

## On contraction in Mongolian ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ documents

Wu Hugjiltu

The ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script is the system of writing used during the Yuan dynasty after Yuan Shizu Khubilai ordered the National Teacher (國師) ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ to create it. After its introduction in 1269, the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script was in use throughout the Yuan dynasty, during a period of more than one hundred years. The surviving documents show that the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script was used to record many languages, including Mongolian, Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Uighur. Materials in the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script are today preserved in a number of museums, libraries, and archives in China, Mongolia, Russia, Great Britain, Germany, France, Hungary, Turkey, Japan, and Korea.

The study of these materials was initiated by Nicholas Poppe, who published a pioneering monograph on the topic under the title *The Mongolian monuments in ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script* (1957, translated and edited by John R. Krueger, from the Russian original of 1941). After Poppe, Louis Ligeti published his *Monuments en écriture 'phags-pa* (1973), and later other scholars from various countries have also contributed to our understanding of the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script.

The greatest number of ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ documents is, not surprisingly, preserved in China. Many Chinese scholars have therefore worked on the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script. Most importantly, the Mongolist Junast (Zhaonasitu), a leading researcher at the Institute of Nationality Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the editor in chief of the journal *Minzu Yuwen*, has collected an extensive corpus of ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ materials and published a two-volume monograph on them under the English title *The ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script and Mongolian monuments* (八思巴字和蒙古語文獻, published in Japan in 1990). This work contains a systematic analysis of altogether forty separate documents written in the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script. Junast has also published a number of other monographs and specialized articles on the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script.

An important orthographical property of the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠰᠢᠯᠠ script, as applied to record Mongolian, is that syllables are normally written as separate graphic entities, as in the following phrase:

ḥP'ags-pa script	ᠮᠣᠭ ᠭ ᠳᠡᠭ ᠷᠢ ᠶᠢᠨ ᠬᠤ ᠴᠦ ᠳᠤᠷ
ḥP'ags-pa transliteration	moᠭ g dᠡᠭ ri yin ku čü dur
ḥP'ags-pa transcription	moᠭ-ga dᠡᠭ-ri-yin ku-čü-dur
Mongolian script	ᠮᠣᠭᠭᠠ ᠳᠡᠭᠷᠢ ᠶᠢᠨ ᠬᠤᠴᠦᠳᠤᠷ
Mongolian transcription	möngke tngri-yin küčü-dür

However, the ḥP'ags-pa documents also contain certain cases in which two syllables are contracted into one. The examples below are arranged according to the document number (No.) as listed by Junast:<sup>1</sup>

No.	ḥP'ags-pa script	ḥP'ags-pa transliteration	Mongolian script	Mongolian transcription
(i)				
§ 1	ᠴᠠᠶᠠᠨ	q'n	ᠴᠠᠶᠠᠨ	qayan
§ 2	ᠤᠯᠠᠭᠠ	u-l'	ᠤᠯᠠᠭᠠ	ulaya
§ 3	ᠲᠠᠮᠭᠠᠳᠠ ᠠᠴᠠ	tm-q-d'-č	ᠲᠠᠮᠭᠠᠳᠠ ᠠᠴᠠ	tamᠭad-aca
§ 7	ᠴᠠᠶᠠᠨ	č-q'n	ᠴᠠᠶᠠᠨ	caᠶan
§ 16	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠲᠤ	ḷ-y'-t'u	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠲᠤ	ḷayaᠶatu
§ 25	ᠰᠢᠲᠠᠶᠠᠬᠤ	si-t''-qu	ᠰᠢᠲᠠᠶᠠᠬᠤ	sitayaqu
§ 28	ᠤᠯᠤᠰᠤ ᠲᠠᠶᠠᠨ	u-lus-d'n	ᠤᠯᠤᠰᠤ ᠲᠠᠶᠠᠨ	ulus-taᠶan
§ 28	ᠪᠣᠰᠠᠶᠠᠳᠠ	bos-q''-d	ᠪᠣᠰᠠᠶᠠᠳᠠ	bosqayad
§ 28	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠨ	ḷ-y'n	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠨ	ḷayaᠶan
§ 28	ᠨᠣᠶᠠᠳᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	noq-r(d)''-su	ᠨᠣᠶᠠᠳᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	onoᠶadabasu
§ 29	ᠵᠢᠷᠠᠨ	ḷir-q'n	ᠵᠢᠷᠠᠨ	ḷiran
§ 29	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠨ ᠤ	ḷ'-nu	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠨ ᠤ	ḷayan-u
§ 29	ᠻᠢᠵᠠᠶᠠᠷ	k'i-ḷ'-r	ᠻᠢᠵᠠᠶᠠᠷ	kiḷaᠶar
§ 29	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠲᠠᠨ	ḷ-y''-t'n	ᠵᠠᠶᠠᠶᠠᠲᠠᠨ	ḷayaᠶatan
§ 29	ᠲᠣᠳᠣᠷᠠᠶᠠᠰᠠᠶᠠᠷ	t'o-do-rq-s'r	ᠲᠣᠳᠣᠷᠠᠶᠠᠰᠠᠶᠠᠷ	todoraysaᠶar
§ 35	ᠤᠬᠠᠶᠠᠲᠠᠨ	u-q''-t'n	ᠤᠬᠠᠶᠠᠲᠠᠨ	uqaᠶatan
§ 35-1	ᠰᠢᠨᠲᠠᠷᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	šiq-t''-r''-su	ᠰᠢᠨᠲᠠᠷᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	šintarabasu
§ 35-2	ᠴᠢᠷᠢᠶᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	qu-ri-y''-su	ᠴᠢᠷᠢᠶᠠᠪᠠᠰᠤ	quriyabasu
(ii)				
§ 1	ᠶᠡᠪᠡᠭᠡᠨ	'i-h'en	ᠶᠡᠪᠡᠭᠡᠨ	ibegen
§ 1	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠭᠳᠡᠭᠰᠡᠳᠤ	g'ek-deg-sed	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠭᠳᠡᠭᠰᠡᠳᠤ	kemegdegsed
§ 1	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠨ	g'en	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠨ	kemen (g-)
§ 2	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠵᠦ	g'e-ḷju	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠵᠦ	kemeḷju
§ 12	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠵᠦ	k''e-ḷju	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠵᠦ	kemeḷju
§ 3	ᠰᠢᠯᠡᠳᠡᠭᠦᠳᠤᠨ	šil-d'e-dun	ᠰᠢᠯᠡᠳᠡᠭᠦᠳᠤᠨ	šildeged-ün
§ 4	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠷᠦᠨ	g'e-run	ᠻᠡᠮᠡᠷᠦᠨ	kemerün
§ 17	ᠵᠡᠭᠡᠨ	ge-g'en	ᠵᠡᠭᠡᠨ	gegen

§ 19	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠰᠤ	k'e-su	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ	kemebesü
§ 20	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠯᠤ ᠯᠤ ᠯᠤ	g'e-'u-lu-'e d	ᠬᠡᠰᠤᠯᠤᠯᠤᠯᠤ	kemegülüged
§ 21	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠰᠢᠨ	g'ek'-sen	ᠬᠡᠰᠤᠰᠢᠨ	kemegsen
§ 28	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠬᠡ	k'e-k'u	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ	kemekü
§ 28	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠳᠤ	d'e-du	ᠬᠡᠰᠤᠳᠤ	degedü
§ 28	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠷᠢ	d'e-re	ᠬᠡᠰᠤᠷᠢ	deger-e
§ 32	ᠪᠤ ᠰᠢ ᠷᠢ ᠰᠤ	bu-ši-r'e-su	ᠪᠤᠰᠢᠷᠢᠰᠤ	büširebesü
§ 36	ᠬᠡᠰᠤ ᠬᠡᠸᠦ	g'e-k'ué	ᠬᠡᠰᠤᠬᠡᠸᠦ	kemeküi

(iii)

§ 1	ᠳᠤᠯᠤᠭᠤ ᠶᠤ ᠶᠤᠷᠠᠭᠢ	d'ul-q-que	ᠳᠤᠯᠤᠭᠤᠶᠤᠷᠠᠭᠢ	duḡulyaqui
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(iv)

§ 4	ᠨᠣᠶᠠᠳᠤ ᠯᠤᠷᠤᠭᠤ	no-yd-lu'	ᠨᠣᠶᠠᠳᠤᠯᠤᠷᠤᠭᠤ	noyad-luḡ-a
§ 10	ᠠᠷᠠᠨ ᠯᠤᠷᠤᠭᠤ	h-rn-lu'	ᠠᠷᠠᠨᠯᠤᠷᠤᠭᠤ	aran-luḡ-a
§ 14	ᠶᠤᠪᠤ ᠰᠤ	y-bu'-su	ᠶᠤᠪᠤᠰᠤ	yabubasu
§ 35	ᠴᠠᠳᠤ ᠪᠠᠰᠤ	č-du'-su	ᠴᠠᠳᠤᠪᠠᠰᠤ	čadubasu
§ 35	ᠤᠷᠠᠭᠤ ᠪᠠᠰᠤ	ur-qu'-su	ᠤᠷᠠᠭᠤᠪᠠᠰᠤ	uḡubasu

In these examples contraction is indicated in the ḥP'ags-pa script by the letter ᠬ (·). Since such examples are recurrent, contraction cannot be an accidental or occasional phenomenon—rather, it is a question of a systematic convention of spelling reflecting a regular feature of the underlying language.

The examples above have been arranged into four categories (i to iv), depending on which vowel letter, if any, follows or precedes the letter indicating contraction. In the first category (i) no overt vowel letter is present, in the second and third categories (ii and iii) the letter indicating contraction is *followed* by the vowels *e* and *u*, respectively, while in the fourth category (iv) it is *preceded* by the vowel *u*.

Observing these four types of contraction, it is crucial to understand the orthographical functions of the letter ᠬ (·). Concerning this particular detail, Poppe writes:<sup>2</sup>

«As the ḥP'ags-pa script is syllabic, each consonantal letter represents not only the sound of a consonant, but also an entire syllable, consisting of that consonant plus the vowel *a*, e.g., § 2 stands not for *b* but *ba*, § 6 not for *t'* but *t'a*, § 10 not for *l* but *la*; and so on.»

«A final consonant of a closed syllable is transcribed by the same sign which serves to render that consonant in combination with *a*, i.e., § 2, § 10, etc., except that a consonant not forming an independent syllable is written joined together with the syllable to which it relates, while independent syllables are written separately. Thus,

§ 10 in *balaqadun* cities (gen. pl.), representing the syllable *la*, is written separately and is not joined to *ba*; while § 10 in the word *bolju*, where *l* does not form a separate syllable, is written joined to *bo* [...].»

Junast (op. cit.), on the other hand, claims that the ḥP'ags-pa script is basically not a syllabic but a phonemic system of writing, in which the letters indicating phonemes are assembled to larger units corresponding to syllables. In this system, the vowel *a* cannot be regarded as an inherent part of consonant letters. Rather, *a*, as opposed to the other vowels, is expressed by zero in the script. More specifically, the zero representation of *a* is possible under any of the following contextual conditions, which apply within the graphic syllable: (1) after a single letter indicating a consonant, (2) after a single letter indicating a semivowel, (3) after the first segment in a succession of two consecutive consonant letters, (4) after the first segment in a succession of three consecutive consonant letters, (5) after *each* of two consecutive consonant letters of which the latter is  $\mathfrak{R}(\cdot)$ , (6) after a consonant letter followed by *yi*, as well as (7) after the letter  $\mathfrak{R}(\cdot)$  preceded by *u*.

Indeed, the conclusion made by Junast concerning the phonemic nature of the ḥP'ags-pa script must be correct and helps us to understand the principles of this script. At the same time, the conception that syllables are expressed as larger units composed of phonemic letters is also in accordance with what we know of the functioning of the ḥP'ags-pa script. For this reason, the examples of contraction listed above must, from the graphic point of view, be analyzed as reflecting a phenomenon that takes place within the syllable.

We may now go on examining the role of the letter  $\mathfrak{R}(\cdot)$  as an indicator of contraction. On this issue, Poppe (l. c.) writes as follows:

«Syllables with § 28 (*'a*, *'u*, etc.) are, however, an exception. These as a rule ARE written joined to the previous syllable when the vowel of the syllable with *'* is the same as the vowel of the preceding syllable, cf. *q'an* emperor II 3, *d'ulqaquē* addressed to I 4, etc. When the vowel of the syllable beginning with *'* is different from the vowel of the preceding syllable, these syllables are written separately, e.g., *ba'ut'uqayi* let (them) dismount! II.17.»

This explanation is sufficient for the first three categories of contraction as listed above. In these categories, the contracted vowels have a uniform quality: (i) *a'a*, (ii) *e'e*, or (iii) *u'u*. The fourth category, however, requires a separate explanation, for here the vowel qualities preceding and following the letter  $\mathfrak{R}(\cdot)$  are different: (iv) *u'a*.

In his discussion of the «zero initial symbols in the ḥP'ags-pa script», Junast (op. cit.) mentions examples in which the letter  $\mathfrak{R}(\cdot)$  represents

the zero initial (零聲母符號) of a medial syllable. According to him, when this letter stands at the end of the written syllable, and when the preceding vowel is **u**, it expresses the diphthongoid connection between the components of the sequence *ua* (category iv). On the other hand, when following a consonant letter, it expresses the lengthening of the zero-marked vowel into a long *aa* (category i). Finally, when occurring between a consonant letter and either one of the vowel letters **e u**, it expresses the long vowels *ee uu* (categories ii and iii). From the linguistic point of view, the letter 𐰢 (·) indicates that contraction had taken place, and that the categories of long vowels and diphthongs had been formed in the language.

We may, consequently, assume that contraction in Mongolian ḥP'ags-pa documents is a graphic device for expressing the long vowels and diphthongs of the underlying language. To support this assumption, the following arguments can be presented:

(1) The complexes containing the letter 𐰢 (·) are written as graphic syllables. This is in accordance with the basic principle of the ḥP'ags-pa orthography, in which letters are assembled into units corresponding to the linguistic syllables of the underlying language. However, this also implies that the long vowels and diphthongs represented as contracted sequences in the script were monophonemic entities which belonged to a single linguistic syllable.







(2) As the ḥP'ags-pa script was essentially a modified version of the Tibetan script, the cases of contraction may be compared with the similar convention of using the letter 'a-chung in Tibetan. It is well known that the latter can form syllables together with a preceding letter, indicating small qualitative and tonal changes. In certain cases, and for certain varieties of Tibetan (including modern Lhasa Tibetan), 'a-chung can even express long vowels or diphthongs.<sup>3</sup>

(3) In initial position, the letter 𐰢 (·) marks the zero initial, also known as the «shadow initial» (影聲母). According to the Mongolian rhyme book *Menggu ziyun jiaoben* 蒙古字韻校本 the pronunciation of the letter 𐰢 (·) is «the pronunciation of itself». This obviously means that the letter actually had zero pronunciation, modified in each case by the actual vowel present in the syllable.<sup>4</sup> This also corresponds to the pattern exhibited by the Tibetan letter 'a-chung.<sup>5</sup>

(4) Some cases of contraction in ḥP'ags-pa documents correspond to a syllable with a short vowel in Written Mongolian, while the modern spoken language has a long vowel. This very clearly indicates that the ḥP'ags-pa orthography was based on the actual pronunciation of the contemporary spoken language:

No.	hP'ags-pa script	hP'ags-pa transliteration	Mongolian transcription	Modern Mongolian
§ 17	ᠬᠡ ᠭᠡᠨ	ge-g'en	gegen	[gege:n]
§ 7	ᠬᠡ ᠭᠠᠨ	c-q'n	čayan	[tʃaga:n]

However, in a few exceptional examples uncontracted sequences are present in the hP'ags-pa script:

No.	hP'ags-pa script	hP'ags-pa transliteration	Mongolian script	Mongolian transcription
§ 7	ᠬᠡ ᠭᠠᠨ	c-q'n		čayan
§ 9	ᠬᠡ ᠭᠡ ᠨ	c-q-'n		čayan
§ 1	ᠳᠤᠯᠤᠰ ᠶ᠋ᠢ ᠬᠡᠭᠡ	d'ul-q-que		duγubγaqui
§ 28	ᠳᠤ ᠬᠡᠭᠡ ᠶ᠋ᠢ	du-'ul-qan		duγubγan
§ 29	ᠵᠢ ᠨᠤ	ǰ'-nu		ǰayan-u
§ 29	ᠵᠢ ᠨ	ǰ-'n		ǰayan

There are two factors behind such variation. First, the hP'ags-pa script probably reflects the fact that the process of contraction was just taking place, in which situation contracted and uncontracted pronunciations coexisted in the oral language. Second, the scribes using the hP'ags-pa script were accustomed to treat the letter ᠬ (·) as the initial of a syllable. As a result, they occasionally misrepresented the cases of contraction as sequences of separate syllables.


(5) The hP'ags-pa orthography can also be compared with that of the *Secret History of the Mongols* (1240), the most important Middle Mongolian document, written in terms of a phonological application of the Chinese characters. The *Secret History* contains occasional examples of long vowels. Even more importantly, some words in it occur in two different orthographical shapes:<sup>6</sup>

SH	Chinese characters	Character transcription	Mongolian transcription	Gloss
§ 80	察罕	caqān	čayan	'white'
§ 87	察中哈安	caqa'an	čayan	id.
§ 145	格堅	gegēn	gegen	'bright'
§ 21	格格延	gege'en	gegen	id.
§ 19	客周	kējū	kemeǰū	'saying'
§ 184	客額周	ke'eǰū	kemeǰū	id.
§ 111	扎牙禿	jayātu	ǰayaǰatu	'fortunate'



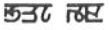





§ 201	扎牙阿禿	<i>jaya'atu</i>	<i>ḡayaḡatu</i>	id.
§ 201	亦協周	<i>ihējü</i>	<i>ibegejü</i>	'protecting'
§ 163	亦赫額勒	<i>ihē'el</i>	<i>ibegel</i>	'protection'

Most of the examples contain a long vowel in the modern language, as in *čayan* [tʃaga:n], *gegen* [gəgə:n], *ḡayaḡatu* [dʒɪya:t], *ibegel* [ibə:l]. The only exception is formed by the modern cognate of *kējü*, in which an irregular shortening has taken place, actually: *kemejü* > *ke'ejü* > *kējü* > *gejü* > *gej* [gədʒ].

On the basis of these arguments, we may confidently conclude that the spellings *·a ·e ·u* of the ḥP'ags-pa script reflect a regular convention for expressing the long vowels [a:] [e:] [u:] of the Middle Mongolian language. Therefore, the correct transcription of a written word like *q·n* is *qān* [qa:n], not *qa'an*. It may be noted that Ligeti listed the transcriptions *qā gē dū* in his table of the ḥP'ags-pa alphabet.<sup>7</sup> Poppe also presented some new opinions concerning this issue in his preface to the Chinese edition of his monograph on the ḥP'ags-pa monuments. He wrote (adapted retranslation from the Chinese):<sup>8</sup>

«The ḥP'ags-pa script raises some problems. The main problem concerns the marking of the symbol . I transliterate it as «'» following Prof. Dragunov. In other words, I use a raised dot. Prof. Dragunov writes a dot to indicate a pharyngeal stop. There is no pharyngeal stop in Mongolian, and there has probably never been one. Therefore we may say that this symbol marks in Mongolian a kind of hiatus filler, as in *de'ere* 'upper part, above', expressing the continuation of vowels, as can also be seen from the Mongolian version of the «Secret History of the Mongols». It is also possible that this symbol simply expresses the duration of vowels, as has been suggested by Prof. Clauson and Yoshibu. In Tibetan the corresponding letter actually represents the duration of vowels. It is therefore possible that the ḥP'ags-pa spelling *de'ere* stands for *dere* [misprint for: *dēre*—eds.]»

Apart from the cases discussed above, the ḥP'ags-pa script has also another type of contraction, which is connected with sequences containing the letter *ᠮ* (*y*). Examples:

No.	ḥP'ags-pa script	ḥP'ags-pa transliteration	Mongolian script	Mongolian transcription
(i)				
§ 8		<i>nyi-m-n</i>		<i>naiman-a</i>
§ 10		<i>'yi-mq</i>		<i>ayimay</i>
§ 14		<i>y-bu-'yi</i>		<i>yabuḡai</i>
§ 14		<i>q-qyi</i>		<i>ḡaqai</i>



§ 24	ᠮᠠᠯᠠᠢ	t'w-lyi	ᠮᠠᠯᠠᠢ	<i>taulai</i>
§ 28	ᠪᠣᠰᠠᠪᠠᠢ	ḡos-q-byi	ᠪᠣᠰᠠᠪᠠᠢ	<i>bosqabai</i>
§ 29	ᠤᠮᠤᠤ	u-t'yi	ᠤᠮᠤᠤ	<i>utai</i> (五台)
§ 29	ᠳᠠᠯᠠᠢ	t-lyi	ᠳᠠᠯᠠᠢ	<i>dalai</i>
§ 29	ᠬᠣᠷᠢᠶᠢᠶᠢᠨ	ho-ryi-yin	ᠬᠣᠷᠢᠶᠢᠶᠢᠨ	<i>oroï-yin</i>
§ 29	ᠪᠣᠯᠲᠤᠭᠢ	bol-t'u-qyi	ᠪᠣᠯᠲᠤᠭᠢ	<i>boltuḡai</i>
§ 31	ᠬᠤᠳᠤᠭᠢᠲᠠᠢ	qu-t'uq-t'yi	ᠬᠤᠳᠤᠭᠢᠲᠠᠢ	<i>quduḡtai</i>
§ 35-4	ᠪᠣᠯᠠᠢ	bo-lyi	ᠪᠣᠯᠠᠢ	<i>bolai</i>
§ 37	ᠬᠤᠪᠢᠯᠠᠢ	qu-bu-lyi	ᠬᠤᠪᠢᠯᠠᠢ	<i>qubilai</i>
(ii)				
§ 28	ᠡᠭᠦᠳᠪᠡᠢ	é-'ud-beyi	ᠡᠭᠦᠳᠪᠡᠢ	<i>egüdbei</i>
§ 29	ᠲᠡᠶᠢᠮᠤ	t'eyi-mu	ᠲᠡᠶᠢᠮᠤ	<i>teimü</i>
(iii)				
§ 25	ᠮᠣᠭᠠᠢ	mo-qoyi	ᠮᠣᠭᠠᠢ	<i>moyai</i>
§ 35-3	ᠨᠣᠭᠠᠢ	no-qoyi	ᠨᠣᠭᠠᠢ	<i>noqai</i>

The sample words of the three categories above (i to iii) contain the sequences *ayi*, *eyi*, and *oyi*, respectively. Contraction is in all of these cases expressed by the letter *y*. Incidentally, according to the *Menggu ziyun jiaoben* the latter is also a «shadow» letter. Except when representing the syllable-initial glide [j], it marks the end component of diphthongs like *ai*, *ei*, *oi*. This is fully in accordance with the analysis presented by Junast.

It is, however, important to note that diphthongs are not always expressed by means of contraction. In some cases, we find spellings with sequences like *eé ué üé*, as in the following examples:

No.	hP'ags-pa script	hP'ags-pa transliteration	Mongolian script	Mongolian transcription
§ 29	ᠳᠡᠯᠡᠭᠡᠢ	de-le-geé	ᠳᠡᠯᠡᠭᠡᠢ	<i>delekei</i>
§ 29	ᠬᠡᠢ	k'eé	ᠬᠡᠢ	<i>kei</i>
§ 29	ᠠᠶᠤᠢ	'a-'ué	ᠠᠶᠤᠢ	<i>ayui</i>
§ 28	ᠲᠡᠳᠦᠢ	t'e-dué	ᠲᠡᠳᠦᠢ	<i>tedüi</i>
§ 4	ᠦᠦᠯᠡᠰ	'üé-les	ᠦᠦᠯᠡᠰ	<i>üiles</i>
§ 2	ᠦᠦᠯᠡᠳᠤᠭᠡᠢ	'üé-led-t'u-geé	ᠦᠦᠯᠡᠳᠤᠭᠡᠢ	<i>üiledtügei</i>

## Notes

- 1 Junast, *The hP'ags-pa script and Mongolian monuments*. Vol. I: Research paper collections, vol. II: Monuments collections. Tokyo: Foreign Language University,



1990. In the present paper, the letter **G**, as used by Junast, has been replaced by **q**, as used by Poppe.
- 2 Nicholas Poppe, *The Mongolian monuments in ḥP'ags-pa script*. Göttinger Asia-tischer Forschungen 8. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1957, p. 27.
  - 3 Cf. the «Tibetan transliteration textbook» by the Section of Tibetan Studies of the Department of Language and Literature of National Minorities, Central Institute of Nationalities. Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House, 1983.
  - 4 *Menggu ziyun jiaoben* 蒙古字韻校本, compiled by Junast (照那斯圖) and Yang Naisi (楊耐思). Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House, 1987.
  - 5 Additional examples of the correspondence of the ḥP'ags-pa zero initial to its Tibetan counterpart are discussed in the Chinese version of the present paper, published in *Xibei Minzu Yanjiu* 西北民族研究 1999: 1. Lanzhou, pp. 22–30.
  - 6 Igor de Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972. In this book, long vowels are indicated by the length sign (ˉ) above vowel letters.
  - 7 Louis Ligeti, *Monuments en écriture 'phags-pa. Pièces de chancellerie en transcription chinoise*. Monumenta linguae Mongolicae collecta III. Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1972, p. 14.
  - 8 Ni. Baopei 尼鮑培 [Nicholas Poppe], *Basiba zi Menggu yu beiming* 八思巴字蒙古語碑銘. [Translated by:] Hao Sumin 郝蘇民. Hailar: Inner Mongolia Cultural Publishing House, 1986, p. vii–viii.

