THE ONLY KNOWN TEXT FROM BALA, AN EXTINCT TUNGUSIC LANGUAGE

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Bala (bala1242) is an extinct Tungusic language formerly spoken in and around the Zhangguangcai mountain range in Northeast China. The language is only fragmentarily recorded. This study analyzes a song that is the only known text of this language and was written with the help of Chinese characters. The language of the song is close to Manchu dialects but exhibits clear signs of a mixture with a more archaic variety. The underlying language is probably from a higher register of Bala, which is strongly influenced by Manchu but at the same time preserves several unique characteristics, such as an intervocalic -g- in dege(ng) 德更 'high' (Manchu den).

1. INTRODUCTION

Bala is a fragmentarily attested and extinct Tungusic language formerly spoken in and around the Zhangguangcai mountain range, located in the Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces in Northeast China (Hölzl 2020). Around the year 1600, the ancestors of the Bala people fled to the mountain range during the expansion of the Jianzhou Jurchen, the core of the later Manchus, where they remained until the twentieth century (Mu Yejun 1984). The Bala language has been extinct since 1982 (Mu Yejun 1985). It belongs to the so-called *Jurchenic* (Janhunen 2012) or *Manchuric* (Jang 2020) subbranch of Tungusic, which also includes varieties of Jurchen and Manchu. Most of the data have been collected by Mu Yejun (1984; 1987; 1988), but the existence of the Bala people has been confirmed by other scholars (e.g., Ma Mingchao 1997 [1987]). More recent fieldwork has produced additional materials of the language and culture of the Bala (Li Guojun, Li Keman & Dong Yinghua 2018). These sources contain isolated lexical and grammatical items, some word lists, and a few sentences. Mu Yejun (1984) recorded what seems to be the only text of Bala, which was transcribed with the help of Chinese characters and is the focus of this study.

According to Mu Yejun (1987), Bala exhibits different registers, which are insufficiently understood and require further analysis. Generally, there appear to be a more archaic layer and a more innovative layer, which is close to Manchu, the language of the Qing dynasty (1636–1912). Because of the preservation of archaic features, Bala is a language of utmost importance for comparative Tungusic research. One example is the presence of an aspirated bilabial plosive (written <p'> but pronounced [pʰ]), while Manchu shows regular labiodentalization (Table 1).

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Table 1 Examples for the presence and absence of labiodentalization in initial position in Manchu and Bala (Mu Yejun 1987: 9–13); corrections in parentheses.

Meaning	Manchu	Bala
bracken fern	**f**ukt'ala	**p'**ut'ərə
Buddha	**f**ucihi	**p'**ut(')ihin
hair	**f**uniyehe	**p**(')iniergə
low	**f**angkala	**p'**aŋgə
meat scraped from a bone	**f**urun	**p'**urun
palisade, fence	**f**aisha	**p'**aitsga
sledge, sleigh, sled	**f**ara	**p'**alai
to cough	**f**ucihiya-	**p'**ut'ihiaŋ-
willow	**f**odoho	**p'**ədhe

Archaic features such as this may have survived the massive standardization throughout the Qing dynasty because of the relative isolation in the Zhangguangcai mountain range. Ma Xueliang and Wulaxichun (1993: 5) independently recorded a dialect in Heilongjiang that showed an ongoing change from [pʰ-] to [f-] via an affricate [pfʰ-] (e.g., **pf'ɔtǒʁ** 'willow,' **pf'ut'a** 'rope'). Dai Guangyu (2012: 81, 244–245) encountered an elderly speaker in Sanjiazi who, unexpectedly, also appears to have preserved the original plosive (e.g., **pʰu't'ha** 'rope').

The innovative layer of Bala includes words such as *fuli* 'jerky' or *fut'a* 'rope,' which are close to or indistinguishable from Manchu (*fuli, futa*). In these examples, the presence of an initial *f-* suggests that the words may have been borrowed.

The song appears to be from a register close to spoken Manchu dialects, but it also exhibits a few features from a more archaic layer. This study aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the language of the song, considering phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic aspects. For this purpose, it compares the language of the song to the other available data from Bala (Mu Yejun 1987; 1988; Li Guojun, Li Keman & Dong Yinghua 2018), to written Manchu (e.g., Gorelova 2002; Hauer 2007; Norman 2013), and to other documented varieties of Manchuric (e.g., Shirokogoroff 1924; Yamamoto 1969; Norman 1974; Kiyose 1977; Mu Yejun 1985; 1986; 1987; Kane 1989; Zhao Jie 1989; Aixinjueluo Yingsheng 1991; Ma Xueliang & Wulaxichun 1993; Enhebatu 1995; Sun Bojun 2004; Wang Qingfeng 2005; Kim et al. 2008; Dai Guangyu 2012; Zikmundová 2013; Hölzl & Hölzl 2019).

The outline of this study is as follows. Section 2 presents the text and points out minor typographic mistakes. Section 3 gives a translation of the song. The main part of this study is the analysis of the language of the song in Section 4 on the lexicon and Section 5 on the grammar. Section 6 briefly discusses the significance of the data and concludes the paper.

2. THE TEXT

The text is a song about the Zhangguangcai mountain range (*zhāngguǎngcái lǐng* 张广才岭 in Chinese), the historical dwelling place of the Bala in Northeast China. It has the following form (Mu Yejun 1984: 66–67):

博依达苏苏、遮根萨岭, 啊哈拉, 阿哈哪。玛法哩, 古鲁吉[古]朝哈德, 阿凡都哈博, 乌巴德, 特苏巴, 纳莫, 木德(,)木必赫勒赫, 啊哈拉, 阿哈哪。俄勒巴彦巴, 木色孩拉米, 赫勒赫, 阿哈拉, 阿哈哪。阿孩, 阿拉埃, 德更格哈达哪, 泯博, 胡鄙[啚]哩, 布必赫, 阿哈牙, 阿哈哪, 那依牙哈拉阿哈。特勒, 博老舍利木克, 西布苏其沾春, 那哈拉, 阿哈阿。窝的得古鲁古, 拉不道班贝他哥, 那哈依呀

拉, 阿哈。依能吉达力, 嘎萨博, 这德瓦集嘎库, 阿哈哪, 拉哈依呀哪, 巴彦尼, 遮根采岭, 木再依达苏苏, 达苏苏, 拉哈依呀哪, 阿哈拉, 阿哈依哎。

Whether the song was written down by Mu Yejun himself or was discovered by him in this form remains uncertain. The Chinese transcription requires an additional layer of analysis but presents no major obstacle for an understanding of the underlying language. There are at least two minor mistakes (indicated with brackets). The character *ji* 吉 in *guluji* 古鲁吉 seems to be a misprint for *gu* 古 (Manchu *gurgu* 'wild animal, beast, game') and *bi* 鄙 in *hubili* 胡鄙哩 for *tu* 啚 (Manchu *hūturi* 'happiness'). A probably mistaken comma within the word *mude*(,)*mubi* 木德(,)木必 'to become' was put in parentheses (Manchu *mute-mbi* 'can, to be achieved').

The song can be transliterated into Pinyin, the official Chinese Romanization system, with word- and line-segmentation as follows. Tonal markings were omitted because Bala has no tone system. The song contains several items that are perhaps best considered a form of refrain at the end of each of the eight lines. These elements are underlined in the following but not further discussed in this study:

boyi da susu, zhegensaling, ahala, ahana.

mafali, gulu[gu] chaohade, afanduhabo, wubade, tesu ba, namo, mude(,)mubi helehe, ahala, ahana.

ele bayan ba, muse hailami, helehe, ahala, ahana. ahai, alaai,

degengge hada na, minbo, hu[tu]li, bubihe, ahaya, ahana, nayiyahalaaha.

tele, bolao sheli muke, xibusuqi zhanchun, nahala, ahaa.

wodide gulugu, labu daoban beitage, nahayiyala, aha.

yinengjidali, gasabo, zhede wajigaku, ahana, lahayiyana,

bayanni, zhegencailing, muzaiyi da susu, da susu, lahayiyana, ahala, ahayiai.

Excluding the refrain, the song contains about 41 words that represent 36 lexemes, although the exact number depends on the analysis (see Section 4).

3. A TRANSLATION

The following Chinese translation is by Mu Yejun (1984: 67). The enumeration was added:

(1)张广才岭啊, 我的故乡。(2)祖先们同野兽兵丁作战, 我们才成了本地人。(3)我们爱这个富裕的地方, (4)那高高的山峰给了我们幸福, (5)那清清的泉水象[像]蜜甜, (6)山林中有用不尽的走兽, (7)天天有吃不完的飞禽, (8)富裕的张广才岭, 我的家乡, 我的家乡。

This translation is the basis for the analysis of the song. The Chinese version can be translated into English as follows.

(1) The Zhangguangcai mountains, (they are) my native place. (2) Our ancestors fought against wild beast and soldiers, only (in this way) we became locals. (3) We love this rich and prosperous place. (4) The high mountains gave us [me] happiness. (5) The clear spring water is as sweet as honey. (6) There are endless beasts in the mountain forest. (7) Every day there are so many birds that they cannot all be eaten. (8) The rich and prosperous Zhangguangcai mountains, (they are) my [our] native place, my native place.

The translation is close to the original. There are only minor differences, such as the first person singular (not plural) in sentence (4) and the first person plural inclusive (not singular) in sentence (8). A translation of the original is presented in Section 5.

4. LEXICON

Table 2 compares all elements from the song to written Manchu (e.g., Gorelova 2002; Hauer 2007; Norman 2013). Uncertainties are indicated with the help of question marks. Important differences with respect to written Manchu are marked in boldface. Several differences are the result of the transcription with Pinyin (for Bala) and the von Möllendorff system (for Manchu). For instance, Bala *chaoha* and Manchu *cooha* 'army' both contain a diphthong, probably [aɔ], which is written <oo> in Manchu. Bala <yieng**j**i-dali> (No. 50) and Manchu <ineng**g**i-dari> 'every day' both contain the syllable [gi] (or perhaps [ki]). Mandarin does not have this syllable, which was transcribed with <ji> [tɕi] instead. In a few cases, uncertainties remain because of the limited inventory of consonants in Mandarin. For instance, the <l> in the suffix <-dali> 'every' (No. 50) could represent both an [l] or an [r], as in Manchu *-dari*. The same problem can be observed in Nos. 6, 7, 17, 21, 31, 36, 38, and 44. Although Manchu usually suggests an *r*, an occasional change from *r* to *l* is also attested for Bala (see Table 1).

Table 2 A comparison of all elements in the song with written Manchu.

Meaning	Bala	Pinyin	Manchu	No.
family-GEN	博依	bo-yi	boo-i	1
native place	达苏苏	da susu	da susu	2
PN	遮根萨岭	**zhegensaling**	julgen sain alin	3
(refrain)	啊哈拉	ahala	-	4
(refrain)	阿哈哪	ahana	-	5
ancestor-PL	玛法哩	mafa-li	mafa-ri	6
game, beast	古鲁吉[古]	gul(u)[gu]	gurgu	7
army-DAT	朝哈德	chaoha-de	cooha-de	8
fight-REC-PTCP.PFV-ACC	阿凡都哈博	afa-ndu-ha-bo	afa-ndu-ha-be	9
this-place-DAT	乌巴德	(w)u-ba-de	u-ba-de	10
native place	特苏巴	tesu ba	tesu ba	11
person, people	纳莫	**namo**	niyalma	12
become-IPFV	木德木必	mu**d**e-m(u)bi	mute-mbi 'to be completed'	13
(refrain)	赫勒赫	helehe	-	14
(refrain, = No. 4)	啊哈拉	ahala	-	15
(refrain = No. 5)	阿哈哪	ahana	-	16
this	俄勒	ele	ere	17
rich	巴彦	bayan	bayan	18
place	巴	ba	ba	19
1PL.INCL	木色	muse	muse	20
to love	孩拉米	haila-**mi**	haira-mbi	21
(refrain = No. 14)	赫勒赫	helehe	-	22
(refrain, = No. 4)	阿哈拉	ahala	-	23
(refrain, = No. 5)	阿哈哪	ahana	-	24
(refrain)	阿孩	ahai	-	25
(refrain)	阿拉埃	alaai	-	26

Meaning	Bala	Pinyin	Manchu	No.
high + -N	德更格	de**g**engge	den + -ngge[1]	27
peak	哈达	hada	hada	28
?earth	哪	na	?na	29
1SG.OBL-ACC	泯博	min-bo	mim-be	30
happiness	胡鄙[啚]哩	hu[tu]li	hūturi	31
give-PST	布必赫	bu-bihe	bu-bihe	32
(refrain)	阿哈牙	ahaya	-	33
(refrain = No. 5)	阿哈哪	ahana	-	34
(refrain)	那依牙哈拉阿哈	nayiyahalaaha	-	35
that	特勒	tele	tere	36
clear, clean	博老	bolao	bol**ho**, bol**go(n)**	37
spring water	舍利木克	sheli muke	šeri muke	38
honey-ABL	西布苏其	xib(u)su-qi	hibsu-ci	39
sweet	沾春	zhanchun	jancu**hūn**	40
(refrain)	那哈拉	nahala	-	41
(refrain)	阿哈阿	ahaa	-	42
forest-DAT	窝的得	(w)**odi**-de	weji-de	43
game, beast (= No. 6)	古鲁古	gul(u)gu	gurgu	44
many	拉不	labu	lab**du**	45
excess	道班	daoban	daban	46
?useful (+ ?-ADJ)	贝他哥	beitage	?baita-ngga	47
(refrain)	那哈依呀拉	nahayiyala	-	48
(refrain)	阿哈	aha	-	49
every day	依能吉达力	yinengji-dali	inenggi-dari	50
bird-ACC	嘎萨博	gasa-bo	gas**ha**-be	51
eat-?	这德	zhe-**de**	je-?	52
finish-PTCP.PFV.NEG	瓦集嘎库	waji-**gaku**	waji-hakū	53
(refrain = No. 5)	阿哈哪	ahana	-	54
(refrain)	拉哈依呀哪	lahayiyana	-	55
rich + -GEN (cf. No. 18)	巴彦尼	bayanni	bayan + -(n)i	56
PN (cf. No. 3)	遮根采岭	**zhegencailing**	julgen sain alin	57
1PL.INCL + -GEN (cf. No. 20)	木再依	muzaiyi	muse + -i	58
native place (= No. 2)	达苏苏	da susu	da susu	59
native place (= No. 2)	达苏苏	da susu	da susu	60
(refrain)	拉哈依呀哪	lahayiyana	-	61
(refrain, = No. 4)	阿哈拉	ahala	-	62
(refrain)	阿哈依哎	ahayiai	-	63

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1 According to Norman (2013), the meaning of Manchu *de-ngge* is 'glorious; distant, far away,' but it should probably also include the meaning 'high.'

Only those elements that show important characteristics that differ from Manchu will be discussed here in detail.

No. 1: Based on the translation ('my native place,' 我的故乡), the first word <bo> could be a personal pronoun. In Manchu, the first person plural exclusive pronoun has the form *be*, which would be a perfect formal match. However, the following syllable <yi> is probably a genitive. The genitive of the pronoun in Manchu has the form **men-i** instead. The change of the *b* to *m* in the pronouns (e.g., Manchu *bi* 'I' vs. **min-i** 'my') is also observed in Bala **min** 'my' in Mu Yejun (1987: 25) and **min-bo** 泯博 '1SG.OBL-ACC' in the song (No. 30). In the pronouns, the genitive is lost in Bala, as in some other Tungusic languages, such as Even *min* (Benzing 1955: 80). Mandarin furthermore possesses a syllable <men>, which would be expected instead of <bo>. The syllable <yi> cannot belong to the following word *da susu* 'native place' (No. 2) either, which has the same form in Manchu and is confirmed by the translation ('native place,' 故乡).

A comparison with Manchu *boo* 'house, family, home' might be the only solution on formal grounds (Table 3). Manchu *boo* is usually transcribed with the syllable <bao> in Chinese but most Manchuric varieties have forms closer to <bo> in the song (Table 3). In Manchu, the genitive has the form *boo-i*, and a genitive form *pɔɔ-i* is also attested for Bala (Mu Yejun 1987: 26). The translation of *bo-yi da susu* should thus be '(my/our) family's native place' (Manchu *boo-i da susu*).

Table 3 The word for 'house, family, home' in several Manchuric varieties; unless otherwise indicated, the following tables are based on the same sources.

Language	No. 1: 'family'	Source
Bala (song)	bo- 博	Mu Yejun 1984
Bala	bɔɔ, pɔɔ	Mu Yejun 1987
Jurchen A[2]	boge 卜戈 (*bogo)[3]	Kiyose 1977
Alchuka	bɔɔ	Mu Yejun 1987
Chinese Kyakala	bao- 宝	Hölzl & Hölzl 2019
Jurchen B	bo- 博	Kane 1989
Yibuqi Manchu	po, puə	Zhao Jie 1989
written Manchu	boo	Norman 2013
Lalin/Jing Manchu	bɔɔ	Mu Yejun 1987
Aihui Manchu	bo	Wang Qingfeng 2005
Sanjiazi Manchu	bo:, bɔ:	Enhebatu 1995
Shenyang Manchu	?	Aixinjueluo 1991
Sibe	bo	Zikmundová 2013

Jurchen A is unique in retaining an intervocalic *-g-* in this word. Data from most dialects and written Manchu indicate that the vowel must have been long, probably because of the loss of the *-g-*. Shirokogoroff (1924: 76) recorded the word in Aihui as *pao*, but this might be influenced by the written language. Standard Manchu <boo> is usually transcribed with Chinese <bao>. For Sibe, a long vowel was also sometimes recorded, such as *boo* in Norman (1974). Yibuqi

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2 The two different Jurchen varieties identified by Kiyose (2000) will be referred to as "Jurchen A" (Kiyose 1977) and "Jurchen B" (Kane 1989), as in Hölzl & Hölzl (2019).

3 For Jurchen as recorded with Chinese characters, the modern pronunciation is given. If necessary, the tentative reconstruction by the indicated authors is added in parentheses. These reconstructions are approximations that need future revisions based on a better understanding of Chinese phonology and Manchuric.

Manchu *po* has a variant *puə* with a diphthong, but it remains unclear whether this is a retention or an innovation (Zhao Jie 1989: 77, 79). A parallel of the loss of an intervocalic *-g-* can be found in the Manchu word *beile* 'ruler' (borrowed into Mandarin as *bèilè* 贝勒), in which the diphthong is the result of the loss of a *-g-* that is still retained in "Old" Jurchen *bojilie* 勃极烈, as recorded during Jin dynasty (Franke 1994: 266; 2000; Sun Bojun 2004: 326). The syllable <ji> for [gi] (or perhaps [ki]) is the result of the modern pronunciation of the Chinese transcription. See also No. 27 and No. 50.

No. 3/No. 57: According to Mu Yejun, the name of the mountain range in Manchu is *julgen sain alin* 'the mountain of good fortune.' For Bala, the name was written in a variety of different ways, two of which are represented in the song, *zhegen-sa-ling* 遮根萨岭 (No. 3) and *zhegen-cai-ling* 遮根采岭 (No. 57). The loss of a word-internal consonant, as in the first word (Manchu *julgen*), is reminiscent of a phenomenon observed in Alchuka and possibly Chinese Kyakala (Hölzl & Hölzl 2019). In Alchuka, the name has a similarly contracted form *dʒəguŋ-tsʻai-liŋ*[4] or *dʒəgəŋ-tsʻai-liŋ* (Mu Yejun 1985: 6, 9), illustrating that the absence of the consonant is not due to the transcription (see Table 4).

The assumption that the place name must be a contraction of formerly independent lexical items is confirmed by a violation of vowel harmony. In Manchu, the vowels *a* and *e* [ə] cannot normally cooccur in one word, as in *zhegen-sa-ling*. The vowels *i* and *u* are neutral and can be combined with both *a* and *e*. The other items in the song, including the refrain, seem to follow this rule. For instance, the word *afa-ndu-ha-bo* 'fight-REC-PTCP.PFV-ACC' (No. 9) contains a suffix *-hA*, which in both Manchu (*-ha*, *-he*, and *-ho*) and Bala (*-ha*, *-hə*, *-hɔ*; Mu Yejun 1987: 30) still exhibits three vowel harmonic forms. The form *-ha* shows the same vowel as the stem *afa-*. As in Manchu, there are some exceptions, such as the accusative *-bo* (pronounced [bə] or perhaps [pə]), which still shows vowel harmony in many other Tungusic languages. Bala has some additional exceptions, such as *nahən* 'Kang, oven-bed' (Manchu *nahan*; Mu Yejun 1987: 8), which are probably the result of a secondary weakening of the final syllable (see No. 12).

Table 4 The words for 'good' and 'mountain' in Manchuric varieties; Alchuka *ailin* from Mu Yejun (1986).

Language	No. 3, No. 57: 'good'	No. 3, No. 57: 'mountain'
Bala (song)	-sa- 萨, -**cai**- 采 [tsʰ-]	-ling 岭
Bala	**ts**ʻai [tsʰ-], -**cai**- 材 [tsʰ-]	alin, -ling 岭
Jurchen A	saiyin 塞因	aliyin 阿里因
Alchuka	**ts**ʻan [tsʰ-], -**ts**ʻai-	əilin, ailin, -liŋ
Chinese Kyakala	saien 赛恩	?
Jurchen B	saiyin 赛因	ali 阿力
Yibuqi Manchu	**ts**ʻʌn [tsʰ-]	ɛlin
written Manchu	sain	alin
Lalin/Jing Manchu	sain	?
Aihui Manchu	sɛn	ɛlin
Sanjiazi Manchu	sain	ailin, æilin
Shenyang Manchu	?	?
Sibe	śieⁿ	aliⁿ

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4 It is difficult to determine whether the affricate has the form <tsʻ> or <tʂʻ> in this word.

Occasional affricatization of an *s*, as in *zhegen-cai-ling* with a [tsʰ-], is confirmed by other recordings of Bala and other Manchuric varieties. For instance, Manchu ***saman*** 'shaman' is attested for Bala as ***ts'aman*** [tsʰ-] (Mu Yejun 1987: 9) or ***chama*** 察玛 [tʂʰ-] (Li Guojun, Li Keman & Dong Yinghua 2018: 120, 240), for Alchuka as ***ts'aman*** [tsʰ-] (Mu Yejun 1987: 9), and for Yibuqi Manchu as ***ts'amən*** [tsʰ-] (Zhao Jie 1989: 54). The same was observed in one recording of Sanjiazi Manchu (‿*tsʰaman*) and spoken Sibe (*samən* ~ ***tsʰamɛn***) (Dai Guangyu 2012: 80). Some maps from the early twentieth century still mention the *Changkwansai Mts.* without affricatization (e.g., Stanford & The China Inland Mission 1908/1909: Map 20). Without additional historical data, however, the age of the change is difficult to determine. See also No. 20 and No. 58.

Probably due to bonding and erosion, the word for 'mountain' was shortened in Bala and Alchuka. In the Chinese name *zhangguangcai ling* 张广才岭, the last word *ling* 岭 'mountain range' happens to have the same pronunciation and similar semantics. Li Guojun, Li Keman, and Dong Yinghua (2018: 150) also recorded the word for 'mountain' in Bala as *alin* 阿林.

No. 6: The word *mafa-li* 玛法哩 'ancestors' corresponds to Manchu *mafa* and the plural marker *-ri*. In Manchu, this plural is restricted to *mafa* '(paternal) grandfather, ancestor, old man' and *mama* '(paternal) grandmother, female ancestor, old lady.' Li Guojun, Li Keman, and Dong Yinghua (2018: 117, 227) recorded the Bala word as *mafa* 玛发 'paternal grandfather.' As seen before, Bala usually lacks labiodentalization, especially in initial position (see Table 1). The occurrence of an *f* instead of an expected *p* in Bala *mafa* could suggest influence from Manchu. But for Bala the number of examples in intervocalic position is insufficient. The same problem exists for the word *mafa-li* 玛法利 in Chinese Kyakala, which, like Bala, also seems to have cases where the plosive is preserved (Hölzl & Hölzl 2019: 119). A change of *-p-* to *-f-* in intervocalic position only is attested in Udihe (Benzing 1956: 33) (e.g., *mafa* 'old man, husband, bear'). The *-p-* is retained, for example, in Nanai *mapa* 'old man, bear.'

No. 12: The word *namo* 纳莫 is considerably shorter than its cognate *niyalma* in Manchu. Like Chinese Kyakala *namo-* 纳莫, it must be interpreted with a final schwa [ə] (see Hölzl & Hölzl 2019: 122–123). The majority of Manchuric lost an original consonant that is still present, for instance, in written Manchu *niyalma* or Jurchen A *nie'(e)rma* 捏儿麻 (Table 5). Remnants of the consonant can still possibly be found in a long vowel in Sanjiazi (e.g., *nia:mʌ*) and a separate vowel in Yibuqi (e.g., *niaɣma*). The lack of the diphthong in Bala *namo* 纳莫 could be the result of the transcription with Chinese characters, but it also has parallels in some varieties, such as spoken Sibe *nan*. Hölzl (2014: 210) assumed that this word in Sibe is not cognate with Manchu *niyalma*. However, written Sibe also retains the longer form *niyalma*. Spoken Sibe texts recorded by Muromski that were heavily influenced by the written language exhibit the variants *ńalma*, *nalma*, *nana*, and *nan* (Kałużyński 1977). For spoken Sibe, the form has also been recorded with retention of the final vowel as *nanə* (e.g., Norman 1974). According to Zikmundová (2013, p.c. 2021), the vowel in Sibe *nan* can also reappear under certain conditions, such as a following dative, *nanə-t* (Manchu *niyalma-de*). The *n* in *nanə* could either be the result of an assimilation to the initial nasal or of a simplification of the consonant sequence *lm*. The final vowel was also lost in Shenyang Manchu (*nam*) and in some variants in Yibuqi (*niam*) and Sanjiazi (*niam*). Alchuka has a contracted form *-nɔ* or *-nə* in certain expressions, such as *sinbi-nə* 'Sibe person,' which is reminiscent of *śivə nan* in Sibe. Bala *namo* 纳莫 [namə] in the song and Chinese Kyakala *namo-* 纳莫 [namə] are almost identical to Sibe *nanə* and Alchuka *nəmə*. For Bala a word *niɔ* 'person' is also attested (Mu Yejun 1987). This is could be a borrowing from Kilen *nio* 'person' (An Jun 1986: 92). However, Li Guojun, Li Keman,

and Dong Yinghua (2018: 113, 241) recorded the two Bala expressions *butehai nie* 布特海捏 and *buteha niema* 布特哈捏玛 'hunter' (cf. Manchu *butha* 'hunting and fishing' + *-i* 'GEN'). If this is not a typographic problem, the first seems to contain a cognate of *niɔ*, the latter of *niɔmə*. This indicates that *niɔ* could also be a contracted form of *niɔmə* comparable to Alchuka *-nɔ/-nə* and Sibe *nan*.

Table 5 The word for 'person' in Manchuric varieties; not all variants are shown; some Alchuka forms are from Mu Yejun (1985).

Language	No. 12: 'person'
Bala (song)	namo 纳莫 [namə]
Bala	niɔmə, ?niɔ
Jurchen A	nie'(e)rma 捏儿麻
Alchuka	nəmə, nɔmə, nəɔmə, -nə, -nɔ
Chinese Kyakala	namo- 纳莫 [namə]
Jurchen B	niema 捏麻
Yibuqi Manchu	niʌɣmə, niʌmə, niʌɣmʌ, niʌm
written Manchu	niyalma
Lalin/Jing Manchu	nijama
Aihui Manchu	niama
Sanjiazi Manchu	nia:mɣ, niam, nia:mʌ
Shenyang Manchu	nam
Sibe	nan, nanə-

No. 13: The verb *mude-m(u)bi* 木德木必 was translated as 'became' (成了). The comma between *mude* 木德 and *m(u)bi* 木必 in the song appears to be a mistake. Most likely, it is cognate with Manchu *mute-mbi*, which can have the meaning 'to be able, can, to be possible' but also 'to be completed, to be achieved.' The unaspirated <d> [t] possibly has a parallel in Aihui Manchu. The suffix corresponds to Manchu *-mbi* and is also attested in No. 21 as *-mi* 米. This suffix is a Manchuric innovation (Table 6).

Table 6 Cognates of Manchu *mute-* and *-mbi* in Manchuric varieties.

Language	No. 13: 'to be achieved'	No. 13/21: IPFV
Bala (song)	mude- 木德	-m(u)bi 木必, -mi 米
Bala	?	-mi
Jurchen A	mute- 木忒	-bie 别
Alchuka	?	-mei
Chinese Kyakala	?	-bi 必, -mi 米
Jurchen B	mote- 墨忒	-bi 必, -nbi 们必, ...
Yibuqi Manchu	mut'u-	-mi
written Manchu	mute-	-mbi
Lalin/Jing Manchu	?	-mi
Aihui Manchu	mudu-, mudə-, mutu-	-me
Sanjiazi Manchu	mutu-	-me
Shenyang Manchu	mutu-	-me, -m
Sibe	mutə-, mutu-	-mie, -m

No. 20: *muse* 木色 and No. 58 *muza*(*i*)-*yi* 木再依 with a [-ts-] correspond to Manchu *muse* and *muse-i* with a genitive, the first person plural inclusive pronoun that in this form is unattested in Tungusic languages outside of Manchuric (Table 7). Like No. 3 and No. 57, the song shows one example with and one without affricatization of the *s*. Whether the final -*i* of the syllable <zai> in No. 58 is an artefact, part of the stem, or belongs to the following genitive remains unclear.

Table 7 The words for the first person plural inclusive pronoun and 'high' in Manchuric varieties; Alchuka *muts* from Mu Yejun (1986).

Language	No. 20/58: 1PL.INCL	No. 27: 'high'
Bala (song)	muse木色, muza(i)- 木再	dege(ng) 德更
Bala	?	dəgən, də'ən
Jurchen A	?	tege 忒革
Alchuka	mu**ts**	dəŋ
Chinese Kyakala	muza-i 穆在 '-GEN'	?
Jurchen B	?	de 得
Yibuqi Manchu	mə**ts**ə	tən
written Manchu	muse	den
Lalin/Jing Manchu	?	dən
Aihui Manchu	mə**dz**ə	dən
Sanjiazi Manchu	mɯːz, mɯzɯ, mɯːzɯ	dɯːn, dɯn
Shenyang Manchu	?	?
Sibe	məs	dəⁿ

No. 27: The item *degengge* probably corresponds to Manchu *den* 'high' and the nominalizer -*ngge*. Whether the nasal <ng> [ŋ] is part of the stem (Manchu *den*) or the suffix (Manchu -*ngge*) is uncertain. The final instable -*n* in Manchu disappears before a suffix in *de-ken*, but apparently not in Bala *də'əŋ-kən* 'somewhat high' (Mu Yejun 1987: 30). Bala *dəgən* retains an intervocalic -*g*- that was lost in Manchu. The same -*g*- can still be encountered in Jurchen A *tege* 忒革, which exhibits an unexpected, aspirated plosive [tʰ]. Bala as recorded by Mu Yejun (1987) sometimes only retains a hiatus *də'ən*, indicating the former presence of a consonant (Table 7). Of the other varieties, only Sanjiazi Manchu *duːn* exhibits an optional long vowel, which might be the result of the loss of the consonant. Similarly, Manchu *se* 'year (said of age)' corresponds to Sanjiazi Manchu *suː* with a long vowel and Jurchen A *saige* 塞革 (*sege). More research is necessary to confirm that no other reason for the long vowels exists and that the rule can be generalized. Other recordings of Sanjiazi Manchu do not exhibit the long vowel: for example, *dən* and *sə* in Kim et al. (2008). However, the authors did not indicate long vowels because they were found to be not distinctive (Kim et al. 2008: 21).

No. 37: The word *bolao* 博老 is probably cognate with Manchu *bolho* ~ *bolgo*(*n*) 'clean, clear' (Table 8). Manchu has two derived forms, *bolgo-kon* and *bolo-kon*, which both mean 'somewhat clean or clear.' The former contains an old, fused suffix while the latter preserves a final vowel, showing that the stem is *bolo-*. Bala *bolao* either corresponds to Manchu *bolo-*, a form without suffix (cf. No. 40), or to Alchuka *pɔl'ɔ*, in which the -*g*- of the suffix was lost. Mu Yejun often indicates the former presence of a consonant with an apostrophe <'> (see also the negator in No. 43). The consonant could have also been lost due to the transcription. In many modern dialects the consonant is realized as a fricative that is difficult to transcribe with

Chinese characters. The meaning of the Jurchen word *boluwen* 卜鲁温 was indicated as 'quiet,' but it is probably cognate with Manchu *bolgon*, too. Possibly, the Chinese word *jìng* 静 'quiet' was confused with *jìng* 净 'clean' in the translation. The character *wen* 温 in the Jurchen word probably represents the syllable [gun] or [ʁun], as in Jurchen A *anchun-wen* 安春温, which corresponds to Bala *antʃʻu-gun* 'gold.'[5]

Table 8 The words for 'clear' and 'sweet' in Manchuric varieties; the Alchuka form *pɔl'ɔ* is from Mu Yejun (1986: 14), the Sibe form *jaɴcuhuɴ* from Yamamoto (1969: 18).

Language	No. 37: 'clear'	No. 40: 'sweet'
Bala (song)	bolao 博老	zhanchun 沾春
Bala	?	tʃʃiaŋtʃʻihun
Jurchen A	boluwen 卜鲁温 (*bolugun) (?)	?
Alchuka	pɔl'ɔ	?
Chinese Kyakala	?	?
Jurchen B	boluoke 博罗课	dangchu 当出
Yibuqi Manchu	porkon	tɕiɛntɕʻikʻon
written Manchu	bolho ~ bolgo(n)	jancuhūn
Lalin/Jing Manchu	?	?
Aihui Manchu	bolɣoŋ	dziantɕikoŋ
Sanjiazi Manchu	bolʁɔn	dziantʂkun
Shenyang Manchu	?	?
Sibe	bolʁǔⁿ	jaɴcuhuɴ [dʐaŋtʂuχɵn] 'weak in flavor'

No. 40: The adjective *zhanchun* 沾春 'sweet' lacks a suffix that is present in Manchu *jancu-hūn*. The final *-n* in *zhanchun* is probably the instable nasal that usually disappears when another suffix is attached. Both the suffix and the nasal are absent in Jurchen B. The initial in Manchu and Sibe shows palatalization still absent in Jurchen B, which is only explainable with the help of other varieties that preserve an *i* following the plosive. In Jurchen B *dangchu* 当出, the *i* is either absent or was lost in transcription. The development can be reconstructed as *dia > jia > ja* (using Manchu orthography as a basis). The initial stage is usually best preserved in Alchuka. For example, Manchu *ucara-* and Alchuka *utʻiara-* 'to meet' indicate the parallel development *tia > cia > ca*. In some cases, Manchu dialects, such as Sibe, have already lost the *i*. The presence of palatalization in Bala (*zhanchun* 沾春) that usually lacks this feature must be the result of influence from Manchu.

No. 43 and No. 53: These two words appear to derive from different layers, the former being more innovative, the latter more archaic (Table 9). In Manchu, the two words exhibit two sound changes, palatalization before *i* (*waji-*, *weji*) and the breaking of the initial (*waji*, *weji*). Concerning palatalization without following vowels, the development is *di > ji* (and *ti > ci*). This can be seen, for example, in Alchuka *di-*, Bala *di-*, and Manchu *ji-* 'to come.' The earlier presence of a *d* in the verb is also confirmed by Jurchen A *di-* 的 (Kiyose 1977), Jurchen B *di-* 的 (Kane 1989), or Hezhen *di.də-*, as recorded by Ling Chunsheng (1934: 279). The initial <wo> in *wodi-* 窝的 could stand for either [ɔ] or [wə]. Manchu *weji* is usually transcribed in Chinese as <woji>. However, given the lack of palatalization, the word probably also lacks breaking,

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5 Kiyose (1977: 128) reconstructs the word as *ančun*, but the Chinese transcription indicates three syllables.

which is why the initial <w> is in parentheses (i.e., (*w*)*odi*). In Jurchen A and Chinese Kyakala, the word for 'forest' is only attested in the forms corresponding to the name *Udihe*, which means 'forest dweller' (cf. Manchu *wejike*) (Hölzl & Hölzl 2019).

The verb *waji-* 瓦集 is host for a perfective negative form. In Manchu, this has the form -*hAkū* and is derived from the perfective participle -*hA* in combination with the negative existential *akū*. For Bala and Jurchen A, other negators than forms derived from *akū* were recorded (Kiyose 1977; Mu Yejun 1987). For example, Bala (*asəi*) and Jurchen A (*asui* 阿隨) share an otherwise unattested negator. Thus, the negative form -*gaku* 嘎库, like the verb stem *waji-* 瓦集, is probably influenced by Manchu dialects. However, a plosive instead of a fricative in this form is unique (Table 10). Manchu has a variant -*kAkū* but this is restricted to certain verbs.

Table 9 The words for 'to finish' and 'forest' in Manchuric varieties. The Sibe form *veji* is from Yamamoto (1969: 102).

Language	No. 43: 'to finish'	No. 53: 'forest'
Bala (song)	waji- 瓦集	(w)**odi**- 窝的
Bala	**ɔrdi**-	**ud**i
Jurchen A	?	(w)**udi**- 兀的
Alchuka	**ɔd**i-	**ud**i
Chinese Kyakala	?	(w)**udi**- 乌底
Jurchen B	**ed**i- 饿的 (***od**i-)	?
Yibuqi Manchu	vatɕi-	?
written Manchu	waji-	weji
Lalin/Jing Manchu	wadʒī-	wədʒi-
Aihui Manchu	vadzi-, vadzə-	?
Sanjiazi Manchu	va:dʐu-, va:dʐʅ-	?
Shenyang Manchu	?	?
Sibe	vaš-, vaj(ə)-	veji [vɜdʒ] 'taiga'

Table 10 The perfective negative form in Manchuric varieties. Alchuka -*xa'ɔ* taken from Mu Yejun (1986), Lalin/Jing Manchu -*hakū* from Aixinjueluo Yingsheng (1987).

Language	No. 43: PTCP.PFV.NEG
Bala (song)	-**ga**ku 嘎库
Bala	-
Jurchen A	-
Alchuka	-xa'ɔ
Chinese Kyakala	?
Jurchen B	(+ akua 阿夸)
Yibuqi Manchu	-ɣə axoɯ, …
written Manchu	-hAkū
Lalin/Jing Manchu	-hakū
Aihui Manchu	-χaqo, …
Sanjiazi Manchu	-ʁ a�austqxʊ, …
Shenyang Manchu	(+ aku)
Sibe	-ʁaqů, …

No. 45: Bala *labu* 拉不 'many' is cognate with Manchu *labdu*. The lack of the dental consonant is either the result of the transcription or a unique change unknown from other Manchuric varieties (Table 11). Alchuka *lɔtɔ* lost the labial consonant instead. Analyzing the next character *dao* 道 as representing the final syllable of Manchu *labdu* would leave the following characters unanalyzable.

No. 51: The word *gasa-* 嘎萨 'bird,' like Alchuka *gasa*, probably lost a consonant still preserved in Manchu *gasha*. As in No. 45, it could also be the result of the transcription (Table 11).

Table 11 The words for 'many' and 'bird' in Manchuric varieties. Alchuka *lɔtɔ* and *gasa* taken from Mu Yejun (1985: 6, 1986: 14), Lalin Manchu *lafdu* from Aixinjueluo Yingsheng (1987: 14).

Language	No. 45: 'many'	No. 51: 'bird'
Bala (song)	labu 拉不	gasa- 嘎萨
Bala	?	?
Jurchen A	?	?
Alchuka	lɔtɔ	gasa
Chinese Kyakala	?	?
Jurchen B	?	hasaha 哈撒哈 'cormorant' (?)[6]
Yibuqi Manchu	lɔvto	?
written Manchu	labdu	gasha
Lalin/Jing Manchu	lafdu	?
Aihui Manchu	labdo, labdu	?
Sanjiazi Manchu	laːbdɔ, lábdo	ɢɑːsᵈxa, ...
Shenyang Manchu	lafdu	?
Sibe	laft	ɢasχ

5. MORPHOSYNTAX

This section analyzes the grammar of the song and presents a translation of the original that slightly differs from the Chinese translation in Section 3. In the following examples, the first line is Bala transcribed with Chinese characters, the second is the transliteration with the help of Pinyin, the third is the constructed Manchu equivalent, the fourth is an interlinear glossing, the fifth is an English translation based on the Bala original, and the last is the corresponding Chinese translation by Mu Yejun. The refrain is not included. The enumeration corresponds to the numbers given in the translations in Section 3. Simplified constituency and grammatical relations are indicated in the second line with brackets and subscript (e.g., Dixon 2010; Bickel 2013).

The morphosyntax of the song is almost identical to Manchu. The first sentence is an equational copula sentence that is grammatical without an overt copula. In the terminology used by Dixon (2010), *boyi da susu* '(my/our) family's native place' is the copula subject (CS) and the name of the mountain range is the copula complement (CC). As in Manchu, the possessor precedes the possessed and is marked with the genitive.

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6 On formal grounds, the Jurchen word cannot correspond to Manchu (*muke*) *gaha* 'cormorant.' Kane's (1989: 226) comparison with Manchu *gūwasihiya* 'eastern egret' is problematic.

(1)   博依达苏苏遮根萨岭

[*bo-yi*   *da_susu*]cs   *zhegensaling*cc
boo-i   *da_susu*   *julgen_sain_alin*
family-GEN native_place PN

'(My/our) family's native place is the Zhangguangcai mountains.'

(张广才岭啊，我的故乡。)

The second example is a complex sentence that appears to exhibit a subordinate clause marked with an accusative. The basic sentence consists of a copula clause with a copula meaning 'to become.' The copula subject is *mafa-li* 'ancestors' and the copula complement *tesu ba namo* 'local people.' In Manchu, this expression would usually contain a genitive (*tesu ba **i** niyalma*) that is absent in the Bala song. The adverbial demonstrative (*w*)*u-ba-de* 'here, at this place' refers to the mountain range in the first sentence.

(2)   玛法哩古鲁吉[古]朝哈德阿凡都哈博

*mafa-li*cs   [*gulu*[*gu*] *chaoha-de* *afa-ndu-ha-bo*]
mafa-ri   *gurgu*   *cooha-de*   *afa-ndu-ha-be*
ancestor-PL beast   army-DAT   fight-REC-PTCP.PFV-ACC

'(My/our) ancestors, by fighting against wild beast and soldiers,'

(祖先们同野兽兵丁作战，)

乌巴德特苏巴纳莫木德(，)木必

(*w*)*u-ba-de*   [*tesu ba   namo*]cc   *mude-m*(*u*)*bi*
u-ba-de   *tesu ba   niyalma*   *mute-mbi*
this-place-DAT native place   person   become-IPFV

'became natives of this place.'

(我们才成了本地人。)

In the third sentence, the word order is OAV. The O argument, traditionally referred to as "object," is a complex expression with a demonstrative and an adjective modifying a head noun. It precedes the A argument, the "transitive subject," or most agentive argument. Basic word order in transitive clauses in Manchu usually is AOV, but OAV is also attested with pragmatically marked O arguments, as in this case.

(3)   俄勒巴彦巴木色孩拉米

[*ele bayan ba*]o   *muse*a   *haila-mi*
ere bayan ba   *muse*   *haira-mbi*
this rich   place 1PL.INCL love-IPFV

'We love this rich place.'

(我们爱这个富裕的地方，)

The fourth sentence consists of a ditransitive clause with the word order AGTV. In Manchu, the dative form *min-de* 'me' would be expected for what semantically is a beneficiary (the G argument) (e.g., Malchukov & Nedjalkov 2010). In Manchu, a T argument, traditionally referred to as "direct object" in ditransitive clauses, can be marked with an accusative *-be* or remains unmarked as in this case. The nominalizer *-ngge* expresses a high degree if used

attributively (Gorelova 2002: 153). The meaning of *na* is somewhat unclear. If it corresponds to Manchu *na* 'earth,' *hada na* must be understood as a binominal compound.

(4) 德更格哈达哪泯博胡鄙[噐]哩布必赫

[*degeng-ge hada na*]ₐ *min-bo*_G   *hu*[*tu*]*li*_T *bu-bihe*
de-ngge   hada ?na   mim-be   hūturi   bu-bihe
high-N   peak ?earth 1SG.OBL-ACC happiness give-PST

'The very high peaks gave me happiness.'

(那高高的山峰给了我们幸福，)

The fifth sentence is a comparative construction that has the form of an adjectival copula sentence. Semantically, the complex copula subject *tele bolao sheli muke* 'the clear spring water' that has three modifying elements is the comparee (Dixon 2010: 177). The standard of comparison (here abbreviated as SC) *xib(u)su-qi* 'than honey' is marked with the ablative as in Manchu. The underlying reasoning is a spatial metaphor in which the scale of sweetness is conceptualized as a path. The comparee and the standard of comparison are understood as objects on the path. Starting *from* the standard of comparison (hence the ablative), the comparee is seen as further ahead on the path. The adjective *zhanchun* 'sweet' is the copula complement.

(5) 特勒博老舍利木克西布苏其沾春

[*tele bolao sheli   muke*]_CS *xib(u)su-qi*_SC *zhanchun*_CC
[*tere bolgo šeri   muke*] *hibsu-ci   jancuhūn*
that clear spring water   honey-ABL   sweet

'The clear spring water is sweeter than honey.'

(那清清的泉水象[像]蜜甜，)

The sixth sentence probably is an adjectival copula clause with an additional locational adjunct. The noun *gul(u)gu* 'beast' is the copula subject, (*w)odi-de* 'in the forest' is an adverbial adjunct. The analysis of the last five characters 道班贝他哥 used for transcription remains somewhat unclear. Based on the Chinese translation of 'endless' (用不尽), one would expect a cognate of Manchu *dube akū* or (*wajin*) *mohon akū* 'endless' but the Bala text appears to lack a negator corresponding to Manchu *akū*. A comparison of the last word with Manchu *baitakū* 'useless' (< *baita* + *akū*) is unlikely on formal and semantic grounds. The equation with *baita-ngga* 'useful' remains speculative.

(6) 窝的得古鲁古拉不道班贝他哥

(*w)odi-de   gul(u)gu_CS *labu   daoban beitage*
weji-de   gurgu   labdu daban ?baita.ngga
forest-DAT game   many excess ?useful

'There are endless beasts in the forest.'

(山林中有用不尽的走兽，)

The seventh sentence consists of a transitive sentence with an (A)OV word order. The verb phrase contains an analytic construction in which the verb *zhe-* 'to eat' is followed by a second verb *waji-* 'to finish.'

(7)   依能吉达力嘎萨博这德瓦集嘎库

yinengji-dali gasa-bo₀ zhe-de waji-gaku
inenggi-dari gasha-be je-? waji-hakū
day-every   bird-ACC eat-? finish-PTCP.PFV.NEG

'Every day there are so many birds that they cannot all be eaten.'

(天天有吃不完的飞禽，)

Given the combination of the two verbs, the element *-de* 德 could be a converb. In Manchu, the imperfective converb (written Manchu *-me*) would be expected, as in the following example from Aihui Manchu: *buda dʒə-mə vadʒə-ʁa* 'food eat-CVB.IPFV finish-PTCP.PFV' '(somebody) has finished eating' (Wang Qingfeng 2005: 86). However, no converb suffix with a form *-de* is attested in Manchuric. It could be a misprint for a character representing the syllables <me> or <mo>, but no sufficiently similar character seems to exist. Two anonymous reviewers suggested a comparison with the irregular stem extension *-te* in the imperfective participle form *je.te-re*. If correct, it might show a phonological development as in *mude-* opposed to written Manchu *mute-* (No. 13). Manchu *je.te-* has cognates in other Tungusic languages, such as Evenki, where it can have the function of a connegative form, e.g., Khamnigan Evenki *ə-ʃi-n dzəb-tə* 'NEG-PRS-3SG eat-CONNEG' (Chaoke & Kajia 2016: 44). The productive use of the suffix in the Bala song would be archaic and unexpected, given the overall similarity to Manchu.

The last sentence is an equational copula sentence. The first part *bayan(n)i zhegencailing* 'the rich Zhangguangcai mountains' is the copula subject. The copula complement has the form *muza(i)yi da_susu* 'our native place.' The reduplication of *da susu* 'native place' is probably caused by the text being a song.

(8)   巴彦尼遮根采岭木再依达苏苏达苏苏

[*bayan-(n)i zhegencailing*]_CS [*muza(i)-yi   da_susu   da_susu*]_CC
bayan-i   julgen_sain_alin muse-i   da_susu   da_susu
rich-GEN   PN   1PL.INCL-GEN native_place native_place

'The rich Zhangguangcai mountains are our native place, (our) native place.'

(富裕的张广才岭，我的家乡，我的家乡。)

In sum, the grammar of the song is close to Manchu. Table 12 compares all grammatical elements with written Manchu. For practical purposes, some of the items, such as the imperfective or dictionary ending (Manchu *-mbi*; Table 6) or the perfective negator (Manchu *-hAkū*; Table 10), were already discussed in Section 4.

Most of the comparisons are straightforward. Minor differences are the result of the transcription. For instance, the accusative *-bo* 博 and the dative *-de* 德, 得, like Manchu *-be* and *-de*, probably both contain a schwa [ə]. Mandarin lacks a syllable <be>, which is why the syllable <bo> is used instead. According to Mu Yejun (1987: 26), an accusative *-pə* is only rarely encountered in Bala conversations, and the dative has seven different forms (*-də, -dɔ, -du, -d, -nə, -t'ə,* and *-t'*). These and similar features of the song mentioned above show that its language is strongly influenced by Manchu.

Table 12 Grammatical items in the song in comparison with Manchu.

	Bala (song)	Manchu
?	?-de 德	?
ABL	-qi 其	-ci
?ADJ	?-ge 哥	-nggA
ACC	-bo 博	-be
DAT	-de 德, 得	-de
every (day)	-dali 达力	-dari
GEN	-yi 依, -(n)i 尼	-(n)i
IPFV	-m(u)bi 木必, -mi 米	-mbi
N	-ge 格	-ngge
PTCP.PFV	-ha 哈	-hA
PL	-li 哩	-ri
PTCP.PFV.NEG	-gaku 嘎库	-hakū
PST	-bihe 必赫	-bihe
REC	-ndu 凡都	-ndu, -nu
that	tele 特勒	tere
this	ele 俄勒	ere
this-place-DAT	(w)u-ba-de 乌巴德	u-ba-de
1PL.INCL	muse 木色	muse
1PL.INCL-GEN	muza(i)-yi 木再依	muse-i
1SG.OBL-ACC	min-bo 泯博	mim-be

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has presented an analysis of the only known text of the Bala language. The song confirms that Bala has an overall mixed character with some elements being more innovative and some more archaic. The song itself is from a higher register, with all lexical items also being recorded in Manchu, but it exhibits a few archaic features. For instance, *waji-* 'to finish' must be from a more innovative Manchu layer, which shows palatalization and breaking (Manchu *waji-*, Bala *ɔrdi-* in Mu Yejun 1987), while (*w*)*odi* 'forest' is from a more archaic layer (Manchu *weji*, Bala *udi* in Mu Yejun 1987). Some special features that differ from written Manchu, such as an occasional affricatization of *s*, are also known from spoken Manchu dialects. A few features, such as the plosive in the negator **-gaku** 嘎库 (Manchu **-hakū**), are rare or absent in other recorded varieties of Manchuric.

The careful analysis of this text belonging to an extinct language illustrates that much can still be learned from scattered materials that have been collected among the last speakers. Although attested only in fragments, Bala is of utmost importance for the study of Manchuric and Tungusic languages. The data show that remnants of archaic Manchuric languages that preserve features otherwise only known from Jurchen recorded during the Jin (1115–1234) or Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, such as an intervocalic *-g-*, survived well into the twentieth century. These remains not only help in the reconstruction of Jurchen but can give a glimpse into the diversity of Manchuric before the rise of written Manchu and spoken "Bannerman Manchu" (Zikmundová *forthcoming*) at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which forms the basis of almost all attested dialects.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	First person	NEG	Negation, negator
3	Third person	No.	Number of examples in Table (2)
ABL	Ablative	OBL	Oblique
ACC	Accusative	PFV	Perfective
ADJ	Adjective	PL	Plural
CONNEG	Connegative	PN	Place name
CVB	Converb	PRS	Present
DAT	Dative	PST	Past
GEN	Genitive	PTCP	Participle
INCL	Inclusive	REC	Reciprocal
IPFV	Imperfective	SG	Singular
N	Nominalization, nominalizer		

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