claim on property rights over people was not confined to the alleged owner's lifetime, but – within the confines of Qing law – could be inherited on discretionary basis. As the following entry shows, women not only arranged for the inheritance of dependent people, but sometimes closed their own deals.

On the same day, it was taken to the records that Gočiqu's lady of Jortai *sum* sold 'people of the yurt', [namely] the household of Nurmu with four people, to Čorji Lama of Sangqu *sum* (*Sangqu sumuni Čorji blam-a-du*) for one camel.⁹⁸

In the records from Qanggin banner, quite a number of people who acquired human beings, are referred to by their Buddhist ranks and titles. In all cases, their affiliation is specified with an administrative unit like the *sum*, not with a monastery. By the end of the Qing period, a large percentage of Mongolian men had finished a monastic education and had taken monastic vows,⁹⁹ but for the mid-eighteenth century, there are no numbers on the percentage of the male population with monastic ranks. For this reason, the involvement of monks in transactions in people is not necessarily disproportionate.

⁹³ QQJYD: XXV, 275. July 3, 1778 (QL 43, 10th day of last month of summer).

⁹⁴ QQJYD: XXV, 252. January 14, 1776 (QL 40, 24th day of middle month of winter).

⁹⁵ Bass, "The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia": 390–95.

⁹⁶ QQJYD: XXV, 276. January 2, 1779 (QL 43, 15th day of middle month of winter).

⁹⁷ For an example of inheritance of a family's dependents in the patrilineal line, and material wealth in the matrilineal line see Bass, "The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia": 395.

⁹⁸ QQJYD: XXV, 192. March 25, 1754 (QL 19, 2nd day of last month of spring).

⁹⁹ For estimated numbers in the various parts of Mongolia see Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*: 508.

III.2.3. Human Dowry

The Qanggin banner archives give little evidence for the reselling of human beings for profit. However, not all people, who were forced to enter another household with the status of slave or “boy of the yurt,” actually stayed there for life. People given away as compensation of debt were among those, who were further uprooted. Moreover, persons who were required to serve others as “human dowry” (*inje*) were forced to transfer from one dependency relationship to another. According to Mongolian custom, a bride of noble origin and rich background would be given maidservants, and in some cases also menservants, to accompany her to her new home and be at her command.¹⁰⁰ We know of this Mongolian practice already from thirteenth century, when the number of people forced to join a bride could number in the hundreds.¹⁰¹ According to the Qanggin records, fathers or brothers, who granted a female family member a “human dowry,” usually assigned one or two of their “people of the yurt” to accompany her. In this source, the largest number of people allocated as “human dowry,” is six. Not always were these people chosen from the existing group of “people of the yurt,” and the purchase of a person could be in direct connection with the desire to equip a family member with “human dowry.” The following two transactions were concluded on the same day:

That same day it was taken to the records that Ayusi of Siratoloyai *sum*, because he did not have enough to live on, sold his twenty-one-year-old daughter to Čuuqai of Kibsüng *sum* for three *lang* [money].¹⁰²

That same day, it was taken to the records, that Čuuqai of Kibsüng *sum* equipped his daughter with a dowry and gave one ‘person of the yurt’, a twenty-one-year-old girl, to Jibalu of Majur *sum*.¹⁰³

Because in both entries the name of the young woman is not mentioned, it cannot be proved beyond doubt that the twenty-one-year-old female Čuuqai bought, was the person he registered as “human dowry” that same day. If this was indeed the case, however, it shows again that the condition of being bought and sold went along with loss of status. Ayusi, the father of the girl, belonged to the group of “tax- and duty-payers,” while the girl forced into the role of “human dowry” was referred to as “person of the yurt.” The fact that she had been the object of a transaction transformed the girl from commoner to slave status.

The Qanggin archives include further evidence that persons, who had to accompany the bride as part of the dowry, beforehand had become victim of forced displacement.

Because that same day Erinčen’s ‘boy’ with the name Obootu said: ‘I am suffering greatly, because I was forcefully enslaved¹⁰⁴ by the Janggi [E]rinčen’, we examined the old records and [found] that in the 28th year of Qianlong (1763) Taiji Dorji of Sanjab *sum* bought the eleven-year-old boy Obootu from the woman Qarakeü of Nasun *sum* for five buckets of

¹⁰⁰ The role of dowry in Mongolian history has recently been discussed by Chuluunbaatar Udaanjargal and Leland Liu Rogers, “Property Relations of Mongolian Women during the Qing Period,” *Inner Asia* 22 (2020): 320–38.

¹⁰¹ Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*: 461.

¹⁰² QQJYD: XXV, 249. August 27, 1775 (QL 40, 2nd day of middle month of autumn).

¹⁰³ QQJYD: XXV, 249. August 27, 1775 (QL 40, 2nd day of middle month of autumn).

¹⁰⁴ Literally: “made Chinese” *kitadčilan*. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the term *kitad* became a Mongolian term of enslavement, while retaining its original meaning “Chinese” (Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 90–100).

grain, a pair of a sheep and a goat, one piece of coarse linen and tea, and gave it [all] to the mother; because there can be no doubt that Taiji Dorji made [the boy] follow his daughter¹⁰⁵ as dowry and handed him over to Janggi Erinčen, Obootu was rebuked and given instructions and Janggi Erinčen's competence was entered in the records.¹⁰⁶

Notably, it was possible for Obootu, a “boy of the yurt,” who once had been purchased and given away as “human dowry,” to file a complaint against the man, who claimed property rights over him. His case was taken seriously and underwent judicial review. This is important for understanding the agency, which “people of the yurt” could develop within the structures of Qing administration. Even though Obootu's attempt to free himself from Erinčen's claims on him was not successful, his advance shows that agency in this relationship of asymmetrical dependency was not unidirectional.¹⁰⁷ The Qing state, which protected alleged property rights of human beings over others (see section 1.2.), likewise opened up opportunities for questioning these rights.

The practice of human dowry was common not only among Mongol, but also among the Manchu elites of the Qing empire. Wei-chieh Tsai investigated the role of Han and Manchu bondservants, who accompanied Manchu princesses to their Mongolian in-laws as part of the dowry. He points out that, after the death of a princess, her “human dowry” would be reallocated by the court, and, not unfrequently, dependent people were sent back to Beijing.¹⁰⁸ This shows that people regarded as dowry would not inevitably pass over into the possession of the Mongolian husband and the princess's children. The Qanggin records suggest that, likewise, in Mongolian society property rights of a surviving husband over “human dowry” of his deceased wife were not very strong.

Even though before, in the 37th year of Qianlong (1772), it was taken to the records that Taiji Čoyijung of Majur *sum* made a ‘boy’ named Yasai to the dowry of his daughter and gave him to the bridegroom Jalan¹⁰⁹ Sanji of Kibzüng *sum*, now, because Yasai says: ‘Sanji is treating me badly’ and the bride has passed away, Yasai is handed over to the originally competent Taiji Rabdan and it was taken to the records that same day that he is released into Majur *sum*.¹¹⁰

Yasai, after the death of the woman he had accompanied to her in-laws, obtained manumission, and was registered as a “tax- and duty-payer” under the responsibility of the family, who once had given him away as “human dowry.” Even though Yasai had been registered as property of the *bridegroom*, the death of the former bride was an argument for his manumission. This suggests that people, who were made “human dowry,” had a special status with several parties being entitled to bring forward property claims against them. This, however, may also have enabled people forced into the role of “human dowry” to negotiate for their own interests. For them, the death of the former bride represented an opportunity

¹⁰⁵ Literally: “lady” *abayai*.

¹⁰⁶ QQJD: XXV, 250. October 9, 1775 (QL 40, 15th day of last month of autumn).

¹⁰⁷ Winnebeck et al., “On Asymmetrical Dependency”: 11.

¹⁰⁸ Tsai, “Mongolization of Han Chinese and Manchu Settlers in Qing Mongolia, 1700–1911”: 164–65.

¹⁰⁹ Official in the banner administration with the rank of Jalan-u Janggi.

¹¹⁰ QQJD: XXV, 311. March 5, 1782 (QL 47, 22nd day of first month of spring). The spelling of Kibsüng/Kibzüng/Keyibsüng *sum* varies in the Qanggin archival records.

for manumission and a raise in status. As will be discussed below, manumission could also be obtained in other constellations.

III.2.4. Manumission

As the Mongolian scholar Natsagdorj pointed out, over the course of the Qing dynasty, especially in the time between 1770 and 1870, the number of “people of the yurt” in Mongolia decreased. By the late 19th century, there is almost no reference to people with this status in the sources.¹¹¹ The reasons for this development are not entirely clear, but are probably related to increasing poverty.¹¹² The inheritance records from Khalkha Mongolia’s Tüsiyetü Khan Aimag (see section III.1.) show that it was common practice among “tax- and duty-payers,” to make arrangements in the banner office, so that – after their death – their slaves or “boys of the yurt” were likewise acknowledged to have this status. These dependents were frequently presented as children bought in infancy, or as sons who men had with women with the status of “people of the yurt.”¹¹³ The terminology used for manumission suggests that it was not just regarded as an administrative act but a physical transformation: In the sources, to become a member of the *sum* as “tax- and duty-payer” is eventually referred to as “whitening one’s bones” (*yasu-i anu čayilyaju*).¹¹⁴ According to Samuel Bass, “whitening of bones symbolized a transition from a non-color, degraded status of slave or illegitimacy to one of banner or parish membership.”¹¹⁵ What needed to be “whitened,” was not conceived as the result of polluting labor, but was the situation of being outside of the banner community.¹¹⁶ In addition, the records from the Qanggin banner archive indicate that manumission was frequently framed as adoption:

On the first day of the last autumn month, it was taken to the records that Sarab Bandi of Majur *sum*, because he had no offspring, adopted his own ‘boy of the yurt’ Banjiraša as his son and released him to become an armed soldier of the *sum*.¹¹⁷

The same day, it was taken to the records that Ayusi, the son of Jodba of Namujab *sum*, releases [his] ‘people of the yurt’, Gelüng Dongrub and Sunrab, into the *sum*, and they become ‘duty-payers’ of the Taiji.¹¹⁸

With regard to the last entry, it seems likely that Gelüng Dongrub and Sunrab had been “people of the yurt” of Ayusi’s father, and were released upon the father’s death. The two entries also show that, strictly speaking, the release was framed as a transfer, which entailed the transition from one form of dependency to another. After their release, Banjiraša, Gelüng Dongrub and Sunrab belonged to the large group of “tax- und duty-payers.”

In contrast to the records from Khalkha Mongolia’s Tüsiyetü Khan Aimag, the Qanggin records provide little insight into merit generation as motivation for manumission. In accordance with

¹¹¹ Natsagdorj, “Geriiin hüvüüdiin uchir”: 83–84.

¹¹² Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 220.

¹¹³ Heuschert-Laage, “Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft: Zu Adoption und Erbe in der Qalqa-Mongolei im 18. Jahrhundert”: 188–94.

¹¹⁴ Heuschert-Laage, “Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft: Zu Adoption und Erbe in der Qalqa-Mongolei im 18. Jahrhundert”: 194.

¹¹⁵ Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 140.

¹¹⁶ Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 126.

¹¹⁷ QQJD: XXV, 264. October 1, 1777 (QL 42, 1st day of last month of autumn).

¹¹⁸ QQJD: XXV, 216. January 13, 1757 (QL 21, 24th day of middle month of winter).

the Buddhist concept of merit accumulated as a result of good deeds and thoughts, to release a person into a different (and better) status category, was conceived as a highly meritorious act.¹¹⁹ Especially offerings of slaves to monasterial estates have to be understood in this context. The decision of Ayusi to release the dependents of his father, Gelüng Dongrub and Sunrab, may also have been motivated accordingly.

According to the Qanggin archival records, manumission frequently required a ransom. As the case of a certain Čayangelüng makes plain, it was not impossible for people with the status of “boy of the yurt” to accumulate extensive wealth and utilize it in order to obtain a change in status:

In the court dispute between Sundui and Čayan Gelüng, Čayan Gelüng, who [according to the records] was a ‘person of the yurt’ of Taiji Sundui of Keyibsüng *sum*, said: ‘I was a “person of the yurt” of Čubai, I was not a “person of the yurt” of Taiji Sundui’; that same day Čayan Gelüng and his two younger brothers, these three people, were made ‘people of the yurt’ of Čubai of Noyad *sum* and this was taken to the records.¹²⁰

While it is striking that – apparently – Čayan Gelüng’s statement alone was sufficient evidence to alter his and his brothers’ administrative affiliation, an entry made one year later indicates that Čayan Gelüng owned a considerable quantity of livestock. He used his wealth to exit his status of “person of the yurt”:¹²¹

The same day it was taken to the records that, because Čubui of Noyad *sum* could not make a living, he released [his] ‘people of the yurt’, Čayangelüng and his two disciples and the two people of Lubsang’s household, altogether five people, and offered them to the responsible Taiji Sabdan; [Čubui] took fifty sheep and five large livestock from Čayangelüng.¹²²

The impression is that Čayan Gelüng in 1755 initiated legal proceedings, so that he became the property of someone else, Čubui, who, in 1756, was willing to release him and his followers for the payment of a substantial amount in livestock. Again, there is no indication that the monastery where Čayan Gelüng took his vows made any claims on him or his property. In other cases, manumission was granted in return for loyalty:

Because Sanjab, a ‘person of the yurt’ of Jalan Yerentei, made a report when the Qaraču Noyan comploted against Jalan Yerentei, now, after he gave two horses to Jalan Yerentei, Sanjab, Sundui and Gendün, father and sons, altogether four people, are made ‘duty-payers’ of the responsible Taiji Altangerel and become armored soldiers of Dalantai *sum*.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Bass, “The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia”: 227–61.

¹²⁰ QQJYD: XXV, 206–7. December 22, 1755 (QL 20, 20th day of middle month of winter).

¹²¹ On payment of ransom in case of manumission see Tsai, “Mongolization of Han Chinese and Manchu Settlers in Qing Mongolia, 1700–1911”: 111.

¹²² QQJYD: XXV, 214. November 1, 1756 (QL 21, 9th day of leap autumn month). The variants in the spelling of names can be explained with different scribes in the banner office. Regarding the companions of the *gelüng*, the inconsistency of “younger brothers” (*degüü*) versus “disciples” (*šabi*) may indicate the growing respect towards Čayan Gelüng.

¹²³ QQJYD: XXV, 257. August 14, 1776 (QL 41, 1st day of 1st month of autumn). The household apparently also included a person, whose name is not mentioned in the records.

Because of Sanjab's trustworthiness when Yerentei was attacked by a third party, he was granted the chance to free himself from the status of "person of the yurt." In addition to Yerentei's acceptance to release him and his family, however, this required a ransom. From this we may conclude that, despite of his dependent status, Sanjab disposed over property to which Yerentei had no access.

IV. Conclusion

The present paper deals with *transactions* in people, but the people in Qanggin banner, who were forced into dependency relationships (or managed to get out of it), did not leave the confines of the local administrative unit of the banner. An important aspect of slaving practices in Qing dynasty Mongolia was their restriction to the level of the banner. When van Rossum distinguishes between mobilizing and immobilizing regimes of asymmetrical dependency and enslavement,¹²⁴ the constellations in Qanggin banner rather point to the latter. A diachronic investigation of slavery regimes in Mongolian history will particularly focus on this aspect, when contrasting slaving practices of the Qing period with those of the Mongol empire. While thirteenth century Mongols are credited with the establishment of long-distance slave trade routes and networks of trafficking,¹²⁵ slaving in the eighteenth century was negotiated between local actors and tied people down to their community.

Qing law with its establishment of categories of legal status had considerable impact on inter-Mongol relations in terms of asymmetrical dependency. Legal provisions of the state, however, were not the only factors shaping slaving practices in Qanggin banner. Debt slavery and human dowry were practiced in Mongolian societies long before the Qing period, but with the integration into the Qing empire they were administered by authorities confirmed by the Qing court. As section III.2.1. makes plain, debt slavery in the eighteenth century frequently involved a third party, who offered to provide livestock for the payment of compensation while in return enslaving a member of the debtor's family. As there are no guidelines for this practice in relevant legal codes, it can be regarded as an adaption of existing practices to the increasing impoverishment of wide sections of the population. This leads to the conclusion that the demand for compensation of the offended party was an important component in the reproduction and transformation of relationships of asymmetrical dependency. In effect, the involvement of a third party led to a concentration of property claims over dependent people in the hands of fewer people. This can be seen as an example for the adaptability of informal regimes of slavery to internal and external pressures.¹²⁶ In Qanggin banner, many of those, who purchased other human beings or benefitted from debt slavery, had ranks in the banner administration. Holders of offices like *Kiy-a* and *Janggi* seem to have been wealthy enough to enlarge their encampment with individuals and client families. While members of the aristocracy maintained different types of dependency relationships to "tax- und duty-payers," "personal serfs" and "people of the yurt," office-holders, who did not belong to the upper aristocracy, possibly saw the acquisition of "people of the yurt" as a means to consolidate their local power base.

¹²⁴ Van Rossum, "Slavery and Its Transformations": 591–92.

¹²⁵ Zeuske, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Sklaverei*: 324.

¹²⁶ Van Rossum, "Slavery and Its Transformations: Prolegomena for a Global and Comparative Research": 574.

As in other parts of the world, in Qing dynasty Mongolia the majority of enslaved people were women and children,¹²⁷ and an impoverished family was never safe from being torn apart. The ones most prone to be given away were younger family members, children and young women. Apart from debt slavery, they could be sold by fathers (sometimes also mothers) and elder brothers, in order to improve the economic situation of the family. There is not much information on the services these people were supposed to render. They lived dispersed in encampments, and some of them were forcefully transferred into other dependency relationships as “human dowry.” In what way property claims on people declared to be “human dowry” differed from claims on other enslaved people calls for further research. With regard to notions of property, the study confirms the close relationship between property and inheritance inherent in the Mongolian term *ömči*.¹²⁸ Dependents, just like other property, could be passed on to the next generation, but in the case of inheritance their dependence could stand up for discussion. There is evidence that this went especially for people, who were forced into a life as “human dowry.”

Manumission was not framed in the terminology of freedom, but was referred to as “release into the local administrative unit,” and thus meant a change into a different kind of dependency. Even though in Qing dynasty Mongolia, commoners as “tax- and duty-payers” often suffered from the burdens imposed on them from the local administration, for historical actors it was obviously desirable to abandon the status of slave or “people/boy of the yurt” and rather have this status. This change, however, required the consent of the person (or family) who regarded a dependent person as their property, and who often expected compensatory measures. The paper shows that some slaves and “people of the yurt” were able to accumulate considerable wealth, which was out of the reach of their alleged owner. Even though these cases seem to have been exceptions, there is evidence that the status of slave or “boy of the yurt” was not the only deciding factor for a person’s place in the community. Further research on local archives will show how relationships of asymmetrical dependency were shaped by the interaction of legal norms, practices and local power relations.

¹²⁷ Miller, “History as a Problem of Slaving”: 219.

¹²⁸ Sneath, ““Mongolia in the ‘Age of the Market’: Pastoral Land-Use and the Development Discourse”: 202.

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