

# Social changes and peasant livelihood during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty

## -- Taking Shao Ying, a native of Shandong, as an example of immigrating to Northeast China

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### Abstract

In the early Qing Dynasty, Manchu rulers sought to prevent a large number of Han people from leaving customs and infringing on the interests of the Manchus, due to its influence on the customs and order of the Manchu people in the "the place of prosperity", Northeast China was sealed off and Han people in the region were prohibited from migrating to the northeast. However, the strict ban did not completely stop the Han immigration activities. A series of economic policies implemented during the period from Kangxi to Qianlong made Shandong's population increase substantially, and it was difficult for the limited land to support the rapidly growing population. During the reign of Emperor Qianlong, a series of natural disasters occurred in Shandong, and poverty and famine forced a large number of Han people to enter the east to make a living. Based on the experience of Shao Ying, a poor man in Jimo, Shandong province, during the Qianlong period, this paper tries to explore this grand immigration history and the economic and social background at that time.

### Keywords

Qing Dynasty, the Qianlong period, population migration, regional economy.

## 1. Introduction

The history of migration from the Pass to the northeast can be traced back to the Zhou Dynasty(1046 BC - 256 BC). According to legend, Shun once exiled Gonggong to Youzhou, and Youzhou was roughly located in today's Hebei and Liaoning provinces. In the Qin and Han dynasties, the government organized immigrants to the northeast region. After that, the Jin, Sui, Song and Yuan Dynasties were recorded that the government organized immigrants to cultivate the northeast. After the abolition of the northeast prohibition policy in the late Qing Dynasty, the climax of immigration to the northeast appeared in modern times.

When sorting out the relevant data of the family genealogy, the author found that Shao Ying, the first ancestor of the Shao family in Xiuyan, migrated from Jimo to Xiuyan in Liaoning Province as early as in the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty (1736-1796), which aroused the author's attention to the migration activities of Shandong people to the northeast.. What kind of historical process is entering the east of Shanhaiguan? Why do Shandong people want to join the Northeast China? Why do they use the northeast as a destination?

## 2. The Historical Background of Brave the Journey to the Northeast

### 2.1. The Origin of Brave the Journey to the Northeast

Northeast China refers to the vast regions of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning and eastern Inner Mongolia. Because it is located in the east of Shanhaiguan(an important pass to Northeast

China), it is called Northeast China, also called outside the customs, south of Shanhaiguan is also known as inside the customs. In the middle of the Qing Dynasty (1662- -1795), the government began to ban the northeast, and prohibited the Han people from going to the customs for reclamation. To Northeast China, to take the risk of severe punishment, but also through the layers of checkpoints, this is the origin of Brave the Journey to the Northeast. In the tenth year of Xianfeng (1860), the government lifted the ban and went to Northeast China to make a living. According to the growth of the population in northeast China, at least 10 million people migrated to the northeast from the 18th year of Qianlong (1753) to the third year of Xuantong (1911).

## 2.2. The Lockdown Policy Towards Northeast China in the Early Qing Dynasty

For a long time from the Song Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty (960-1644), there was no policy restrictions on the migration of the Han people at that time, regarding the migration of Han people from the inner region to the outside of the border. Except for the influence of war, people came and go relatively freely. The Northeast China region was sparsely populated, and under the influence of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties (1628-1700) war, people fled, leading to the waste city and fort, ruined walls, thousands of miles, no land, no confidence. Northeast China was the birthplace of the Qing Dynasty. In order to strengthen the roots, the early Qing government encouraged and supported the Han people to leave the customs for reclamation, and ordered the local officials in the Northeast China region to recruit the displaced people to reclaim the wasteland. In the tenth year of Shunzhi (1653), the government prom ligated the Regulations on the Recruitment of people in Liaodong, and set up Liaoyang Prefecture to administer the system of the mainland.

However, in the seventh year of Kangxi (1668), the Qing government issued the Order to Stop the Liaodong Government. The immigration policy, which had been implemented only for 15 years, was abolished, and the government began to restrict the immigration activities to the northeast. Levels were set up in Shanhaiguan, Gubeikou and Xifengkou, and on the basis of Liutiao border in the early Qing Dynasty, a "new border" was more than 690 li long from Weiyuan Fort in the northeast of Kaiyuan City, Liaoning Province to Fateha, Jilin Province (now North, Jilin City, Jilin Province), and the Han people were forbidden to reclaim and settle outside the border. In the fifth year of Qianlong's reign (1740), the government took the lead in announcing the ban on the Fengtian region, and then successively banned the Jilin and Heilongjiang regions. In the forty-first year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1776), Han people were again forbidden to cultivate land outside the willow edge. Thus, the northeast region was completely banned, and Jilin and Heilongjiang became the focus of the ban.

## 2.3. Analysis of the causes of the northeast China ban policy in the early Qing Dynasty

In the early Qing Dynasty, the government first encouraged people to migrate to Northeast China, and then banned it. The main reasons are as follows.

### 2.3.1. Prevent Being Sinicization.

Since the Qing army entered the customs and unified China, the Manchu army has been impacted by the Han culture and folk customs in various fields. In order to maintain the purity and stability of the Manchu base camp, *the land of the dragon, if left unchecked to the people, and the customs of Manchu* has been repeatedly issued. However, under the strong impact of the Han culture, it was really difficult for the Qing government to retain the Manchu martial style and cultural customs. The only way to think of was to ban the Northeast China region.

### 2.3.2. Safeguarding the Interests of the Manchu People and the Royal Family.

In the early Qing Dynasty, the royal family set up a large area of enclosure and hunting ground in the northeast for the royal hunting. The paddock is a large area, and the royal times to hunt,

it is very inconvenient to manage, but not to ban tourists steal the forbidden land in the name of clearing land. The ban in the northeast also had a consideration to protect the royal enclosure. In addition, Northeast China is the main origin of ginseng, mink and other rare local products, the people into the mountain thieves repeatedly banned. At that time, the Manchu farming technology was far behind that of the Han people. With the influx of the Han people, a large number of Manchu land flowed into the hands of the Han people, which was increasingly intensified, which seriously affected the interests of the Manchu people, which became one of the reasons for the Qing court to close the customs.

### **2.3.3. Eliminate Political Hidden Dangers.**

After the Manchu people entered the customs, they thought that they were foreign people entering the Central Plains, had a strong awareness of not our clan, their hearts will be different, and had a heavy suspicion of the Han people. In addition, the voice of reversing the Qing Dynasty and restoring the Ming Dynasty, the reversing the Qing movement occurred from time to time. In order to retain the birthplace of Manchu, there are also concerns that if the Central Plains are unstable, they can return to the northeast and not repeat the mistakes of the Yuan people. At the same time, a large area of land in the northeast can be used as pasture and paddock, and can provide venues for horse training of the Eight Banners Army, so as to maintain the combat effectiveness of the Eight Banners Army, and form a deterrent to the pass and even the areas where the Mongols live. This also prompted the Qing government to repeatedly issue bans, not only to always ban refugees, not entering the country, but also ordered expulsion.

Of course, the policy of prohibition was far from resisting the influence of the Han culture. Although the Qing government took great pains to prevent the migrants from entering the Northeast China, the northern migrants continued to stop and was constantly expanding. The Han people in Shandong could easily reach the Liaodong area by sea. In the fifty-first year of Kangxi's reign (1712), more than 100,000 people from Shandong alone entered the customs. In the forty-first year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1776), more than 1.8 million Han people made a living in northeast China.

## **3. The Qing Dynasty Shandong People Entered the Northeast China, the Reason Analysis**

Most of the immigrants in the Qing Dynasty came from north China, and most of them were from Shandong. In 1911, the population of Northeast China (Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning provinces) totaled 18.41 million, of which about 10 million were from Shandong, Hebei and Henan provinces; during the Republic of China (1912-1949), the population of the Northeast China was 20 million. The Chinese have always moved back again. What is the reason why so many Shandong people have to go to the Northeast China? What is the specific situation of its politics, economy and society? According to the Shao's Genealogy of Xiuyan, Liaoning Province, in the early years of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, Shao Ying, the ancestor of the Shao family, moved from Jimo, Shandong Province to Xiuyan, Liaoning Province. This paper aims at study the complex reasons of Shandong people entering the Northeast China by combing the data of Shao Ying's migration.

### **3.1. Rapid population growth and a serious shortage of land**

The war in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties caused serious damage to the economy and population in Shandong. In order to consolidate the rule, the government in the early Qing Dynasty carried out a series of measures to restore and develop the economy, rewarding reclamation and reducing farmers' corvee and taxes, which made Shandong population grow rapidly, especially the highest population growth rate during the Qianlong period. In the 24th year of Kangxi (1685), the population growth rate was 19.96%, in the fifth year of Qianlong

(1740), the government decided to examine the household registration and the hidden population in the 32 year of Qianlong (1767) even reached 100.75%. From the 18th year of Shunzhi (1661) to the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767), the population of Shandong increased from 8.798 million to 25.634 million, an increase of 198.14%.

The rapid growth of population in Shandong has promoted the reclamation of reclaimed land. However, the growth rate of the land during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty was far from lagging behind with the growth rate of the population. In the 18th year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1753), Shandong had a population of 12.796 million, 99.374 million mu, and 7.76 mu per capita. In the thirty-first year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1767), Shandong had a population of 25.634 million, and the cultivated land only increased to 99.914 million mu, and the per capita cultivated land rapidly dropped to 3.86 mu. And some of the newly reclaimed land is relatively poor, and the grain harvest is very low. After the rapid expansion of the cultivated land area in the early Qing Dynasty, the cultivated land was basically maintained at about 98 million mu during the Qianlong period. The rapid growth of the population has overwhelmed the land in Shandong. With the change of the qing government's policy on the northeast, entering the Northeast China has become an important way to relieve the population of pressure in Shandong.

### 3.2. Low grain yield per unit area and frequent natural disasters

The rapid growth of the population makes the land cultivation more refined. However, under the conditions at that time, the level of agricultural technology was low, and affected by the degree of land barren, the crop structure, annual performance and natural disasters, the per-mu grain yield in Shandong has been maintained at a low level. *Confucius* archives recorded the per-mu grain yield of cultivated land around Qufu in Shandong province in the early Qing Dynasty. In the tenth year of Shunzhi (1653), Gaojiazhuang had 179.4 mu, with a total grain output of 39,442 jin and the average grain yield per mu was only 220 jin. In the fourth year of Kangxi (1665), Dushan Tun in Yutai County, Shandong Province had 79.4 mu, the total grain output was 31,538 jin, and the average grain yield per mu was 397 jin. The low grain output made Shandong facing the crisis of grain shortage for a long time. In the 31st year of Qianlong (1766), Shandong occupied only 25 jin of finished grain per month.

In the Qing Dynasty, natural disasters occurred frequently in Shandong, including floods, droughts, locusts, earthquakes, wind disasters and hail disasters, especially floods. According to statistics, in the 268 years of the Qing Dynasty, there were 419 floods, 233 droughts, 138 locusts and 238 earthquakes in Shandong province. These disasters destroyed grain, resulting in a large area of grain failure, sometimes even failed. Jimo County Annals records: In the first month of the seventh year of Qianlong (1742), the comet appeared in the northeast. In March (1743), the comet was seen northwest. Eleven years (1746) summer, water, beans injury. The cow epidemic died. Twelve years (1747), from spring to May no rain, autumn waterlogging. People are hungry, the official set up a porridge factory relief. Thirteen years (1748) in May, drought.locust. After hunger and the epidemic, many people fled. Frequent natural disasters have had a significant impact on the economic and social development and population size of Shandong province, and a large number of Shandong people have been displaced. This is also the main reason for Shandong immigrants to enter the Northeast China.

### 3.3. Reasons for choosing Northeast China as the migration destination

Why do the mainlanders represented by Shandong take the initiative to *Enter the Northeast China*? It boils down to several reasons:

### **3.3.1. The northeast land is large and sparsely populated, and the rent for land is relatively low.**

In the early Qing Dynasty, northeast China was vast and sparsely populated. The population Bannerman division and the people are registered separately. The exact number of people in the middle of the Qing Dynasty and before cannot be tested, so the population can only be calculated according to the number of people and the mouth ratio recorded in literature. It is estimated that in 1840, the population of the three eastern provinces was about 2.97 million, the total area of the three provinces was 806,300 square kilometers, and the population density was 3.68 people / square kilometer. While Heilongjiang's population density is only 0.53 people per square kilometer. Shandong province covers an area of only 153,800 square kilometers, with a population density of 207.71 people per square kilometer.

There has always been a large amount of uncultivated land in northeast China. Even by 1929, the proportion of uncultivated land was 30% in Liaoning, 55% in Jilin and 70% in Heilongjiang. The land fu and land rent here are much lighter than those in the customs. In the fifteenth year of Shunzhi of the Qing Dynasty (1658), the northeast region began. During the Guangxu period of the Qing Dynasty (1875-1908), the land rate in Shandong was 2~4 times higher than that in northeast; the rent in Fengtian generally accounted for 15%~30% of the harvest, while some in Shandong were as high as 50%~70%.

### **3.3.2. Northeast China is fertile soil and rich in resources.**

The Songnen Plain, Sanjiang Plain and Liaohe Plain in northeast China is flat, and their unique geographical environment and climatic conditions forms fertile soil and rich natural resources. Black land has deep soil layer, good air permeability and water retention, rich in organic matter and minerals, suitable for the growth of all kinds of crops. Agricultural production is mainly food crops, including corn, sorghum, soybean, etc. These crops thrive and yield in fertile soil and suitable climatic conditions. Northeast China also widely planted cotton, fruit trees, tobacco, peanuts and other representative cash crops. Here pine forest thousands of miles, endless, precious wood and sable, green fox, gold sand, margarite also enough to make people envy In addition, northeast China is also rich in coal, iron ore, gold min and other mineral resources, with an iron storage capacity of 700 million tons and more than 2 billion tons of coal.

### **3.3.3. Convenient transportation and tide formation.**

Shandong people enter the east, not outside the two ways of land and water. The land is mainly through ShanHaiGuan. The waterways mostly sailed from YanTai, QingDao, WeiHai and other places in the JiaoDong Peninsula of Shandong province, landed in Dalian, YingKou or DanDong in the LiaoDong Peninsula, and then dispersed to the northeast. JiaoDong Peninsula and LiaoDong Peninsula across the sea, from YanTai to Dalian only 90 nautical miles, a boat can be reached overnight. Water provinces reduce the hardships of land crossing mountains and traveling long distances. Moreover, compared with the southeast coastal areas, the natural environment in northeast China is similar to that of Shandong, and the cold is not intolerable for Shandong people. Convenient transportation and similar geographical environment are one of the important reasons why Shandong people regard northeast China as a migration destination. According to the Shao's Genealogy in Xiuyan, Liaoning province, Shao Ying was the twelfth descendant of Shao Duan, Qiantaolinzhao Village, JiMo, Shandong Province. She was born during the reign of the Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty and left Jimo to Donggang, Dandong City, Liaoning Province by boat. After that, she settled down in Huangqigou, Shaozihe Township, Xiuyan, Anshan.

A large number of Shandong people scattered in the northeast, driving more Shandong people to hear the wind. In the Qing Dynasty, almost every family in the countryside had entered the east, and those who did not enter the east longitude calendar were even considered worthless. Entering the east has become a trend in some areas of Shandong. Once encountered serious

natural disasters or bandits, in the local life can not go on, Shandong people first want to enter the east to make a living. After arriving in Northeast China, they joined their friends and took care of each other, and formed a Shandong Tun, Shandong Zhuang and so on.

#### **4. The Influence of Shandong People's Migration to Northeast China in the Qing Dynasty**

In the Qing Dynasty, the large-scale migration of the population in the Pass to the northeast, with its large scale and wide influence, can be called a miracle in the history of world immigration. Within immigration, growth, the northeast political, economic, social, culture, folk all has a significant and far-reaching influence, accelerated the integration of the Han Chinese and the northeast ethnic minorities, further close the inside and northeast, promote the economic and social development of northeast, gradually formed a unique new northeast China culture.

##### **4.1. Promote land reclamation and utilization, and the rapid development of agricultural economy**

During the ban period, the land in northeast China of the Qing Dynasty was generally divided into three types: official land, flag land and civilian land. The land occupied by the Qing royal family and the nobles was called the official land, the land occupied by the eight banners army was called the flag land, and the land occupied by the Han people was called the civil land. In the early Qing Dynasty, the land was mainly official land and banner land, while the number of civilian land was very small. The rigid land ownership system is not conducive to land flow and development, and hinders the development of agricultural economy. Although the government has repeatedly intensified the ban since the Kangxi Dynasty, the ban is not complete due to the rapid population growth in North China and the frequent natural disasters. The influx of immigrants increased the population of the Northeast China region again and again and changed the situation in the northeast. The advanced agricultural production technology brought by Shandong immigrants has effectively promoted the reclamation and utilization of land in northeast China.

According to the author to Liaoning Xiuyan area investigation, Xiuyan mountain farmers a large number of tussah silkworm, listen to an old man put silkworm, the technology of tussah silkworm is the ancestors of the early Qing Dynasty into the east. According to the Genealogy of the Shao Family, Shao Ying moved from Jimo, Shandong Province, to Xiuyan, Liaoning Province, more than 280 years ago, and has multiplied for 11 generations. There is more than 500 descendants, who are either farming fields, or sericulture and silk reeling, or breeding livestock, or doing business. At the same time of difficult entrepreneurship, it also promoted the rapid development of local agricultural economy.

##### **4.2. Promote the establishment of administrative construction, and consolidate the northeast border area**

In the first year of Shunzhi (1644), after the Qing army entered the customs, it exercised military and political rule in the northeast. General Shengjing, who was under the control of the northeast, and a military organization was set up to manage the flag men. In view of the large number of Han people moving in, the Qing government in the tenth year of Shunzhi (1653) set up Liaoyang Prefecture, under the jurisdiction of two counties of Liaoyang and Haicheng, for the Han people, and the dual management structure of flag and people division appeared. Shunzhi 14 years (1657) withdraws Liaoyang mansion, set up Fengtian Prefecture, jurisdiction over 2 states 6 counties 4 halls. Kangxi three years (1644) set up Guangning Prefecture, jurisdiction over 2 states and 2 counties. Two prefectures and prefectural and county offices, known as the people department. According to vol. 271 of the General Literature of the Qing

Dynasty, All the affairs of the Manchuria, Mongolian and Han armies were to the general of Fengtian, and the ordinary affairs were to the Yin of Fengtian. Since then, Jilin and Heilongjiang have set up prefectures and counties. The order and number of prefectures and counties in northeast China reflect the process and scale of the migration of Han people from south to north, and also roughly reflect the situation of agricultural development in northeast China. It was not until the thirty-third year of Guangxu (1907), when the northeast province was officially established, that the management system of the flag and the people was officially terminated. The establishment of administrative construction, the national control over the local further strengthened, realized the political unity, and increased the national tax revenue. Moreover, the large influx of Han immigrants filled the gap in the northeast, and changed the frontier situation in the past, which was conducive to the consolidation of the northeast frontier. After the signing of the China-Russia Secret Treaty in 1896, the Russian survey of the Middle East railway was strongly opposed by the people of northeast China. In 1904, people in Tieling, Liaoning province annihilated more than 600 Japanese troops, won seven grain depots, and captured a large number of weapons and ammunition. All these reflect the contribution of immigrants to opposing foreign aggression and maintaining the reunification of the motherland.

### **4.3. Accelerate cultural exchanges and integration to form a new Northeast China culture**

The activities of the Han people to the northeast promoted the cultural integration between the Manchu and other ethnic minorities and the Han nationality. The large-scale exit of Shandong Han people not only brought advanced agricultural technology, but also brought the life style, customs, family system, ethical concepts and language of Shandong people. The minority culture with Manchu as the main body and Confucian culture were continuously integrated, and the cultural tradition of Han people gradually became the dominant culture of Northeast China. At the same time, the culture of the ethnic minorities in Northeast China also had a great influence on the Han culture, and the culture gradually merged in the constant collision and communication, forming a unique new Northeast China culture. This culture takes the Han culture as the main body and has the cultural factors of various ethnic minorities in northeast China.

When the author participated in the collation of Shao Shi's genealogy in Liaoning Xiuyan, he interviewed more than 20 descendants of Shao Ying's descendants and visited two cemeteries of Shao Ying and his descendants. The site of these two cemeteries behind the mountain and water, completely in line with the feng shui customs of the Han people. The arrangement of each burial place in the cemetery is also completely in accordance with the layout of the Han people carrying children and grandchildren. The funeral of Shao Piyuan, the fifth grandson of Shao Ying, adopted the local most solemn funeral. Xiuyan County Annals records: funeral rites mostly along the old system, complex and simple different, each as the strength of the rich and poor. People who build a color shed, put a ghost, or invite the party to dip, say funeral, or ask the students to sing, say funeral. This kind of Han people's funeral tedious ceremony was almost completely accepted by the Manchu people. In addition, marriage customs, living customs and so on have the shadow of the Shandong region, and the Manchu jump god is accepted by the Han people in the East.

## **5. Conclusion**

During the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, the rapid growth of the population and the serious natural disasters prompted the people of Shandong province to break through the strict ban policy and flood into the northeast. The large-scale population migration has made the population distribution of China more balanced, injected vitality into the economic

development of the Northeast China region, played an important role in the stability of the northeast border area, and effectively promoted the great integration of the Chinese nation.

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- [5] Liutiao Bian refers to the boundary built by the Qing government in the second half of the 17th century to protect the "Land of Longxing". It is called "Liutiao Bian" or "tiao Bian" due to the planting of Liutiao Bian on the boundary.
- [6] Fengtian, in addition to being under the jurisdiction of Liaoning Province today, also includes most of the counties and cities in present-day Jilin Province, including Baishan, Tonghua, Siping, Liaoyuan, and Baicheng areas, as well as present-day Chifeng City and Xing'an League in Inner Mongolia.
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- [17] Human ding refers to the male workers listed in the account and charged with the obligation of service. The number of household population is not the total population, nor the number of all adult men, but should be converted into the oral number according to a certain proportion. This proportion is the "oral Ding ratio", that is, the corresponding actual population of each household population..... The mouth Ding ratio only reflects the ratio of the real mouth number and the number of Ding recorded in the government account, rather than the ratio of the real population and the real human number in the society, so it is not so stable and must be analyzed and calculated.(See Zhao Wenlin and Xie Shujun, The Population History of China, People's Publishing House, 1988, p. 386)
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[21] Originally known as "jumping shaman", it is a sacrificial form of the traditional Manchu religion shamanism.