

Manchu names and some problems concerning their transcription

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Manchu clan names and personal names are topics which belong to the most neglected fields in Manchuology. In Europe, only four researches were carried out on Manchu *clan* names, one in 1919–1920 by Erich Haenisch,¹ and three in 1957–1958 by E. P. Lebedeva.² Both scholars based their researches on the «Clan genealogies of the Manchu Eight Banners», the *Jakūn gūsai Manjusai mukūn hala be uheri ejehe bithe / Baqi Manzhou shizu tongpu* 八旗滿洲氏族通譜, which have also been used for the present paper.

With the exception of Haenisch's above-mentioned article, Manchu *personal* names have never been analyzed by Western scholars. Attempts to penetrate into the rules of Manchu name-giving and their meanings were done by the Chinese scholars Ch'en Chieh-hsien³ and Chuang Chi-fa.⁴ Ch'en Chieh-hsien found seven main categories in which Manchu personal names could be subdivided (p. 29):

1. Names related to animals, like *Arsalan* 'Lion';
2. Names related to plants, like *Orhoda* 'Ginseng';
3. Names related to inanimate objects, like *Amin* 'Saddle';
4. Names related to the person's order of birth within the family, like *Duici* 'Fourth', or *Fiyanggū* 'Youngest';
5. Names related to topographical features, like *Alin* 'Mountain';
6. Names which were strange or amusing, like *Siteku* 'Bed-wetter'; and
7. Names related to parental aspiration, like *Mukden* 'Prosperity', and its verbal variants like *Mukdembu* 'May you become prosperous'.

To these we may add some other categories like colors: *Sahaliyan* 'Black', seasons: *Bolori* 'Autumn', and ethnonyms: *Solho* 'Korean', *Nikan* 'Chinese', even *Ose* 'Japanese'. Interesting, in this context is the name *Loca*, which was also used to indicate the first Russians who appeared in the Amur region in the 17th century. *Loca* is the Manchu term for Sanskrit *rakṣa*, 'demon, devil' etc., and it was given, according to common opinion, to the Russians because of their violence against native Amur tribes. As a Manchu name, it belongs probably to the same category as *Ibagan* 'Monster', *Hutu* 'Demon', and *Buṣuku* 'Spectre'.

The most interesting, and for Westerners «incomprehensible», names are found in Ch'en Chieh-hsien's sixth category, which he called «strange or amusing». Indeed, it is difficult to understand, according to our mentality, how a father could call his son *Wakšan* 'Toad', or *Giohoto* 'Beggar', or *Walda* i.e. the invective 'Vile', or even *Ehenikan* ~ *Ahanikan* 'Bad ~ Slavish Chinese'. There were, evidently, some criteria in Manchu name-giving that we still do not know.

Chuang Chi-fa added a further very common category, that is, that of Chinese numbers in Manchu transcription, which, according to the author, may refer to the father's or grandfather's age when the son was born. Altogether 49 such «numerical names» are attested, going from *Seši* < 四十 *Sishi* 'Forty', to *Giošiba* < 九十八 *Jiushiba* 'Ninety eight'.⁵ *Manchu* cardinal numbers were not used with the exception of *Dehi* 'Forty', *Ninju* 'Sixty', *Nadanju* 'Seventy', *Jakûnju* 'Eighty', *Uyunju* 'Ninety' and *Tanggû* 'Hundred'.

To these numbers we may also add another numerical variant, which is that of Chinese numbers from one to ten, to which the syllable *ge*, in Chinese transcription 格, is added. According to Lebedeva, the syllable *ge* derives from Manchu *age* «brother». ⁶ The syllable exists also in Chinese with the same meaning, but written 哥 *gē*. Whatever the origin of this syllable, it seems clear that the names *Sange* < *Sange* 三格, *Uge* < *Wuge* 五格, *Lioge* < *Liuge* 六格 etc. mean 'Brother Three', 'Brother Five', 'Brother Six' etc.

As can be seen from this preliminary survey, our knowledge of Manchu personal names is rather limited; for further research, the most important source to be taken into consideration is the already mentioned «Clan genealogies of the Manchu Eight Banners», giving preference, for obvious reasons, to its Manchu version. This work, with two prefaces dated January 13th, 1736 (Yongzheng 13/12/1) and January 5th, 1745 (Qianlong 9/12/3), contains 80 chapters altogether.

- The first 65 chapters are devoted to 649 Manchu clans.
- Six chapters (66–71) are devoted to 235 Mongol clans.
- Two chapters (72–73) are devoted to 43 Korean clans and listed according to their Chinese pronunciation.
- Five chapters (74–78) are devoted to 163 Chinese clans, called *Nikan* 尼堪 and not *Han* 漢 also in the Chinese version.
- One chapter (79) is devoted to 80 clans of the so-called «Watch-tower Chinese», the *Tai* 臺 *Nikan*.
- The last chapter (80) is devoted to 10 clans of the so-called «Chinese from Fushun», *Fusi nikan*.

This subdivision clearly evidences the multiethnic composition of the first eight Manchu Banners, made up of Chinese, Koreans, Mongols and Jurchen, or better «Tungus», all of them classified as «Manchu». It testifies that the term «Manchu» was originally a political-administrative term and not an ethnic one.

The Jurchen and Tungus, or «Manchu proper», have numerically the strongest presence with more than 36,000 names registered. In comparison, the Mongol names number only about 2,200. Obviously this great number of names is a remarkable source for the study of early Manchu society and its genealogical structure, which comprises, in some cases, up to twelve generations. Given the nature of this source, its *historical* value is rather limited and has already been studied by Haenisch. In some cases, however, answers to unresolved historical questions can be found, for instance, in the case of Nurhaci's first enemy *Nikan Wailan*. Translated literally, it means 'Chinese official', and there was (and still is) a long discussion on *who* this 'Chinese official' was. But since this supposed «title» is found twice as a personal name in our source, we may definitely conclude that Nurhaci's enemy was not recorded anonymously by his title, but that *Nikan Wailan* was really his personal name. It can be seen that in the early stage of Jurchen-Tungus society, binoms were often used in personal names, which disappeared only after the creation of Nurhaci's banner system.

The translation of Manchu names, however, can lead to wrong conclusions. The best example is the very common name *Hoošan*, a term which in Manchu means 'paper'. We have already seen that objects of daily use are often found as personal names too, for instance, *Samara* 'Wooden bowl', *Hunio* 'Water bucket'. But in the case of *Hoošan*, which occurs 57 times, we can see from the Chinese version that it is rendered as *Haoshan*, written with various different characters like 好善 'good' + 'virtuous', 鶴善 'crane' + 'virtuous', 浩善 'great' + 'virtuous'. So we do not know if *for the Manchus* the name *Hoošan* really had the meaning of 'paper', or if it was rather understood as a transliteration of two Chinese characters. In all these cases, of course, any translation into a Western language results in a vain attempt, especially when the Chinese characters are not given.

In addition, it seems that many Manchu names are pure phonetic variants of a name given to the first-born son. A good example is offered by the first-born *Ulušun* of the Namdulu-clan: the second son got the name *Hūlušun*, the third *Ilušun*, the fourth *Delušun*, the fifth *Fulušun*, and the sixth *Jalušun*. If we try to find a meaning for the second brother's name *Hūlušun*, we will not be successful, at least with the dictionaries at our disposal, and this is due to the fact that this name was

«created» by adding an *h* to the name of the first-born brother *Ulušun*. Another example is given by the brothers *Dobakū*, *Tebakū*, *Obakū* and *Tabakū*. Such syllabic changes may occur also at the end of names, for instance in the case of *Sahadai*, *Sahabu*, *Sahaci* and *Sahacan*. The same principle in name-giving holds also between father and son: *Cabahai* had a son named *Cadahai*, *Bojilda* had a son named *Bojiltu*. The best known example is given by *Nurhaci* and his younger brothers *Šurhaci* and *Murhaci*. Here we may add that the meaning of the name *Nurhaci* is not yet clear. According to a recent, yet questionable Chinese interpretation⁷ it would be a variant of *Nuheci*, meaning ‘leather of the wild pig’. Since the author connects the name of Nurhaci’s younger brother *Šurhaci* with Manchu *šurha*, meaning ‘a two-year-old wild pig’, the impression arises that the author’s identification of *Nuheci* with *Nurhaci* is the result of *Šurhaci*’s connection with *šurha* rather than a philologically proved evolution of *Nuheci* > *Nurhaci*. As a name in its own right, *Nuheci* is found three times in our source, whereas the names *Nurhaci*, *Šurhaci* and *Murhaci* are never mentioned.

Chinese influence on Manchu name-giving is another interesting chapter in Manchu social history. Generally speaking, during Nurhaci’s time we find an ancestor with a Manchu, or Manchurized Chinese, name; the second and third generation (Shunzhi and early Kangxi times) used pure Chinese names, the fourth generation (late Kangxi and Yongzheng times) turned back to Manchu or manchurized Chinese names, and the last generation (late Yongzheng and Qianlong times) again used pure Chinese names.

An excellent example is given by *Kiyanghiyoo*,⁸ evidently a manchurized name of Chinese origin, < *Qiang Xiao* 強效, who had his name written in Manchu form, i.e., with the two syllables written together. For his nephews the Chinese name style was adopted, and we find their names divided into three parts, with the first one acting as the Chinese surname *Qiang*: *Kiyang Ioi I* < *Qiang Yuyi* 強喻義, *Kiyang Guwe Fu* < *Qiang Guofu* 強國富, etc. The subsequent generation abandoned Chinese surnames turning back to «Manchurized» names like *Haiming* < *Haiming* 海明, or *Šiju* < *Shizhuo* 世卓. The last generation again adopted pure Chinese names and reintroduced Chinese surnames: *Kiyang Gioi* < *Qiang Ju* 強珺, etc.

This strong Chinese influence on Manchu names is well known. What is surprising is that the Manchus had the same strong influence on Mongols and Koreans. Indeed, if we examine Mongol and Korean genealogies, we see that the Mongol and Korean clan-ancestors had typical Mongol and Korean names. After their submission to the Manchus, however, many

Mongols and especially Koreans adopted Manchu names, or were registered into the Banner genealogies with a Manchu name.

As a curious instance we may quote the ethnonym *Manju*, which is attested 10 times as a proper name. In the Chinese version, this name is given 5 times with the characters *Man* 滿 + *zhu* 珠 ‘pearl’, twice with *Man* + *zhu* 柱 ‘pillar’, once with *Man* + *zhu* 住 ‘to dwell’, and twice with the characters *Man* + *zhou* 洲, which later became the official Chinese designation of the Manchu people itself.

The Manchu dynastic name *Daicing*, meaning in Manchu ‘warrior’, is found three times; its Chinese version is given with different characters at every occurrence: 岱清, 戴清, 代青, though never, of course, with the characters of the Chinese dynastic name *Da Qing* 大清. Here we meet the same situation as in the case of the afore-mentioned *Hoošan*, since we do not know if the name *Daicing* was understood in its Manchu meaning as ‘warrior’, or if it was rather accepted as a Chinese borrowing.

In any case, the rendering of Manchu names with Chinese characters is another unexplored field in Manchu name-giving rules which needs further research. The same unclear situation is found when Chinese names had to be transcribed in Manchu, for example, the character *guo* 國 is sometimes rendered as *Guwe*, and at other times as *G’o*.

With the progressive Sinicization and adoption of Chinese names another problem arose, which the Manchus resolved with the introduction of new graphic variants, but which were never taken into consideration in Western transcription systems. A case of graphic variant occurred when two Chinese syllables, the second beginning with a vowel, were put together. In such occurrences, the Manchu letter transcribing the Chinese vowel is a modified form of its initial position, and not that of its «inside» position. For example:

Baio, the Manchu transcription of Chinese *Bayou* 巴有, is not written  but, utilising a graphic variant of *i* in its initial position: , thus clearly indicating that *io* is an «independent» syllable. Another example is the name *Duufu*, a transcription of Chinese *Duwufu* 都五福, which is written  and not  ( < ).

The impossibility to distinguish two syllables of Chinese origin is a lacuna in Western transcription systems, and this is particularly evident when two reading variants are possible. For example, the Manchu name *Guwanging* could originate from Chinese *Guan* + *jing* 關景, or *Guang* + *ying* 廣英. In Manchu this distinction is preserved, since the first one is written , with *i* «fused» with the foregoing *g*, whereas the second is written .

How can one solve this problem, which is particularly felt in modern Sibe-Manchu where the number of Chinese loanwords is constantly growing? A good example for the debate on this issue is the Chinese loanword for 'doctrine', *zhuyi* 主義, written , with modified initial *i*, of which two autochthonous Sibe transcriptions and one European (Hungarian) transcription are found:

1. The first transcription divides the word into its original two syllables: *ju i*.⁹
2. The second transcription is half Sibe and half *pinyin* Chinese, though now written together: *juyi*.¹⁰
3. The third, European, system uses an apostrophe to separate the two syllables: *ju'i*.¹¹ Especially in this case, a sign of separation seems absolutely necessary to distinguish it from the Manchu word *ju*i, meaning 'child'.

Now, if we analyze the first method we may immediately see its inadequacy since the graphic division into two syllables does not correspond to the original form. The second transcription, besides being non-scientific, creates a chaotic situation; the above-mentioned name *Guwanging*, for example, would have to be transcribed *Guwanjing*, and this would clearly be a mistake. What remains is the third possibility: an apostrophe indicates the beginning of a new syllable and underlines the particular graphic variant of its initial vowel. With this function the apostrophe is already used in *pinyin*, for example in the city name 西安 *Xi'an*, to distinguish it from *xian* 縣 etc. The introduction of an apostrophe in transcribing classical Manchu would be innovative progress, and progress is indeed the aim of every scientific research.

Notes

- 1 «Beiträge zur altmandschurischen Geschlechterkunde», *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 8 (1919–1920), pp. 171–184.
- 2 «Rasselenie man'čžurskich rodov v konce XVI i načale XVII vekov», *Učenyje zapiski, LGPI im. A. I. Gercena*, Fakul'tet narodov Krainego Severa, tom 132, Leningrad 1957, pp. 69–110; «Die Geschlechternamen der Mandschu», *AOH* 7 (1957), pp. 213–229; «Lingvističeskij analiz rodovych nazvanij man'čžurov», *Voprosy jazykoznanija* 3 (1958), pp. 100–109.
- 3 «The sinification of Manchu names: A study of personal names in the Ch'ing imperial house and upper class Manchu society of the Ch'ing period», in: Kim Banghan ed., *Proceedings of the Second East Asian Altaistic Conference*, Seoul 1968, pp. 26–34.
- 4 «A discussion of the Manchu custom of giving names after numbers», in: Ch'en

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- Chieh-hsien ed., *Proceedings of the Sixth East Asian Altaistic Conference*, Taipei 1981, pp. 89–102; see also footnote 5.
- 5 For more examples see his article «Cong shumu mingzi de yanbian kan Qingdai Manzu de hanhua», *Manxue yanjiu* 2 (Peking 1994), pp. 169–201.
 - 6 Lebedeva, E. P., «Die Geschlechternamen der Mandschu», *AOH* 7 (1957), p. 217.
 - 7 Wang Huo, «Manzu renming de minsu tezheng he yuyan tezheng», *Manzu yanjiu* (1993), pp. 72–77, especially p. 72.
 - 8 Manchu edition ch. 58, p. 15a, Chinese edition ch. 15, p. 12b.
 - 9 See the dictionary *Nikan Sibe gisun kamciha šolokon buleku bithe / Han-Xi jianming duizhao cidian*, Urumqi 1989, p. 420.
 - 10 See *Nei fon Sibe šu tacin gisun-i arara kooli / Xiandai Xibo wenxue yuyan zhengti fa*, Urumqi 1992, p. 85. For its German translation see G. Sary, «Die Orthographie-Reform der modernen Schriftsprache der Sibe», *Central Asiatic Journal* 41/1 (1997), pp. 76–121.
 - 11 See p. 360 footnote 12 in Cornélie Melles, «Remarques sur un texte chibo moderne», *AOH* XXXI/3 (1977), pp. 359–363.

