

Editors' Note

Four Books on the Manchus in China and in Greater Asia

In the past few years four new books have challenged and added greater complexity to how scholars have explained the place of the Manchus in Chinese history. The editors of the *Journal of Asian Studies* invited two historians to assess how these new books can be placed in the historiography not just of China but of Asia more generally. Kent Guy approaches this problem as a sinologist and historian of the Qing, and begins with the basic question, "Who were the Manchus?" Guy goes on to discuss the nature of Manchu political legitimacy, the organization of the Banner system, the problem of Manchu ethnic identity, and the Qing as the last dynasty to rule China. Sudipta Sen views the Manchus as discussed in these books by locating them on the "larger canvas" of Asian history. A historian of the British East India Company in the late Mughal period, Sen examines questions of "the barbarian" in the history of civilizations and issues of frontier, territory, and the relation between genealogy and ethnic identity of a conquering people. By crossing boundaries that often separate historians of particular regions, these articles constitute an exercise in comparative analysis that provides the insights of regional knowledge and makes possible a scholarly engagement among specialists of different regions.

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