

Ioi Cung's Manchu Lessons, 1913–1919¹

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Abstract: This research note describes three classroom manuscripts in the Harvard-Yenching Library that belonged to Aisin Gioro Ioi Cung (1903–1965), one of the fellow-students of the Xuantong Emperor during his residence in the Forbidden City after the abdication of 1912. These manuscripts were annotated from Xuantong 5 to 11 (1913–1919), during was likely Ioi Cung's Manchu lessons taken alongside Puyi inside the Forbidden City. The research note establishes the ownership, dating, and original context of these manuscripts by comparing available sources on Puyi's Manchu curriculum with the material features of the manuscripts themselves, paying particular attention to the handwritten running dates in the top margins. Thus identified, these manuscripts offer insight into the Manchu education received by Ioi Cung and Puyi, which displays a significant degree of continuity, both in content and in practice, with late Qing Manchu language education in more ordinary banner schools.

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毓崇的滿文課本，1913–1919

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美國哈佛燕京圖書館藏有三套屬於愛新覺羅毓崇（1903–1965）的手抄滿漢合璧課本。據眉批可知毓崇使用這些課本的時間為宣統五年至十一年，即他於遜清皇室擔任愛新覺羅溥儀陪讀期間。本文借助多種史料確認哈佛燕京所藏抄本的歸屬及其年代，並通過抄本的內容及特徵初步探討遜清皇室的滿文教育與晚清一般旗人滿文教育的異同。

A moment from the well-known confessional memoir of China's "Last Emperor," titled *Wo de qianbansheng* 我的前半生 in Chinese and *From Emperor to Citizen* in English translation, is often cited in popular discourses (and occasionally, academic writings) surrounding the state of the Manchu language near the end of the Qing empire. The intrigue which Puyi's (1906–1967) submission that he knew no more than one expression in Manchu — *ili* "rise!"—holds for China's cultural memory endures, and the analysis of this endurance—which perhaps speaks as much to the specters that haunt China's present as it does to its past *per se*—is yet to be undertaken.² This research note, in the meantime, takes up the comparatively simpler question lurking behind the culturally-cathexed symbol of a linguistically sinicized emperor: How much Manchu did he actually know, and how did he learn it?

In the following, I will introduce three sets of manuscripts upon which my subsequent discussion centers. By closely examining the running dates in the top margin of these manuscripts, I demonstrate that these manuscripts were used by one of Puyi's three fellow-students—Aisin Gioro Ioi Cung (1903–1965)—between Xuantong 5 and 11 (1913–1919), during their Manchu lessons in the Forbidden City after the emperor's abdication. After the analysis of the manuscripts themselves and by way of conclusion, I will contextualize the palace Manchu curriculum as glimpsed through

2. One recent work that addresses the role the Manchus play in the ideology of contemporary Chinese ethnonationalism is Kevin Carrico, *The Great Han: Race, Nationalism, and Tradition in China Today* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

these manuscripts and other transmitted sources within late-Qing Manchu pedagogical practices at large, across different strata of bannermen society.

Three manuscripts within the Harvard Yenching Library's Manchu-Mongolian collection contain the name “Ioi Cung 毓崇” on their front covers. They are:

1. *Holboho manju gisun* | *Lian qing yu* 聯清語. 2 volumes. 22 cm. TMA 5806.08 1300. A Chinese-Manchu lexicon, with the Chinese word given first and followed by the Manchu below. Organized roughly by category, but without explicit category titles.
2. *Booi tacihyan-i ten-i gisun* | *Ting xun ge yan* 庭訓格言. 14 volumes. 21 cm. TMA 1686 3214.
3. *Enduringge tacihyan be neileme badarambuha bithe* | *Sheng yu guang xun* 聖諭廣訓. 21.5 cm. 6 volumes. TMA 1686 3245.

In addition to the name on the covers, these manuscripts share several other features: the physical books are roughly of the same size, have very similar bright-yellow covers and title slips, and all use high-quality paper that has shown nearly no deterioration. The calligraphy of both the Manchu and the Chinese is consistent and superb, and there is no correction to the text of the sort that is otherwise typical of this kind of classroom manuscript.

All of this demonstrates that these manuscripts belonged to the same person. The color of the cover and the quality of the paper, furthermore, suggest that these manuscripts were likely produced within the Forbidden City itself. And since no one by the name of Ioi Cung 毓崇 can be found within the *Renming quanwei: renwu zhuanji zil-iaoku* 人名權威：人物傳記資料庫 database of the Academia Sinica, it would seem reasonable to suspect that these manuscripts once belonged to Aisin Gioro Ioi Cung (1903–1965), the son of Aisin Gioro Pulun (1874–1927) who once represented the Qing at the St. Louis World's Fair. This Ioi Cung, still young upon the fall of the Qing (hence his absence in the official biographies) nevertheless lived a notable life, being best known as having studied alongside Puyi for some time during the strange period between the emperor's abdication in 1912 and his expulsion from the Forbidden City in 1924.

As the former emperor recounts in his memoir, “When I was five, the empress dowager Lung Yu chose a tutor for me and ordered an astrologer to select an auspicious day for me to begin my studies. This day was September 10, 1911.”³ The lessons, which

3. In the interest of convenience, I quote from the imperfect translation of the memoir by W. J. F. Jenner, but I reference the original wherever the English translation substantially abridges or alters the text. W. J. F. Jenner, trans., *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1989), 53.

Republic this was still regarded as a great honour by the young men of the imperial clan. The three recipients of these favours were my brother Pu Chieh, Yu Chung (a son of my cousin Pu Lun), and Pu Chia, the son of my uncle Tsai Tao. Yet another honour conferred on these three was that of being scolded on behalf of their emperor in the schoolroom: when I made a mistake in reading out my lessons the teacher would tell one of my fellow-students off. As Pu Chieh was my brother the victim was nearly always Yu Chung, whose studies naturally suffered when he found himself being scolded whether he read well or badly.⁴

Of the three companions, Puyi specifies that Ioi Cung (Yu Chung above) and Pu Chieh (Pujie 溥傑) accompanied his Sinitic studies, while Pu Chia accompanied his English studies. Puyi does not mention whether either of his Sinitic fellow-students also attended his Manchu lessons, but it is not unlikely.⁵

Before turning to the manuscripts themselves, I will briefly survey what is known about Puyi's Manchu education.

Puyi's Manchu teacher from 1911 onwards was Iktan of the Gūwalgiya hala (1861–1923), a translation *jinshi* of 1886 from the Plain White Banner whom Reginald Johnston (1874–1938)—Puyi's English tutor—remembered in the following terms:

I-K'o-T'an, who as I have said was one of the first three to be appointed tutors to the emperor Hsüan-T'ung, was a Manchu. The duty assigned to him was to teach the Manchu language, or rather to see that the emperor was not brought up in entire ignorance of what had been his ancestors' native tongue. If there was nothing very striking about his personality, he had a gay and genial temperament and was popular both in the palace and elsewhere. Whether his knowledge of his ancestral tongue was profound or not I cannot say, though I think he was a more fluent speaker of Pekingese than he was of Manchu.⁶

Both Puyi and Johnston, in their memoirs, recounted that the young Puyi did not take his Manchu lessons very seriously. First, in Puyi's own words, "I had some basic lessons in Manchu, but before I was even able to use the alphabet my teacher Yi Ko Tan died and my lessons stopped."⁷ There is also his famous statement that,

4. Jenner, trans., *From Emperor to Citizen*, 56–57.

5. Zheng Li 鄭里, in an article published in *Zijin Cheng* 紫禁城, gives an anecdote involving both Puyi and Ioi Cung in Iktan's Manchu class, but it is unclear what the source of the anecdote might be. See Zheng Li, "Xunqing huangshi yishi zalu" 遜清皇室軼事雜錄, *Zijin Cheng* 紫禁城 1984, no. 1: 47. Note that this is part of a series of articles by the same author under the same title.

6. Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2006), 186.

7. Jenner, trans., *From Emperor to Citizen*, 54.

The subject at which I was worst was Manchu: I only learnt one word in all the years I studied it. This was *yili* (arise), the reply I had to make when my Manchu ministers knelt before me and said a set phrase of greeting in the language.⁸

Finally, there is Johnston's account:

The emperor's Manchu lessons were not, as far as I could judge, taken very seriously; and though he learned to speak a little of the language, and to write it fairly well, he never became a good Manchu scholar. When I-K'o-T'an died, no successor as Manchu tutor was chosen, and the emperor himself announced that English was thenceforth to be regarded as the second language of the Manchu court.⁹

These impressionistic accounts have exerted considerable influence over the construal of Puyi's Manchu knowledge in both academic and popular historiography. It has of course long been noted that Puyi had perhaps deliberately downplayed his knowledge of Manchu in the memoir, and Johnston's observation that he did, indeed, learn to "write it fair well" would seem to confirm that suspicion. Nevertheless, besides Puyi's mention that, in general, he was exempt from the usual expectation of memorization in his studies, both memoirs say surprisingly little about what exactly Iktan had taught Puyi and how.¹⁰

These heuristic accounts of Puyi's Manchu ability given in memoirs, then, can be imprecise and, as already suggested by Erling von Mende, quite possibly distorted.¹¹ Fortunately, it is possible to reconstruct Puyi's Manchu curriculum to some degree, both by looking at his memoir more closely and by consulting some more recently published materials from the palace museum itself. Jenner's English translation of Puyi's memoir omits the list of titles he gives for the texts that he had studied during those years, which include the following:

1. The *Thirteen Classics* (*shisan jing* 十三經) which he describes as the main text, with everything else being auxiliary texts.
2. *Daxue yanyi* 大學衍義
3. *Zhuzi jiaxun* 朱子家訓
4. *Tingxun geyan* 庭訊格言
5. *Shengyu guangxun* 聖諭廣訓

8. Jenner, trans., *From Emperor to Citizen*, 56.

9. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, 186.

10. Jenner, trans., *From Emperor to Citizen*, 55–56.

11. See Erling von Mende, "In Defence of Nian Gengyao, or: What to Do about Sources on Manchu Language Incompetence?" *Central Asiatic Journal* 58, nos. 1–2 (2015): 59–87.

6. *Yupi tongjian jilan* 御批通鑑輯覽
7. *Shengwu ji* 聖武記
8. *Daqing kaiguo fanglue* 大清開國方略, etc.¹²

Upon first sight, the list of “auxiliary texts” is, well, auxiliary. Save for the last two works dealing with military affairs and the formation of the Qing state, they are essentially popularizations of the Ruist classics as interpreted by the Learning of the Way thinkers and by the emperors of the High Qing. Moreover, when it comes to introductions to the world of Ruist classicism in the late Qing, these texts were as standard as they come.

Read against other sources, however, it seems likely that Puyi reported some texts read in Manchu using their Sinitic titles and further omitted other materials used in his Manchu (and even Mongolian) education. In Puyi's selected diary entries published under the editorship of Wang Qingxiang 王慶祥 in 1999, one finds the additional mention of the following texts among what he studied and reviewed during this period:

1. *Tangshi* 唐詩
2. *Shier zitou* 十二字頭 (reviewed Jan. 30, 1916)
3. *Dan qingyu* 單清語 (reviewed Jan. 30 and 31, 1916)
4. *Lian qingyu* 聯清語 (reviewed Feb. 1, 1916)
5. *Manwen xiaojing* 滿文孝經 (reviewed Apr. 14, 1916)¹³

The selection of diary entries is not comprehensive, and neither is their listing of learning materials. Nevertheless, the list of texts, especially the last four, should be familiar—they were common introductory materials for beginning students of Manchu. The role of the “Twelve Heads” in Manchu literacy has of course been well-demonstrated in the work of Mårten Söderblom Saarela,¹⁴ and the *Dan qingyu* and the *Lian qingyu*, both lexicons designed for students to memorize, were typical instantiations of the “wide variety of informal texts” produced and utilized in pedagogical settings, as Devin Fitzgerald has recently suggested.¹⁵ Manchu translations of Sinitic texts, especially in interlinear bilingual editions, were commonly used by students of translation, who would gloss the corresponding parts of speech of the same text across two languages to understand the differences between Sinitic and Manchu syntax.

12. Aisin Gioro Puyi 愛新覺羅溥儀, *Wo de qianbansheng* 我的前半生 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1999), 64.

13. See Wang Qingxiang 王慶祥, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji* 愛新覺羅溥儀日記 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1996), 1–35.

14. See Mårten Söderblom Saarela, “Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911),” PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2015, in particular 212–18.

15. Devin Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical Practices: The Connections Between Manuscript and Printed Books,” *Saksaba: A Journal of Manchu Studies* 17 (2021): 25.

A third, source for Puyi's curriculum is a "Chongxin jiaoding chuankge zhangcheng" 重新校訂窓課章程 in the Forbidden Palace, quoted in a 1982 article by Zheng Li 鄭里 and discussed by Martin Gimm and Murata Yūjirō.¹⁶ It is unfortunately unclear when this "revised" schedule was established, or what other information may be included in it beyond the short excerpt given by Zheng Li. Nevertheless, the "Manchu-Mongolian" section of Puyi's daily curriculum, according to this document, includes the following.

1. Archery.
2. Reading the *Shengyu guangxun* 聖諭廣訓 (*erhao* 二號, the meaning of which is unclear).
3. Reading the translated *Sishu* 四書 or *Xiaojing* 孝經.
4. Reading three volumes of the *Qingwen jian* 清文鑑, half a chapter (*pian* 篇) each per volume.
5. Reading three volumes of Mongolian dialogue books, half a chapter (*pian* 篇) each per volume.
6. Translation of two lines of dialogue (*tiaozi* 條子)
7. Practice writing Manchu, half a chapter (*pian* 篇).
8. Reading Manchu miscellaneous dialogue (*zatiozi* 雜條子) from five cases (*xia* 匣), five leaves (*zhang* 張) per case.¹⁷

All of which was to be completed in around forty-five minutes or three *ke* 刻, in contrast to the over twenty *ke* (or around seven hours) Puyi subsequently spent studying Sinitic texts. One can only imagine the time or attention dedicated to the study of each text individually. Nevertheless, it would seem that Puyi had studied a larger range of Manchu texts than what is recorded in his memoir and diary, and that the learning materials he did employ are surprisingly standard, being a mixture of classical texts, lexicons, and dialogue books. The latter were presumably of a more vernacular register, as they often are in order to teach what was supposedly the spoken language.

The remainder of the research note adds to these scattered accounts of Puyi's Manchu education by turning to the Harvard-Yenching Library manuscripts themselves. Through a close examination of their marginalia, it can be determined that they were

16. Martin Gimm, "Marginalien zum letzten chinesischen Kaiser P'u-I und zu seiner Familie (Teil I)" in *Miszellen zur mandchurischen Sprache, Literatur und Geschichte im 17. und 20. Jahrhundert / Miscellanea di studi sulla lingua, letteratura e storia mancese del 17° e 20° secolo*, edited by Michael Weiers et al., Aetas Manjurica T. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 32–98, especially 70 ff.; Murata Yūjirō, "The Late Qing 'National Language' Issue and Monolingual Systems: Focusing on Political Diplomacy," *Chinese Studies in History* 49, no. 3 (2016): 108–25, especially 116; and Zheng Li, "Xunqing huangshi yishi zalu", 28–30, 48, especially 28.

17. Zheng Li, "Xunqing huangshi yishi zalu," 28.

annotated during the interval of Xuantong 5 to 11 (1913–1919) and that Ioi Cung's classroom schedule followed closely what we know of Puyi's schedule in the Yuqing Hall. It follows that Ioi Cung likely did study Manchu (as well as Sinitic) alongside Puyi and, conversely, that Puyi's Manchu lessons would have been highly similar if not identical to those of Ioi Cung's, which we can reconstruct to some degree from the manuscripts. Both throughout my discussions and in particular in the concluding remarks, I show that the Yuqing Hall Manchu curriculum shared significant continuity with late Qing Manchu pedagogical practice in general, as seen from other student materials both in the Harvard-Yenching collection and elsewhere.

All three items are extensively annotated in red ink. Taking the *Enduringge tacihiyān be neileme badarambuha bithe* | *Sheng yu guang xun* 聖諭廣訓 (TMA 1686 3245) as an example, we may observe that the annotations are of two kinds. There are red dots at

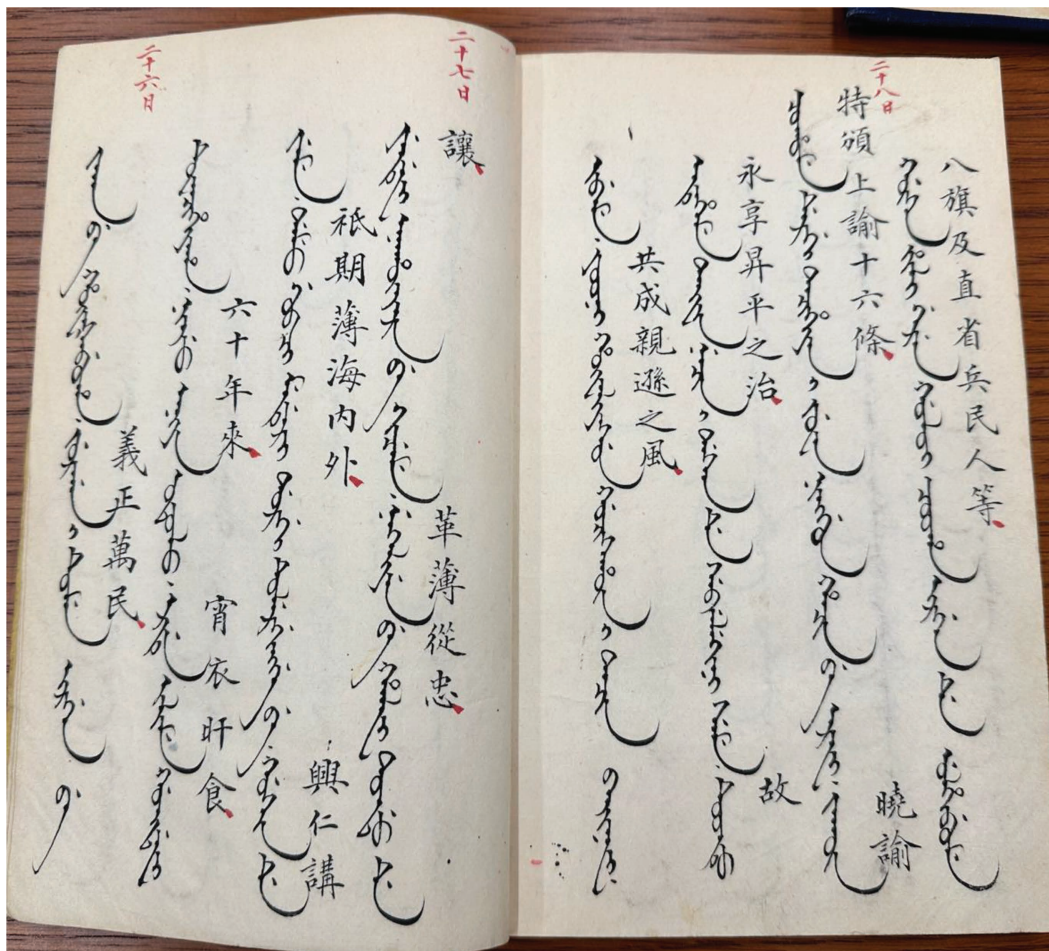


Figure 2 1:2v–3r of *Enduringge tacihiyān be neileme badarambuha bithe* | *Sheng yu guang xun* 聖諭廣訓. TMA 1686 3245. Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

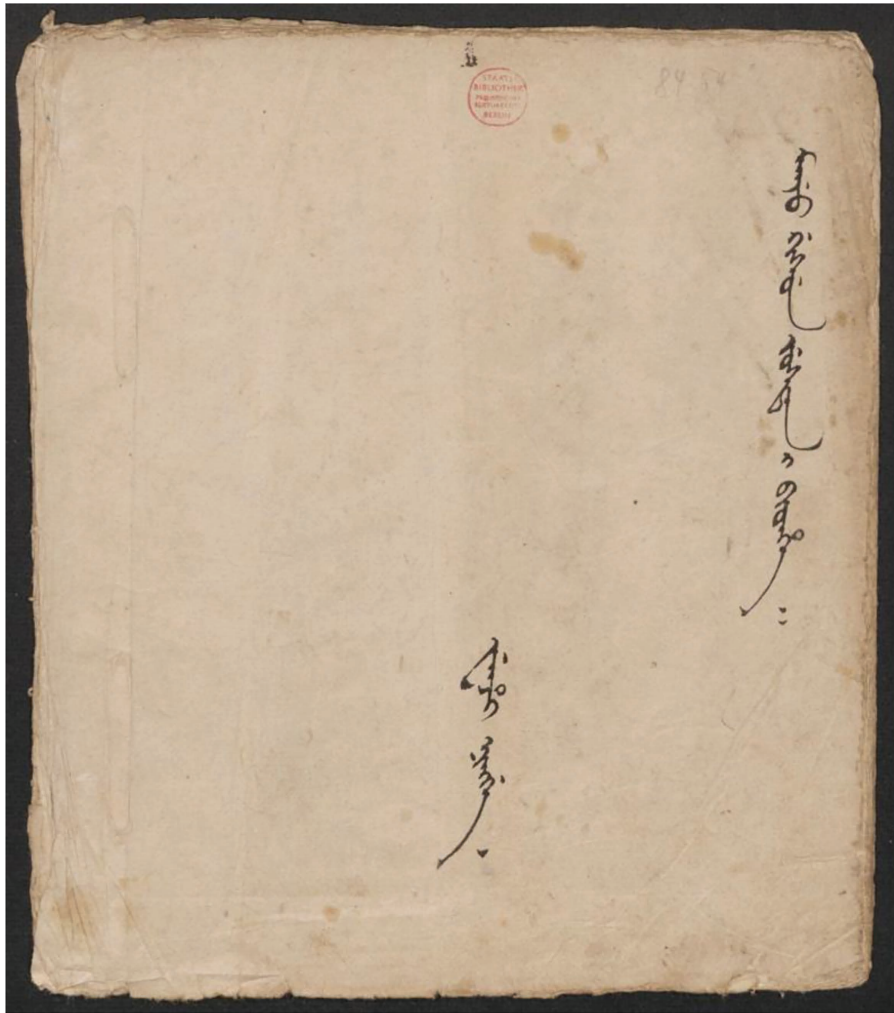


Figure 3 Cover of *Manju gisun justan-i bithe*. Hs. or. 8454. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

the end of each Sinitic phrase, and there are dates written in red in the top margin, also in Sinitic. Significantly, both types of annotations run through the entire six volumes of the manuscript.

Both the position of the name (“Ioi Cung 毓崇”) on the front cover and the use of running dates in the top margin demonstrates the similarity between this manuscript and other print and manuscript Manchu materials used in pedagogical settings in the late Qing. *Manju gisun justan-i bithe* (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 8454), with “Wengjy ningge” written on the cover, would be an example of such a manuscript produced in a less prestigious context.

The practice of the running dates, observed in these manuscripts, is associated with language pedagogy in several ways. First, in some textual objects on which the running date appears, there is explicit mention of the school setting, either

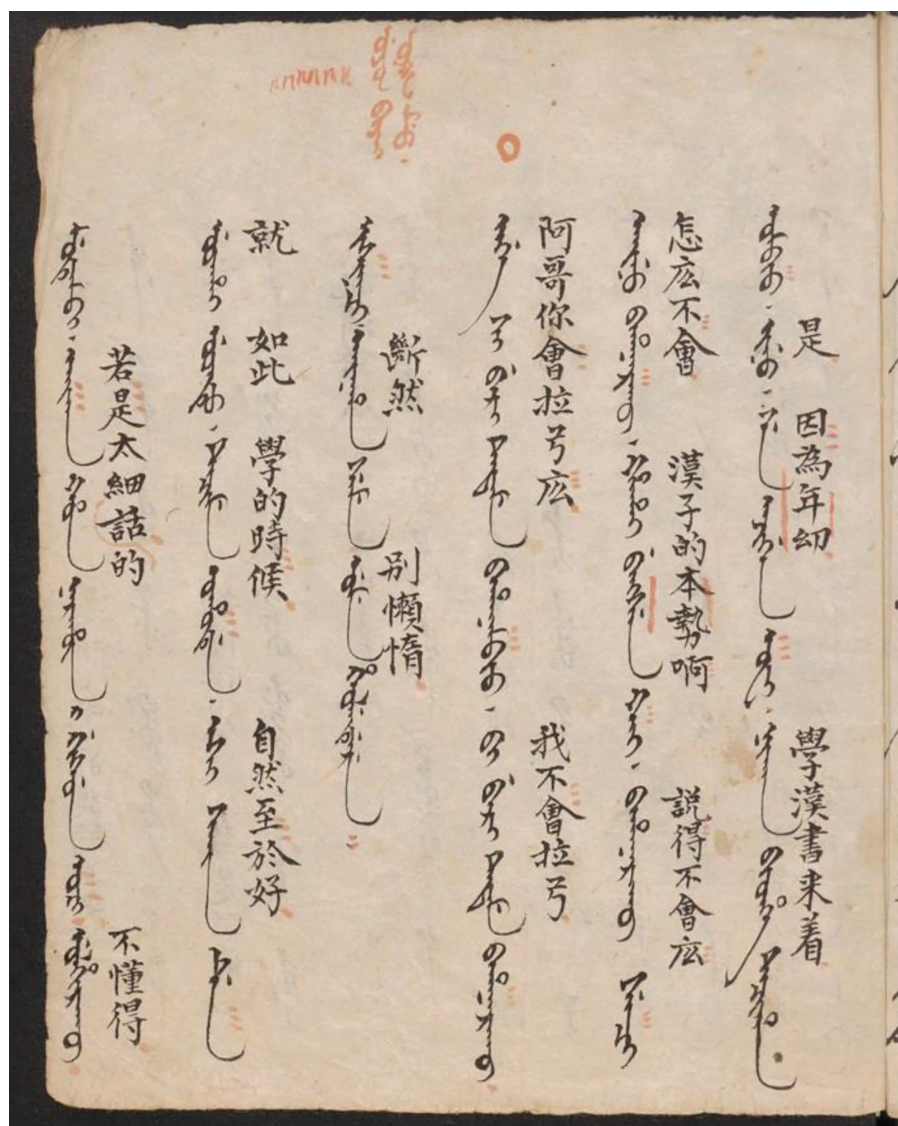


Figure 4 1v of *Manju gisun justan-i bithe*. Hs. or. 8454. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

in the text itself or in the marginalia. A printed edition of *Ninggun baita-i targabun gisun* | *Liushi zhenyan* 六事箴言 in the University of Chicago East Asian Collection (M1681/4917, preface dated 1815), for example, contains not only the running dates in red ink but also occasional remarks by the student about missing school (e.g., on the top margin of 1:33r, “十九日未上學” or “on the nineteenth day I did not go to school”). Another manuscript titled *Justan-i bithe* belonging to a Cunsiyang in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Hs. or. 10791, undated), also bearing running dates, includes dialogues about Cunsiyang’s own family background and school routines, and it is clear that this manuscript was produced in the very school mentioned in the text itself.

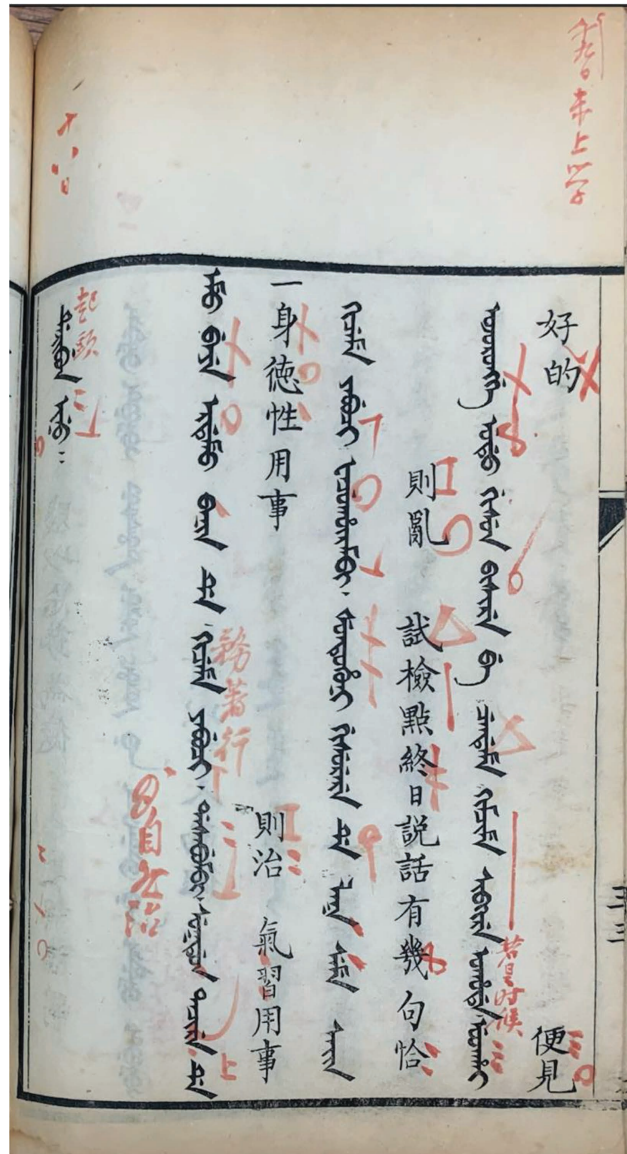


Figure 5 33r of *Ninggun baita-i targabun gisun*. M1681/4917, University of Chicago East Asian Collection.

Second, we know that the memorization of short segments of Manchu texts was a common and important strategy in day-to-day Manchu pedagogy, as it has been discussed in contemporary print and manuscript sources dealing with Manchu literacy. For example, the nineteenth *meyen* of the second *fiyelen* of the *An-i gisun de amtan be sara bithe* | *Yongyan zhizhi* 庸言知旨 (preface 1819) contains the following utterance of a teacher to a pupil.

inenggidari simbe fulu udunggeri hūla hūla seme . yala angga jušetele šorgiha . si minde donjici . ai baire .. urui silemideme minde fiokon-i fio sembi .. enenggi teile naranggi ureshūn-i

šejileme mutehekū de . girubure be aliha . ai yokto .. te kemuni hacihiyame sithūfi urebume hūlarakū oso elemangga pilehe bithe be udu jurgan ibkame meitereo sehengge . jaci cihai fiyokorohobi .. endebuku be halara de ume sengguwedere sebebe hadahai eje . fede ..

I tell you every day to read, read a few more times, and my mouth is getting sore from urging you so much. If you listen to me, that's for the best. But you never listen and always ignore me. Today you didn't manage to memorize this and embarrassed yourself for nothing. Now not only do you not try to catch up by studying more, you are asking me to reduce the assigned text by a few lines. What utter nonsense! Remember well: If you change your ways after a mistake, there is nothing to be afraid of. Get yourself together!¹⁸

The verb for assigning a segment of text here is *pilembi*, and in context, it likely means to mark up a text in the process of studying it. The daily memorization regime suggested here, in fact, dovetails with the popular genre of *meyen* or *huatiao* 話條 (literally “a string of utterance”) in Manchu pedagogy, which are rather short dialogues or monologues, often but not always in a vernacular register. The quote above is itself an example of the *meyen* genre. The brevity of these segments meant that they could be studied in a single lesson, which also aligns with what the running dates on these texts, when they are present, tend to suggest. In the case of longer texts that, unlike the *meyen* genre, were created outside this pedagogical context, they will simply be divided into shorter segments to fit back into the daily memorization routine. While the typical assignment for a day, which is anywhere between two lines to just over a half-leaf, may seem short, it might be worth keeping in mind that in a school setting more than one text was studied every day (as suggested, e.g., by Puyi's diary and schedule), and thus a *meyen* text might be studied alongside Sinitic classics or a Manchu-Sinitic lexicon, with each text having a similar daily amount of memorization.

If we now turn to the pattern of the dates in Ioi Cung's *Enduringge tacihiyān be neileme badarambuha bithe* manuscript, two features are immediately worthy of notice: First, the dates are almost entirely consecutive—that is, they follow each other nearly without break, which is not usual in other pedagogical texts with running dates. Second, as mentioned before, the dates appear throughout the entire six volumes of the work, which is again unusual, especially for a multi-volume work.¹⁹ But the consistency of the annotation allows us to ascertain the duration of time necessary for the student

18. Takekoshi Takashi 竹越孝, “Gokanhon *Yōgen chishi* kōchū (2)” 五卷本『庸言知旨』校注 (2), *Kōbe gaidai ronsō* 神戸外大論叢 72 (2020): 103–5.

19. More frequently, learning materials marked from beginning to finish tend to be much shorter manuscript *meyen* collections, and with longer texts, many such annotations stop after a few months of study, which is the case with the aforementioned University of Chicago *Ninggun baita-i targabun gisun* (M1681/4917).

to study each volume of the text, and to study the text as a whole. It is regrettable that, with this type of marginalia, typically only month and day are given (as more information is generally unnecessary in context), thus if the manuscript itself does not have a colophon it is difficult to establish when, exactly, it was used in a classroom. However, as we will see, the idiosyncrasies of the dates given in this and the two other manuscripts allow us to determine the exact year in which they were annotated.

The beginning and end date of each volume of the *Enduringge tacihyan be neileme badarambuha bithe* manuscript are as follows. I give the dates as written on the manuscript (8.23 means “the twenty-third day of the eighth month,” and so on), without converting to the Gregorian calendar yet.

1. Volume one: from 8.23 to 11.16.
2. Volume two: from 11.18 to 3.19.
3. Volume three: 3.20 of the seventh year, to 7.20.
4. Volume four: 7.21 to 10.10.
5. Volume five: 10.11 to 12.19.
6. Volume six: 12.20 to 2.23.

Note that at the beginning of the third volume, the year—and not just the month and the day—is specified, although not the reign name. A total of one year and four months, then, elapsed during the study of this six-volume text from cover to cover, with each volume taking anywhere between two and a half to four months. The text covered each day stays within the range of two to four lines.

I give also the dates in *Holboho manju gisun* (TMA 5806.08 1300):

1. Volume one: from 7.14 to 2.6 of the sixth year, with seven unmarked half-leaves at the end.
2. Volume two: with nine unmarked half-leaves in the beginning, from 3.15 to 8.1.

Here, the year is given for the first lesson after the new year in volume one, which was on 1.6 of the sixth year. The total gap of sixteen unmarked half-leaves between the end of the first volume and the beginning of the second volume, it should be noted, would have been approximately the amount covered by the thirty-six days of lessons from 2.7 to 3.14, since in general, the student moved through one or (more often) two lines per day, with each line containing two Manchu-Chinese word pairs, and each half-leaf containing four lines. This also demonstrates, of course, that the instruction continued even when Ioi Cung was unable to attend school, making it even more unlikely that

this manuscript had been used by Ioi Cung with a private tutor rather than in Iktan's classroom.

Finally, here are the dates in *Booi tacihiyān-i ten-i gisun* (TMA 1686 3214):

1. Volume one: from 2.24 of the eighth year to 4.21.
2. Volume two: from 4.22 of the eighth year to 7.20.
3. Volume three: from 7.21 to r2.5²⁰ [of the ninth year].
4. Volume four: from [r2.]6 to 4.6.
5. Volume five: from 4.7 to 7.26.
6. Volume six: from 7.27 to 10.4.
7. Volume seven: from 10.5 to 12.8.
8. Volume eight: from 12.9 to 2.28 [of the tenth year].
9. Volume nine: from 2.29 to 5.9.
10. Volume ten: from 5.10 to 8.5.
11. Volume eleven: from 8.6 to 10.16.
12. Volume twelve: from 10.17 to 12.19.
13. Volume thirteen: from 12.20 to 3.8 [of the eleventh year].
14. Volume fourteen: from 3.10 to 5.15.

This text is by far the longest of the three manuscripts, and it took Ioi Cung over three years to complete.

Together, we can ascertain that the three texts were studied in the following sequence. First, *Holboho manju gisun*, a basic Manchu-Sinitic word-list, was studied from 7.14 of the fifth year (of the Xuāntōng reign, as we shall see, hence this date is August 15, 1913 in the Gregorian calendar) to 8.1 of the sixth year (September 20, 1914).²¹ A few weeks later began the study of *Enduringge tacihiyān be neileme badarambuha bithe*, which started on 8.23 of the sixth year (October 12, 1914) and concluded on 2.23 of the eighth year (March 26, 1916). The study of *Booi tacihiyān-i ten-i gisun* immediately followed, beginning on 2.24 of the eighth year (March 27, 1916) and concluding over three years later, on 5.15 of the eleventh year (June 12, 1919).

Within this context, it is possible to determine the exact era name to which the years belong through the appearance of an intercalary fifth month in the sixth year in the second volume of the *Holboho manju gisun* (2:21v). Of all the Qing era names, only

20. The letter “r” indicates that this is an intercalary month. “r2” is therefore the month intercalated after the second month.

21. Note that there is a discrepancy between the material evidence and Puyi's memoir quoted earlier, in which he mentions that Ioi Cung joined his studies when Puyi was nine *sui*. Puyi would have been only eight *sui* during the first lessons on the *Holboho manju gisun*, although he would have been nine *sui* or older during most of Ioi Cung's remaining Manchu lessons.

the Xuanton era (extending into the Republican era) had a month intercalated between the fifth and the sixth months in its sixth year. Furthermore, there was an intercalary second month in the ninth year of this era (during which the third and fourth volumes of *Booi tacihyan-i ten-i gisun* were being studied). Throughout the Qing this had happened only twice: during the Kangxi (r. 1661–1722) and the Xuanton eras. The former, however, is very unlikely, not least because the Yongzheng Emperor (1678–1735), who was to compile the *Booi tacihyan-i ten-i gisun*, was not yet born in the year Kangxi 9 (1670).

The appearance of intercalary months thus demonstrates conclusively that these manuscripts were annotated during the Xuanton period, and more specifically between 1913 and 1919. Furthermore, the dates in these manuscripts also display consistent alignment with what we know of Puyi's schedule and school breaks during these years, which Wang Qingxiang, the editor of Puyi's diaries, listed in a series of footnotes to Puyi's diary entries during this period. In the interest of length, I will only give the school breaks listed within the published diary entries under the year Xuanton 7, during which Ioi Cung and Puyi had been studying the *Enduringge tacihyan be neileme badarambuha bithe*. Both due to the nature of diary entries, which often mention texts he *reviewed* rather than *newly learned* on specific days, and the selective nature of the publication, these breaks are not exhaustive even for the year Xuanton 7.

1. There is no class in Yuqing Hall on the second, twelfth, and twenty-second day of each month.²²
2. From 12.24 of Xuanton 6 to 1.5 of Xuanton 7 is a winter break and no classes in Yuqing Hall.²³
3. From 1.10 to 1.17 of Xuanton 7 there are no classes, possibly to observe Puyi's birthday and the Lantern Festival.²⁴
4. From 5.4 to 5.6 of Xuanton 7 there are no classes, to observe the Dragon Boat Festival.²⁵
5. From 5.29 to 6.2 of Xuanton 7 there are no classes, to celebrate the birthday of Imperial Noble Consort Jingyi 敬懿 (1856–1932).²⁶
6. On 6.7 of Xuanton 7 there are no classes, to observe the entrance into the three *fu* that are the hottest part of summer.²⁷

22. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 4n2. Note that there are sometimes exceptions to this rule, especially if one of these days was immediately preceded by or followed by a longer break.

23. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 7n2.

24. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 9n2.

25. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 12n1.

26. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 12n2.

27. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 12n3.

7. On 6.9 of Xuantong 7 there are no classes, to observe the birthday of the Xianfeng Emperor (1831–1861).²⁸
8. From 6.17 to 7.7 of Xuantong 7 is a summer break, and there are no classes.²⁹
9. From 8.7 to 8.10 of Xuantong 7 there are no classes, possibly to observe the birthday of Imperial Noble Consort Ronghui 榮惠 (1856–1933).³⁰
10. From 8.14 to 8.16 of Xuantong 7 there are no classes, to observe the Mid-Autumn Festival.³¹
11. From 12.26 of Xuantong 7 to 1.5 of Xuantong 8 is a winter break, and there are no classes.³²

Unsurprisingly, all of these breaks in Puyi's class schedule are consistently absent also in the running dates in Ioi Cung's copy of the *Enduringge tacihyan be neileme bada-rambuha bithe*. For example, on 5.28 of Xuantong 7, Ioi Cung had finished the line [. . .] *fafun erun de ele šar seme gūnin be baitalahabi* 而於刑罰尤惓惓致意 on 3:26v, and it was not until 6.3 that he continued onto the next line, *bi soorin de tehe ci ebsi* 朕臨御以來 [. . .]. Because the break in the schedule is so specific—it was to celebrate the birthday of an imperial noble consort—it is difficult to explain its presence in Ioi Cung's study unless he had been studying the text alongside Puyi.

Having now established the ownership and context of these manuscripts, I will conclude by way of some remarks on the kind of Manchu pedagogical practice they suggest. Liu Xiaomeng's 劉小萌 study of private schooling in the family of Wanggiyan Lincing (1791–1846) divides Qing private bannermen schools into three categories: school in the Forbidden City, schools in princely mansions, and schools for the ordinary bannermen.³³ And while considerable scholarship in recent years have demonstrated that the degree of Manchu language decline in the late Qing has been greatly exaggerated in received historiography, when we turn to the extant textual artefacts used in Manchu language instruction both in the Forbidden City and in ordinary banner schools, we find that the endurance of Manchu as an administrative and literary language even in the final days of the empire was supported, at least in Beijing, by striking similarities in the format and technique of Manchu language education across social strata.³⁴

28. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 12n5.

29. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 13n1.

30. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 14n2.

31. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 14n3.

32. Wang Qingxiang, ed., *Aisin Gioro Puyi riji*, 17n1. Notice that during this winter break, Puyi had been reviewing the *Twelve Heads* and the Manchu-Sinitic lexicons.

33. Liu Xiaomeng 劉小萌, “Qingdai Manren de jiashu—yi Wanggiyan Lincing jia wei li” 清代滿人的家塾—以完顏麟慶家為例, in *Qingshi Manzushi lunji xia* 清史滿族史論集下 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020), 915.

34. On the Guangxu Emperor's Manchu and Mongolian language education, which Puyi's language education closely resembles, see Daniel Barish, *Learning to Rule: Court Education and the Remaking of the Qing State, 1861–1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), esp. Chapter 2, as well as Murata, “The Late Qing ‘National Language Issue,’”

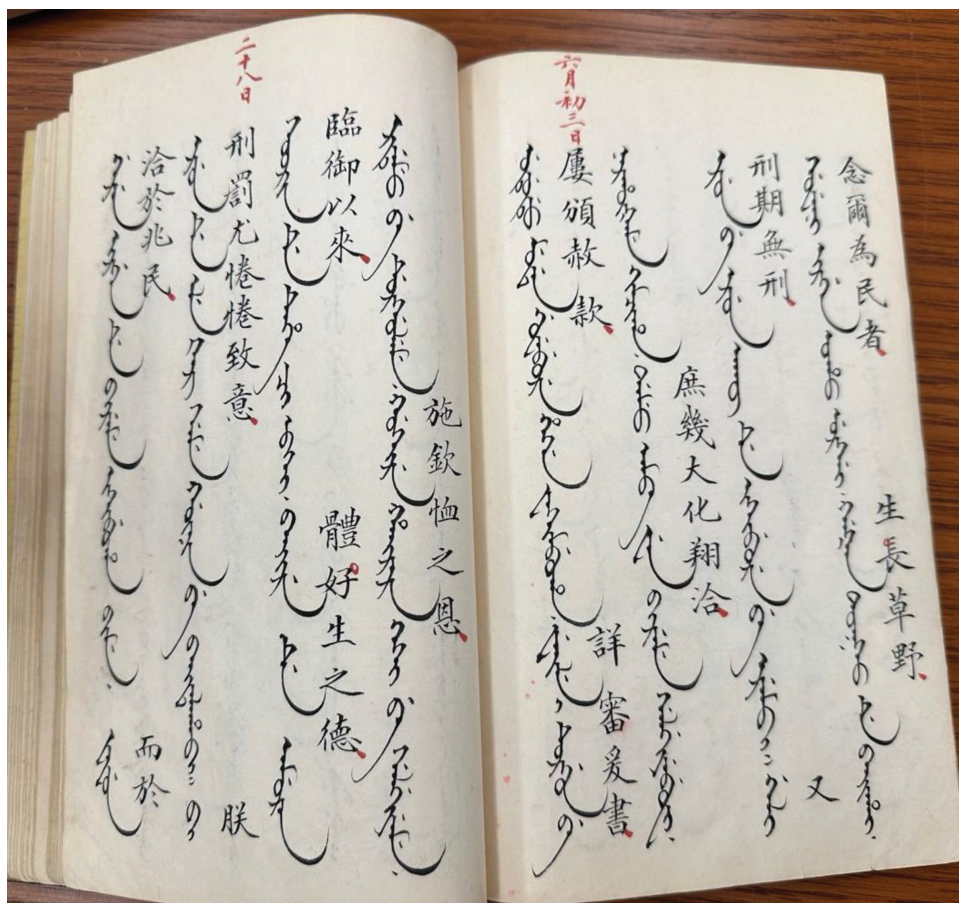


Figure 6 13:26v–3.27r of *Enduringge tacihyan be neileme badarambuha bithe* | *Sheng yu guang xun* 聖諭廣訓. TMA 1686 3245. Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

These formats and techniques of language instruction constitute what Fitzgerald observes as the “surprisingly consistent institutional practices and experiences amongst Manchu students” in the late Qing across different schools and also across time.³⁵ Presumably, Puyi and Ioi Cung, like many bannered children before them, began their study of Manchu by reciting the “Twelve Heads” and had already finished a text titled *Dan qingyu* 單清語, which Puyi reviewed alongside the “Twelve Heads” in 1916, before turning to

114–16. On the continued use and study of Manchu in the early twentieth century, see also Märten Söderblom Saarela, “A Guangxu Renaissance? Manchu Language Studies in the Late Qing and Their Republican Afterlife” in *Time and Language: New Sinology and Chinese History*, edited by Ori Sela, Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, and Joshua A. Fogel (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2023), 180–203, and Märten Söderblom Saarela, *The Manchu Language at Court and in the Bureaucracy under the Qianlong Emperor* (Leiden: Brill, 2024), “Conclusion.”

35. Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical practices,” 25. Another detailed study of Manchu reading and annotation practices, as an anonymous reviewer points out to me, is Sarah Bramao-Ramos, “Manchu-Language Books in Qing China,” PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2023.

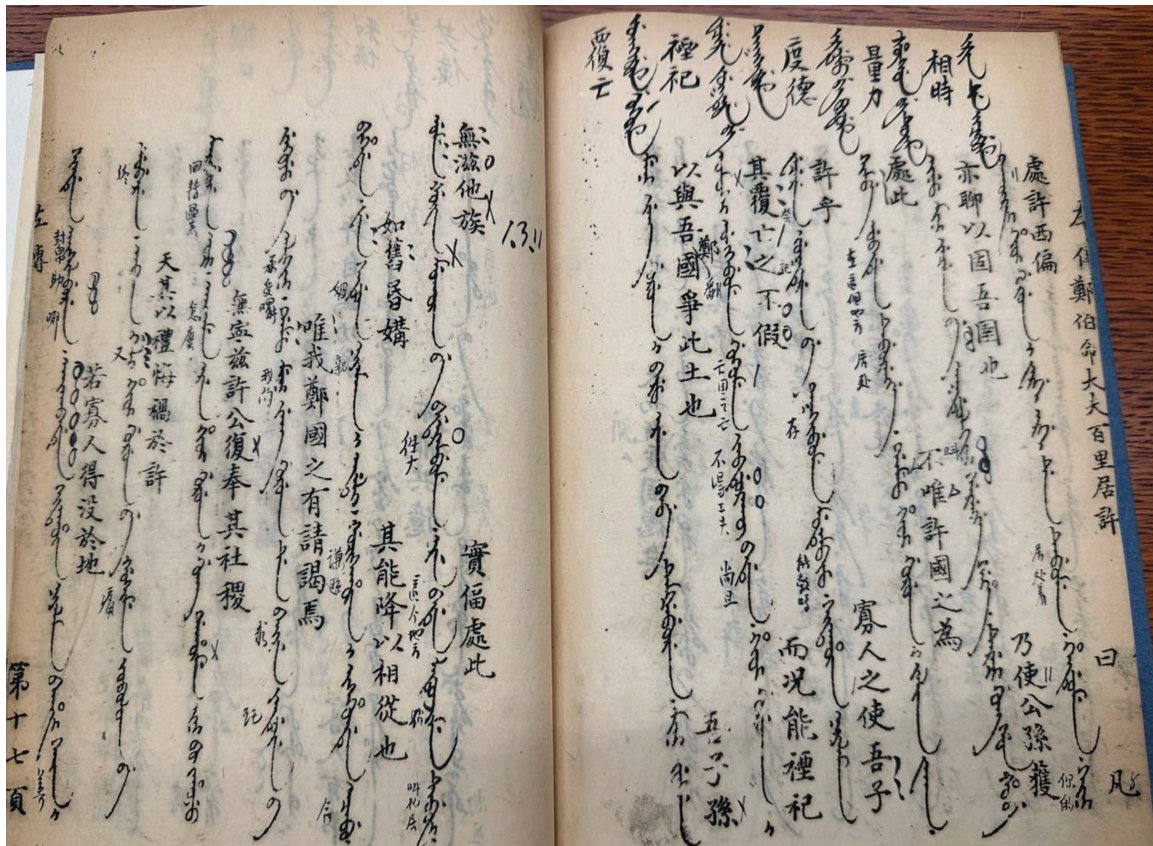


Figure 7 17v–18r of *Ubaliyambuha dzo keu ming-ni araha ulabun* | *Fanyi zuozhuan* 繙譯左傳. The bilingual text is mimeographed from a manuscript, with further annotations in black ink by a student. Note that the date at the end of the section, “1.3.11” (of the Xuantong reign, April 30, 1909), is given in Indo-Arabic numerals. TMA 718 4124. Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

the three texts discussed in this research note.³⁶ The types of annotations Ioi Cung left on these manuscripts as he progressed through the texts are so typical, in fact, that, a few material idiosyncrasies notwithstanding, they could easily have come from a humbler Manchu school such as the one attended by Wengjy, the owner of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin manuscript mentioned earlier. As Fitzgerald puts it, in such private schools, “primers were copied, songs were sung, dialogues were memorized, homework was corrected, and notes were taken on any available surface.”³⁷ The three Ioi Cung manuscripts demonstrate certain of these practices, although others—such as corrected homework—would perhaps be

36. There is in fact a *Gargata manju gisun* | *Dan qingyu* 單清語 printed by the Jingzhou zhufang fanyi zongxue 荊州駐防繙譯總學 in 1891 (see Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 34908 ROA), but *gargata gisun* is such a common title for manuscript language learning materials in the late Qing that the text Puyi had studied and this xylograph likely share the same title only coincidentally.

37. Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical Practices,” 25.

more fitting for a different part of his (and Puyi's) curriculum. In any case, it seems that Ioi Cung and Puyi's Manchu education involved a similarly diverse range of materials, with the particularly notable inclusion of the *meyen* genre, unfortunately absent in these manuscripts, which had circulated widely and often anonymously in the late Qing, and the linguistic coarseness of which their compilers had sometimes felt the need to justify.³⁸

Rare Books and Manuscripts

- Bibliothèque nationale de France, Mandchou 66, *Cing wen ki meng bithe* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙 (Beijing: Mohua tang, 1732). Xylograph. 4 fascicles. Digitized at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90028080>.
- Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 718 4124, *Ubaliyambuha dzo keu ming-ni araha ulabun* | *Fanyi zuozhuan* 繙譯左傳 (ca. 1909–1910). Mimeograph with handwritten annotations. 1 volume.
- Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 1686 3214, *Booi tacihiyān-i ten-i gisun* | *Ting xun ge yan* 庭訓格言 (1916–1919). Manuscript. 14 volumes. “Ioi Cung 毓崇.”
- Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 1686 3245, *Enduringge tacihiyān be neileme badarambuha bithe* | *Sheng yu guang xun* 聖諭廣訓 (1914–1916). Manuscript. 6 volumes. “Ioi Cung 毓崇.”
- Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 5161 3304, *Manbanwen zashi tiaozhi* 滿漢文雜事條治 (undated, c. 19th century). Manuscript. 1 volume. “Žunghai tacin bithe.”
- Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 5806.08 1300, *Holboho manju gisun* | *Lian qing yu* 聯清語 (1913–1914). Manuscript. 2 volumes. “Ioi Cung 毓崇.”
- Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 34908 ROA, *Gargata manju gisun* | *Dan qingyu* 單清語 (Jingzhou: Jingzhou zhufang fanyi zongxue, 1891). Xylograph. 8 volumes. Digitized at <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000315A00000000>.
- Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 8454, *Manju gisun justan-i bithe* (undated, c. 19th century). Manuscript. 1 volume. “Wenju ningge.” Digitized at <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000031C400000000>.
- University of Chicago Library East Asian Collection, M1681/4917, *Ninggun baita-i targabun gisun* | *Liushi zhenyan* 六事箴言 (prefaced dated 1815). Xylograph with handwritten annotations. 4 volumes.

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38. This was Uge Šeo Ping's reservation against publishing his private teaching materials in what was to become the famous *Cing wen ki meng bithe* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙, as recounted in Ceng Ming Yuwan's preface. See *Cing wen ki meng bithe* (Beijing: Mohua tang, 1732), 1:2v–3r. A fully digitized copy of this edition (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Mandchou 66) is available online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90028080>. For an expression of the sentiment that “when it comes to Manchu writing, the refined and coarse are the same” (*tuttu manju bithe seve emu baita be tuwaci, harhūn muwa emu kai* 故滿文一事粗細一也), see *Manbanwen zashi tiaozhi* 滿漢文雜事條治 (Harvard-Yenching Library, TMA 5161 3304), 30v.

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