

# Southern Tungusic origin myths in Chinese and Manchu sources

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This article analyses and compares two sets of Tungusic origin myths for the first time: two versions of the origin narrative of the earlier Jurchen »Golden Khanate« (also Jin, 1115-1234 CE) and six variations of the origin myth of the later Jurchen »Golden Khanate« (also Later Jin, 1616-1636) and its successor, the Manchu »Great Warrior Khanate« (also Great Qing, 1636-1912). Although the textual sources that document these myths date from far-apart periods (the twelfth to thirteenth centuries and the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, respectively), the origin myths are related. While they are linked to other Asian myths, they share several motifs and elements of thematic structure that confirm their particularly close relation to each other. Such shared motifs are the miraculous birth, the stranger-king as progenitor, his integration into an existing clan, the prophecy of the birth of the king, three siblings as an ancestral set, and waters, rivers, and mountains as sacred places of origin and dwelling places of the clans. Furthermore, I identify five essential elements that connect the two sets of narratives, »Introduction of a Holy Mountain«, »Conception and Birth/Arrival of the Ancestor«, »Marriage between Ancestor and Woman from the Tribe (Ancestress)«, »Stat-ing the Place of Residence of the Tribe« and finally, »Establishment of the People«/»Ancestor Is Admitted to the Tribe«. These commonalities suggest that the Jurchen-Manchus did not distance themselves from their Jurchen forefathers, as has been previously argued, but rather retained important connecting features in their origin myth. This implies that the relation between the earlier Jurchen and the later Jurchen-Manchus remained close even beyond the decline of the latter in 1912.

*Keywords:* Jurchen, Manchus, Jin dynasty, Qing dynasty, origin myths

## Introduction

In this article, I compare origin myths<sup>1</sup> of two empires that are separated by nearly four centuries in time, though not so much by culture: the Jurchen »Golden Khanate«<sup>2</sup> (Jurchen *anchun*

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This article is part of the thematic section *Medieval Origin Myths in Eurasian Comparison*, guest editor: Reinier Langelaar. To read all related articles, please access [https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds\\_no24\\_2026](https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no24_2026).

- 1 I follow James Grayson's (*Myths from Korea*, 7) definition of myth, which stipulates that its »principal defining feature [...] is that the central characters or actors in the narrative are spirits, gods, divine and semi-divine beings«.
- 2 I translate the Jurchen-Manchu term *gurun* as »khanate«. It is lexicalised as »country, state, land«, but additionally as »tribe, people« (Norman, *Comprehensive Manchu-English Dictionary*). This cluster of meaning is closely associated with the Chinggisid concept of statehood, where people(s) rather than territory are ruled

*gurun*), Chinese »Great Jin« (*Da-Jin* 大金, 1115-1234 CE) and the Manchu empire, which initially shared the same name, »Golden Khanate« (1616-1636), before being renamed the »Great Warrior Khanate« (Manchu *amba daicing gurun*) or literally »Great Clarity« in Chinese (*Da-Qing* 大清, 1636-1912). Both were founded by people later categorised as Southern Tungusic.<sup>3</sup> I analyse and compare their origin myths diachronically in order to trace changes and similarities in their thematic structures and motifs.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, I fill a gap in the research that so far has focused mainly on the Manchu origin myth and has, moreover, never compared it with the Jurchen Jin narrative, despite Manchu Qing emperors having stated their close relation to the Jurchen Jin emperors.<sup>5</sup>

»Tungus« is a loose designation of groups of people that is mainly based on modern linguistic identifiers: Peoples designated as Tunguses speak or used to speak Tungusic languages. Historically, Tunguses lived in North and Northeast Asia, particularly in Siberia and Manchuria. They were (and, to a certain degree, still are) people with highly diverse cultures, religions, ways of living, and languages, which inevitably limits the aforementioned linguistic identifier. This diversity is also related to the large territory Tunguses have historically inhabited.<sup>6</sup> The focus of this article lies diachronically on the Southern Tungusic peoples, namely Manchus, and southern branches of the Jurchen. The latter used to live on the shores and to the south of the Amur River. From the seventeenth century onwards, they migrated in larger numbers towards China proper. For reasons explained below, the name »Manchu« was only adopted around 1635 for southern Jurchen and other peoples.

### *Jurchen and Manchus*

People referred to as »Jurchen« (*Nüzhi* 女直, *Nüzhen* 女真) first appear in written sources in tenth-century Chinese texts.<sup>7</sup> The Jurchen were a group of tribal federations, sometimes loosely and sometimes more closely linked, that had existed in northeast Asia for centuries, appearing in Chinese sources under different names. In the tenth century, their southern branches were under the control of the Khitan Liao Khanate (907-1125), or »Great Liao« (*Da-Liao* 大遼). In 1115, a Jurchen chieftain of the Wanyan clan, Aguda (1068-1123, reign 1115-1123), proclaimed his own »Golden Khanate«, or Jin Dynasty. From 1117 onwards, envoys from the Chinese Song Dynasty (960-1279) came to Aguda's court to seek his alliance against

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(Munkh-Erdene, From people to territory). By using the term »khanate« for both polities, I intend to include that conceptual background. Moreover, Jurchen and Manchu rulers were referred to as »khans« (*han*, in Manchu), a title they had adopted from Mongolian *Khan*, which makes the term »khanate« even more suitable. *Khan* is an old Eurasian title for king of unclear etymological origin.

3 Müller, *Languages of the Seat of War*, 93; Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Manchus*; Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, 52. The problems caused by the categorisation of premodern peoples into ethnicities have been discussed at length by Pamela Crossley, Thinking about ethnicity.

4 I follow Grayson's (*Myths from Korea*, 5-6) definition of both terms. Grayson adopts his understanding of motif from Stith Thompson. A »Comparison of elements of thematic structure in the Jurchen and Manchu origin myths« analysed here can be found in the appendix, table 1.

5 Gaozong huangdi, »Xu« 序 (1777), 2b, in *Qinding Manzhou yuanliu kao*.

6 Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, 1-3.

7 Franke, *Chin Dynasty*, 216.

the Khitan Liao. Finally, the Song and the Golden Khanate signed a treaty and together defeated the Khitan in 1124.

Soon after, the Golden Khanate began to threaten the Song. In 1127, the Song capital was sacked and the Song emperor kidnapped and killed, which caused an exodus of the Song court to the south.<sup>8</sup> By the late 1120s, the Jurchen had thus established themselves as the most powerful polity in Manchuria and Northern China, ruling over diverse populations of Jurchen, Northern Chinese, Khitan, and others.

This article seeks to answer, among other things, how the Jurchen explained their rise to power in their origin narrative. Therefore, their demise is of no further interest here. It suffices to say that in 1234, the Jurchen Golden Khanate was swept away by Ögedei Khan (c. 1186-1241, reign 1229-1241), Chinggis Khan's son and heir, who had entered an alliance with the Song.<sup>9</sup>

Several centuries later, in the late sixteenth century, the Jurchen chieftain Nurhaci (1559-1626, reign 1616-1626), of the Aisin or »golden« Gioro clan, had united a federation of diverse tribes under his leadership, most of them Jurchen, but also Southern (Khorchin) Mongols and Northern Chinese (also referred to as *nikan*<sup>10</sup>).<sup>11</sup> In 1616, in reminiscence of the Jurchen Golden Khanate, he declared the founding of a second »Golden Khanate« (Jin).<sup>12</sup>

By conquest and coercion, but also through building alliances and federations, Nurhaci and his ruling elites enlarged the later Golden Khanate over time. Nurhaci's son Hong Taiji (1592-1643, reign 1626-1643) continued this expansion. Importantly, Hong Taiji renamed both his subject people and the khanate. The ethnonym *manju*, by which Hong Taiji named most of his loyal subjects, first appears in writing around 1635. As mentioned, subjects of the later Golden Khanate included mostly Jurchen, but also northern Chinese and Mongols peoples. Furthermore, in 1636, Hong Taiji adopted a new name for the khanate, calling it »Great Warrior Khanate« (*Amba daicing gurun*) in Manchu and »great clarity« (*Da-Qing* 大清) in Chinese.<sup>13</sup>

In 1644, the Ming capital, Beijing, was sacked by Chinese rebels. When a Ming general asked the Manchus for help, Hong Taiji's successor used this to his advantage and conquered Beijing. The Ming imperial court fled south. Over the next century or more, the Qing dynasty established a huge pluri-cultural empire, which reached its greatest extent and power in the mid-eighteenth century, before declining from the mid-nineteenth century onward and collapsing in 1912.

8 *Songshi* 48:950, 187:4570, etc.

9 Franke, *Chin Dynasty*, 259-265.

10 Crossley, *The Qianlong retrospect*, 67-70 and throughout.

11 It should be stressed that these were not ethnic identities in a modern sense. For example, loyalty was an important aspect of identity that could supersede any ethnic markers such as common language, religion, tradition, way of life, and assumed descent (see footnote 3).

12 Gaozong huangdi, »Xu« 序 (1777), 2b, in *Qinding Manzhou yuanliu kao*.

13 *Daicing* is probably a loanword from Mongol *daicin* (Hauer, *Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache*, 172). However, the origin and meaning of the Manchu and Chinese names have not been ultimately clarified.

### *Jurchen Origin Myths*

In the eleventh century, a Jurchen script was developed from the Khitan »large script«, but only a few sources written in this script have survived,<sup>14</sup> and they do not contain any origin myths. Our only sources on Jurchen origin narratives, then, are in Chinese. Although based on materials written by officials of the Jurchen's Golden Khanate, the final texts were most likely written by Chinese literati, which is problematic: Not only is it less than ideal to rely only on translated and second-hand accounts, but Chinese literature about non-Chinese people also tends to be biased, usually portraying the latter as wild and uncivilised barbarians.<sup>15</sup> However, given the lack of alternative texts, we must make do with the sources we have.

The foremost sources regarding origin myths of the Jurchen Golden Khanate are, firstly, the first chapter in the official *History of the Jin* (*Jinshi* 金史, presented to the throne in 1345), and, secondly, an account contained in nearly identical versions in two sources. These two sources are the first chapter of *Eyewitness Account from Jimo*<sup>16</sup> (*Songmo jiwen* 松漠紀聞) by the Song envoy Hong Hao 洪皓 (1088-1155, *jinshi*<sup>17</sup> 1115), hereafter *Eyewitness Account* for short, and the third chapter in the *Collected Accounts of the Treaties with the North under Three Reigns*<sup>18</sup> (*Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編, presented in 1194), hereafter *Collected Accounts* for short, a private history by the Song scholar-official Xu Mengxin 徐夢莘 (1126-1207, *jinshi* 1154).<sup>19</sup>

Hong Hao, the author of the *Eyewitness Account*, had been sent to the Golden Khanate as a Song envoy in 1129. The Jin emperor wanted him to serve his state, which Hong denied. He then lived in the Jin empire as a captive for fifteen years. After his return to the Song empire in 1144, Hong wrote down what he had learned about the Jurchen in his *Eyewitness Account*.<sup>20</sup> He burned this original draft later and reconstructed it from memory. This second version was also damaged and then partly reconstructed by one of Hong Hao's sons, Hong Zun 洪遵 (1120-1174). Today, there are two versions of Hong's *Eyewitness Account*.<sup>21</sup> Chapter one begins

14 Twitchett and Franke, Introduction, 31-32; Grube (*Die Sprache und Schrift der Jučen*, 105-144), for example, translates twenty Jurchen Jin memorials into Chinese and German; Kiyose (*A Study of the Jurchen Language*, 152-232) translates the same twenty memorials in addition to nine more into English.

15 Saussy, *Making of Barbarians*, 21, 94. From a traditional Chinese perspective, what separates a civilised people from barbarians is usually the presence of a script, following (Chinese) rituals and having proper (Ruist or Confucian) social rules.

16 The *Eyewitness Account* has survived in two slightly different versions: Hong Hao, *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] and Hong Hao, *Songmo jiwen* [Siku quanshu].

17 A *jinshi* degree-holder had passed the palace examinations.

18 The *Collected Accounts*, too, have survived in two versions: Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] and Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Siku quanshu]. Based on a cursory assessment of chapter three, it seems that about 30 per cent of the text has been deleted in the Siku quanshu edition for censorship reasons.

19 I use my own translations here. Alternative translations of the relevant chapters in the *History of the Jin* and in the *Collected Accounts* can be found in Franke, Chinese Texts on the Jurchen and Franke, Chinese Texts on the Jurchen II.

20 Chang Fu-jui, Hong Hao.

21 See slightly different versions of the relevant passage in Hong Hao, *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] 1:2a and Hong Hao, *Songmo jiwen* [Siku quanshu] 1:2a.

with an outline of the regions occupied by the Jurchen Golden Khanate and then turns to its origin story. In the case of this origin myth, the two versions differ only slightly.

The author of the *Collected Accounts*, Xu Mengxin, was a Southern Song contemporary of the Jurchen Golden Khanate. When he presented his work to the throne in 1194, the khanate was still a powerful entity in the north. The book's 250 chapters cover the time from 1115 until 1162, chronologically telling the development of Jin-Song relations and including memorials and treaties as well as reports from envoys. Xu Mengxin based his book on official documents as well as eye-witness accounts of the Jin-Song wars in the 1120s.<sup>22</sup> The third chapter includes a brief account of the Jurchen Jin origin narrative, which seems to be copied from Hong Hao's *Eyewitness Account*. The relevant passage in the *Collected Accounts* differs only insofar from Hong's *Eyewitness Account* as it omits one longer sentence.

The *History of the Jin* was compiled by a team of 26 official historians during the reign of the Mongol Yuan, under the supervision of the Mongolian official and aristocrat Toqto'a (1314-1355) and was presented to the court more than a century after the Golden Khanate's demise.<sup>23</sup> The 135 chapters of the *History of the Jin* are based on the »veritable records« (*shilu* 實錄), records compiled by court scribes of the Golden Khanate, as well as private histories by Chinese scholar-officials. The first chapter covers Jurchen history before the founding of the Golden Khanate and includes an origin myth. A Manchu translation of the *History of the Jin* exists that is, however, not very helpful regarding the Jurchen origin myth. It follows the Chinese original closely and does not even use the Manchu version of place names for which Manchu names exist, but instead transcribes the Chinese names.<sup>24</sup>

All three sources contain ethno-genealogical, historical, or pseudo-historical information. Ethno-genealogies are a typical feature in imperial Chinese histories of non-Chinese dynasties and peoples, serving to ascertain under what names they had been referred to in earlier Chinese sources so as to trace their alleged origins. In the case of the Jurchen, imperial Chinese accounts usually trace them back to the Sushen 肅慎, an ethnonym mentioned in texts dating from before the third century BCE.<sup>25</sup> A chain of ethnonyms from the Sushen to the Jurchen and later the Manchus is then followed through history, a narrative pattern that is supported by the same chain being followed and extended over time in the twenty-four dynastic histories, beginning with the first, the *Grand Scribe's Records* (*Shiji* 史記, presented c. 91 BCE). The *Grand Scribe's Records* is the starting point, mentioning the »Mohe state« (*Mohe guo* 靺鞨國) as the Sushen's successors.<sup>26</sup>

22 Cheng Yu, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*.

23 Toqto'a was the Chief Compiler of Dynastic Histories who also oversaw the compilations of the Liao and Song histories. Among his team, ten are listed as Mongols and Turks, and the rest Chinese. The Chinese probably included Jurchen, who were regularly referred to as Chinese under the Mongol Yuan administration.

24 For example, the Black Water (*Heishui* 黑水), an old name for the Amur River, is transcribed as *hesui*, and not translated as *sahaliyan ula* (lit. Black River), the common name for the Amur in Manchu (see for example, *Aisin gurun i suduri bithe*, 1:1a-2a).

25 *Shangshu*, vol. 2, Zhouguan 周官, 4a; *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, vol. 9, Zhaogong zhong: jiunian 昭公中: 九年 (Duke of Zhao, year nine), 1b.

26 *Shiji* 2:52.

In the seventh century, some sources claimed that the Mohe were a group of several tribes, including the »Black Water tribe« (*Heishui bu* 黑水部), the »Sunggari tribe« (*Sumo bu* 粟末部), and the »White Mountain tribe« (*Baishan bu* 白山部).<sup>27</sup> These three names, which appear frequently in the Jurchen and Manchu origin myths analysed below, reference specific geographical locations. The White Mountain, *Šanggiyan alin* (also *Šanyan alin*) in Manchu, is a mountain located on the contemporary border between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and North Korea. In Chinese, it is called the »Long White Mountain« (*Changbaishan* 長白山). The »Black Water« is the Amur, »Black River« (*Sahaliyan ula*) in Manchu, and »Black Dragon River« (*Heilongjiang* 黑龍江) in Chinese, parts of which constitute the current border between the Russian Federation and the PRC. Finally, the Sunggari River (*Sunggari ula*, *Songhuajiang* 松花江), which flows through northern Manchuria (see map 1), links the White Mountain and the Black Water, originating as it does from the former and flowing, as a major tributary, into the latter.

In early Tang times (618-907), as claimed by the *History of the Jin*, only two Mohe tribes were left: the Black Water tribe and the Sunggari tribe, both named after the rivers in whose vicinities they settled (see map 1).<sup>28</sup> The Sunggari tribe later supposedly changed its name to Bohai 渤海 (*Parhae*, in Korean) and founded a kingdom of that name (698-926); the Black Water Mohe were later called Jurchen (*Nüzhi* 女直, *Nüzhen* 女真).<sup>29</sup> By the time of the Khitan Liao, »those [Black Water Mohe tribes] living in the south were registered with the Khitan and were called »cooked Jurchen«. Those living in the north were not registered with the Khitan and were called »raw Jurchen« (其在南者籍契丹, 號熟女直; 其在北者不在契丹籍, 號生女直).<sup>30</sup> »Cooked« and »raw« were typical Chinese terms used to refer to non-Chinese peoples perceived as civilised and barbarian, respectively.<sup>31</sup> Both the »raw« and the »cooked« Jurchen were probably descendants of the Black Water tribe, the latter being descendants of families whom the Khitan Liao had forcibly resettled in the south (Liaoyang region) to break up powerful allies.<sup>32</sup>

27 *Beishi* 94:3124; *Suishu* 81:1821.

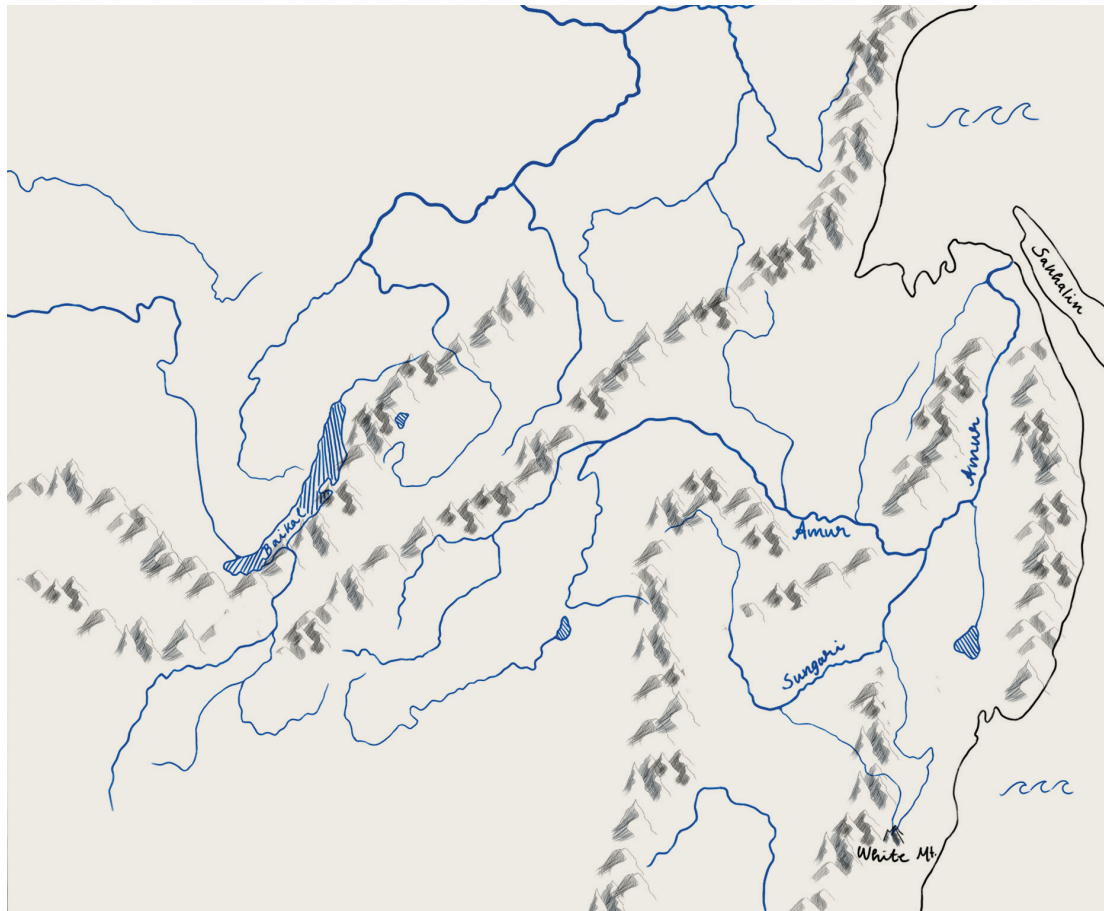
28 *Jinshi* 1:1.

29 *Jinshi* 1:1; *Songmo jiwen* [both editions] 1:1a. The different spelling of the second character of the Chinese ethnonym for the Jurchen derives from the fact that *zhen* 真 was a taboo character in Liao times, being the name of the seventh Liao emperor Yelü Zongzhen 耶律宗真 (*Songmo jiwen* [both editions] 1:1b).

30 *Jinshi* 1:2; see also *Songmo jiwen* [both editions] 1:1b. The *Collected Accounts* mention a third group that is »neither cooked nor raw« (非熟女真亦非生女真) (*Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:2b). Note that in the Siku quanshu edition of *Collected Accounts*, all references to »cooked« and »raw« Jurchen are deleted (*Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Siku quanshu] 3:2a-b).

31 Fiskesjö, On the »raw« and the »cooked« barbarians.

32 *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:2a-2b.



*Map 1: The Jurchen-Manchu ancestral homeland with the White Mountain, Amur (Black Water), and Sunggari regions.*<sup>33</sup>

*The Wanyan Myth: Eyewitness Account from Jimo (twelfth cent.) and Collected Accounts of the Treaties with the North (1194)*

Xu Mengxin begins the third chapter of his *Collected Accounts* with a largely historical, partly pseudo-historical, account of the Jurchen in pre-Jin times that cannot be found in this form in Hong Hao's *Eyewitness Account*.<sup>34</sup> Xu locates the Jurchen to »the east of Huntong River, at the Yalu River's source at the Long White Mountain« (混同江之東。長白山鴨綠水之源). The Yalu, thus Xu, »is also called Ashuhuo« (又名阿朮火), a transcription of the Jurchen term *anchun*, »gold«.<sup>35</sup> Three geographical landmarks are thus mentioned: the White Mountain,

33 I thank E.S. who drew the map for me, based on Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, Map VI, facing 160.

34 *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:1a-2a. The *Eyewitness Account* includes a much shorter account of the Jurchen in pre-Jin times (*Songmi jiwen* [both editions] 1:1a-b).

35 *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:1a-b; not included in *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Siku quanshu].

the Huntong River (which is probably the Black River<sup>36</sup>), and the Golden River – the name-sake of the Golden Khanate itself.

A couple of pages later, Xu briefly recounts the Jurchen origin myth. As mentioned before, this account is probably copied from Hong's *Eyewitness Account*. Alternatively, Xu and Hong used the same source. As the *Eyewitness Account* is slightly more elaborate, I use this as the master version, indicating which sentences are missing from the *Collected Accounts* (Shanghai guji edition) by highlighting them in italics:<sup>37</sup>

At the beginning, the [Jurchen's] ruler was a man originating from Silla,<sup>38</sup> whose clan name was Wanyan. »Wanyan« is the same as »king« (*wang*) in Chinese. *The Jurchen made [the man from Silla] their leader when they realised that he was well-versed in [political] matters.* He and his elder and younger brothers were three. One became leader of the cooked Jurchen and obtained the title Myriarch, the other one went to another country. When Wanyan was over sixty years old, the Jurchen betrothed him to a woman who was also over sixty years old. She bore two sons. Their eldest son was Hulan [Hulai]. From this one, [chieftainship] passed on through three generation to »great master« Yingge. *He had no sons. Therefore, he adopted his nephew, Aguda's younger brother, posthumously called Wenlie, as his son. Later, Yingge did have a son, Dalan, and let Wenlie return to his family.*

女真之主乃新羅人<sup>39</sup>，號完顏氏，完顏猶漢言王。女真以其練事，後隨以首領讓之。<sup>40</sup>其兄弟三人，一為熟女真首<sup>41</sup>，領號萬戶，其一適他國，完顏年六十餘，女真妻之以女，亦六十餘，生二子。其長子即呼蘭<sup>42</sup>也。自此傳三人至英格太師<sup>43</sup>。無子，以其姪阿固達<sup>44</sup>之弟謚曰文烈者為子。其後英格生子達蘭<sup>45</sup>，乃令文烈歸宗<sup>46</sup>。<sup>47</sup>

In the *Eyewitness Account*, the full narrative stands in an individual paragraph, clearly separating it from the text before and after. The next paragraph lists the nine generations of chieftains before the first emperor of the Jurchen Golden Khanate, starting with the »ancestor« (*zu* 祖) Hanpu 函普 or Kanfu 龔福, respectively.<sup>48</sup> We will meet Hanpu again later on, his

36 »The Huntong River is also called Black Dragon River« (混同江亦號黑龍江) (*Jinshi* 1:2).

37 Differences between the two versions of the *Eyewitness Account* are indicated in footnotes. Sometimes, the Shanghai guji edition of the *Collected Accounts* uses slightly different terms that are also indicated in footnotes. As mentioned, the Siku quanshu edition of the *Collected Accounts* deletes up to thirty per cent of the original text. These deletions and other deviations of this edition are not indicated here.

38 The Korean Silla dynasty (668-935) controlled the southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula.

39 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi]: 女真酋長乃新羅人; *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji]: 其初酋長本新羅人.

40 This sentence is partly missing from *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] and completely from *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Siku quanshu].

41 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] and *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji]: 一為熟女酋長.

42 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] and *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji]: Hulai 胡來.

43 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] and *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji]: Yangge taishi 楊哥太師.

44 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] and *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji]: Aguda 阿骨打.

45 *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi]: Tala 闡辣.

46 These two sentences are missing in *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji].

47 *Songmo jiwen* [both editions] 1:2a; *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:9b; *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Siku quanshu] 3:8a-b.

48 *Songmo jiwen* [both editions] 1:2b; *Songmo jiwen* [Gujin yishi] 1:2a.

identity by then having changed. Xu's *Collected Accounts* take a different turn after Yingge has been introduced. He directly refers to Aguda as the next chieftain and begins describing his outer appearance.<sup>49</sup>

I refer to the myth as told in the two sources as the Wanyan myth, because the first chieftain's name is given as Wanyan. Neither accounts are particularly elaborate, perhaps because Hong Hao and Xu Mengxin did not know the myth well or did not find its details important. Still, some important motifs of the Jurchen origin myth are already mentioned here: firstly, the stranger-king who comes from the southern Korean Peninsula, presents himself as an able leader and is thus made chieftain; secondly, the miraculous births of two sons to over-age parents, thereby making the latter semi-divine. Both motifs are discussed in more detail below, as they reappear in the second and more detailed version of the Jurchen origin myth.

### *The Hanpu Myth: History of the Jin*

The first chapter of the *History of the Jin* gives some general information as to where the Jurchen came from, starting with an ethno-genealogy. Unlike Xu, it clarifies that the dynastic founders were »raw« Jurchen:

The territory of the raw Jurchen encompassed the Huntong River and the Long White Mountain, the Huntong River also being called »Black Dragon River«. These are the so-called »Black Water and White Mountain«.

生女直地有混同江、長白山。混同江亦號黑龍江，所謂「白山、黑水」是也。<sup>50</sup>

Elsewhere, the *History of the Jin* stresses the importance of the White Mountain, associating it with the homeland of the rulers of the Jurchen Golden Khanate:

The Long White Mountain is in the region from where the kings rose, [and we should] gather there to perform rituals of honouring, establish a title of nobility, and build a temple.

長白山在興王之地，禮合尊崇，議封爵，建廟宇。<sup>51</sup>

The White Mountain also held an important position in origin myths in another northeast Asian tradition. The legendary founder of the first kingdom on the Korean Peninsula, Tangun 檀君, descended to the White Mountain, or »Great White Mountain« (*T'aebaek-san* 太白山), from Heaven.<sup>52</sup> As stranger-king and classical culture hero, he taught the people agriculture and other arts. The mountain lost its prominent position over time, only to be resurrected as a national symbol in the early twentieth century and was thereafter called »White-head

49 *Sanchao beimeng huibian* [Shanghai guji] 3:9b.

50 *Jinshi* 1:2. In the Manchu translation, the note about the Black Water and the White Mountain is missing, possibly because it would make no sense given that Manchu translation uses transcriptions of the Chinese pronunciation for proper names (*Aisin gurun i suduri bithe* 1:2a).

51 *Jinshi* 35:819.

52 *Samguk yusa*, 32; see Grayson (*Myths from Korea*, 42, 47, 50) for other versions of this myth, each of which containing the descent of Tangu to the White Mountain.

Mountain« (*Paektusan* 白頭山 in Korean).<sup>53</sup> It still holds an important position for North Korean political leaders today.<sup>54</sup>

The *History of the Jin* then turns towards the origin myth of the Golden Khanate:

The personal name of the Golden [Khanate]’s First Ancestor was Hanpu. He originally came from Koryŏ<sup>55</sup> and was already over sixty years old. His elder brother Agunai loved the Buddha and remained in Koryŏ, unwilling to leave. [He] said [to Hanpu]: »Among [your] descendants in future generations there will certainly be someone who has the ability to reunite us, [but] I cannot go [with you].« [The First Ancestor] went alone, accompanied by his younger brother Baohuoli. The First Ancestor lived on the banks of the Pugan River among the Wanyan tribe, while Baohuoli lived at the Yelan [River]. [...]

After the First Ancestor had reached the Wanyan tribe, he lived among them for a long time. At one point, a man of the tribe killed a man from another clan. Therefore, the two clans hated each other, and their mutual fighting could not be ended. The people of the Wanyan tribe said to the First Ancestor: »If you can settle this hatred among the people of our tribe and prevent the two clans from killing each other, then a worthy woman in our tribe, who is sixty years old and not yet married, shall be married to you, and you will also become a member of the [Wanyan] tribe.« The First Ancestor replied: »Yes.«

Thereupon, he personally went [to the clan whose member had been killed] and said: »Killing one man and not ending the fighting will result in even more casualties. If only the one leading rioter is executed, and the tribe compensates you with goods, then there will be no more fighting and, moreover, you will have some profit.« The victim’s family agreed to this. [...]

After the compensation had been paid according to the agreement, the tribe’s people had confidence in the First Ancestor and obeyed him [...]. They allowed him to marry the sixty-year-old woman. [...] Later, two sons were born. The elder was called Wulu, the younger Wulu. The first daughter was called Zhusiban. Thereafter, [the First Ancestor] became a member of the Wanyan tribe.

金之始祖函普，初從高麗來，年已六十餘矣。兄阿古廼好佛，留高麗不肯從，曰：「後世子孫必有能相聚者，吾不能去也。」獨與弟保活里俱。始祖居完顏部僕幹水之涯，保活里居耶懶。[...] 始祖至完顏部，居久之，其部人嘗殺它族之人，由是兩族交惡，鬭鬪不能解。完顏部人謂始祖曰：「若能為部人解此怨，使兩族不相殺，部有賢女，年六十而未嫁，當以相配，仍為同部。」始祖曰：「諾。」廼自往諭之曰：「殺一人而鬭不解，損傷益多。曷若止誅首亂者一人，部內以物納償汝，可以無鬭而且獲利焉。」怨家從之。[...] 既備償如約，部眾信服之 [...]，并許歸六十之婦。[...] 後生二男，長曰烏魯，次曰幹魯，一女曰注思板，遂為完顏部人。<sup>56</sup>

53 Schmid, *Korea between Empires*, ch. 6; Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 56-57.

54 Kim Jong Il (c. 1941-2011), the second »Eternal President« of North Korea was supposedly born there – although he was probably actually born in Primorsky Krai in the Russian Far East. His father, the first »Eternal President«, Kim Il Sung (1912-1994), who was born in Pyongyang, was allegedly also born close to the White-head Mountain (Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 57).

55 Chinese *Gaoli* 高麗 refers to the Korean Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), but can also be a generic reference to Korea as Koryŏ controlled the whole peninsula. It is thus less specific than »Silla« in the *Collected Accounts*.

56 *Jinshi* 1:2-3.

This narration of the Jurchen origin myth contains several widespread motifs. It starts with a migration myth: The First Ancestor came from the Korean Peninsula accompanied only by his younger brother, who goes elsewhere. The First Ancestor then settles as an individual stranger among the Wanyan tribe. His name is now given as Hanpu, and not as Wanyan as is the case in the Wanyan myth. In *Eyewitness Account*, Hanpu was only mentioned in the section after the origin myth, where he was introduced as the first ancestor of the rulers of the Golden Khanate. However, he was not identified as Wanyan, the stranger-king from Silla who became chieftain of the Jurchen. The *History of the Jin* now merges both accounts, stating that Hanpu and the first chieftain are one and the same person. The information that the first chieftain's name was Wanyan and that *wanyan* means »king« in Chinese, given in *Collected Accounts* and *Eyewitness Account*, is no longer mentioned. Because Wanyan was no longer used as his personal name, but instead as the name of the already-established tribe whom he joins, the explanation that *wanyan* meant »king« has become unfitting.

Secondly, through his ability to prevent an internal blood feud and bring peace to the tribe, the First Ancestor takes on features of a »stranger-king«.<sup>57</sup> A third element is that of prophecy. The First Ancestor's elder brother predicts that there will be a man among »the descendants« who will unite the Jurchen tribes, thus prophesying the Golden Khanate's founding. Finally, the fact that the First Ancestor and his nameless wife were already over sixty years old, yet still had several children, invokes the motif of miraculous births.<sup>58</sup> The name of the eldest son, which in *Collected Accounts* and *Eyewitness Account* was Hulan 呼蘭 or Hulai 胡來, is slightly changed, to Wulu 烏魯. Additionally, the other son is now also named, along with a daughter, unlike previous accounts.

Adding my own findings to Grayson's suggestions for elements of thematic structure in the Jurchen origin myth, I identify four fundamental elements of thematic structure: »Arrival of the Ancestor«; »Ancestor Establishes New Social Order«; »Marriage between Ancestor and Woman from the Tribe (Ancestress)«; »Ancestor Is Admitted to the Tribe«.<sup>59</sup> Although some elements are necessarily omitted here, these four cover most of the important episodes of the Jurchen origin myth. All appear in Hong Hao's *Eyewitness Account*, and all but the second in Xu's *Collected Accounts*, but in a superficial and marginal form. In the *History of the Jin*, they are preserved and strengthened.

The remainder of the narrative contains relevant motifs. Following the origin myth proper, the *History of the Jin* narrates the fates of the First Ancestor's descendants. The First Ancestor's great-grandson, the »Presenting Ancestor« (*Xianzu* 獻祖), permanently moved the tribe to »the vicinity of the Golden River« (安出虎水之側), where he taught them farming, craftsmanship, and house-building.<sup>60</sup> Besides the motif of migration, the story thus also uses the motif of a culture hero, who brings »civilisation«, here in the form of houses and farming. We can assume that this interpretation was related to the Chinese compilers' view that

57 Lewis, *Stranger-Kings of Sikka*, ch. 6.

58 This is a common motif, for example, in the Bible with the well-known figures of Sara and Abraham.

59 I hereby follow, revise, and expand Grayson's (*Myths from Korea*, 126) suggestions of elements, which are »Arrival of the Hero«; »Hero Establishes New Social Order«; »Hero Marries«; »Hero's Sib Admitted to Tribe«.

60 *Jinshi* 1:3.

civilised life necessarily centred on sedentary farming, and that, in contrast, nomadism and tents were barbarian.

The First Ancestor's great-great-grandson, the »Illustrious Ancestor« (*Zhaozu* 昭祖), was also a culture hero, at least from a Ruist (Confucian) and Legalist perspective. »Because the raw Jurchen had no script and no discipline, they could not be controlled« (生女直無書契, 無約束, 不可檢制). When the Illustrious Ancestor wanted to establish rules, the tribes fiercely objected and even wanted to murder him. In the end, however, he succeeded and consequently »the tribe became stronger and stronger« (部落寢強).<sup>61</sup>

Finally, Aguda, a seventh-generation descendant of the First Ancestor, achieved chieftainship and crowned himself emperor of the Golden Khanate, becoming the »Great Ancestor« (*Taizu* 太祖), a common Chinese designation for dynastic founders. In the second chapter of the *History of the Jin*, the wonders of Aguda's birth are told:

During the time of Liao Daozong [1055-1101], five-coloured clouds and mists, which were as big as granaries for two thousand bushels of grain, repeatedly appeared in the east. The [Liao] Officer of Heaven,<sup>62</sup> Kong Zhihe [dates unknown], secretly told someone, »Beneath it, an extraordinary man will be born who will accomplish outstanding things. By this appearance, heaven tells us that no human's power can overcome him.« On the first day of the seventh month in the fourth year of Xianyong [1 August 1168], the Great Ancestor was born.

遼道宗時有五色雲氣屢出東方，大若二千斛困倉之狀。司天孔致和竊謂人曰：「其下當生異人，建非常之事。天以象告，非人力所能為也。」咸雍四年戊申，七月一日，太祖生。<sup>63</sup>

Aguda's birth story thus repeats the motif of the prophecy about a future leader, but no other motifs or elements. The rest of his biographical chapter is rather mundane.

### *Origin myths of the Manchu Qing*

As mentioned, Hong Taiji changed the name of his empire from Golden Khanate to Great Warrior Khanate or Great Qing in 1636. Gertraude Roth Li argues that this served to distance »his state from the Chin [Golden Khanate] precedent«.<sup>64</sup> However, there are reasons to doubt this interpretation. The Manchu Qing emperors probably had other motives for this name change, for example, the five-agent system. Moreover, they notably retained the term »golden« in their own clan name Aisin, or »golden«, Gioro.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, in the different versions of the Manchu origin myth, many motifs reappear that are clearly recognisable from the myths of the Jurchen Golden Khanate. We do see indications that the Manchu emperors wanted to stress their Manchuness by, for instance, deleting direct references to the Jurchen in their origin myth as time passed. At the same time, however, they strengthened references to the White Mountain, using it to replace the mountain that featured in the early versions of

61 *Jinshi*:3-4.

62 *Sitian* 司天, which can also be translated as »Astronomer«.

63 *Jinshi* 2:19.

64 Roth Li, State building, 63.

65 The name was probably adopted in the 1610s when Nurhaci rose to power. Before, he was a member of the »ordinary« Gioro clan (Roth Li, State building, 28).

their origin myth, as we shall see. There were diverse reasons for these changes and revisions, which cannot easily be explained by the Manchus' alleged wish to deemphasise their Jurchen connection.

The Manchu Qing emperors had much more control over their own history-writing and narratives than the Jurchen emperors. The passage of time has necessarily wreaked more devastation on the literary heritage of the Golden Khanate, which dissolved nearly nine centuries ago, than on that of the Manchu Qing empire, which only ended in 1912. Moreover, the Golden Khanate only lasted about a century, whereas the Qing lasted nearly three, giving the Manchus more time to establish their script and literature. Finally, the Qing emperors were effective in controlling the Manchu origin myth. Due to the »formalization of the old culture« by the Qing emperors, »the documentation of descent, myth, clan history« became »visible, manageable, and standard«.<sup>66</sup>

In what follows, I refer to the oldest known versions of the myth as the »themes« and the later ones as »variations«. The themes probably date to 1635; the following four variations in Manchu were written down or printed in 1655, 1736, 1739, and 1819. The final variation was published in Chinese in 1928.<sup>67</sup> The following list gives an overview of the sources, including transliterations and translations, if available:

*Themes: The Hūrha myth (1635)*

- Manchu text: *Jiu Manzhou dang* [1969] 9:4242.  
 Transliteration: *Jiu Manzhou dang* [1972], ed. Nobuo, Jun and Hidehiro, 124-125.  
 English translation: Durrant, Repetition in the Manchu origin myth, 76.  
 Chinese translation: Sun and Song, Cong Manwen wenxian, 49.  
 German translation: Stary, Mandschurische Reime, 77.

*Themes: The Mount Bukūri myth (1635)*

- Manchu text: Uju nenehe [genggiyen] han i sain yabuha kooli uheri juwan nadan debtelin, (*Nei guoshiyuan dang* 內國史院檔, fasc. 2, pt. 1:1a-5b).<sup>68</sup>  
 Transliteration: Matsumura, Founding legend, 46-48.  
 English translation: Matsumura, Founding legend, 48-50.

*Variation I: The tripartite White Mountain-Mount Bukūri-Fanca myth (1655)*

- Manchu text: *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:1-10 [3-12].  
 Transliterations: Matsumura, Founding legend, 50-52; *Ubaliyambuha suhe gisun kam-cibuha Manju i yargiyan kooli*, 1-6.

66 Crossley, *Manzhou yuanliu kao*, 761-762.

67 References can be found below in the respective sections of each version. I am indebted to Sun's (Writing an empire) account of four »stem versions«, even though I deviate from her list of sources and conclusions.

68 I did not have access to this manuscript, hold by the First Historical Archives in Beijing, myself.

*Variation II: The bipartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon myth (1736)*

- Manchu text: Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hūwangdi i da hergen i bithe dergi debtelin (*Manwen Taizu Gao huangdi benji* 滿文太祖高皇帝本紀), vol. 1, 1-4.<sup>69</sup>
- Transliteration: Zhang, “*Jiu Manzhou dang*” *cihui*, 70-71.

*Variation III: The tripartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon-Fanca myth (1739)*

- Manchu text: *Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* (ujui debtelin. sahaḥūn honin aniya ci niowanggiyan bonio aniya de isinahabi), 123-131 [1-9].
- Transliteration: Sun and Song, *Cong Manwen wenxian*, 54-55.
- Chinese translation: *Taizu Gao huangdi shilu* 1:1b-3b [21-22].
- German translation: Hauer, *Das mandschurische Kaiserhaus*, 13-14.

*Variation IV: The tripartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon-Fanca myth (1819)*

- Manchu text: Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hūwangdi i da hergen i bithe dergi debtelin 1:[7b-10b].

*Variation V: The tripartite Mount Bukūri-Fanca-Möngke Temür variation (1928)*

- Chinese text: *Qingshigao* 1:1.

*Themes: The Hūrha myth and the Mount Bukūri myth (1635)*

In 1635, two closely related myths, the Hūrha myth and the Mount Bukūri myth, were first written down – probably in that order. Both are in fact theme myths. The Jurchen Hūrha clan (*Hu'erha* 虎爾哈, in Chinese),<sup>70</sup> who lived close to the Black River, surrendered to Hong Taiji in 1635. In the same year, one of the surrenderers, Muksik (dates unknown), was brought to court, where he told the origin myth of his clan. It comprises the following few lines in the *Old Manchu Archives* (*Fe Manju dangse*, in Manchu, *Jiu Manzhou dang* 舊滿洲檔, in Chinese):

For generations, my forefathers and fathers lived at Lake Bulhori<sup>71</sup> at Mount Bukūri. [...] When three heavenly girls, Enggūlen, Jenggūlen, and Fekūlen, took a bath in said Lake Bulhori, a spirit magpie brought a red fruit to the youngest of the girls, Fekūlen. She took it into her mouth, and it entered her throat. She became pregnant and gave birth to Bokori Yongšon. His descendants are the Manchu people.<sup>72, 73</sup>

69 I did not have access to this manuscript, hold by the National Palace Museum in Taipei, myself.

70 *Qingshigao* 1:6 and throughout. Sun and Song (*Cong Manwen wenxian*, 49) use the transcription 呼尔哈.

71 Later spelled Bulhūri. According to Walter Fuchs (*Bulhūri Omo*, 47), this »small lake« is situated »a two-days march to the east« of the White Mountain »in the middle of the untouched wilderness of the virgin forest«.

72 Here, *gurun* (here spelled *gūrun*) means people (see above, footnote 2).

73 Sun (*Writing an empire*, 105-106) claims that a Kangxi version (1686) of the myth would be another variation because it stressed for the first time that the name of the people had already been »Manchu« since Bukūri Yongšon's time. Sun, however, relies on the transliteration of the Mount Bukūri theme myth by Sun and Song (*Cong Manwen wenxian*, 50), which omits the final sentences that mention the Manchu people (Zhang, »Sansiannü« *chuanshuo tanyuan*, 113).

*mini mafa ama jalan halame bukūri alin i dade bulhori omode banjiha, [...] tere bulhori omode abkai ilan sargan jui enggūlen, jenggūlen, fekūlen ebišeme jifi, enduri saksaha benjihe fulgiyan tubihe be fiyanggū sargan jui fekūlen bahafi anggade ašufi bilgade dosifi beye de ofi bokori yongšon be banjiha, terei hūncihin manju gūrun inu.*<sup>74</sup>

I identify the following structural elements: »Stating the Place of Residence of the Tribe«; »Conception and Birth of the Ancestor«; »Establishment of the Tribe« (see appendix, table 1).<sup>75</sup> As we shall see, all elements as well as several motifs reappear as part of the Mount Bukūri myth, the earliest written version of the Manchu origin myth.<sup>76</sup> The last sentence indicates that this Hūrha origin myth is actually a Manchu origin myth, too.<sup>77</sup> For reasons of clarity, I will continue to call it a Hūrha myth here .

The Mount Bukūri myth is the first written version of an imperial origin myth: not yet of the Manchu Qing (as those two names would only emerge in 1635 and the following year, as explained above), but of Nurhaci's and Hong Taiji's Golden Khanate. The Mount Bukūri myth is clearly related to the Hūrha myth. Gertraude Roth Li and Sun Lin assume that it was an adaptation of the Hūrha myth.<sup>78</sup> Giovanni Stary, on the other hand, argues that the basic motifs of the myth were widespread and can also be found in older Tungus, Korean, and Chinese origin myths. He assumes that similar myths had not only been orally transmitted by the Hūrha clan, but also by Nurhaci's clan, and were then further developed in written form.<sup>79</sup> Muksik supports the notion that myths were transmitted this way stating that »in our place, there is neither script nor scripture. Since ancient times, [the myth] has been told from mouth to mouth« (*mini bade bithe dangse akū, julgei banjiha be ulan ulan i gisureme jihengge*).<sup>80</sup> Indeed, some general motifs of the Hūrha myth appear in other myths from Northeast Asia, particularly those of the Southern Tungus.<sup>81</sup> However, as I show below, the Hūrha origin myth and the Mount Bukūri myth share more specific commonalities which indicate that they are more closely related.

74 *Jiu Manzhou dang* 9, ed. Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 4242. Note that the use of old Manchu involves some spelling peculiarities, mainly the use of the letter »ū« in proper names. For a transliteration, see *Jiu Manzhou dang* [1972], ed. Nobuo, Jun and Hidehiro, 124-125; for alternative translations, see Durrant, Repetition, 76; Sun and Song, Cong Manwen wenxian, 49; Stary, Mandschurische Reime, 77.

75 I identified the individual elements by following Grayson's suggestions for diverse northeast Asian myths and adding my own findings (Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 124-143).

76 For a complete German translation, see Fuchs, Bulhuri Omo, 50-52.

77 Roth Li, State building, 64;

78 Sun, Writing an empire, 102; Roth Li, State building, 64.

79 Stary, Mandschurische Reime, 76.

80 *Jiu Manzhou dang* 9, Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 4242.

81 See, for example, the Nanai origin myth (Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 140).

The Mount Bukūri myth dates to c. 1635<sup>82</sup> and was recorded in the *Documents of the Palace Historiographic Academy*<sup>83</sup> (*Nei guoshiyuan dang* 內國史院檔).<sup>84</sup> It is much longer than the Hūrha myth. Below, I paraphrase the entire theme narrative quoting key passages verbatim, with their translations. This enables me to point out how later variations deviate from the theme or »master narrative« without completely retelling each individual version.

The three clans of the Jurchen people were competing for the throne of the people's leader and were constantly fighting each other.

*jušen gurun i ilan halai niyalma, gurun de ejen tere soorin temšeme, inenggi dari becendure afandurebe.*

Therefore, »the Heavenly Khan« (*abkai han*) decided to send a »spirit« (*enduri*) to end the fighting and become their leader. He turned the spirit into a magpie (*saksaha*), which carried a »red fruit« (*fulgiyan tubihe*) to Lake Bulhūri (*bulhūri omo*) at the foot of Mount Bukūri (*bukūri alin*). At that time, »three girls« (*ilan sargan jui*) were bathing in the lake. Coming out of the water, the youngest found the red fruit lying on top of her clothes. »She put it in her mouth, and it went directly into her throat« (*ašuka tubihe bilgade šuwe dosika*). She became pregnant. Her two elder sisters left after assuring her, »We have all taken the drug of immortality, so you will not die! Do not worry« (*muse lingdan okto jeke, bucere kooli akūkai, si ume joboro*). Later, she gave birth to a boy who grew up within only a few years. His mother said to him:

Heaven gave life to you so that you bring order to the Jurchen people. You, son, must go to the Jurchen people. When the Jurchen people ask you where you come from, who your father and mother are, and what your family name is, you should say »I was born on Lake Bulhūri that is at the foot of Mount Bukūri. My first name is Bukūri Yongšon,<sup>85</sup> and my family name is Aisin Gioro [Golden Gioro] which descended from Heaven. I do not have a father. My mother is one of the three heavenly girls. The eldest is called Enggulen, the sec-

82 Matsumura (Founding legend, 41-46) explains why this date is plausible.

83 The Palace Historiographic Academy, also translated as »Inner Historical Office«, existed from 1635 to 1658 »in the top echelon of the early Ch'ing central government« and »[k]ept records, edited imperial pronouncements, [and] produced historical documents« (Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 348, no. 4212).

84 I did not have access to the original or its facsimile. For a transliteration of the relevant part in the second fascicle titled »uju nenehe [genggiyen] han i sain yabuha kooli uheri juwan nadan debtelin« in the *Documents of the Palace Historiographic Academy* (fasc. 2, pt. 1:1a-5b) see Matsumura, Founding legend, 46-48, who also offers a complete translation (48-50). Fuchs (Bulhūri Omo, 50) claims that a 1635 version of the myth is also included in *Ubaliyambuha suhe gisun kamcibuha manju i yargiyan kooli* ed. Imanishi Shunjū, 2-6. However, this is a misunderstanding: he mistakes the year whose events are recorded (which is 1636, not 1635) for the year in which they were actually written down.

85 Bukūri Yongšon can be translated as »[Mount] Bukūri Hero«, *yongšon* being »a corruption of *yingxiong* [英雄]«, Chinese for »hero«. As this might not have been obvious to Manchu readers unfamiliar with Chinese, I keep the Manchu transcription as Bukūri Yongšon's name throughout and do not refer to him as Bukūri Hero. For more about the significance of the term »hero«, as derived from a Manchu-Mongolian honorific title, see Crossley, Introduction, 19. In the facsimile print of a Chinese manuscript of *Taizu Gao huangdi shilu* 太祖高皇帝實錄 [Veritable Records of the Qianlong Emperor], the term »hero« (英雄) has been crossed out and replaced with *yongchun* 雍純, a transliteration for »Yongšon« (*Taizu Gao huangdi shilu*, vol. 1:3b).

ond Jenggulen, and the third Fekulen. I was born by Fekulen, so I am a spirit from Heaven above as well. The Heavenly Khan turned my soul into a red fruit, and another spirit in the form of a magpie was sent down and I was born [...].«

*simbe jušen gurun de genefi banjikini seme abka fulinggai banjibuha, jui si jušen gurun de genefi banji, jušen gurun i niyalma, simbe ainaha niyalma, sini ama eme we, gebu hala ai seme fonjiha de bukūri alin i dade bulhūri omoi dalin de banjiha mini gebu bukūri yongšon, mini hala abka ci wasika aisin gioro, minde ama akū, mini eme abkai ilan sargan jui bihe, eyungge sargan jui gebu enggulen, jacin sargan jui gebu jenggulen, ilaci sargan jui gebu fekulen, fekulen de banjihangge bi inu bi abkai dergi enduri bihe, mini fayangga be, abkai han fulgiyan tubihe obufi emu enduri be saksahai beye obufi takūrafi unggifi, bi banjiha [...].*

Fekulen gave Bukūri Yongšon a »canoe« (weihu). Bukūri Yongšon boated down a river and finally went ashore. »He bent willow twigs, supported with aromatic herbs<sup>86</sup> to make a chair and sat on it [...]« (*burga be bukdafi suiha be sujafi mulan arafi, mulan i dele tefi [...]*). A man coming to fetch water saw him there. He went back to his people who were fighting with each other and said, »Stop fighting! At the ford of our river is a very beautiful, good boy. [...] This boy is not of our Jurchen people« (*suwe ubade becendurebe naka, musei muke gaijara dogon de dembei hojo sain emu haha jui jifi, [...] tere jui musei ere jušen gurun i niyalma waka*). The Jurchen tribes stopped fighting and went to see and question this boy. Bukūri Yongšon recounted his mother's words. Thereupon,

everyone said, »This boy is someone who cannot go on foot.« Two men joined their hands and let him sit on them, carrying him [to their] home. The members of the three clans met for consultations [and said], »Let us stop fighting over [the position of] ruler of our people and let us elevate this one, make him our people's ruler, and give him our younger sister Beri Gege as a wife.« After they gave him the wife, he became the supreme leader of them all. Bukūri Yongšon, who came from Mount Bukūri and the shores of Bulhūri Lake, settled down in Odoli town in the lowlands of Omohoi and became the ruler of the unruly Manchu people.

*tere geren niyalma hendume, ere jui be yafahan gamara jui waka seme gisurefi, juwe niyalmai gala be ishun joolame jafafi[,] galai dele tebufi[,] boo de gamafi, ilan halai niyalma acafi[,] hebdeme, muse gurun de ejen ojoro soorin [sorin] temšere be nakaki, erebe tukiye fi, musei gurun de beile obuki, musei non berigege be, ede sargan buki seme gisurefi, sargan bufi ceni geren i dele terebe ejen obuha, bukori alin i dade, bulkori omoi dalinde banjiha bukori yongšon, omohoi bigan, odoli hecen de tefi, facuhūn manju gurun de beile ofi banjiha,<sup>87</sup>*

Thus ends the origin myth. I identify the following elements of thematic structure: »Conception and Birth of the Ancestor«; »Riverine Journey of the Ancestor«; »Marriage between Ancestor and Woman from the Tribe (Ancestress)«; »Ancestor is Elected Leader«; »Renewal of Social Order«, and »Stating the Place of Residence of the Tribe«. We see nearly

86 The term *suiha* can refer to mugwort, wormwood, and other aromatic herbs used for medicinal and spiritual purposes.

87 Zhang, »Sansiannū« chuanshuo tanyuan, 113.

all elements and motifs from the Hürha myth reappearing, even if some of the proper names are spelled differently. The only missing element is »Establishment of the Tribe«.

We also see motifs from the Jurchen origin myths reappearing (see appendix, table 1). The first chieftain of the Wanyan myth (*Eyewitness Account* and *Collected Accounts*) or the First Ancestor of the Hanpu myth (*History of the Jin*), respectively, is replaced by Bukūri Yongšon, who is a stranger-king. Like the former, Bukūri Yongšon pacifies fighting clans and is betrothed to a woman from their midst. Similarly, the motif of a senior relative's prophecy that the stranger-king will pacify and lead a people reappears. Here, the prophet is Bukūri Yongšon's mother Fekulen, whereas in the Wanyan myth it was Agunai, the elder brother of the First Ancestor. We again encounter a set of three siblings – sisters this time – which echoes the Wanyan motif of three brothers, although the most important sibling here is the youngest, Fekulen, whose slightly different name compared to those of her sisters, Enggulen and Jenggulen, that are nearly identical, marks her as special.

The motif of the protagonist's integration into an existing clan is repeated prominently. In the Wanyan myth, Wanyan joins a nameless Jurchen clan; in the Hanpu myth, the First Ancestor joins the Wanyan clan and adopts its name. Here, Bukūri Yongšon pacifies the three Jurchen clans and introduces his own family name, Aisin Gioro, which repeats the motif of gold. Finally, we again see the motif of the miraculous birth. Fekulen bears Bukūri Yongšon without sexual intercourse – she eats a spirit fruit, wonderfully transformed by the Heavenly Khan and brought to her by a spirit magpie. Her impregnation could be described as a »virginal conception«, as Fekulen herself tells Bukūri Yongšon that he does not have a father.

Only one motif from the Wanyan and Hanpu myths, at least in my counting, disappears, which is the symbolical set of two. In the Wanyan and Hanpu myths, the first chieftain, or First Ancestor, has two sons; in the Hanpu myth, he pacifies two fighting clans. Yet, most of the earlier motifs make a direct or indirect reappearance in the Mount Bukūri myth. This suggests that more general elements and motifs – first ancestor, number three, rivers and mountains, and a miraculous birth – had already been common themes in the Wanyan myth or became common Tungusic motifs thereafter.

Some motifs in the Mount Bukūri myth have no direct equivalents in the Wanyan myth. Mount Bukūri and Lake Bulhūri, a mountain and a body of water, are introduced as sacred places only in the Hürha and Mount Bukūri myths. The spirit magpie and the red fruit, too, make their first appearances in those two myths.

Birds and fruits, or eggs, appear frequently in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean origin myths.<sup>88</sup> Such myths, for example the one of the bird that lives in the sun,<sup>89</sup> commonly associate birds, and especially black birds, such as crows or magpies, with the sun. Waters, on the other hand, and particularly rivers, are associated with »life« and »giving birth« (»生命«,

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88 Yang and An, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, 148-149; Birell, *Chinese Mythology*, 115-127. In versions of the foundation myths of Koguryō from the seventh century onwards, the hero is born from an egg (Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 68-94).

89 Yang and An, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, 32, 95-96.

»生育«) among the peoples of Northeast Asia.<sup>90</sup> In his analysis of the origin myth of the Shang dynasty (trad. c. 1600–c. 1046 BCE), Yang Gongji stated that

a sun deity (*feng* bird<sup>91</sup>, dark-coloured bird, spirit magpie) and a river deity's daughter (also spirit bird, *huang* bird) married and then brought Shang<sup>92</sup> into being – he is a »man«, but he is also an entire people. Sun and river water were considered to be father and mother of humankind.

日神(鳳、玄鳥、神鵲)和河神的女兒(也是神鳥、娥凰)結婚, 于是產生了商—是一个‘人’, 也是全族。這說明在當時人的觀念中, 認為太陽和河水是人类的父親和母親。<sup>93</sup>

There are further parallels between the origin myth of the Shang 商 dynasty (traditionally c. 1600–1046 BCE) with the Mount Bukūri myth. The myth was first recorded in the *Shiji* by Sima Qian, the oldest Chinese history:

As for Hsieh [Xie] of Yin, his mother was called Chien-ti [Jiandi]. [...] [One day when] she and two other women went out to bathe, she saw a black bird lay an egg. Chien-ti took it and swallowed it. For this reason, she became pregnant and gave birth to Hsieh.

殷契, 母曰簡狄 [...]. 三人行浴, 見玄鳥墮其卵, 簡狄取吞之, 因孕生契。<sup>94</sup>

Instead of by the sun, Bukūri Yongšon is fathered by Heaven, though he is also embodied by a dark bird (magpie) and a red fruit, which features instead of the egg. He is borne by Fekulen, who bathes with two women (her sisters), just like Yin's mother Jiandi.

When we consider Fekulen sending her son downstream in a canoe, the specific embeddedness of the Mount Bukūri myth in northeast Asian mythology becomes clear. Although the motif of »the abandonment of the hero-child (>Moses motif)<« can be found in many Asian and non-Asian myths,<sup>95</sup> the second motif of the »Riverine Journey of the Hero«<sup>96</sup> appears specifically in northeast Asian origin myths of the Khitan<sup>97</sup> and of the Southern Tungusic Nanai.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, two minor motifs appear, which have their parallels in other Asian myths. Firstly, the chair is introduced as the sign of a ruler, here built by the stranger-king himself, as well as the fact that he must be carried. In particular, the latter motif can also be found in Tibetan origin myths on the first king of Tibet. His name, gNya'-khri btsan-po, was later interpreted

90 Zhang, Yin-Shang, Gaogouli, Manzu, 51.

91 *Feng* 鳳 is a mythological male bird, often translated as »phoenix« in English, whose female counterpart is called *huang* 凰.

92 This refers to Xie of Yin 殷契, the first ancestor of the Shang dynasty.

93 Yang, *Zhongguo wenxue*, 94. Note that some characters had already been replaced by simplified ones, while others are still traditional.

94 *Shiji* 3:91; translated in *Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. I, ed. Nienhauser Jr., 41; see also Yang and An, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, 148–149; Birell, *Chinese Mythology*, 115–116.

95 Durrant, *Repetition*, 74, fn 6.

96 Grayson (*Myths from Korea*, 153) uses the expression »Riverine Descent of the Hero«, which I revised for clarity.

97 *Liaoshi* 37:445–446; see also Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 124. The Khitan are usually described as proto-Mongol. However, their origin myth ultimately puts them in close relation to the Southern Tunguses.

98 Lattimore, *Gold Tribe*, 11–12; see also Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 140.

as meaning »neck-throne emperor«, because according to the origin myth, his new subjects carried him on their necks.<sup>99</sup> The parallels with gNya'-khri btsan-po continue: he, too, comes from Heaven, lands on a mountain, from where he descends (not by canoe), and is found by herdsmen who identify him as their ruler.<sup>100</sup> Secondly, the motif of Bukūri Yongšon »growing up before the [proper amount of] years were over« (*aniya goidahakū amban* [sic] *oho*)<sup>101</sup> can already be found in Buddhist texts about Gautama Buddha's birth. According to Buddhist tradition, Gautama walked seven steps northwards directly after being born. It also features in the pre-Islamic version of the origin myth of the Oghuz Turks, whose legendary ancestor, Oghuz Khan, »[a]fter forty days [...] started to walk and play«.<sup>102</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Hūrha myth already introduces the »Manchu people« (*manju gurun*). Moreover, the Mount Bukūri myth refers to the »Jurchen people« (*jušen gurun*). In fact, it uses the two terms, Manchu and Jurchen, to refer to one and the same populace, albeit at different points in time. At first, the myth refers to the »unruly Jurchen people« (*facuhūn jušen gurun*) whom the Heavenly Khan intends to pacify by sending Bukūri Yongšon. In the end, Bukūri Yongšon becomes leader of the »unruly Manchu people« (*facuhūn manju gurun*), clearly referring to the same people.

#### *Variation I: The Tripartite White Mountain-Mount Bukūri-Fanca Myth (1655)*

Variation I, dated 1655, introduces new topics and fails to include old ones (see appendix, table 1).<sup>103</sup> Most importantly, it adds a new introductory part, new concluding sentences to the theme myth (which now becomes the second part), and a novel third part.

The new introduction concerns the White Mountain (*šanggiyan alin*), here also referred to as »Long White Mountain« (*golmin šanggiyan alin*). Already known from the historiography of the Jurchen Golden Khanate, it makes its first appearance here as part of the Manchu myth (see illustration 1).<sup>104</sup> The mountain is described in geographical terms, including a reference to its crater lake, »a lake called Tamun«<sup>105</sup> (*tamun i gebungge omo*), as well as the three rivers that originate from the mountain, Yalu, Hüntung, and Aihu.<sup>106</sup> Sun claims that the introduction of

99 *History of Buddhism*, 435, about the translation of the name, see 431, fn 1485; see also *Mirror* (*rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*) trans. Sørensen, 138-139; Zhang, »Sansiannü« chuanshuo tanyuan, 109-111, 120-121. I thank Reinier Langelaar for pointing out this parallel myth to me and for the reference.

100 *Mirror* (*rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*), trans. Sørensen, 139.

101 Zhang, »Sansiannü« chuanshuo tanyuan, 112.

102 Doğruyol, *Epic as a literary genre*, 187. I am particularly grateful to Joo-Yup Lee, who pointed out this myth and provided references for it (Lee, *Some remarks*, 130, fn. 44). For an English translation of the whole myth in Uighur script (manuscript held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris), see Doğruyol, *Epic as a literary genre*, 187-196.

103 *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:1-10 [3-12]. A transliterated version can be found in Matsumura, *Founding legend*, 50-52 and in *Ubalıyambuha suhe gısın kamcibuha Manju i yargiyan kooli*, 1-6.

104 *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:1 [3].

105 Today, Lake Tamun is called »Heaven Lake« (*Tianchi* 天池) in Chinese.

106 *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:1 [3]. The Yalu River has kept its name, the Hüntung River is the Sunggari and the Aihu River (*Aihu* 愛乎, 愛濤 in Chinese) is the Tumen River (Matsumura, *Qing Taizu shilu* yanjiu, 25).

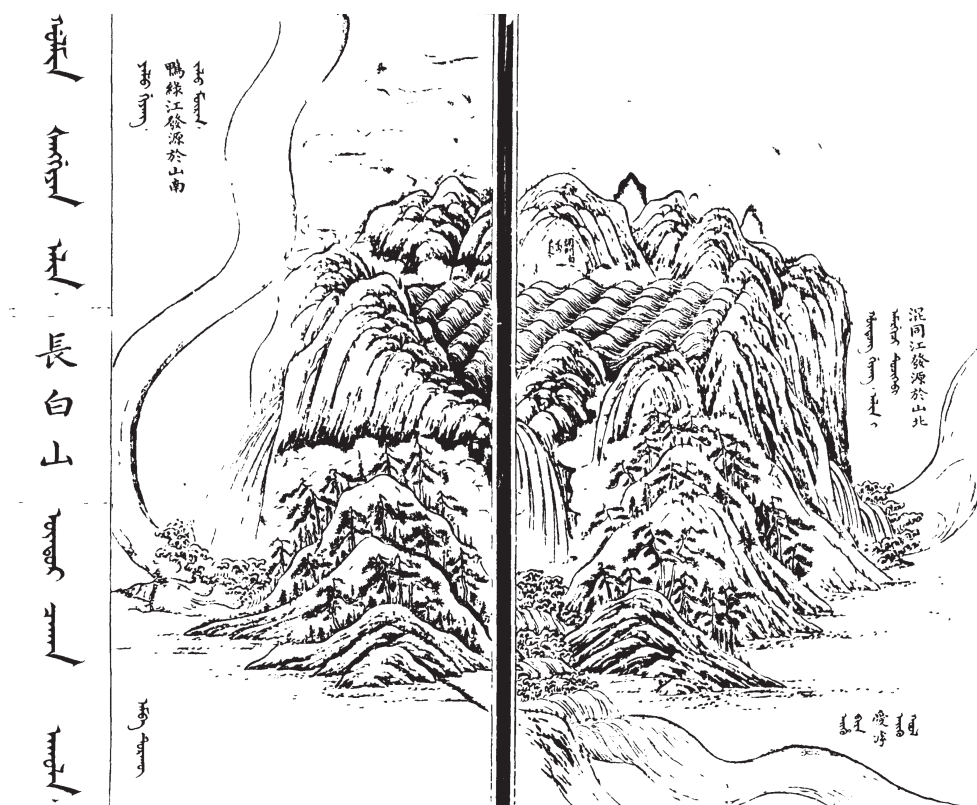


Illustration 1: The »Long White Mountain« and its three rivers<sup>109</sup>

the White Mountain »is clearly connected to the fact that the Manchus, having now left their homeland, felt an urgent need to establish a spiritual geographical basis«.<sup>107</sup> In view of the rather mundane way in which the White Mountain is introduced, however, it does not yet feature as a sacred place proper. It will only assume more sacredness in variation II in 1736.

In a transitional sentence, the text of variation I somewhat awkwardly attempts to link the White Mountain and the earliest attested version of the myth, which continues to be set at Mount Bukūri:

Originally, the Manchu people came from the east of the Long White Mountain where a mountain called Bukūri rises with a lake called Bulhūri.

*manju gurun i da, golmin šanggiyan alin i šun dekdere ergi bukūri gebungge alin, bulhūri gebungge omoci tucike,*<sup>108</sup>

107 Sun, *Writing an empire*, 103.

108 *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:3 [5].

109 *Manju yargiyan kooli* 1:[1a-b]). The captions on the left give the mountain's name in Manchu, Chinese, and Mongolian. The small captions in the picture refer to the rivers originating from Lake Tamun. The captions in the upper left corner say »Yalu River« in Manchu, Chinese, and Mongol, explaining in Chinese that it »flows towards the south of the mountain«. The middle right notes in Manchu and Chinese say that »the Hüntung/Huntong River flows towards the north of the mountain«. The lower right reads »Aihu River« in

In doing so, the White Mountain is geographically tied to the Manchu origin myth, but why its description features as an introduction will only become clear later.

Unlike the theme myth, variation I does not mention the Jurchen. Sun assumes that the »Jurchen people« were replaced by »unruly people« (*facuhūn gurun*), and that this shows that the Shunzhi emperor »wished to minimize the association« between Manchus and Jurchen. In her opinion, this »marks the turning point between the »inheritors of the Jin dynasty« and the making of the Manchus [...].<sup>110</sup>

The Heavenly Khan, who occupied a prominent position in the theme myth, largely disappears from variation I, too. It still mentions him in Fekulen's speech to her son, but this seems to be an accidental remnant from the theme myth, since the Heavenly Khan no longer features as the spiritus rector of the events.

Variation I then adds two new aspects at the end of the Bukūri Yongšon part:

After Bukūri Yongšon had settled down in a town called Odoli in the lowlands called Omohui, to the east of the White Mountain, and pacified the unruly, he said that the name of the people was »Manchu«. This [man] was the first ancestor of the Manchu people.

*bukūri yongšon šanggiyan alin i šun dekedere [sic] ergi omohoi gebungge bigan i odoli gebungge hecen de tefi, facuhūn be toktobufi, gurun i gebu be manju sehe, tere manju gurun i da mafan inu,*<sup>111</sup>

Like Mount Bukūri in the introduction, the town Odoli, Bukūri Yongšon's chosen place of settlement, is now also located in relation to the White Mountain. Furthermore, Bukūri Yongšon is now not only the ruler, but the »first ancestor of the Manchu people« (*manju gurun i da mafan*).

Subsequently, variation I introduces a new, third part: a »restorative« or »retriever« myth about a boy, Fanca (*Fancha* 凡察, in Chinese). His role follows the motif of the »sole survivor«, which shows him to be »a kingly figure«, in line with Indian and Tibetan tradition.<sup>112</sup> Fanca is a descendant of »Bukūri Yongšon's clan« (*bukūri yongšon i uksun mukūn*).<sup>113</sup> The story reports that the clan's heroic qualities had worn off over time, and the people had become disunited again. When the other clans rebelled, Bukūri Yongšon's clan was defeated and almost completely eradicated. Only Fanca managed to escape, helped by a »spirit magpie« (*enduri saksaha*), who settled on Fanca's head, which made his pursuers mistake him for a dead tree.<sup>114</sup> Consequently, Fanca was able to re-establish the clan.

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Manchu, Chinese, and Mongol. Finally, the lower left says »great cascade« in Manchu, referring to the waterfall originating from Lake Tamun, which here seems to feed into the Aihu River, while it actually feeds into the Hüntung River, known today as Sunggari.

<sup>110</sup> Sun, Writing an empire, 103-104.

<sup>111</sup> *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* 1:7-8 [9-10].

<sup>112</sup> Dotson, Theorising the king, 89-90. Tibetan myths inherited this motif from the two main Hindu epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>113</sup> Note that the clan is not referred to as »Aisin Gioro« here. Note also that there was a historical Fanca (?-1451/1458), half-brother of Möngke Temür (see below) (Crossley, Introduction, 14, 14n2; Goodrich and Fang, *Ming Biography*, 1066; see also Roth Li (State building, 13, 20), who claims Fanca was Möngke Temür's son).

<sup>114</sup> Trees generally seem to be rare topics in founding myths. There is a Uyghur origin myth that features trees giving birth to the first ancestor (Lee, Some remarks, 129-130, see also 129 fn. 42). I thank Joo-yup Lee for this reference.

Therefore, later generations of the Manchu people all said that the magpie was their ancestor and abstained from killing it.

*tuttu ofi manju gurun i amaga jalan i juse omosi gemu sakaha be mafa seme warakū bihe.*<sup>115</sup>

Apart from the new motifs, Fanca's story resembles the motif of the hero-child Bukūri Yongšon and reinforces the motif of the magpie, which now also embodies the people's ancestor. The origins of the Fanca myth and the reason for its inclusion are unknown.<sup>116</sup>

Compared to the theme myth, all six original elements of thematic structure are maintained. In addition, we find a new element at the beginning, »Introduction of a Holy Mountain«, which is not yet fully developed. There are three new postfixed elements: »Establishment of the People«, »Hero's Escape«, and »Reestablishment of the People«. However, not all of these elements are truly new, as we already know them from the Jurchen and Hūrha myths. In the appendix, table 1, I compare the elements of all myths, bringing parallels and discrepancies to the fore. Firstly, variation I shows all elements of the Jurchen myth if we ignore the fact that the mere arrival of the ancestor is replaced by his conception and birth (rows 2 and 3), and that the ancestor's admission to the tribe is replaced by his establishment as the ancestor of the Manchu people (rows 9 and 10). Secondly, variation I contains all elements of the Hūrha myth. Thirdly, variation I reintroduces already-known elements, the holy mountain (row 1) and the establishment of the people (row 9). Finally, the Jurchen and Hūrha myth share three elements if we accept what was said before for lines 2 and 3, and for lines 9 and 10. This indicates that the Hūrha myth might have been a transmitter from the Jurchen to the Manchu myth.

#### *Variation II: The bipartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon myth (1736)*

Variation II, perhaps written down in 1736,<sup>117</sup> is more neatly organised and features less repetition than the theme myth and variation I (see appendix, table 1). Apparently, it does not include the Fanca myth. However, I could only access a transcription by Zhang Huake, which might be incomplete.

Here, the White Mountain replaces Mount Bukūri. It is now the place of origin of both Nurhaci and the Aisin Gioro clan, as well as the main point of reference for locating other places. Mount Bukūri and Lake Bulhūri are only mentioned once at the very end of the first part, and only in relation to the White Mountain: »To the east of the [Long White] Mountain,

115 *Daicing gurun i taidzu horonggo enduringge hūwangdi iyargiyan kooli* 1:9 [11].

116 Sun (Writing an empire, 105-106) claims that a Kangxi version (1686) of the myth would be another variation, because, she believed, it stressed for the first time that the name of the people had already been »Manchu« since Bukūri Yongšon's time. Sun, however, relies on a transliteration of the Mount Bukūri theme myth, which omits the final sentences (Sun and Song, Cong Manwen wenxian, 50) that mention the Manchu people (Zhang, »Sansiannū« chuanshuo tanyuan, 113).

117 A transliteration can be found in Zhang, "Jiu Manzhou dang" cihui, 70-71. The variant stems from a manuscript held in the Palace Museum in Taipei which I could not access, *Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hūwangdi i da hergen i bithe dergi debtelin* (*Manwen Taizu Gao huangdi benji* 滿文太祖高皇帝本紀), vol. 1, 1-4 (Zhang, "Jiu Manzhou dang" cihui, 71 n96). The document itself does not contain a date; 1736 is suggested by Chen (*Manwen Qing benji yanjiu*, 7-8).

where a mountain called Bukūri emerges, lies Lake Bulhūri« (*alin i šun dekdere ergi bukūri gebungge alin i da de bulhūri gebungge omo bi*).<sup>118</sup> At the end of the second part, the town Odoli, where Bukūri Yongšon settled down, is said to be situated »east of the Long White Mountain« (*golmin šanggiyan alin i šun*).<sup>119</sup> Although the ancestor's name remains Bukūri Yongšon, it loses part of its meaning because it is never explicitly stated that his mother conceived him at the lake at Mount Bukūri.

Nurhaci (here Nurgaci) himself is mentioned for the first time in the Manchu myth. Moreover, by including a prophecy, the White Mountain is now incorporated into the myth proper:

The ancestors of Nurgaci of the Aisin Gioro clan emerged from the Long White Mountain. [...] There was a saying by a wise man who observed the skies<sup>120</sup>, »At this place, a holy man will appear to whom all people will surrender.«

*hala aisin gioro, gebu nurgaci nenehe jalan golmin šanggiyan alin ci hūhuri be deribuhebi, [...] sukdun be tuwame bahanara niyalma i henduhengge, ubade enduringge niyalma tucifi geren gurun be dahabumbi seme gisurehe bihe,*<sup>121</sup>

The prophecy seems to reflect familiarity with content from the *History of the Jin*, already adduced above, »The Long White Mountain is in the region from where the kings rose«. <sup>122</sup> The prophecy here resembles the earlier prophecies concerning the Jurchen's First Ancestor and Bukūri Yongšon – like them, Nurhaci is predicted to become a ruler. In the earlier-dated sources, senior relatives (mother, elder brother) made the prophecies; here, they are replaced by a »wise man who observed the skies«. <sup>123</sup>

### *Variation III: The tripartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon-Fanca myth (1739)*

Variation III was written down only slightly later than the second one, in 1739. <sup>124</sup> Written in Manchu and Chinese, it includes three parts, as does variation I. The first part resembles variation II, albeit with one important difference: it does not include the Nurhaci prophecy. In the second part, the »Heavenly Khan« has now completely disappeared. The third part on Fanca resembles variation I.

118 Zhang, "Jiu Manzhou dang" cihui, 70.

119 Zhang, "Jiu Manzhou dang" cihui, 71.

120 I translated *sukdun* somewhat freely as »skies« here. It literally means »vapour«, »spirit«, or »air«, among other things. However, *sukdun* can be found regularly in texts about divination and hence usually refers to the clouds and other phenomena in the sky which are interpreted for prophecies (see, for example, Manwen riyue xingchen zhan, [5-8] and throughout).

121 Zhang, "Jiu Manzhou dang" cihui, 70.

122 Above and *Jinshi* 35:819.

123 This figure might be a shaman, and is also reminiscent of the »officer of the Heaven« in the *History of the Jin*, who makes a prophecy about Aguda, the dynastic founder (*Jinshi* 2:19).

124 *Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hūwangdi i yargiyan kooli* (ujui debtelin. sahaḥūn honin aniya ci niowanggiyan bonio aniya de isinahabi), 123-131 [1-9]; Transliteration: Sun and Song, Cong Manwen wenxian, 54-55 (contains spelling mistakes); Chinese version: *Taizu Gao huangdi shilu* 1:1b-3b [21-22]; German translation: Hauer, Das mandschurische Kaiserhaus, 13-14.

*Variation IV: The tripartite Nurhaci/White Mountain-Bukūri Yongšon-Fanca myth (1819)*

Variation IV, contained in a manuscript copy of the annals of the Qianlong emperor,<sup>125</sup> generally agrees with variation II in its first and second parts – including the Nurhaci prophecy. However, the third part deviates from it by excluding the notion that the magpie is the Manchus' ancestor.

Most importantly, variation IV carries the deletion of Mount Bukūri from the Manchu origin myth forward. Here, the ancestor still retains the name Bukūri Yongšon and the White Mountain has not yet replaced Mount Bukūri, but a nameless mountain remains part of the myth. In the first part, we read: »To the east of the [Long White] Mountain, where a mountain emerges, lies Lake Bulhūri, which is also called Lake Tamun« (*alin i šun dekdere ergi alin i dade, bulhūri gebungge omo bi, geli tamun omo sembi*).<sup>126</sup> This also prepares the way for Lake Bulhūri's exit from the myth, with Lake Tamun taking its place. Because Lake Tamun is the crater lake atop the White Mountain, it is strange to locate it to the mountain's east. However, this seems to be a compromise that keeps parts of the previous variations while simultaneously juxtaposing the mythological Mount Bukūri – here a nameless mountain – and Lake Bulhūri with the real White Mountain and Lake Tamun, thus bringing the myth closer to the Manchu home.

*Variation V: The tripartite Mount Bukūri-Fanca-Möngke Temür Variation (1928)*

Finally, variation V is a narrative found in the Chinese *Draft History of the Qing Dynasty* (*Qingshigao* 清史稿), compiled by Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽 (1844-1927) and first published in 1928. It is an impoverished version – it has lost nearly all mythological motifs and omits most of the myth. Simultaneously, it interweaves it with quasi-historical accounts, newly incorporating a historical figure, Möngke Temür (also Menggetimur, *Menggetiemu'er* 孟哥帖木兒, ?-1433):

The clan name of the Great Ancestor (*Taizu*) [...] Emperor of Above (*Gao huangdi*) was Aisin Gioro, his personal name Nurhaci. His ancestors were of the Golden Khanate's (*Jin*) tribe. The First Ancestor (*Shizu*) Bukūri Yongšon's mother was Fekulen. Upon receiving a red fruit, she became pregnant. [Bukūri Yongšon] grew up in a short time. He pacified the chaos of the three clans, and the masses made him their leader. He lived in Odoli town in the wilderness of Omohoi to the east of the Long White Mountain and called his tribal people Manchu. The Manchu originated there. [...]

After several generations, Bukūri Yongšon's clan could not pacify their masses, and the masses rebelled. The clan was defeated and only the boy Fanca escaped.

After another several generations, there arrived Möngke Temür, who became Original Ancestor and Primary Emperor. He had a wise strategy, planned to restore [the tribe] and destroy his enemies and, moreover, established a territory. Thereupon, the Primary Ancestor moved to Hetu Ala at the shore of Suksuhu River.

太祖 [...] 高皇帝, 姓愛新覺羅氏, 諱努爾哈齊。其先蓋金遺部。始祖布庫里雍順, 母曰佛庫倫, 相傳感朱果而孕。稍長, 定三姓之亂, 眾奉為貝勒, 居長白山東俄漠惠之野俄朵里城, 號其部

125 Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hüwangdi i da hergen i bithe dergi debtelin 1:[7b-10b].

126 Daicing gurun i taidzu dergi hüwangdi i da hergen i bithe dergi debtelin 1:[7b].

族曰滿洲。滿洲自此始。[...] 越數世，布庫里雍順之族不善撫其眾，眾叛，族被戕，幼子范察走免。又數世，至都督孟特穆，是為肇祖原皇帝，有智略，謀恢復，殲其仇，且責地焉。於是肇祖移居蘇克蘇湍河赫圖阿喇。<sup>127</sup>

We know all elements and motifs that appear here, although the story is short and many other familiar aspects are missing (see appendix, table 1): there is no Mount Bukūri, no lake, no Heaven, no magpie, etc. The only mythological aspects are Fekulen's impregnation and Bukūri Yongšon's swift coming of age. What is new is Möngke Temür, chieftain of the Jurchen Odoli tribe.<sup>128</sup> He was not related to the Aisin Gioro, but Nurhaci already claimed him as an ancestor for reasons of legitimacy.<sup>129</sup> According to Pamela Crossley, this »etiological tale« aims to »explain the rise to dominance of the Möngke Temür lineage in the ancestral region«.<sup>130</sup> Möngke Temür fits into the narrative tradition quite well: like Fanca before and Nurhaci after him, Möngke Temür is a retriever of the clan's power, further adding to the motif of the hero who restores order. Given the fact that variation V was compiled after the Qing dynasty's decline, it remains an open question where the Möngke Temür story came from as it had not been part of any previous variation.

In general, variation V in fact »de-mythologises« the origin myth, which seems to become a mere story. Still, we find four of six elements of the theme myth and all four additional elements of variation I (see appendix, table 1).

### Conclusion

The comparison between the Southern Tungusic origin myths of the Jurchen Golden Khanate and of the Jurchen-Manchu Great Warrior Khanate, or Qing Empire brings many similarities to the fore (see appendix, table 1). These similarities persist despite the fact that the Manchu origin myths eventually shed the most obvious references to the Jurchen. As shown, many motifs of the Jurchen myth reappear in the Manchu narratives in either the same or modified form. Moreover, we also see certain thematic constructions reappear. Firstly, the ancestor or his mother, respectively, are one of three siblings in both myths. Secondly, the ancestor joins an already-established people – living at the shores of a river – from the outside as a stranger-king. Thirdly, in both cases, the people suffer from internal dispute, which the stranger-king resolves. This act convinces the people that he is their leader. Finally, the stranger-king is betrothed to a woman from the people, with whom he then forms the apical ancestral couple.

In addition to a comparison of the earlier Jurchen and the later Jurchen-Manchu origin myths, I have moreover embedded at least some elements of their thematic structure into the pool of origin myths in Northeast and Inner Asia. However, it goes beyond the scope of this paper to provide a more detailed embedding of and comparison to other origin myths

127 *Qingshigao* 1:1.

128 Goodrich and Fang, *Ming Biography*, 1065-1067; see also Roth Li, *State building*, 12.

129 Goodrich and Fang, *Ming Biography*, 1067; see also Crossley, *Introduction*, 14-15; Roth Li, *State building*, 27-28.

130 Crossley, *Introduction*, 14.

in Asia and even beyond. Nevertheless, I hope that my comparative analysis of Chinese and Manchu sources from the twelfth to the twentieth century has provided some useful material, on which further studies can be grounded: studies of how origin myths are used in discourses of political legitimation, integration, and dominance, as well as further comparative analyses on differences and similarities between Southern Tungusic and other origin myths.

As outlined above, the similarities between the Jurchen and the Manchu myths are particularly striking when comparing them to other origin myths from Northeast Asia. Although some motifs also appear in other northeast Asian myths, the thematic constructions differ between Jurchen-Manchu myths and other Tungusic myths.<sup>131</sup> This leads to the conclusion that the thesis that the Manchu emperors »wished to minimize the association and the memory of their relations with the Jurchens« is not entirely convincing.<sup>132</sup> Rather, the transformation of the Manchu myth is more complicated. It is correct that the term »Jurchen« disappeared from the Manchu myth over time. However, there was no clear-cut transition from the term »Jurchen« to the term »Manchu« as a reference to the people, and their uses even briefly overlapped. In the Hūrha myth (1635), only the term »Manchu« appears; in the Mount Bukūri myth (1635), both Jurchen and Manchu are used, clearly referring to the same group of people; only from variation I (1655) onwards, does »Manchu« completely replace »Jurchen«. It was thus unnecessary to add the ethnonym »Manchu«; one merely needed to emphasise it.

At the same time, the Manchu myth maintains Jurchen motifs, firstly and most importantly, the *miraculous birth* to mark the First Ancestor – Wanyan or Hanpu and Bukūri Yongšon, respectively – as the chosen ones; secondly, the motifs of *stranger-king* and hero; thirdly, the motif of *ancestor and ancestress*, whereby the hero marries a woman from the clan he joins as a stranger; fourthly, the motif of a *prophecy* by senior relatives that the hero was to become ruler; fifthly, the motif of *three siblings*, as brothers of the hero himself and as sisters of the hero's mother who have important supportive roles; sixthly, the *clan* that the hero pacifies and joins; seventhly, *waters and rivers* as dwelling places but also as sacred places of origin; and, eighthly, a *mountain* as a sacred place of origin.

Finally, it is remarkable that in the Manchu theme myth of 1635 the sacred mountain is Mount Bukūri, which plays no role in the Jurchen myth. Over time, however, it is replaced by the White Mountain, which of course occupies a similar position in the Jurchen myth. This puts the Manchu in closer relation to the Jurchen, even if the latter's name is no longer mentioned. Even though the Jurchen as a people have disappeared from the Manchu myth, the Jurchen myth is, hidden in plain sight in the Manchu myth.

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131 For brief notes on a number of foundation myths, see Grayson, *Myths from Korea*, 24-123 (Korea), 123-151 (northeast Asia in general).

132 Sun, *Writing an empire*, 103.

## Appendix

|                                                                    | Jurchen<br>Wanyan<br>myth | Jurchen<br>Hanpu<br>myth | Hürha<br>theme | Mount<br>Bukūri<br>theme | Manchu<br>variation<br>I | Manchu<br>variation<br>II | Manchu<br>variation<br>III | Manchu<br>variation<br>IV | Manchu<br>variation<br>V |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Introduction of a Holy Mountain                                    |                           | X                        |                |                          | (X)                      | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Conception and Birth of the Ancestor                               |                           |                          | X              | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Arrival of the Ancestor                                            | X                         | X                        |                |                          |                          |                           |                            |                           |                          |
| Riverine Journey of the Ancestor                                   |                           |                          |                | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         |                          |
| Marriage between Ancestor and Woman<br>from the Tribe (Ancestress) | X                         | X                        |                | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         |                          |
| Ancestor Elected Leader                                            | X                         | X                        |                | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Ancestor Establishes New Social Order                              |                           | X                        |                | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Stating the Place of Residence of the Tribe                        |                           | X                        | X              | X                        | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Establishment of the People                                        |                           |                          | X              |                          | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Ancestor Is Admitted to the Tribe                                  | X                         | X                        |                |                          | X                        | X                         | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Hero's Escape                                                      |                           |                          |                |                          | X                        |                           | X                          | X                         | X                        |
| Reestablishment of the People                                      |                           |                          |                |                          | X                        |                           | X                          | X                         | X                        |

Table 1. Comparison of elements of thematic structure in the Jurchen and Manchu origin myths.

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