Lesson 21: Script IV, Transliterating Chinese

Many Manchu transliterations of Chinese words are obvious for anyone who knows pinyin. The Manchu word *wang* is the same as the pinyin *wang* (and so, usually, refers to the Chinese character 王). Other transliterations, though not absolutely identical to pinyin, are quite easy to decipher – the Manchu *dung* is the same as the pinyin *dong*, the Manchu *cu* is the same as the pinyin *chu* (easy if you remember that the Manchu *c* is pronounced like "ch"), the Manchu *k'ao* is the same as the pinyin *kao*, the Manchu *šeng* is the same as the pinyin *sheng*, and the Manchu *lio* is the same as the pinyin *liu*.

The following are a few conventions for transliteration that are more likely to trip you up, and so are worth learning. If you're ever stuck, a complete list of pinyin/Manchu equivalences is found in Roth-Li, pp.377-381.

1. The Manchu *eo* represents the pinyin *ou* (so *ceo = chou*, *jeo = zhou*, etc).
2. The Manchu *oo* represents the pinyin *ao* (so *boo = bao*, *loo = lao*, etc).
3. The Manchu *uwe* represents the pinyin *uo* (so *guwe = guo* – note that sometimes Manchu will represent *uo* simply by using *o*, but it's worth recognizing *uwe*)
4. The Manchu *ioi* represents the pinyin *ü* (so *ioi = yu*, *sioi = xu*, *lioi = lü*, etc). However, note that when the pinyin *ü* sound is followed by an *n* (as in *xun* or *qun*), Manchu will use *iyūn* (so *ciyūn = qun*) and when the *ü* sound is followed by *an* (as in *quan* or *xuan*) Manchu uses *iowan* (so *siowan = xuan*).
5. Many Chinese dipthongs have their vowels separated by either a *y* (if the first vowel in the dipthong is an *i*) or a *w* (if the first vowel in the dipthong is a *u*) when represented in Manchu. (So *liyan = lian*, *hūwang = huang*, *jiyei = jie*, *cuwan = chuan*, *biyoo = biao*, etc)
6. (Thank you to Ken Hosokai for pointing out an error in this issue in previous versions of this lesson) Because of the relatively recent palatalization of three Mandarin consonants, there are three consonants in modern pinyin that can each be written in two different ways in Manchu (depending on what consonant appeared in the word in pre-palatalization Mandarin). They are as follows:
   a. The pinyin *j* is sometimes represented by a Manchu *j* and sometimes by a Manchu *g* (so both *giyan* and *jiyan = jian*). Words using *g* were not palatalized in early Qing Mandarin. Please note that when followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i*, Manchu *g* = pinyin *g* (so *ging = jing*, but *geo = gou*). When followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i*, Manchu *j* = pinyin *zh* (so *jang = zhang*).
   b. The pinyin *x* is sometimes represented by a Manchu *s* and sometimes by a Manchu *h* (so both *hiyūn* and *siyūn = xun*). Words using *h* were not palatalized in early Qing Mandarin. Please note that when followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i,* Manchu *h* = pinyin *h* (so *hiyan = xian*, but *hūwang = huang*). When followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i*, Manchu *s* = pinyin *s* (so *san = san*)
   c. The pinyin *q* is sometimes represented by a Manchu *c* and sometimes by a Manchu *k* (so both *ciyan* and *kiyan = qian*). Words using *k* were not palatalized in early Qing Mandarin. Please note that when followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i*, Manchu

k = pinyin *k* (so *kioi* = *qu* but *keo* = *kou*). When followed by a Manchu vowel other than *i*, Manchu *c* = pinyin *ch* (so *cang* = *chang*)

7. The pinyin *g* and *k* will always be represented by a front consonant, so if the following vowel is a back vowel, the special forms *g'* and *k'* will be used. Remember that these letters link to vowels in the same way as do the front *g* and *k* (so don't for instance, mistake *g'an* for *g'a*).

8. Remember the special rules for certain pronunciations of the pinyin *i*. *Chi, zhi, shi,* are written with the regular Manchu *i*, but using special consonant forms (*shi* is written as Manchu *ši*, *chi* and *zhi* have unique forms of *c* and *j* marked with a circle). Pinyin *si*, meanwhile, uses the normal *s*, but a special form of *i* (also used with *ts* to represent pinyin *ci*). Pinyin *zi* is written by attaching a short left-facing tail to Manchu *dz*.

9. Remember the special letters used for Chinese sounds: Manchu *dz* = pinyin *z*, Manchu *ž* = pinyin *r* (in initial position only, pinyin *er* is given as Manchu *el*), Manchu *ts* = pinyin *c*.

The next page has some Chinese place names, names, and words written in Manchu (words which might well appear in a Qing document). Try to identify each Chinese term.

Practice words/names/place names (note that a few examples include regular Manchu words)

55. ᠊ 56. ᠊ 57. ᠊

50. ᠊ 51. ᠊ 52. ᠊ 53. ᠊ 54. ᠊

45. ᠊ 46. ᠊ 47. ᠊ 48. ᠊ 49. ᠊

40. ᠊ 41. ᠊ 42. ᠊ 43. ᠊ 44. ᠊

35. ᠊ (compare to ᠊) 36. ᠊ 37. ᠊ 38. ᠊ 39. ᠊

31. ᠊ 32. ᠊ 33. ᠊ 34. ᠊

25. ᠊ 26. ᠊ 27. ᠊ 28. ᠊ 29. ᠊ 30. ᠊

19. ᠊ 20. ᠊ 21. ᠊ 22. ᠊ 23. ᠊ 24. ᠊

14. ᠊ 15. ᠊ 16. ᠊ 17. ᠊ 18. ᠊

10. ᠊ 11. ᠊ 12. ᠊ 13. ᠊

5. ᠊ 6. ᠊ 7. ᠊ 8. ᠊ 9. ᠊

1. ᠊ 2. ᠊ 3. ᠊ 4. ᠊ (commonly appears as ᠊)