

Leping's Lessons: Considering *Muwa Gisun*¹

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Abstract: This article examines *Muwa gisun* (Plain Talk), a handwritten manuscript in the Harvard-Yenching Library and one of the most well-known examples of a Manchu learning primer, situating it within the broader context of Qing-era dialogue books. Manuscripts such as this reflect much more than language instruction: They illuminate classroom practices, multilingual reading strategies, and Manchu manuscript culture. Through close comparative analysis of *Muwa gisun* and three other related manuscripts held in Copenhagen, Berlin, and Nagasaki, this article identifies shared dialogues, textual differences, and corrections to showcase the collaborative and iterative nature of Manchu-language manuscript production and use. This article also places these Manchu dialogue books in conversation with multilingual pedagogical traditions in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and across early-modern Europe, drawing parallels with language-learning manuals for languages such as Latin. Ultimately, this study argues that dialogue books in Manchu were part of a dynamic manuscript culture where students, teachers, and readers engaged with text through copying, recitation, and correction—practices that bridged the division between the oral and the written and shaped multilingual language acquisition.

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摘要：本篇論文所探討的《粗話》為哈佛燕京圖書館所藏手抄本。在諸多滿語初學讀本中，該文獻尤為人熟知。本文將其置於清代滿語會話課本的脈絡中，並加以考察。此類手稿不僅反映了語言教學狀況，更揭示了當時的課堂實踐方法、多語閱讀策略、滿文手稿文化。本文以《粗話》為中心，與現存於哥本哈根、柏林、長崎的三份相關手稿對讀，細緻比較其對話內容的共通與差異，並考察其中的修訂與校正，藉此揭示滿文手稿在製作與使用過程中展現的協作和反覆修潤的特性。同時，本文亦將滿語會話課本置於更廣泛的多語教育傳統之中，將此類書籍與日本、朝鮮、越南、近世歐洲的語學教材進行比較，並與拉丁語等語言的課本相互參照。最終，本文主張，滿語會話課本構成了一種生動的手稿文化：學生、教師、讀者通過抄錄、誦讀、校改等方式與文本互動。此種實踐既跨越口語與書寫之界限，亦深刻塑造了多語習得的模式。

What good jujubes! Crisp and crunchy, yet the price isn't expensive. Why aren't you buying them?

Brother, you have aged, but you still have youthful thoughts. Jujubes, watermelon seeds, and fried peas, these are all things that entice little children. Look at how fond of them you are.

absi sain soro. kufuri seme kufuyen. hūda geli asuru mangga akū. suwe ainu udarakū.

age si se [+de] oho niyalma bime. kemuni se asihan-i gūnin bi. soro dungga use tasgaha turi gemu buya juse be hoššoro jaka. tuwaci si ede [illegible] umesi amuran..²

Short, humorous, and engaging, the dialogue above is from the manuscript *Plain Talk* (*Muwa gisun*), now held at the Harvard-Yenching Library. Though there has not been any sustained or comprehensive formal study of *Muwa gisun*, as the manuscript has been digitized and fully translated, it remains one of the most well-known examples of this kind of Manchu language learning primer.³ Primers are typically understood as a window into the daily life and lived experience of bannermen living in the Qing, and most follow a similar format: In each one, an unnamed “Brother”

2. 19b (62), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library. This manuscript is unfoliated. For all citations of this text, I refer to the first page of the text as page 1a. I do the same for all other unfoliated manuscripts in this article. For *Muwa gisun*, I also include the “discourse” number of the Manchu Studies Group’s translation (discussed below) in parentheses.

3. For the Harvard-Yenching Library reproduction of this manuscript, see <https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:10506310>. The transcription and translation completed by Devin Fitzgerald, Mark Elliott, Bian He, Hanung Kim, and others can be found here: <https://www.manchustudiesgroup.org/translations/muwa-gisun-section-two/>.

(Ma. *age*, Ch. *age* 阿哥) converses with and teaches another unnamed Brother, or one Brother delivers a pithy monologue on a specific topic.⁴ These primers can cover a wide variety of subjects, including the weather, hobbies, archery, proper conduct and behaviour, endless invitations to eat and drink, and even—as with the example above—conversations about how liking jujubes is childish.

Manchu-language dialogues can be found in xylographic (woodblock) books printed throughout the Qing.⁵ The earliest example is in *Guide to the Manchu Language* (*Manju gisun-i jy nan* | *Qingshu zhinan* 清書指南), first printed in 1682. There are only ten short sections in this title, and most are either a conversation held over food and drinks, or a conversation discussing the potential of a future conversation that will involve food and drinks.⁶ By the later *The Manchu Preceptor* (*Cing wen ki meng* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙, 1730), however, the use of such dialogues and short monologues in Manchu-language books appears to have developed. There is an entire fascicle devoted to such texts in *Cing wen ki meng*, and each text is longer, more varied, and more concerned with governing appropriate behavior; the pages are filled with warnings against being late, being disrespectful, and being angry. *Essentials of Manchu* (*Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe* | *Qingwen zhiyao* 清文指要) contains a wider range still, with texts on different types of terrible weather and ghosts.⁷ The first section of the text even explicitly discusses the act of learning Manchu, beginning “I heard you are now learning Manchu. Very good!” (Ma. *donjici si te manju bithe tacimbi sembi. umesi sain*).⁸ Available evidence suggests that *Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe* was especially popular, for it is associated with five different publishing houses (Ch. *shufang* 書坊, lit.,

4. The Manchu word *age* is a polite term of address. It is often translated as “master” (although *age* does not indicate the ownership of other human beings), “lord” (though *age* is not a title of nobility), or “sir.” In these dialogue books, *age* is used as a term of address by older men referring to younger, by younger men referring to older, between complete strangers, and between close friends. Given this, one might think of it as conveying the same sense of camaraderie and friendliness as words like “comrade,” “chap,” “bro,” or “dude.” I have opted for “Brother” throughout this article, even though *age* does not indicate a familial relationship.

5. For an overview of such books, see Tatiana Pang, *Schriftliche mandschurische Quellen zur Geschichte und Kultur des Qing-Reiches des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 124–36.

6. The exception to this is the ninth dialogue, which discusses an archery competition. See 2:7b–8a, *Manju gisun-i jy* | *Qingshu zhinan* 清書指南, 4° 41321 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. For a comprehensive introduction to this text, see Devin Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical Practices: The Connections Between Manuscript and Printed Books,” *Saksaha: A Journal of Manchu Studies* 17 (2021): 11–13.

7. There is a great deal of overlap between the contents of this title and that commonly referred to as *Tanggū meyen* (*One Hundred Sections*). For a detailed comparison, see Takekoshi Takashi, “*Ichihyakujō*” “*Seibun shiyō*” *taishōbon* (Kobe: Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, 2017).

8. 1:1a, Backhouse 325, Bodleian Library. By “associated with,” I mean that these publishing houses are mentioned in the colophons of different books. In each, the publishing house is identified as the one that “stores the woodblocks” (Ch. *cangban* 藏板). The blocks for this book were held by Shuangfeng ge 雙峯閣 (1789), Shaoyi tang 紹衣堂 (undated), Dayou tang 大酉堂 (1809), Sanhuai tang 三槐堂, and by the office of the garrison general (Ch. *jiangjun shu* 將軍署) in Xi'an (1818). I am following Cynthia Brokaw in the translation of *shufang* as “publishing house.” For further explanation, see Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 2n2. For a thorough introduction to publishing houses and the different ways through which they obtained their blocks, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 102–5, 177–85.

“book shop”) in the late Qing. Snippets of model conversations even appear in some phrasebooks, even though these are slightly more fragmented.⁹ Overall, it seems that there was enough of a market for numerous publishing houses to stock a wide variety of dialogue books, all aimed at teaching readers how to converse in Manchu.

Though the large number of extant printed dialogue books is a testament to their commercial appeal, students of the Manchu language created their own manuscripts, too. Some existing manuscripts are handwritten copies of the books mentioned above, which is an indication of how common it was for students to practice their penmanship and comprehension by copying texts out by hand.¹⁰ The manuscript titled *Book of Important Explanations from the Home School* (*Boo-i tacikū-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe*) in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, for instance, is a faithful copy of *Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe*.¹¹ Other manuscripts contain what appear to be unique dialogues, namely those that do not appear in printed books. Such books are often assumed to have been tailor-made pedagogical materials, presumably created by individual learners to guide their own studies.

Some manuscripts, including *Muwa gisun*, hint at more collaborative origins. Although the sections of *Muwa gisun* are very similar in tone and structure to those in books such as *Cing wen ki meng* and *Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe*, the dialogues in *Muwa gisun* do not appear in any printed dialogue book. They can be found, however, in other manuscripts. As a 2020 post in the blog “Tales of Manchu Life” first indicated, several *Muwa gisun* dialogues appear in two separate manuscripts, one in Nagasaki (No. 404) and one in Berlin (Hs. or. 8448 ROA).¹² A fourth manuscript—containing sixty-seven percent of the dialogues in *Muwa gisun*—also exists in Copenhagen (Manchu 21). While some dialogues only appear in one or two manuscripts, some—including the memorable text on jujubes quoted at the beginning of this article—appear in all four.¹³

9. Such phrases are usually included in a section on “miscellaneous words” (Ch. *za yan* 雜言). One of the earliest examples of this is in *Complete Collection of Qing Writing* (*Qingshu quanji* 清書全集) (1699), which includes phrases such as *saiyün* (“Are you well?”), *sini hala ai* (“What is your surname?”), and *niyalma jihe* (“People have come”), 5:12b; 14b, TMA 5806 3582, Harvard-Yenching Library. A more developed example is the later *Book of Asking and Answering* (*Fonjin jabun leolen-i bithe* | *Wenda yu* 問答語, 1827). Though laid out like a dictionary, the phrases clearly follow each other. The first page, for example, reads as follows: “Have you come? I’ve come. Sit. I won’t sit. Have you eaten? I’ve eaten. How many bowls did you eat? I ate three. Are you full? I’m full. What vegetables did you eat? Pork.” (Ma. *jiheo* [...] *jihe* [...] *teki* [...] *terakū* [...] *buda jekeo* [...] *jeke* [...] *udu moro jeke* [...] *ilan moro jeke* [...] *ebiheo* [...] *ebihe* [...] *ai sogi* [...] *ulgiyan yali* [...]), 1a, 19951.c.31, British Library.

10. Hand copying has of course long been understood to be an important way for readers to engage with their books in China. See for example Yugen Wang, *Ten Thousand Scrolls: Reading and Writing in the Poetics of Huang Tingjian and the Late Northern Song* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 182–94.

11. Hs. or. 8406 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

12. “Leping’s Dog?” *Tales of Manchu Life* (blog), April 3, 2020, <https://talesofmanchulife.wordpress.com/2020/04/03/leplings-dog/>.

13. For a comparison of the dialogues, see Appendix A.

The existence of these manuscripts, all of which are related to each other, hint at the collaborative and iterative nature of Manchu-language manuscript culture. Though they contain either the same or at the very least closely related dialogues and contents, these four manuscripts in turn represent different ways readers engaged with these dialogues, from students offering their written dialogues to a teacher for correction (*Muwa gisun* and Manchu 21), users creating clean copies perhaps for later use or circulation (No. 404), and a more casual reader creating their own personal copy in what seems to have been a brief burst of activity (Hs. or. 8448 ROA). Two of these manuscripts, *Muwa gisun* and Manchu 21, also provide a partial glimpse at how learners of Manchu learned the language, in particular by highlighting the important roles played by both oral recitation and copying as pedagogical practices.

To explore these dynamics further, this article proceeds in three parts. The first discusses the wider context in which these manuscripts should be viewed, contextualizing them in terms of bilingual and multilingual book cultures in both East Asia and Europe. The second discusses each of the four related manuscripts—*Muwa gisun*, Manchu 21, No. 404, and Hs. or. 8448 ROA—in turn. This section focuses on identifying the kind of user who likely created and used each manuscript based on the available material evidence provided by the manuscripts themselves.¹⁴ This analysis is furthered by section three, which compares examples of dialogues that appear in all four manuscripts. This section concludes that while the four manuscripts do have texts and language in common, there are more differences than there are similarities, suggesting that these manuscripts circulated within a fluid manuscript culture in which editing, revising, and reading out loud were the norm.

Bilingual Dialogue Books

The ubiquity of bilingual dialogue books in the Qing is reflective of the multilingual nature of Qing book culture. As Evelyn Rawski has demonstrated, the Qing period was “marked by an efflorescence of writing in the Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan languages,” stimulated in no small part by imperial order.¹⁵ By all accounts, it was the need for not only literate but specifically bilingual officials who could handle and produce state documents in both Manchu and Chinese that stimulated the early production

14. This section draws methodologically from works of book history, which has demonstrated that only by comprehensively reading all the components of a book can we understand its nature, who used it, and how it was used. For an articulation of this in the context of Chinese book history, see Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th Centuries)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 61.

15. Evelyn S. Rawski, “Qing Book Culture and Inner Asia,” in *Books in Numbers: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library*, edited by Wilt Idema (Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007), 197.

of Manchu-Chinese books. This included the early translation of the Four Books into Manchu is presently being given full consideration for publication—the first extant edition of which is dated 1691—and production of Manchu-Chinese dictionaries—one of the first being *Complete Book of the Great Qing* (*Daicing gurun-i yooni bithe* | *Da Qing quanshu* 大清全書, 1683). Bilingual book production continued apace, with examples including the 1848 translation of *Liaozhai zhiyi* (*Manju Nikan liyoo jai jy i bithe* | *Hebi Liaozhai zhiyi* 合璧聊齋志異), the philosophical translation *Translation of Admonitions on Six Subjects* (*Ubaliyambuha ninggun baitai targabun gisun bithe* | *Fanyi Liushi zhenyan* 繙譯六事箴言, 1851), and numerous translations of *The Art of War* (*Sun dz-i coohai doro bithe* | *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法, first printed 1710). While monolingual Manchu-only books never stopped being produced entirely, by the nineteenth century bilingual Manchu-Chinese books appear to have been the norm.¹⁶

By virtue of being bilingual, such books were designed for readers able to read both Chinese and Manchu. In most Manchu-Chinese books, the two languages are arranged side-by-side on the page in the *hebi* 合璧 format.¹⁷ In such books, Chinese sentences are broken up, with the Chinese characters for a given phrase placed directly next to the Manchu phrase to which they correspond. The reason for this division is a practical one: as a script, Manchu takes up more space. Placing the two side-by-side, then, does not result in word-for-word correspondence, but instead an alignment in meaning, requiring what Loretta Kim has described as “ambilingual” readers. Just as ambidextrous scissors can be used by both right-handed and left-handed persons, ambilingual Manchu-Chinese books were designed to be used by “readers who are proficient in two (or more) languages”—in this case both Manchu and Chinese.¹⁸

Examples of marginalia provide a glimpse of how such ambilingual readers read. The copy of *Cing wen ki meng* in Figure 1, for example, preserves evidence of what appears to be an ambilingual reading practice:

Here, red dots, circles, lines, and crosses have been used to match corresponding pairs. In the case of the first complete dialogue above, a red circle has been added to indicate that *atanggi* (“when?”) is equivalent to *jishi* 幾時 (“when?”), while a red line matches *geneki* (“want to go”) and *yao qu* 要去 (“want to go”) and a red triangles indicates that *hendu* (“say,” here an imperative) is the same as *shuo* 說 (“say”). This reader

16. Evelyn Rawski suggests that over 48 percent of Manchu books were Manchu-Chinese. See “Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, edited by Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 307.

17. This format is sometimes translated as “simultaneous,” following Pamela Kyle Crossley’s use in her description of multilingual imperial utterances. See *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 11–12.

18. Loretta E. Kim, “Recovering Translation Lost: Symbiosis and Ambilingual Design in Chinese/Manchu Language Reference Manuals of the Qing Dynasty,” in *Impagination—Layout and Materiality of Writing and Publication*, edited by Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang, Anthony Grafton, and Glenn Warren Most (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 326.

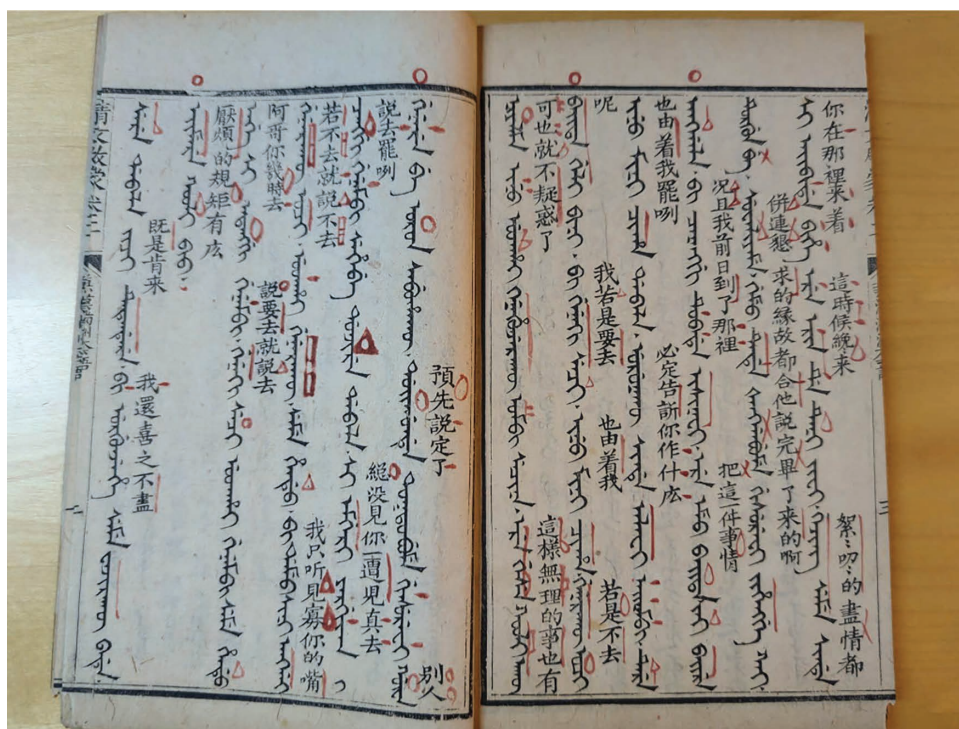


Figure 1 2:2b–3a, *The Manchu Preceptor* (*Cing wen ki meng bithe* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙), Østas I 20, University of Oslo Library.

was clearly working their way across the two languages, a reading practice that the *hebi* form of the bilingual book itself supported.

Qing China was not the only place in East Asia where readers read across both languages and lines of text. Across Japan, Korea, and Vietnam a wide variety of writing and reading practices emerged to handle the simultaneous use of literary Sinitic (*wenyan* 文言) and other vernacular languages. In Japan, this resulted in the use of *kundoku* 訓讀, whereby glosses allowed literary Sinitic written in accordance with the vocabulary and syntax of Chinese to be read as Japanese, a complex “act of reading/translation” that David Lurie has defined as “reading by gloss.”¹⁹ The development of the *kana* 仮名 syllabic script in the ninth century further helped Japanese readers read Sinitic characters, and *kana* started to be added to printed books from the seventeenth century onwards. In Korea glosses (*kugyōl* 口訣) were similarly developed to add Korean grammatical markers to aid the reading of texts written in literary Sinitic, but script and language interacted in even more dynamic ways after the promulgation of the Korean alphabet in 1446. This new script was not just a codification of Korean phonology, but

19. *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 180; see also Chapter 4.

also provided an accurate way to note the pronunciation of Chinese, particularly in the form of “vernacular explications” (*ŏnhae* 諺解) that were added alongside the literary Sinitic.²⁰ Similarly, prior to the development of the Romanized alphabet *Quốc Ngữ* in Vietnam, the morphographic script *Chữ Nôm* 字喃 was used to write vernacular Vietnamese by transcribing vernacular words with Sinitic-based characters, particularly as a means of poetic expression.²¹ In all three contexts, therefore, the act of reading meant reading across both languages and lines of text.

Despite the similarities in terms of dynamic reading practices, however, bilingual Manchu-Chinese texts operate somewhat differently. Peter Kornicki, in his comparison between Manchu and approaches taken to literary Sinitic in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, highlights three key points of difference: In bilingual texts the interlinear Manchu does not provide a way of generating a Manchu text from the Chinese; the Manchu translations, by virtue of being translations, do not retain key Sinitic terms, unlike in Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese texts; and prefaces to eighteenth-century Manchu translations claim interpretive authority for the translations.²² In other words, in Manchu-Chinese bilingual texts, the two languages are presented as static and separate. Although the side-by-side layout facilitated readers reading across the languages—as evidenced by the addition of glosses—if one knew how to read one of the languages, one *could* read a Manchu-Chinese bilingual book without engaging with the other.

To illustrate these differences further, consider the following section from an entirely different book, Jacques (James) Bellot’s *Familiar Dialogues* (1586):

Barbara: How now children,	<i>Barbe: Comment enfans,</i>	<i>Barbara: Haù nau</i>
will you not rise to day?	<i>voulez vous point vous</i>	<i>tchildren, ouil you not</i>
Peter: What ist a clock?	<i>leuer aujourd'huy?</i>	<i>reis tou dê?</i>
Bar.: It is seué a clock.	<i>Pierre: Quelle heure est il?</i>	<i>Pìter: Houat ist a clak?</i>
Stephen: I beleue you not.	<i>Barbe: Il est vij heures</i>	<i>Bar.: It is séuin a clak.</i>
Bar.: Why do you not beleue	<i>Estiene. Je ne vous croy</i>	<i>Stiùin: Ey bilif you not.</i>
me?	<i>point?</i>	<i>Bar.: Houey dou you</i>
	<i>Barbe. Pourquoi ne me</i>	<i>bilif my?</i>
	<i>croiez vous point?</i>	

20. For this aspect of Sejong’s innovation, see Sixiang Wang, “The Sounds of Our Country: Interpreters, Linguistic Knowledge, and the Politics of Language in Early Chosŏn Korea,” in *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000–1919*, edited by Benjamin A. Elman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 58–95.

21. John D. Phan, “Rebooting the Vernacular in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam,” in *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000–1919*, edited by Benjamin A. Elman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 96–128.

22. Peter Kornicki, “Having Difficulty with Chinese? The Rise of the Vernacular Book in Japan, Korea and Vietnam; Lecture 2, Bluffing Your Way in Chinese” (Sanders Lectures in Bibliography, University of Cambridge, March 11, 2008), <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/items/645cf84b-b8b3-4911-a913-809bba3373e7>.

Steuen.: Because I am yet all sleepy and that I am accustomed to awake always at five of the clocke.	Estienne.: <i>Parce que ie suis encor' tout endormy stumé de m'esueiller tousiours à cinq heures.</i>	Stiuiin: <i>Bycàs ey am yet àl slipé, and dat ey am acostuméd tou aouèk àl ouès at feif of dé clak.</i> ²³
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The left and middle columns contain the language Bellot's students were trying to learn (English) and the language they already knew (French). While the French is a complete translation of the English, even to the point of transforming the English name "Stephen" into the French "Estienne," the two columns exist as separate texts. The column on the right, on the other hand, contains a semi-phonetic transcription in which the sounds of the English text have been written in French. By reading this column out loud, a French-speaking reader would learn how to pronounce English. By saying "*Houat*" in French, for example, they would arrive at the English "What." The left and middle columns, therefore, reflect a reading practice closer to that of a Manchu-Chinese book, while the right column would have been recognizable to readers of literary Sinitic in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

The use of this semi-phonetic transcription in *Familiar Dialogues*, however, is something of an innovation on Bellot's part. Most examples of bilingual conversational manuals printed across Europe—of which there are many—contain sections equivalent only to the left and middle columns. This side-by-side format can be traced back to the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* (c. 300 CE). A series of related manuscripts, the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* presents vocabulary lists, prose passages and fables, and dialogues in parallel Greek and Latin.²⁴ As phrases with equivalent meanings appear in both languages side-by-side, learners were encouraged to read the two languages together. This genre of book persisted and became popular particularly in early modern Europe, where multilingual dialogue books were regularly printed and reprinted. Through such books, English readers were offered instruction in French, German, Italian, and Portuguese, in addition to other languages, usually in a convenient, pocket-sized format.²⁵ This also became the standard format for students to learn Latin.

23. Jacques Bellot, *Familiar Dialogues for the Instruction of the[m], That Be Desirous to Learne to Speake English, and Perfectlye to Pronou[n]Ce the Same*, 2nd ed. (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1586), sec. 1. I am using the copy digitized and available through Early English Books Online, which is unpaginated.

24. For a thorough introduction to this text, see Eleanor Dickey, *Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana: Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). There are sections that follow the narrator through their morning routine, what they do at school, and how to borrow money. An extended series of dialogues explain in meticulous detail the preparation one should go through to have a guest to lunch, including inviting the guest, going to the butcher and greengrocer's, instructing the cook, fetching the wine, and setting out the necessary foods and dishware. For a detailed morning routine, see Dickey, 104–8. For lunch, see Dickey, 117–21.

25. For an overview, see Werner Hüllen, "Textbook-Families for the Learning Of Vernaculars between 1450 and 1700," in *History of Linguistics 1999: Selected Papers from the Eighth International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences*, edited by Sylvain Auroux (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), 97–107; Jonathan Culpeper and Merja Kytö, *Early*

By the sixteenth century, lower grammar schools in England, for example, used *Floures for Latine Spekyng* (1534) as their textbook, which arranged Latin and English in alternating phrases. Through this book, students had to continually switch back and forth, thus developing their ambilingual dexterity.²⁶

In Europe, such bilingual books were designed and used specifically by learners seeking to acquire a level of proficiency in a second language. None of the books mentioned above, including *Familiar Dialogues*, taught readers how to recognize the letters in the alphabet; that level of literacy was already presumed. Equally, students were not taught the basics of language itself or how to speak their own native tongue. The intended user of *Floures for Latine Spekyng*, for instance, was a student who could already speak and write English; the anticipated audience for *Familiar Dialogues* were those who could both speak and write French. Equipped with this foundation, students could use such bilingual books and, relying on their first language, facilitate their entry into their second. Particularly in the case of Latin, this would have been a largely practical endeavor, as students looking to become lawyers, officials, and diplomats would use it to further their careers.²⁷

The users of bilingual Manchu-Chinese dialogue books appear to have had similar skills and motivations. They were also not small children learning to babble. Instead, available evidence gleaned from the conversations in the dialogue books suggests that students of Manchu in the late Qing were likely young men, members of the Eight Banners, and able to speak Chinese. They would have also already been proficient at reading the Manchu script, having learned it through the Manchu “twelve heads” (Ma. *juwan juwe uju*) which “held an incomparable position within the Manchu pedagogical paradigm.”²⁸ This explains why these dialogue books begin, even on page one, with complete sentences and elaborate conversations; no slow introduction to language was necessary.²⁹ As recent work by both David Porter and Yeh Kao-shu has shown, given

Modern English Dialogues: Spoken Interaction as Writing (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For an analysis of the kinds of conversation manuals that were produced, see John Gallagher, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 59–79.

26. For more on this book specifically, see Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby, “The Unidentified Sources of Nicholas Udall’s *Floures for Latine Spekyng*,” *Notes and Queries* 49, no. 2 (2002): 203–6. Other authors took slightly different approaches to arranging languages. Joseph Webbe (fl. 1610–1630), an educator who tried to teach Latin by bypassing any explicit mention of grammar, presented the plays of the Roman playwright Terence through a series of numbered corresponding clauses. See Demmy Verbeke, “Types of Bilingual Presentation in the English-Latin Terence,” in *Bilingual Europe: Latin and Vernacular Cultures—Examples of Bilingualism and Multilingualism c. 1300–1800*, edited by Jan Bloemendal (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 78–79. For more on Joseph Webbe, see Vivian Salmon, *The Study of Language in 17th-Century England* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988), 15–31.

27. Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 44–48.

28. Mårten Söderblom Saarela, *The Early Modern Travels of Manchu: A Script and Its Study in East Asia and Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 52.

29. This suggestion is supported by the known ages of language learners. Leping, at eleven *sui*, is the youngest student I have come across, and he claims to know Chinese and some Manchu already, even though *Muwa gisun* is only in Manchu.

the continued importance of Manchu-language translation as a pathway to a career in the civil service, students of Manchu would have had just as much of a tangible reason to want to learn how to discuss the childishness of jujubes as their Latin-learning counterparts.³⁰

In this respect, Manchu-Chinese dialogue books are most comparable to the books used to train and select interpreters in the Translators Institute (*Sayögwön* 司譯院) in Chosŏn Korea. This category includes *Eight-Year-Old Child* (*P'al se a* 八歲兒), which was used to teach Manchu, as well as *Interpreter Pak* (*Pak T'ongsa* 朴通事) and *Lao Qida* 老乞大 (*Nogöltae*), both used to teach Chinese.³¹ This last title refers to a series of related texts which circulated possibly as early as 1346 and then well into the Qing, all of which follow a Korean trader traveling to Beijing.³² Throughout the long journey the trader seeks out lodgings and horse feed, learns the rates of key goods, and befriends a Chinese trader making a similar trip. At the end of his trek, the Korean trader successfully sells his horses and buys new merchandise, bids farewell to his new Chinese friend, and then sets off on his return trip to Korea. By using this as their core text, would-be Korean interpreters were therefore not only learning the language, but well-chosen phrases that they too might actually deploy as they journeyed along the road to Beijing.

Just as *Lao Qida* is structured around the practical phrases and scenarios, the phrases and dialogues in European and Manchu dialogue books are designed for students, with conversations rooted in the classroom and the everyday. *Familiar Dialogues*, for example, takes the reader through a seemingly average day in the lives of Stephen and Peter. They eventually wake up, then get dressed (though Peter is without his garters, having lost them), and head to school. Other sections of the book see Stephen and Peter going to the market, ordering wine, bartering, ordering cloth by the yard, hearing the items available from the fishmonger and butcher, and saying their prayers. They play cards, and Stephen is told off for cheating. Across the book, the boys in the dialogues are encouraged to be studious, respectful, thrifty, and pious—lessons that the reader, too, is encouraged to absorb. Comparable manuscripts convey similar values. Through *Manières de langage*, another series of related manuscripts composed at the turn of the fifteenth century, for example, learners of French would learn aspects of socially

30. See for example Yeh Kao-shu 葉高樹, "Qingchao bu yamen de fanyi kaoshi 清朝部衙门的翻译考试 (Imperial Translation Exams of the Government Office in the Qing Dynasty)," in *Studies in Translation History 2016*, edited by Wong Lawrence Wang-chi (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2017), 1–39; David Porter, "Bannerment As Translators: Manchu Language Education in the Hanjun Banners," *Late Imperial China* 40, no. 2 (2019): 1–43.

31. For an overview of the former, see Choe Yongchul, "Manchu Studies in Korea," *Journal of Cultural Interaction in East Asia* 3, no. 1 (2012): 91–92. For a translation of *Interpreter Pak*, see Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff Dryer, *Pak the Interpreter: An Annotated Translation and Literary-Cultural Evaluation of the Piao Tongshi of 1677* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2006).

32. There are at least four different extant versions. For an overview of these different revisions, see Wang, "The Sounds of Our Country," 73–76.

acceptable life in France, including how to flirt, and when it was appropriate to swear.³³ By reading William Caxton's *Dialogues in French and English* (1483), readers could perfect not only their French and their English, but also practice which register of greeting was appropriate for each person that they met on the street,³⁴ while students of Erasmus' (ca. 1466–1536) *Colloquies* mastered what to do if one was late to class.³⁵ As will be shown in later sections of this article, boys in Manchu dialogue books were taught similar values, including diligence, the importance of not laughing at others, and overall how to behave correctly.³⁶

As they provided students with *written* models of speech, however, the question remains: Were these dialogue books meant to teach their users how to actually speak this second language, or just to read it? In the case of European dialogue books, John Gallagher has argued that such books were most definitely “speaking books.”³⁷ Since the texts mimicked speech and many emphasized pronunciation, readers were clearly meant to rely on them to work on their own oral competency, a kind of “noisy reading.”³⁸ Gallagher therefore situates these dialogue books within what Adam Fox calls the “dynamic continuum” between oral and literate cultures in early modern England, where the ubiquity of print meant that even “the world of those at the lowest and least literate levels was fundamentally permeated by the written word” while those who were able to convey meanings in text were still required to engage in oral exchange.³⁹

In Qing China, the continuum between orality and written cultures was equally dynamic. Outside the classroom, hearing oral recitations was an important part of daily life, whether in the form of recitations of the “Sacred Edict” (*Shengyu* 聖諭), community lectures about the Qing code, or even religious prayers or sutras.⁴⁰ Inside the classroom, the boundary between the oral and the written was more porous still. According to accounts from foreign visitors, Qing schools were noisy places, and the “din which

33. For an introduction to this text, see Emily Reed, “Un Autre Manere de Parler: The Pedagogy of the Manières de Langage” (PhD dissertation, The University of Sheffield, 2019).

34. Werner Hülsen, “A Close Reading of William Caxton's Dialogues: ‘... to lerne Shortly frenssh and englyssh,’” in *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*, edited by Andreas H. Junker (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995), 107.

35. Craig R Thompson, trans., *Colloquies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 7–11; 114; 352–60.

36. This aspect of Manchu-language primers more broadly has been identified by Carla Nappi. Nappi describes how *Cing wen ki meng* taught lessons including how to speak with integrity, how it is important to not let one's finances get in the way of supporting a friend, and how to be a host. For these specific lessons, see Carla Nappi, *Translating Early Modern China: Illegible Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 140–43; 151–53; 155–60.

37. John Gallagher, “Vernacular Language-Learning in Early Modern England” (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2014), 56.

38. Gallagher, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England*, 79. For more on noisy reading, see Margaret Aston, “Epilogue,” in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, edited by Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 275–89.

39. Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 50.

40. For more on community lectures, see Ting Zhang, *Circulating the Code: Print Media and Legal Knowledge in Qing China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 144–178.

arises from a Chinese schoolroom” came from students reciting texts, also described as “shouting out their lessons at the top of their voices.”⁴¹ Students were routinely made to vocalize a text, memorize it, and then recite it from memory.⁴² As another anonymous Manchu-Chinese manuscript—which describes how the user of the book spent their days in school—indicates, students spent at least some of their time practicing how to ask and answer questions, meaning that they very well could have read dialogues out loud:⁴³

erde bithe hūlambi. hūlahangge umesi šadaha manggi. teni bithe šejilembi. šejilehe manggi. hergen be takambi. ice nonggiha bithe be giyangnambi. inenggi dulin de hergen be araha amala. meni yabuha babe alabumbi. yamjifi facara onggolo hūlaha bithe. taciha gisun be sume giyangnabumbi. soncoho inenggi de gisun be ubaliyambubumbi. juru inenggi de bakcilafi manjurabumbi. geli ibere bederere fonjire jabure doru be tacibumbi.

早晨念書念的很乏了時候才背書背了之後認字講新上的書晌午寫了字之後呼告訴各自的履歷晚上散之前將念過之書學過之話破說着講單日呼翻話雙日呼對說清語又教給進退問答的礼

In the morning we read books aloud. After we are tired from reading, then we recite from memory. After reciting from memory, we familiarize ourselves with written words. We comment on newly learned books. At midday we write words. After this, we are [each] given our own tasks. In the evening we break up for the day, but before this, we comment on the books we have read and the words we have learned. On odd-numbered days we translate. On even-numbered days we speak Manchu to each other, and we are also taught the way of asking and answering questions at each other.

Of course, it is difficult to tell if Manchu conversation books really did teach their users how to speak Manchu, or if they were really read from. Oral recitations in and of themselves, of course, leave no trace on the physical page. That said, two of the manuscripts under consideration here do have some traces that suggest that they were the result of a more oral/aural learning practice. This includes the first manuscript under consideration, *Muwa gisun*, to which this article now turns.

41. John Henry Gray, *China: A History of the Laws, Manners, and Customs of the People*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1878), 168; Arthur Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, fifth edition (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894), 251.

42. For an overview of the importance of recitation in earlier reading practices in China, see Li Yu, “A History of Reading in Late Imperial China, 1000–1800” (PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2003), 48–67.

43. 2a–2b, Hs. or. 8463 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. This manuscript is also unfoliated, and 1a refers to the first page of the text.

The Four Manuscripts

Muwa gisun (Plain Words)

Having been used by numerous contemporary Manchu-language classes, it is no surprise that *Muwa gisun* is by far the most well-studied out of the four manuscripts considered here. It is also one of only a handful of surviving manuscript dialogue books that has a name attached to it.⁴⁴ The name “Leping” appears both on the cover and in the first dialogue of this manuscript, and it is usually presumed that this eleven-*se* (Ch. *sui* 歲) boy wrote out all the contents of *Muwa gisun*, including texts about mud in Beijing, a section about the importance of preserving paper with writing on it, and the dialogue about the childishness of jujubes with which this article began.⁴⁵

Muwa gisun contains eighty-two discrete sections: eighty-one complete sections, and one final page of notes (text eighty-two).⁴⁶ The entire manuscript is written in black ink on twenty-five leaves of coarse paper (measuring 24.25 x 14.5 cm). Though the manuscript itself is undated, the handwriting suggests that it was likely written in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁷ As the manuscript has frequent corrections, this is likely a practice book. As Mark C. Elliott and James Bosson comment in their description of the manuscript, the corrections made to the text in red indicate that Leping “used this mainly as an exercise book to practice penmanship.”⁴⁸ This further explains the use of coarse and relatively low-quality paper, dark in color and with visible fibers; this manuscript was not produced to sell, circulate, or last.

While analyses of this manuscript have commonly focused on Leping, it has always been recognized that Leping’s teacher had a hand in creating and finessing it. In the first dialogue—one of the seventeen that are unique to this manuscript—Leping’s teacher is visible:

44. It is described in Mark C. Elliott and James Bosson, “Highlights of the Manchu-Mongol Collection in the Harvard-Yenching Library,” in *Treasures of the Yenching: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Patrick Hanan (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2003); Jonathan Schlesinger, “Toward an Environmental Microhistory: Lessons from the Muwa Gisun,” *Late Imperial China* 39, no. 2 (2018): 1–15.

45. The cover is now incomplete, and the bottom section of the page is missing. It is likely that the cover originally read “Of Leping” (Ma. *Leping ningge*). Leping’s age is taken from the first dialogue in *Muwa gisun*.

46. For this last section, see 24b, *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library. The Manchu Studies Group did not translate the text of this section, though they did include their transcription of the text under dialogue eighty-one. Here, I refer to the text on 24b as “eighty-two” in order to delineate the contents of these two different sections.

47. As Schlesinger notes, the handwriting, “most notably the flaring curls at the end of each Manchu word,” are characteristic of this period (“Toward an Environmental Microhistory: Lessons from the Muwa Gisun,” 4.).

48. Elliott and Bosson, “Highlights,” 86.

age si ya gūsa.
bi kubuhe fulgiyan-i manju gūsa.
ya jalan.
fere jalan.
wei niru.
sioiking niru.
hala ai.
tatara hala.
gebu ai.
leping gebu.
udu se.
juwean emu se.
 [...] *ai manju bithe hūlambi.*
 [...] *ne geli muwa gisun hūlambi.*
ai muwa gisun hūlambi.
meni sefu-i banjibuha yasai juleri. fonjire
*jabure muwa gisun.*⁴⁹

Brother, what is your banner?
 I am in the Manchu bordered red banner.
 Which regiment?
 The first regiment.
 Whose company?
 Sioiking's company.
 What is your surname?⁵⁰
 Tatara.
 What is your name?
 Leping.
 How old are you.
 Elaeven years old.
 ...What Manchu books are you reading?
 ...Now I am also reading "Plain Words."
 What "Plain Words" are you reading?
 "Plain Words" is a book of conversation,
 created by my teacher, and before your
 eyes.

Here, Leping's teacher asks the questions that Leping answers, thus directing the dialogue. They also corrected Leping's work with their red-inked brush. In this part of the manuscript, the corrections are all minor: Leping's teacher made sure that the 'i' in Sioiking was clear and changed what was written as an *e* to an *a* by removing a dot.⁵¹ They also added a deliberate dot to the end of each phrase, a lesson that Leping seems to have remembered when writing out later sections; he didn't often make this mistake again. Through the pages of *Muwa gisun* and corrections such as these, we see Leping learning to write Manchu correctly and accurately.

Muwa gisun is not the only dialogue book to have originated in a classroom. The preface of *Cing wen ki meng* written by Cheng Mingyuan 程明遠, for example, explains that the book was used by his friend Wu-ge 舞格 in his home school (Ma. *booi tacikū*). After watching his friend use his book to teach with, guiding those "who possess little skill" (Ma. *majige sureken ulhicungga urse oci*) to "not only read and write" (Ma. *hūlame arame mutembi sere anggala*) but even ensuring that their "accent was clear and pure,

49. 1a; 2a (1), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library

50. In some contexts, *hala* can be translated as "clan." In an anonymous bilingual manuscript in Copenhagen, however, which has a very similar first dialogue, *hala* is translated as *xing* 姓 ("surname"), while *mukūn* is translated as *zu* 族 ("clan"), which has informed my translation of *hala* as "surname" here and elsewhere in this article. See 1a, Manchu 25, the Royal Danish Library.

51. Other corrections, including one looked at later in this section, are more considerable.

the lines of their writing straight and accurate” (Ma. *jilgan mudan getuken bolgo hergen-i jijun tob tondo*), Cheng took a draft of the text away to be carved into woodblocks. Though Wu-ge protested that his book consisted only of “lowly, amateurish words, plain and ordinary, without decoration” (Ma. *buya calgari gisun muwa albatu bime fiyan akūngge*)—a description that likely refers to the fact that the book contains colloquial conversations—Cheng persisted and ultimately succeeded in printing the text, claiming that it would be of great use to new learners.⁵²

The *Book of Sections* (*Justan-i bithe*) is another manuscript that, like *Muwa gisun*, was used in a classroom.⁵³ This manuscript has “Of Ioišan” (Ma. *Ioišan ningge*, Ch. Yu-shan 毓善) written on the cover, presumably indicating the name of the young man who owned it. According to the first dialogue, in which Ioišan answers questions about himself, he was sixteen *se* and of the Plain Blue Manchu Banner.⁵⁴ When asked about his Manchu proficiency in the second dialogue, Ioišan explains that although he is just learning how to speak Manchu (Ma. *bi teni tacime gisurembi*), he can already read Manchu books and write, all of which he presumably learned to do at his school. When asked “What are you writing?” (Ma. *sini arahangge ai bithe*), Ioišan explains that what he is writing is “sections” (Ma. *justan bithe*)—that is, the title of the manuscript itself.⁵⁵ Just as with Leping’s *Muwa gisun*, Ioišan’s manuscript appears to have been consciously created in a classroom, and through the act of creating it, Ioišan cemented his knowledge of the Manchu language.

Was *Muwa gisun* created by copying from a written text, or by dutifully writing down an oral recitation? As discussed in the first part of this article, assuming that Leping would have been directed to ask and answer questions with his classmates as part of class, he might have recited the dialogues in *Muwa gisun* from memory and then copied them down, or he might have learned the dialogues by asking them and being asked them in turn. Either way, given both what is known about Qing classrooms, it seems likely that oral recitation formed part of how Leping learned.

Irrespective of whether Leping was primarily reciting the texts orally or copying them down, he was following some kind of model. He did not, in other words, create the dialogues himself. This explains some of the errors that appear in the text. Leping was not always accurate with where he started and stopped each discrete section, for example. Section twelve begins “I cannot bear being in a tightly enclosed place” (Ma. *ba hafirahūn teme ba[+k]tarakū*). It then goes on to explain why other locations would be worse, something which has to do with the proximity to the outhouse. But the text

52. xu:1a–2b, *Cing wen ki meng bithe* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙, Mandchou 56, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

53. *Justan-i bithe*, Hs. or. 10781 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

54. 1a–1b, *Justan-i bithe*, Hs. or. 10781 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. This manuscript is unpaginated, and 1a refers to the first page of the text.

55. 6a, *Justan-i bithe*, Hs. or. 10781 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

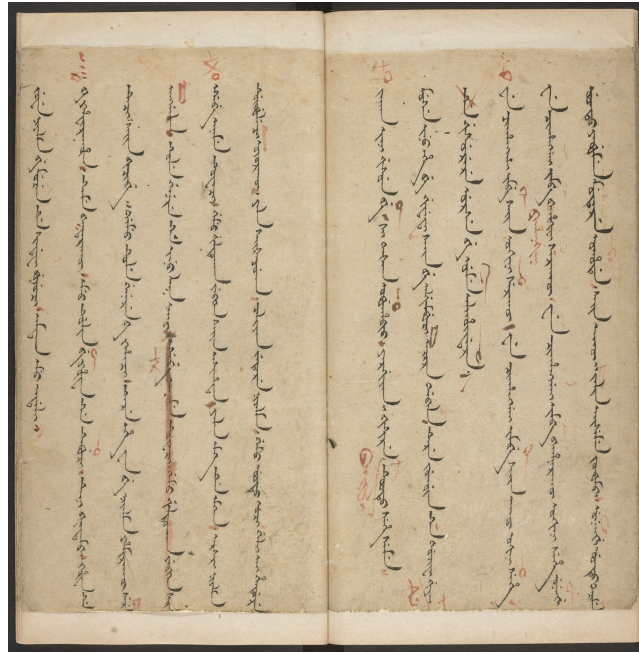


Figure 2 7b (12; 13), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

ends with an odd, incongruous line: “Looking at them one after another, they are all such handsome, fine, and good looking—” (Ma. *esebe aname tuwaci gemu giltukan yebken sain*). This is actually the start of section thirteen, the next lesson. Leping had mistakenly started writing down this lesson, seemingly without realizing it; his teacher crossed this mistake out (see Figure 2).⁵⁶ The size of his Manchu script also tends to shrink towards the bottom edge of each page, as if Leping realized—often too late—that he had more words to squeeze into each line. Perhaps he simply miscalculated how large his own writing was compared to the exemplar he was copying from, or perhaps he misjudged how long his teacher was going to be droning on for. Either way, Leping consistently had to shrink his own writing, or squeeze it more tightly together, in order to make it fit.

Did Leping's teacher personally come up with the texts that they gave their students? As identified in Appendix A, sixty-eight *Muwa gisun* sections appear in the other manuscripts examined in this article. Given this, it seems unlikely that Leping's teacher wrote these texts personally. Section eighty-two further shows that *Muwa gisun*'s contents are

56. 7b (12; 13), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library. A similar mistake appears to have occurred in text 38, which, although it begins by discussing tea, then switches to discussing the speaker's brother. See 14a, *Muwa gisun*.

derived from other manuscripts.⁵⁷ This, the final section of *Muwa gisun*, is the only section of the manuscript that contains Chinese characters. Unlike the other dialogues, it consists entirely of incomplete, fragmented phrases, usually no more than a sentence or two. Though seven of these phrases are unaccounted for—suggesting that there might still be another as-yet-unidentified manuscript in a collection somewhere—most of these fragments are contained in the texts of the other manuscripts. All identified fragments are in fact contained in Manchu 21, as shown in Figure 3:

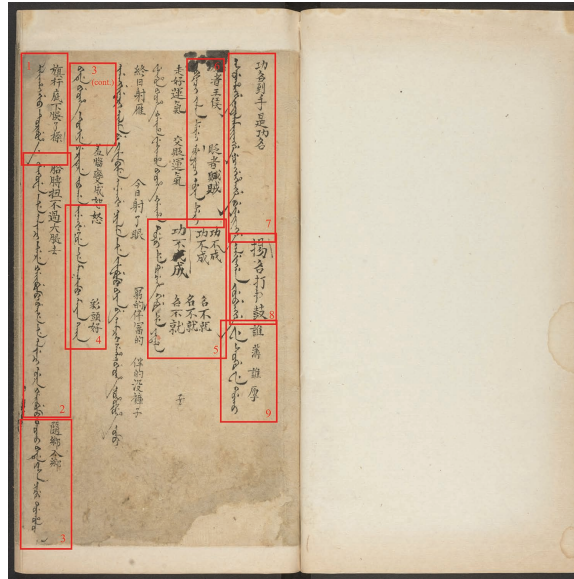


Figure 3 Identification of fragments in text eighty-two, 24b (81), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806. 09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:8, Manchu 21 | 6: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:43, Manchu 21 |
| 2: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:27, Manchu 21 | 7: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:10, Manchu 21 |
| 3: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:45, Manchu 21 | 8: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:10, Manchu 21. Phrase does not follow 7 (above) directly. |
| 4: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:30, Manchu 21 | 9: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 1:40, Manchu 21 |
| 5: Incomplete phrase. Complete text is 2:47, Manchu 21 | |

57. For this section, see 24b (82), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library.

When these phrases are compared to the complete sections from which they appear to have been taken, it becomes clear that this section of *Muwa gisun* is incomplete. Fragments labeled as seven and eight in Figure 1, for example, both come from the same dialogue, but they come from different parts of the text:⁵⁸

Manchu 21	<i>Muwa gisun</i>
<i>age ašuhangge niyalmaingge nunggehengge beyeingge. ere gemu boljoci ojorakū. baita. baha erinde jai baha seci. inu goidarakū. te bahara unde de emdubei algingga jubengge [+jubengge] niyalma de alafi ainambi..</i> Brother, that which you hold in your mouth belongs to someone else, and that which you swallow belongs to you. This won't always be the case. Things — when we have them, we say we have it. But this won't last for a long time. What do we tell the well-known tellers of tales [+tellers of tales] who boast about what they have now?	<i>ašuhangge niyalmaingge nunggehengge beyeingge [7] algingga jubengge [8]</i> That which you hold in your mouth belongs to someone else, and that which you swallow belongs to you. Well-known tellers of tales.

Here it seems that Leping is simply jotting down a few key phrases. This dialogue also appears in full in *Muwa gisun*, though quite a bit earlier (section fifty-eight) in the manuscript.⁵⁹ Perhaps Leping was practicing his writing, scribbling down phrases that interested him, or perhaps he arrived to class late and simply had to scramble to copy down what little he could catch of his teacher's words.

Nevertheless, the inclusion of this section within *Muwa gisun* means that it is highly unlikely that *Muwa gisun* is the original manuscript from which the other three manuscripts considered here were derived. Simply put, since the phrases are incomplete in *Muwa gisun* but complete in Manchu 21, *Muwa gisun* could not have been the ur-text for Manchu 21. Instead, it seems more likely that Leping's teacher drew from at least one other manuscript when compiling their lessons. Likely, as has been shown in the case of handwritten primers created in Japan (*tenaraibon* 手習本), they selected texts based on the needs of their students, selecting texts one-by-one and tailoring their selections based on their interests.⁶⁰

As for the seventeen texts that are unique to *Muwa gisun*, however, there is no reason to suggest that Leping's teacher did not in fact “create” (Ma. *banjibuha*) them themselves, as the first dialogue in *Muwa gisun* suggests. These include the first section of the text where Leping introduces himself (1), the dialogue about meeting a friend's father (41), a text that warns against provoking mean people (37), and a text that urges the listener to be truthful (14). These texts do, however, bear a great deal of similarity

58. 2:4b, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

59. See Appendix A.

60. Yoshinaga Koizumi, “Learning to Read and Write—A Study of *Tenaraibon*,” in *Listen, Copy, Read: Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan*, edited by Matthias Hayak and Annick Horiuchi (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 91–138.

in terms of length, structure, language, and contents to the kinds of dialogues found in other manuscripts and printed books. The very first section of *Muwa gisun*, for example, while it is unique to this manuscript, is similar to dialogues that appear in both *Manju gisun-i jy nan* and *Cing wen ki meng*:

Manju gisun-i jy nan

<i>si ya gūsaningge.</i>	What banner are you in?
<i>kubube suwayaningge.</i>	The Bordered Yellow Banner.
<i>si wei nirui.</i>	Whose company?
<i>tere niruningge.</i>	<i>That</i> company.
<i>sini hala ai gebu we.</i>	What is your surname? What is your name?
<i>mini hala tere. gebu tere.</i> ⁶¹	My surname is <i>that</i> , my name is <i>that</i> .

Cing wen ki meng

<i>age si ya gūsangge.</i>	Brother, what banner are you in?
<i>bi gulu suwayan ningge.</i>	I'm of the Plain Yellow Banner.
<i>hontohonggeo nirunggeo.</i>	Are you half salary, or full salary?
<i>nirungge.</i>	Full.
<i>wei niru de bi.</i>	Whose company are you in?
<i>cangseo niru de bi.</i>	I'm in Cangseo's company.
<i>hala ai.</i>	What is your surname?
<i>hala jeo.</i>	Surname is Jeo.
<i>gebu ai.</i>	What is your name.
<i>gebu fangšengge.</i> ⁶²	Name is Fangšengge.

While Leping's teacher could have come up with the first section of *Muwa gisun* on their own, therefore, there were clearly examples that could have influenced and inspired them.

To sum up, though *Muwa gisun* appears to have been copied out by a young boy named Leping, Leping did not create the contents of the manuscript himself. The dialogues came to his brush via his teacher, who took sixty-eight texts from other manuscripts and composed a further seventeen, likely by using comparable texts for inspiration. Overall, *Muwa gisun* would seem to reflect the way Manchu was taught as both a written and aural/oral language. Some of the mistakes Leping makes, for example writing the start of one dialogue at the end of another (see Figure 2), would seem to be hard to make if he had been copying from a written text, hinting that he may have been writing the text as his teacher read it. At the same time, Leping's teacher was clearly interested in perfecting Leping's ability to write the Manchu script, correcting his spelling and how he formed letters—even while the contents of what he was writing

61. 2:1a, *Manju gisun-i jy nan* | *Qingshu zhinan* 清書指南, 4° 41321 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

62. 2:34a, *Cing wen ki meng bithe* | *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啟蒙, Mandchou 56, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

mimicked speech. This dynamic interplay is one that continues in Manchu 21, the next manuscript in which some of these dialogues appear.

Manchu 21

Very little is known about the second of the four manuscripts, Manchu 21. Anonymous, it is dated 1897.⁶³ Now held in Copenhagen within the collections of the Royal Danish Library (Det Kongelige Bibliotek), the manuscript is divided into two fascicles of roughly the same dimensions as *Muwa gisun* (24.2 x 14.5 cm), on rough paper that the catalog describes as “greyish.”⁶⁴ Like *Muwa gisun*, then, this is almost immediately identifiable as a kind of exercise book, written on low-end paper. *Tanggū meyen* (One hundred sections) is written on the cover of both fascicles, though the contents of this manuscript are not the same as those in the now-standard *Tanggū meyen*, the text compiled in 1924 by Forbes A. Fraser.⁶⁵ Together the two fascicles contain eighty-nine identifiable sections (forty-two in the first fascicle and forty-seven in the second), making it the longest manuscript looked at here, though still short of the one-hundred texts promised by the “*tanggū*” written on the cover. There are, however, several blank pages at the end of each fascicle. It seems probable that whoever put this manuscript together had initially intended to compile one hundred texts, but that they abandoned the project before it was completed.⁶⁶

The blank pages notwithstanding, the rest of Manchu 21 does appear to be complete. It is entirely bilingual, with the text divided into short phrases and arranged in parallel columns. Corresponding phrases are arranged side-by-side, as in printed Manchu-Chinese *hebi* 合璧 books. The text of both languages was written in a steady, regular hand and each dialogue is numbered, all of which gives the impression of a writer who was taking a great deal of care with the manuscript.⁶⁷ There is also, however, quite a lot of red ink. Someone has gone through the text, adding dots to reinforce the ending of phrases and making careful corrections. Both the Chinese and the Manchu

63. Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library. This manuscript is unpaginated. In all references here, 1a refers to the first page of text. A description of this manuscript can be found in the catalog, Walter Fuchs and Martin Gimm, “Die Manjurische Sammlung der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Kopenhagen,” in *Klassische, moderne und bibliographische Studien zur Mandchuforschung*, edited by Martin Gimm, Giovanni Stary, and Michael Weiers (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), 64–65. The catalog, it should be noted, gives the date of this manuscript as the twenty-third year of the Daoguang reign, which would be 1843. The cover of the manuscript gives the date as *badarangga doro-i orin ilaci aniya*, “the twenty-third year of the Guangxu reign.” This would be 1897.

64. Fuchs and Gimm, “Die Manjurische Sammlung,” 65.

65. Forbes A. Fraser, *Tanggū Meyen and Other Manchu Reading Lessons. Romanised Text and English Translation Side by Side* (England: Luzac & co, 1924).

66. To avoid any confusion with other *Tanggū meyen*-s, I refer to this manuscript by its call number, Manchu 21.

67. Unusually, these numbers are written at the end of the dialogue.

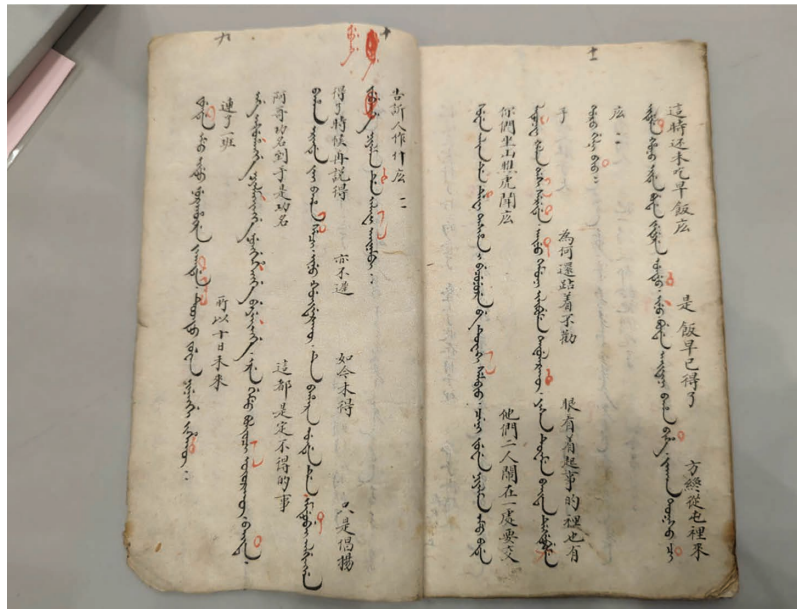


Figure 4 2:4b–5a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

were corrected: *hong* 薨 was very visibly changed to *meng* 夢 in one upper margin, for example, while *morire* (“to wind”) was corrected interlineally to *marire* (“to return”).⁶⁸ Mistakes that were deemed to have been beyond correcting have been pasted over, with the correct word written over the top.⁶⁹

Some of these mistakes seem to indicate that this manuscript was transmitted orally, as might have been the case with *Muwa gisun*. The letters *o* and *a* look very different in Manchu, for example, but *morire* does sound similar enough to *marire* that we might imagine a student mixing the two up. The student also made a comparable mistake when writing *jubengge* (“tellers of tales”), effectively writing *jubeng ge*, with the final *-ge* written almost as a separate unit (see Figure 4).⁷⁰ Had they been copying from a written model, the student would have had to go out of their way to make this kind of mistake.

Unlike *Muwa gisun*, there is no indication as to who copied out this manuscript. The manuscript bears no name, and there is no dialogue about introductions. Given the fluidity of both the Manchu and Chinese writing, it seems unlikely that the manuscript was either written or corrected by the man who donated the manuscript to the library,

68. 1:9b; 10a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

69. Some more visible corrections occur in the second fascicle. See for example 2:11b.

70. 2:4b, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

the Danish missionary Johannes August Vyff (1870–1932).⁷¹ It also appears to have been used by more than one person. A different hand added dates to the upper margin across the first five leaves of the second fascicle of the manuscript, presumably to track their own reading progress. The diligence of this reader, however, only lasted for ten days, after which the dating stopped.⁷²

Though there is no name, the very first dialogue within the manuscript does mention students. This text, which is also contained within *Muwa gisun*, establishes how dialogues are vital for new students of the language:⁷³

tuktan tacire niyalma. foholokon meyen-i gisun baibufi. mudan gaime urebume hūlabu. hergen gisun be tomorhon getuken obu. ume labdu nemšebure.

Students who are beginning must be made to read short sections of speech over and over again. [The sections] must be clear and understandable, and not demanding.

The inclusion of this text, combined with the corrections and the low quality of paper, suggests that the initial owner of this manuscript was likely also a student. Like Leping, they used this manuscript to practice their writing, and they too had someone, probably a teacher, who carefully corrected their mistakes.

As with *Muwa gisun*, most of the dialogues in Manchu 21 appear in other manuscripts. Seventy-eight of the texts in Manchu 21 appear in the three other manuscripts looked at here, with sixty-two appearing in both Manchu 21 and *Muwa gisun*. Eleven texts within Manchu 21 are unique, though the contents of these are not wholly original. There is a text about heat (“Today is sweltering” [Ma. *enenggi hūktame halhūn*]), a text about making tea (“Before you set out the tea, rinse out the pot” [Ma. *cai tebure de nen-eme tampin be silgiyafi*]), one that touches on proper horse care (“Have you not watered your horse yet?” [Ma. *morin kemuni melere undeo*]),⁷⁴ and one about the importance of being careful with one’s words (“You talk carelessly” [Ma. *si balai feme gisurembi*]). These are all topics touched on or mentioned, at least to some extent, in other comparable books.⁷⁵ Though only *Tanggū meyen* mentions a sweltering heat explicitly, dialogues

71. My thanks to Eva-Maria Jansson for her help in identifying the provenance of this book. Vyff seems to have been especially interested in acquiring Manchu pedagogical materials. Of the some forty books that he donated to the library, twenty-four are either dictionaries, phrasebooks, or dialogue books. He donated two copies of *Collected Texts in Manchu* (*Manju isabuha bithe* | *Qingwen huishu* 清文彙書) (Manju 1 and Manju 2), one copy of *Fixed Standards of Manchu* (*Cing wen diyan yoo bithe* | *Qingwen dianyao* 清文典要) (Manju 18), and one copy of *What New Students Must Read* (*Tuktan tacire urunakū hūlaci acara bithe* | *Chuxue bi du* 初學必讀) (Manju 8).

72. 2:1a–3a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

73. 1:1a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library. This same dialogue is in *Muwa gisun*, 5b–6a (5).

74. See Appendix A.

75. 1:15b, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

about the weather, for example, are very common.⁷⁶ Similarly, many other print and manuscript dialogue books contain dialogues about archery.⁷⁷

Apart from the very first text, which introduces the importance of learning from dialogues, there does not seem to be a clear logic to how texts are organized in Manchu 21. As in *Muwa gisun*, the copyist doesn't seem to have grouped them based on a clear progression of lessons, or even in terms of their contents.⁷⁸ The two texts about marriage, for instance, are quite far apart: one in the first fascicle (number 23) and one in the second (number 39). There are six texts about horses, and though some do appear to be grouped in the first fascicle (numbers 33, 34, and 35), one text appears earlier (number 28) and two are in the second fascicle (numbers 20 and 21). Assuming that the texts are arranged according to the order in which they were covered in the classroom, then it would appear that the teacher of this student consistently varied their lessons.

Interestingly, there does seem to be a connection between the order of the texts in the first fascicle of Manchu 21 and *Muwa gisun*. Though the first four texts in *Muwa gisun*—all four of which are unique to this manuscript—are unnumbered, texts five to text fifty-three are numbered using Suzhou numerals. Text five, identified in *Muwa gisun* as Suzhou numeral “one,” is also text “one” in Manchu 21. Texts labeled as one through nine in *Muwa gisun* are also identified as one through nine in Manchu 21. Though there is then a slight break, texts eighteen through twenty-five in *Muwa gisun* correspond to texts ten through eighteen in Manchu 21 too. There is also a great deal of similarity between the contents of the first fascicle of Manchu 21 and *Muwa gisun*. As can be seen in Appendix A, out of the forty-two texts in fascicle one of Manchu 21, only eight are *not* found in *Muwa gisun*.⁷⁹ The teachers who used these two texts clearly decided that these texts were suitable for students nearer the start of their Manchu education, though it is unclear if they did so independently of each other or not.

Though there is not quite enough evidence to claim that whoever wrote Manchu 21 knew Leping, there is undeniably a great deal of overlap between the two. In addition

76. *Tanggü meyen* contains an especially large number of weather-related texts. This includes texts about heavy rain (number 21 and number 57), one about heavy wind (number 26), one about the cold (number 27), and one about the heat (number 81), as found in Fraser, *Tanggü Meyen and Other Manchu Reading Lessons*, 32; 128; 38; 39; 133–34.

77. Most of these texts are about how poor one's archery skills are. *Cing wen ki meng*, for example, contains a section of dialogue where one Brother asks another to draw a bow. The response: “Yes. Ah! I cannot bend this bow” (Ma. *je. ara ere beri-i tebke be. bi inu neime muterakü.*), 2:35a–b, Mandchou 56, Bibliothèque nationale de France. This section is discussed by Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical Practices,” 16. In Hs. or. 8463, one Brother asks the other if they can bend a bow, and they respond that they cannot. When pressed, they explain that because their father was posted to the “outer provinces” (Ma. *tulergi golo*), they studied only Chinese books, never archery. See 6b–7a, Hs. or. 8463 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

78. This is in contrast to the order of lessons in later textbooks, for example *The Manchu-Mongol-Chinese Trilingual Textbook* (Manju Monggo Nikan ilan acangga šu-i tacibure hacin-i bithe | Man-Meng-Han sanwen hebi jiaokeshu 滿蒙漢三文合璧教科書 | Manju mongγ ol kitad γ urban neičetiü udq-a yin sur γ aqu jüil ün bičig), which introduces new words and grammatical concepts in increments.

79. See Appendix A.

to the contents of the two manuscripts being very similar, both were used by students learning Manchu and both were corrected, likely by teachers. Neither has arranged texts in any particular order either. Manchu 21, therefore, is best understood as another example of the importance of the dialogue format to Manchu-language learners. While there is no evidence that Leping shared a classroom with the owner of Manchu 21, it is safe to assume that both students were learning in classrooms that were, in terms of the pedagogical approach and the texts that students used, quite similar.

No. 404

The third manuscript, No. 404, is one of only a few Manchu-language books held at Nagasaki University. It has been fully digitized and made available online.⁸⁰ In terms of format and organization, it is quite similar to Manchu 21. It is bilingual, with alternating columns of Manchu and Chinese. The paper is similarly greyish, and the dimensions are roughly the same (measuring 24.5 x 12.8 cm). All the available evidence suggests that this too is a workbook, a book made to be used and then discarded. No. 404 is also anonymous and undated. Though *Tanggū meyen* (“One hundred sections”) is written on the cover page, the manuscript only contains fifty texts, with one additional sheet of paper included at the end. This is quite likely just one of a matching set of fascicles, though if the second fascicle still exists, it is not in Nagasaki.

Unlike the other manuscripts looked at so far, however, this manuscript does not appear to have been corrected by a teacher. No red-inked brush went through the pages of this manuscript. There are a few corrections, but these have all been made in black ink and either interlinearly or in the upper margin, thus preserving the clean look of each page. Although the original writer mistakenly wrote *daksiha* in the fourth dialogue, for example, someone wrote the correct word *dangsiha* (“rebuked”) in the upper margin (see Figure 5).⁸¹ Similarly, the erroneously omitted *be* (accusative particle) in the third text was added alongside the text with the help of a small cross.⁸² Corrections have also been made to the pages by pasting small bits of paper into the manuscript and then writing words or characters over the top of the blank spaces.⁸³

Even with the corrections, this manuscript is exceedingly neat. As can be seen running across the top of Figure 5, lines were ruled on each page before the text was written out, helping to create an orderly, regular manuscript. The horizontal line across the top

80. The scan of this manuscript has been divided into two sections, both located here: <https://www.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/siryo-search/ecolle/muto/eturan/index.html>.

81. 4a, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library. This manuscript is unpaginated, and 1a refers to the first page of text.

82. 2b, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

83. See for example the upper corners of 6b and 9b, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

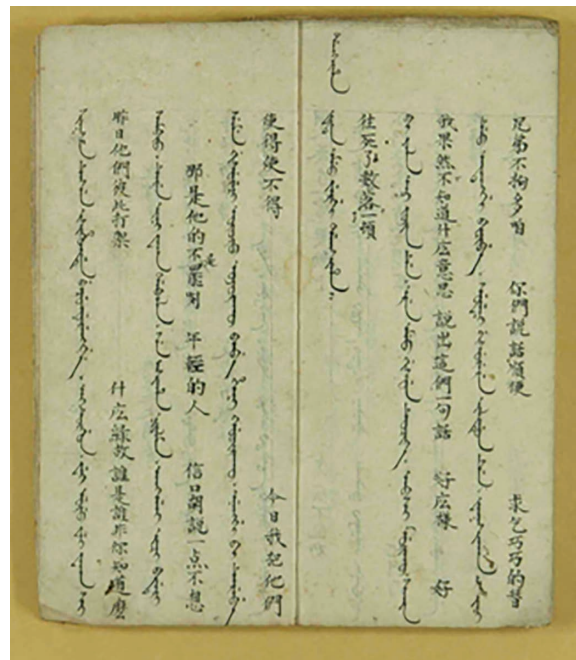


Figure 5 3b–4a, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

of the page indicates where the upper margin boundary is, and the text never creeps over this line. Six vertical lines were also drawn onto each page, and the text of the dialogues was written on top of these lines. These lines serve as the “spine” for the Manchu words and the center point of each Chinese character. Unlike Leping’s sometimes cramped handwriting, regular spaces have been left between the words. Given these differences, it seems less likely that this text was copied out based on an oral recitation, with the copyist having to quickly adapt to verbal instructions. Instead, No. 404 has the appearance of a text carefully copied from a written model.

In terms of the contents, however, No. 404 is exceedingly similar to the other manuscripts looked at here. Only four dialogues are wholly unique to No. 404. Eight are found only in No. 404 and *Muwa gisun*, six are only in No. 404 and Manchu 21, and thirty-two are found in both No. 404 and two or more other manuscripts.⁸⁴ Of the four unique dialogues, one is about being accepting of others (“There are still people like this, who have a mouth but no tongue” [Ma. *ere gese angga. de ilenggu akū niyalma geli bini*]), one discusses archery (“In the morning there is an official archery day” [Ma. *cimari geli alban gabtara inenggi*]), one bemoans how few people are meritorious (“Among people these days, there is not one who is fond of merit” [Ma. *te-i forgon niyalma. ya emke gungge gebu de amuran akū*]), and one is about good books (discussed below). None of

84. See Appendix A.

these texts would be out of place in a different manuscript, or even in a different printed book. The advice given in the text on good books, for example, is quite similar to that given in *Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe*. Though the words themselves are not the same, it is unlikely that the two Brothers that feature in these texts would disagree with each other:

No. 404 ⁸⁵	<i>Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe</i> ⁸⁶
<i>bithe tuki [sic]⁸⁷ seci. damu jingkini sain bithe be sonjofi tuwa. turgun andarama seci. beye mujilen de tusa nongibumbi. aika miosihūn dufe oyomburakū bithe be tuwara oci. tusa akū sere anggala. hono ušatabuhai koro bahambi kai..</i>	If you want to read books, only select and read genuine and good books. For what reason do I say this. If you are looking to benefit your body and mind, and you only read evil, lascivious, and trifling books, not only will you not benefit, but you will aggravate the wounds you cause! <i>bithe tuwaki seci. hafu buleku be tuwa. tacin fonjin nonggibumbi. julgei baita be. targacun obure oci. beye gūnin de tusangga. julen-i bithe serengge. gemu niyalmai balai banjibuha oron akū gisun. udu minggan minggan debtelin tuwaha seme. ai baita.</i> If you want to read books, look at the <i>Comprehensive Mirror</i>. [This] will add to your learning. As for the warnings left by ancient affairs, these will benefit your body and mind. As for novels, these are just nonsense that people carelessly create. Though you read thousands and thousands of fascicles, what is the use?

Contents aside, however, No. 404 is a different kind of manuscript from *Muwa gisun* and Manchu 21. Unlike the two previous manuscripts, which are both notebooks that students used as a means to show their teacher their writing, No. 404 represents a more complete and considerably more polished version of the dialogues. Mistakes, where they are noted and corrected, are amended carefully, with subtle additions. The neatness and uniformity of this manuscript suggests that, unlike the previous two manuscripts, No. 404 was not used by a student who was actively learning. Instead, if this manuscript was used in a classroom, this would seem to be the book that the teacher was dictating from.⁸⁸ No. 404 might even be a clean copy (Ma. *sarkiyambi*). Having neatly written the dialogues out, perhaps the intention was to turn this copy over to craftsmen, to have it carved into woodblocks and printed.⁸⁹ Either way, whoever wrote

85. 33b–34a, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

86. 3:13a–b, *Manju gisun-i oyonggo jorin-i bithe* | *Qingwen zhiyao* 清文指要, Moll 11, Jagiellonian University.

87. I am assuming this word is meant to be *tuwaki*.

88. This interpretation is also suggested in the blog post “Leping’s Dog?”

89. This process is hinted at by Meng Bao 孟保 (d. 1873), a Han bannerman who translated several books into Manchu. As he explains in his preface to *Translation of Admonitions on Six Subjects* (*Ubaliyambuha ninggun baitai targabun gisun bithe* | *Fanyī Liushi zhenyan* 繙譯六事箴言) (1851), a clean copy was no guarantee that the text itself would be error-free: “Having mailed a rough draft to the capital [Beijing] for it to be carved into woodblocks and printed [. . .], the next year [1849–1850] when I returned to the capital, I saw the printed proofs. Unexpectedly, because of the way clean copies of the text had been written out, there were many words in the print that had to be corrected” (Ma. *jise be gemun hecen de jasifi. folobufi šuwaselabufi. [. . .] sirame sohon koko aniya gemun hecen de marifi. da šuwaselaha debtelin be acabume tuuwaci. gūnihakū ishunde sarkiyame arafi. foloro de dasaha hergen umesi labdu ofi.*), xu:3a–4a, TMA 1685.2/4918, Harvard-Yenching Library.

this copy of the text did so without fearing that it was going to be judged by their teacher's brush.

Hs. or. 8448 ROA

The final manuscript also appears to have been done by someone who was not in a classroom. This manuscript, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, is the shortest manuscript looked at here. Held in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 8448 ROA has been fully digitized and made available online, but it is anonymous, undated, and without a title page.⁹⁰ It is also larger than the other three manuscripts, measuring 30 by 24.5 cm. If we assume that *Muwa gisun* and Manchu 21 were designed to be the perfect size to move around a classroom, circulating between student and teacher, this larger size might be indicative of a manuscript that stayed put. This was not a manuscript that was designed to be slipped up one's sleeve and moved.

This manuscript also seems to be more informal and likely more rushed. The beginning of the manuscript, as shown in Figure 6 below, is neat and orderly, with the Chinese written carefully alongside the Manchu. After the first third of the manuscript, however, the style of writing varies considerably. In some places it looks as if the brush was not adequately loaded with ink, while in other areas the writing is overly dark. The thickness of the strokes in later texts also often varies greatly from word to word. By the end of the manuscript, visible in Figure 7, the writing of both the Manchu and Chinese is decidedly sloppy. Overall, the impression is one of a writer who, though they began by writing the dialogues very carefully, was, by the end, just idly jotting them down.⁹¹

Hs. or. 8448 ROA is also quite a bit shorter than the other manuscripts looked at here. It only contains twenty-three dialogues, none of which are unique to Hs. or. 8448 ROA. In fact, as Appendix A shows, all the dialogues in Hs. or. 8448 ROA are contained in Manchu 21 and at least one other manuscript. The manuscript does, however, end only after the end of a completed dialogue—which ends with a final flourish, a *kai* (“!”)—indicating that this dialogue does indeed end here. The first seven dialogues of the manuscript are also marked with Suzhou numerals one through seven. Overall, there are no obvious signs that there are missing pages. Instead, it seems that whoever

90. It is available online here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3306132705&PHYSID=-PHYS_0001.

91. The slide into carelessness appears to have been quite gradual, beginning around about 5a. By 12a, however, the writing is decidedly sloppier. It is entirely possible that these later pages were written by a different person, but as some words do resemble the quality of writing seen earlier in the manuscript, I am more inclined to think that the writer was simply growing tired.

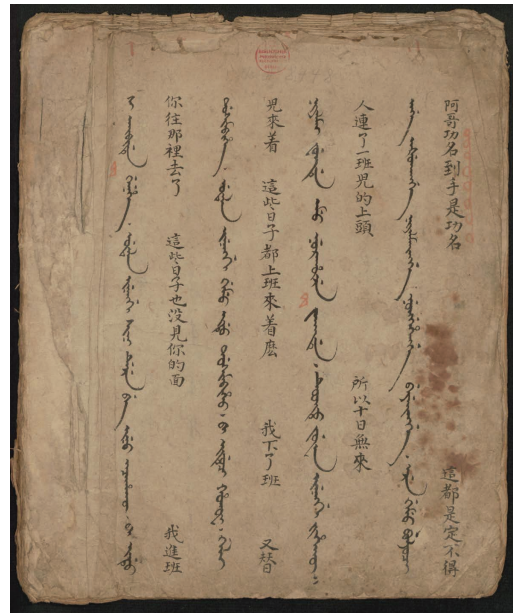


Figure 6 1a, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000031BE00000000>

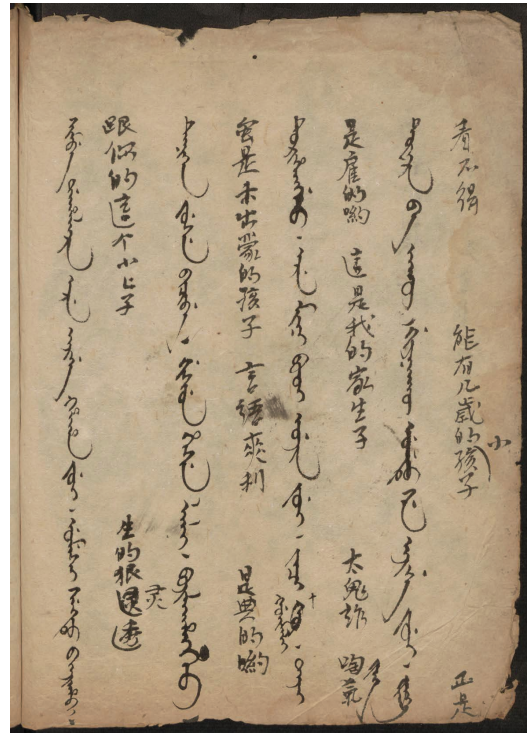


Figure 7 12a, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000031BE00000000>

wrote Hs. or. 8448 ROA was either only interested in these twenty-three dialogues, or their interest only lasted the length it took to copy down twenty-three dialogues.

Though there is no sign of a teacher having corrected Hs. or. 8448 ROA, the first two pages of the manuscript do contain several reader's marks. Though few, these nevertheless show the reader dotting, dating, and reading between both Chinese and Manchu, which were some of the most common ways that Qing readers engaged with Manchu books.⁹² The reader numbered the texts and left emphasis marks to highlight a particularly key phrase.⁹³ They also wrote "twenty-five" (Ma. *orin sunja*) in the upper margin, likely to record for themselves that they read these first two dialogues on the twenty-fifth day of an unstated month. They left red dots to indicate that the Chinese construction *gei* . . . *chile* 給 [. . .] 吃 ("gave . . . to eat") was the same as the Manchu word *ulebuhe* ("gave to eat," or "fed"), and red lines to mark that the Manchu word *dasame* ("again") was the same as *chongxin* 重新 ("again").⁹⁴ There is nothing to indicate, however, that this reader continued reading after dialogue seven. Perhaps they were put off by the rapidly decreasing quality of the writing in the manuscript, for after page five it is not uncommon to find words written so messily that they were crossed out and written again.⁹⁵

Though the manuscript is short, it does contain dialogues that are nevertheless representative of themes that appear in other books. As in *Manju gisun-i jy nan*, texts about coming and going seem to have been of particular interest to this reader. In Hs. or. 8448 ROA there are two, one that begins "Where have you gone?" (Ma. *si aibide genehe*.), and one that starts with "Where are you going?" (Ma. *absi genembi*). There are also two dialogues about telling others off—"I see that you suffer from a fondness for scheming" (Ma. *simbe tuwaci hebe de amuran gojime*), and "Do not yawn towards others" (Ma. *ume niyalmai baru habgiyara*)—in addition to the dialogue about jujubes. There is also one dialogue where one Brother offers to do a favour for another, though his generosity turns out to be quite finite:⁹⁶

sinde emu baita yaduki.

*si mini funde emu jasigan ararao. umai fulu gisun akū. bai sain be fonjire emu bithe.
minde ne je emu ekšere baita bifi. arara šolo akū. uthai baita bikini.*

92. For more on this, see Sarah Bramao-Ramos, "Manchu-Language Books in Qing China" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2023), chapter 6.

93. 1a, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

94. 2a, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

95. Most of these corrections have to do with Chinese characters, though it is worth noting that many of these seem to be corrections of very straightforward characters. Characters such as *lai* 來, *zui* 嘴, *hao* 好, and *ta* 他 have all been crossed out and rewritten, for example (5a, 6b, 8a, 10a, Hs. or. 8448). There are a few Manchu corrections too, all done in red. Here too, these corrections seem to have been made to correct handwriting. *Hobgiyara* was changed to *habgiyara*, and *yagiyān* was changed to *yacihiyara*. I take these corrections as further indication of the slipping standards of the writer.

96. 4a–4b, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

si emu jise jiseleft minde bu. bi kemuni sarkiyame araki..

I'd like to do something for you.

Will you write a letter for me? Nothing fancy, just a letter to simply ask if [they] are well. Right now I'm so busy with [other] matters that I don't have the time to write.

This is what you could do.

Write a rough draft and give it to me. I'll then go and make a clean copy of it.

In general, then, it seems that the reader of this manuscript gravitated towards everyday dialogues, not the more philosophical ones. The dialogues they chose to include either had clear takeaways or were light-hearted, possibly even amusing. Fittingly, Hs. or. 8448 ROA does not include any texts about the importance of neat handwriting.

In summary, unlike the other manuscripts looked at here, there is nothing about Hs. or. 8448 ROA to indicate that it was ever used in a classroom. It was not corrected by a separate hand, and little attention was paid to ensuring the manuscript was neat and legible. Unlike the other manuscripts, therefore, Hs. or. 8448 ROA is evidence not of pedagogy and classroom practices, but it does serve as further evidence of the importance of hand-copying and making one's own books in Manchu-language manuscript culture.

Similarities and Differences

Though this article has so far focused on identifying the fact that these manuscripts have dialogues in common, it is worth highlighting that the texts of these dialogues are often different. Take, for example, a text that explains how you can tell the weather based on what people in the marketplace are selling. In *Muwa gisun*, this text reads as follows:⁹⁷

[+fe] etuku uncara niyalma be tuwaci. erin-i šahūrun halhūn be uthai saci ombi. te bolori [+d]ubesilehe. ulhiyen-i beiguwen ume ge[+n]ere jakade. furdet[+he] etuku kubun ningge jursu ningge labdu. emursu ningge seri [...] jo[+d]on hiyaban etuku be fuhali saburakū oho.

When you see people selling [+old] clothes, you can tell if the season is cold or hot. Now autumn has ended. Don't worry go about it gradually getting colder, because there are lots of fur clothing, cotton pieces, and double-layered pieces. Single-layered pieces are few. Grass linen and hemp clothing have completely disappeared.

97. 16b (48), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library. This translation is modified slightly from that provided by the Manchu Studies Group, as they did not render this correction in either their transcription or translation.

Leping's teacher made a few corrections to this text, indicated in red (as in the manuscript) above. Some are straightforward and effective. For example, his teacher changed *-t-* to a *-d-* in *jodon* ("grass linen") to fix a spelling mistake. Others, however, are less clear. One correction that is more of a puzzle has to do with the word *gelere* ("will fear"). Leping's teacher has crossed out the *-l-* and changed it to an *-n-*, turning the word into *genere* ("will go"), yet this does not make any sense. Where should the reader not go, and how is this related to the seasons changing?

This dialogue appears in the other two manuscripts, too, but the sentence there is quite different. By looking at the dialogue in Manchu 21 and No. 404, it is possible to see what Leping's teacher was aiming for:

Manchu 21 ⁹⁸		No. 404 ⁹⁹	
<i>etuku uncara niyalma be tuwahade. erin-i halhūn šahūrun be saci ombi. te bolori dubesilefi. ulhiyen-i beikuwen ome genere jakade. furdehe etuku kubun ningge jai jursu ningge labdu. emursu seri. jodon hiyaban etuku be fuhali saburakū oho..</i>	When I see people selling clothes, I know if the season is hot or cold. Now, autumn having ended, it is gradually becoming colder, so [if] you go, there [will be] lots of fur clothing, cotton pieces, and double-layered pieces. The single-layered are few. Grass linen and hemp clothing have completely disappeared.	<i>etuku uncara niyalma be tuwahade. erin-i halhūn šahūrun be uthai saci ombi. te bolori dubesilehe. ulhiyen ulhiyen-i beikuwen ome genere jakade. furdehe etuku kubun labdu. emursu ningge seri. jodon hiyaban etuku [+be] fuhali saburakū..</i>	When I see people selling clothes, I know if the season is hot or cold. Now the autumn has ended. It is ever so gradually becoming colder, so [if] you go, there [will be] lots of fur clothing and cotton [pieces]. Single-layered pieces are few. Grass linen and hemp clothing can't be seen at all.

These manuscripts indicate where Leping's teacher went wrong: Leping's teacher was right to change *gelere* to *genere*, but they should have also changed *ume* ("do not") to *ome* ("is"). Both Manchu 21 and No. 404 use these words, effectively creating two phrases out of what is, in *Muwa gisun*, just one sentence. In these versions, the connection between the weather changing and the wares of the market—which the listener will see when they go to the market—is much clearer.

Hs. or. 8448 ROA, however, offers a slightly different version:¹⁰⁰

*etuku uncarangge be tuwahade. erin-i halhūn šahūrun be saci ombi. te bolori dubesilehe.
ulhiyen-i erin-i halhūn genere jakade. furdehe etuku kubun ningge jursu ningge labdu oho.
emursu ningge seri. jodon hiyaban-i etuku be fuhali saburakū oho..*

When I see the ones who are selling clothes, I know if the season is hot or cold.
Now autumn has ended. Because the season's heat is gradually leaving, there were lots

98. 2:6b, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

99. 2a–2b, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

100. 3a–3b, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

of fur clothing, cotton pieces, and double-layered pieces [in the market]. Single-layered pieces are few. Grass linen and hemp clothing have completely disappeared.

In this manuscript, it is not the speaker who is doing the going (Ma. *genere*) at all. Instead, it is the “season’s heat” (Ma. *erin-i halhūn*) that is leaving. Unlike in the other three manuscripts, where the autumn (Ma. *bolori*) is described in terms of increasing cold (Ma. *beikuwen*), Hs. or. 8448 ROA describes this season as one in which heat itself departs.

Looking at these four versions together, it is impossible to say conclusively which wording of the dialogues came first. The overall narrative of the text remains very similar across the four manuscripts, but the language that each uses to arrive at these similarities differs. *Muwa gisun* would seem to be following the wording of Manchu 21 and No. 404, though, due to some key spelling errors, the grammar does not quite work. But it also follows Manchu 21 and Hs. or. 8448 ROA in stating that grass linen and hemp clothing have disappeared (Ma. *saburakū oho*), while No. 404 simply states that these types of clothing cannot be seen (Ma. *saburakū*). No. 404, Hs. 8448 ROA, and *Muwa gisun*, meanwhile, all specify that single-layered *pieces* (Ma. *ningge*, also “the one which”) are few, while Manchu 21 omits this additional detail. Each manuscript also has a few specific details that the others lack: *Muwa gisun* has added that the clothing being sold is old (Ma. *fē*), Manchu 21 uses the perfective converb *-fi* form of *dubesilembi* (“having ended”), No. 404 repeats *ulhiyen* (“gradually”) to stress that the weather is slowly changing, and Hs. or. 8448 ROA uses the possessive suffix to indicate that the speaker sees, specifically, “the ones who are selling” (Ma. *uncarangge*) clothing. Given these differences, it is difficult to identify a clear chronology or relationship between the manuscripts.

In some texts, such differences are even more pronounced. Consider the following dialogue about an impressive man, as it appears in *Muwa gisun*:¹⁰¹

yarha uju muheren yasa tasha meiren lefu dara. yala arbun giru banjihangge. baturu kiyangkiyan. fulgiyere fithere uculere maksire de bahanarakūngge akū. gabtara niyamniyarangge sain. arara nirure be inu majige taciha. damu emu hacin jiha salirakū. yabun fusihūn..

A leopard’s head, round eyes, tiger’s shoulders, and bear’s paws. Truly, the form and appearance that he has [conveys] bravery and power. In fluting, plucking, singing, and dancing, there is nothing he cannot do. His stationary and mounted archery is good. He has even learned a bit of composition and painting. But he is not worth one copper coin, and his actions are humble.

101. 23a (77), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library.

Here, this worthy figure is described in terms of both his appearance and his impressive actions. He displays a wide range of skills, including ability in both types of archery, and an aptitude for music and painting. Despite all this, however, he is poor and humble. The traits Leping is being taught to emulate are clear: military prowess, literary skill, and humility.

tere encehengge niyalma. eiten de kemuni mangga. fulgiyere fithere uculere maksire be. hacin tome bahanarakūngge akū. arara nicure inu majige taciha. uttu bime mangga [sic] sencehe sain. karulame acaburengge eyere gese. damu emu hacin jiha salirakū. yabun fusihūn..

That is an accomplished person. He is an expert at everything. There is nothing that they cannot do when it comes to fluting, plucking, singing, and dancing. He has even learned a bit of composition and painting. Moreover, his mouth¹⁰² and jawline are good. [When] he responds and composes, [his answers] flow. But he is not worth one copper coin, and his actions are humble.

The last line, the detail about composition and painting, and the sentence about skills in “fluting, plucking, singing, and dancing” (Ma. *fulgiyere fithere uculere maksire*) are the same as in *Muwa gisun*. Moreover, there is enough shared wording to suggest that these two dialogues are related. However, the man being described is not at all the same. The man in No. 404 is to be admired for his literary skills, his noble bearing, and his humbleness, but he has no martial skills. While Leping’s teacher evidently decided to emphasize the skills expected of a classically impressive Manchu man to his young charges, No. 404 praises a learned gentleman of a very different sort.¹⁰³

In some dialogues, Leping’s teacher appears to have favoured a more streamlined approach, opting for simpler wording. A text about a servant boy, for instance, begins very simply in *Muwa gisun*:¹⁰⁴

ere we.

mini takūrara[+ara] juse.

turihenggeo bojilahenggeo.

ere [+mini] booi ujin jui. sektu banjihabi. damu taj taji tuwara ba akū.

juse tajirakūngge akū. ere juse uthai anomhon.

Who is this?

My serving boy.

102. The Manchu word written here is *mangga* (“hard”), however in this context I believe it should be *angga* (“mouth”).

103. It might be tempting to assume that this is because No. 404 was not intended to be read by those who had what we might think of as “Manchu” virtues in mind. However, the manuscript also contains a number of dialogues about equestrian skills and horseback riding. See Appendix A.

104. 21a (69), *Muwa gisun*, TMA 5806.09 0622, Harvard-Yenching Library.

Is he hired? Is he pawned?
 He is the son of [+my] family bondservant. He was born clever, but he is unbearably naughty.
 No kid is not naughty. This kid is quite tame.

The three other manuscripts have this text too, but in all three the first sentence is much longer:

Manchu 21 ¹⁰⁵	No. 404	Hs. or. 8448 ROA ¹⁰⁶
<i>simbe dahalara ere haba jui. umesi sektu banjihabi. teiken juse bime. gisun hese lali. bojilahanggeo. turihenggeo. ere mini ujin jui jaci koimali taji. tuwara ba akū [.] giyanakū udu se jing tailara ere[+in] kai..</i>	<i>simbe dahalara ere haba juse. umesi sure sektu banjihabi. teniken juse bime gisun gese la li. bojilahanggeo. turihenggeo. ere mini booi ujin jui. koimali daji. tuwara ba akū. giyanakū udu se. jing dajilara [sic] erin kini..</i>	<i>simbe dahalara ere ajige haba jui. umesi sektu banjihabi. teniken juse bicibe. gisun hese lali. bojilahanggeo turihenggeo. ere mini booi ujin jui. jaci [+goimali [sic]]. taji tuwara ba akū. giyanakū unde se ajige jui. jing tajirara erin kai.</i>
This boy who is following you seems very clever. Though he is young, his speech is quick. Is he pawned? Is he hired?	This boy who is following you seems very wise and clever. Though he is young, his speech seems quick. Is he pawned? Is he hired?	This little boy who is following you seems very clever. Although he is young, his speech is quick. Is he pawned? Is he hired?
This is the child of my family bondservant. He is very cunning and extremely naughty.	This is the child of my family bondservant. He is very cunning and extremely naughty.	This is the child of my family bondservant. He is very cunning and extremely naughty.
How old can he be—it is the time for him to be naughty!	How old can he be. It is the time for him to be naughty!	How old can he be—he is a little boy. It is the time for him to be naughty!

Unlike the simple “Who is this?” (Ma. *ere we*) in *Muwa gisun*, all three of these dialogues begin with the first speaker providing a longer commentary on the boy who is following their companion around. In all four, the boy is clever (Ma. *sektu*), though in No. 404 he is also *sure* (“wise”). In Manchu 21, No. 4040, and Hs. or. 8448 ROA, his naughtiness seems almost appropriate. Because he is young, the Brothers in these manuscripts all explain, it is the appropriate time (Ma. *erin*) for him to be naughty. In *Muwa gisun*, however, there is no suggestion that young children should be disobedient. Perhaps Leping's teacher, not wanting to have his students reading texts that encouraged bad behavior, thought that it would be best to quickly skip over this. Instead, they stressed that this boy is actually quite quiet (Ma. *anomhon*), presumably the kind of boy that Leping was being encouraged to be.

105. 2:14a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

106. 12a–b, Hs. or. 8448 ROA, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

There is in fact a dialogue in both Manchu 21 and No. 404 that does begin with the simple opening “Who is this?” (Ma. *ere we*) used in *Muwa gisun*. In both dialogues, the answer refers to an entirely different boy:

Manchu 21 ¹⁰⁷		No. 404 ¹⁰⁸	
<i>ere we.</i>	Who is this?	<i>ere we [.]</i>	Who is this?
<i>mini jalabi jui.</i>	My nephew.	<i>mini jalabi jui. yebken</i>	My nephew.
<i>yebken banjihabi. se adarama.</i>	He is handsome. How old	<i>banjihabi. se adarama.</i>	He is handsome. How old
<i>tofohon se. hejehebio [.]</i>	is he?	<i>tofohon se be bahambi.</i>	is he?
<i>kemuni feliyere unde.</i>	Fifteen.	<i>kemuni urun feliyere unde.</i>	He has reached the age
<i>beye mutuha giyan-i urun</i>	Is he engaged?	<i>beye mutuha.</i>	of fifteen. A wife and
<i>isibuci acambi. bayan</i>	Marriage still hasn't been	<i>giyan-i urun isibuci acambi.</i>	marriage haven't been
<i>yadahūn be ume bodoro.</i>	discussed.	<i>beye yadahūn be ume</i>	discussed.
<i>damu emu mergen sargan</i>	Since he is grown, it is right	<i>bodoro.</i>	[Since] he is grown, it is right
<i>[+ju] baici wajiba..</i>	that he be given a wife.	<i>damu emu sain sargan jui</i>	that he be given a wife.
	Don't consider whether she	<i>bahaci wajiba..</i>	Don't consider whether she
	is rich or poor. Just find a		is poor [or not]. Just find a
	skilled girl, that is all.		good girl, that is all.

This dialogue was not included in *Muwa gisun*. Perhaps it was not included in the dialogue book(s) available to Leping's teacher. Or, here again perhaps they did not think this to be an appropriate text for Leping and their other students. Leping was, after all, only ten; he still had five years before he was considered “grown” (Ma. *mutuha*) and had to start worrying about whether he was going to be betrothed to a girl who was “good” (Ma. *sain*) girl (as in No. 404), or whether his intended would be “skilled” (Ma. *mergen*).

As this section has outlined, there are clear differences between these different manuscripts, and these differences range from minor to substantial. Some discrepancies might be attributed to the slip of a brush or a mistake in penmanship, but the more substantial changes indicate either a different interpretation of a sentence or a different pedagogical aim. These variations strongly suggest that instead of there being one fixed set of dialogues that readers of Manchu drew from, there was a “multiplicity of legitimate meanings” in circulation around the same time.¹⁰⁹ As has been identified and discussed as a feature of manuscript cultures elsewhere, Manchu dialogue books were subject to a continuous process of alteration as they passed between teachers, students, and curious readers, resulting in manuscripts that differ quite markedly from each other, even though they contain phrases that, at first glance, seem similar.

107. 2:17a, Manchu 21, the Royal Danish Library.

108. 16a, No. 404, Nagasaki University Library.

109. Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 9.

Conclusion

Considering this set of manuscripts as a source for Manchu studies, what these four manuscripts show us is the fluid and multilingual world of Manchu manuscript culture. These manuscripts all contain dialogues that highlight some of the key values young learners of Manchu were expected to exhibit, just as printed dialogue books do. There is a strong chance that at least some of the dialogues in *Muwa gisun*, Manchu 21, No. 404, and Hs. or. 8448 ROA were inspired by the kinds of texts included in such printed books. As manuscript texts, however, these dialogues circulated, morphing and changing as they were copied, reused, and amended. Some of these changes were likely to suit the wants and needs of their readers, whether to highlight one value over another or leave out a sentence deemed to be unsuitable. Some, however, were brought about more by accident, occasionally by less-than-attentive students desperately trying to keep up with the oral instructions of their teachers. These manuscripts reflect the range of ways readers and users interacted with Manchu-language texts, from students perfecting their handwriting, the rushed reader who only has time to write down a few lines, the careful copyist ruling lines in preparation for a tidy appearance, and the teacher, first selecting texts that they think will educate or at least amuse their students, then sitting down to cover their students' work in red.

Appendix A

#	Content ¹¹⁰	Manuscript			
		<i>Muwa gisun</i>	Manchu 21	No. 404	Hs. or. 8448 ROA
<i>Greetings</i>					
1	What banner are you?	1			
<i>Coming and going</i>					
2	Have you come?	2			
3	Where are you going so early?	3			
4	Why are you still not going?	4			
5	You should go on foot.	18	1:10		
6	If you say that you are going, go.	23	1:15		
7	Why hasn't he come back?	36	1:31		
8	There needs to be order to who goes first.	40			
9	We need to meet the father of our friend when he returns.	41			
10	How are you? Why haven't you come by?	56	2:9 ¹¹¹		1
11	"Where are you going?" "The office."	72	2:19	14	10
<i>School and Learning</i>					
12	Teachers must create dialogues for their students.	5	1:1		
13	Who is older? Whose knowledge is better?	11	1:7		
14	Saying things is easy, but learning is hard.	15	1:20	24	
15	I've been studying, so why can't I speak?	28	1:19		
16	Study harder.	29	1:24		
17	Can you get all your studying done in one or two days?	32	1:27		
18	The furniture in our school is broken—let's hire a craftsman.	52	2:44	34	
19	Writing is important. Don't toss paper with writing on it away.	57	2:4		
20	Some people can talk and write at the same time. You are so slow!	81		31	
21	"I'd like to do something for you." "You can write a letter for me."		2:17	9	8
22	If you want to praise books, only select books that are genuine and good.			49	
<i>The Manchu language</i>					
23	Like Chinese, Manchu is deep.	16	1:22		
<i>Weather</i>					
24	It is definitely going to rain.	25	1:18		
25	The streets are still muddy.	30	1:25		
26	Why are you covered with mud?	31	1:26		
27	Today is sweltering.		2:2		
<i>Proper Behaviour</i>					
28	Being upright and strict is good, but you don't want to go too far.	53			

(Continued)

110. Since none of these dialogues has a title, finding a way to identify these texts is tricky. I have primarily used the very first sentence of each dialogue to indicate what it contains. In the case of dialogues that begin with a broad question or that change substantially in tone as the dialogue goes on, I have used a different sentence that is more representative of what I understand to be the main message of the dialogue as a whole.

111. The text of this dialogue is different from *Muwa gisun*, although they begin the same.

Leping's Lessons: Considering *Muwa Gisun*

(Continued)

#	Content ¹¹⁰	Manuscript			
		<i>Muwa gisun</i>	Manchu 21	No. 404	Hs. or. 8448 ROA
29	Do good things.	68		44	
30	Do you not think of rectifying your own personal actions?	76			
31	If you resist the cold, you will probably be defeated.	82 ¹¹²	2:27		18
32	As for being loyal and honest, though this is good, you go too far.	82 ¹¹³	2:45	26	
33	Though you are young, you don't have any courage.		2:34	35	
34	As you are the eldest in this household, it is proper that you lead others in [doing] good.		2:46	38	
35	There are still people like this, who have a mouth but no tongue.			47	
<i>Speaking</i>					
36	Why are you butting in?	6	1:2		
37	Don't boast about what you have; you might not have it for long.	58; 82 ¹¹⁴	2:10		2
38	Everywhere you go, you gossip and meddle.	82 ¹¹⁵	1:40		
39	When I have questions, they just come out.		1:36	6	
40	You speak carelessly.		1:37		
41	As soon as he spoke, you behaved badly.		1:38		
42	It has been said that your brother has no sense of judgement.		1:41		
43	How was the matter settled?		1:42		
44	Tell me what is bothering you.		2:6		
45	Don't complain to me.		2:7		
46	I see that you suffer from a fondness for scheming.		2:29	20	20
<i>Promises</i>					
47	You said you would give it to me.	7	1:3		
48	Are you finally going to give me the thing you promised me?	50	2:42	37	
49	We pooled money to go on a trip, but you weaselled out of it.	79	2:5		
<i>What not to do</i>					
50	Don't laugh.	8	1:4		
51	Don't believe what he says.	9	1:5		
52	Don't provoke mean people.	37			
53	Do not yawn toward others.	70	2:24	13	15
<i>Truth</i>					
54	Be truthful.	14			
55	Don't fool yourself.	20	1:12		
56	I didn't say anything — why did you say that I did?	22	1:14		
57	"Before you are assigned, ask for leave." "Are you being honest?"		2:18	10	9

(Continued)

112. *Muwa gisun* only contains two sentences from this dialogue.

113. *Muwa gisun* only contains one sentence from this dialogue.

114. Two incomplete phrases from this dialogue are also contained in dialogue 82.

115. *Muwa gisun* only contains one phrase from this dialogue.

(Continued)

#	Content ¹¹⁰	Manuscript			
		<i>Muwa gisun</i>	Manchu 21	No. 404	Hs. or. 8448 ROA
<i>Working Hard</i>					
58	Let's do things in shifts.	21	1:13		
59	You can't achieve fame just by wishing for it.	45			
60	You can't learn through reflection alone.	46			
61	As for merit, is it all about fate?	78	2:40	45	
62	It is a common saying: "From success comes reason; from failure comes echoes."	82 ¹¹⁶	2:43	33	
<i>Fighting</i>					
63	Why do you always quarrel?	26	1:17		
64	Why don't you intervene when people fight?	47	2:11	7	
65	Why do you speak carefully to him? Beat him up.	54			
66	Yesterday they were quarrelling — what was the reason?		2:41	5	
<i>Buildings</i>					
67	I don't like being in enclosed places.	12	1:8		
<i>Marriage</i>					
68	They are getting married.	17	1:23		
69	Has your brother gotten married?	38			
70	"Who is this?" "My nephew." "Is he betrothed yet?"		2:39	25	
<i>Eating, drinking, and smoking</i>					
71	Who told you to eat?	10	1:6	22	
72	Light the charcoal. I want to smoke a pipe of tobacco.	24	1:16		
73	Don't offer me food; I've already eaten.	27	1:21		
74	"Why don't you buy these jujubes?" "Only children like jujubes."	62	2:22	11	13
75	Two people came from the village, and we fed them.	71	2:12		3
76	You get food from others.		1:32		
77	Before you set out the tea, rinse out the pot.		2:3		
<i>Marketplace</i>					
78	A lot of stuff has come from Mukden this year.	44		40	
79	Based on the clothes people are selling, you can tell what season it is.	48	2:15	3	6
<i>Horses</i>					
80	Your white horse is beautiful.	33	1:28		
81	Why is the horse neighing?	80	1:35		
82	Have you not watered your horse yet?		1:33		
83	About seven horses came through.		1:34		
84	This horse used to be docile; now, because it has sores, it isn't.		2:20	15	11
85	That horse is so fast.		2:21	16	12
<i>Military and hunting</i>					
86	My mounted archery was terrible today.	34	1:29		
87	Did you hear? They might be selecting officers.	42			
88	The weapons examination is so exciting!	55		48	

(Continued)

116. *Muwa gisun* only contains one sentence from this dialogue.

Leping's Lessons: Considering *Muwa Gisun*

(Continued)

#	Content ¹¹⁰	Manuscript			
		<i>Muwa gisun</i>	Manchu 21	No. 404	Hs. or. 8448 ROA
89	They are going to inspect weapons again this year.	73	2:25	17	16
90	We are all people who go out into the wild. ¹¹⁷	74	2:26	18	17
91	You are a common soldier.	82 ¹¹⁸	2:47	27	
92	Tomorrow there is an official day for archery.			41	
<i>Things</i>					
93	These are the heavenly stems and earthly branches.	19	1:11		
94	The five elements, five constants, five organs, and five flavours are as follows.	43	2:38	43	
95	Put your coat, belt, and boots away carefully.	60	2:13	1	4
96	"What do you think of this painting?" "It's a print!"	61	2:37	36	
97	Go buy flour to fix the windows.	63	1:39		
98	Your pen cap fell on the floor. Pick it up.	67	2:1		
99	I think this silk is better than that.	75		23	
100	Our flag has come down!	82 ¹¹⁹	2:8		
101	Speaking of mugs . . .		2:35	32	
<i>Justice</i>					
102	It's not fair. Let's draw lots.	35	1:30		
<i>Gifting</i>					
103	We need a present for our friend.	39			
104	What a great bag! You should give it to me.	65		46	
<i>Temples</i>					
105	I do not wish to go burn incense.	49	2:16	8	7
<i>Other people</i>					
106	They are fine young men.	13	1:9		
107	He is very learned and accomplished.	51			
108	Have you seen him? He's better than before.	59		39	
109	He goes along with everything.	64	2:36	30	
110	Who is that quarrelling by the gate?	66	2:14	2	5
111	Your servant seems very clever.	69	2:32	28	23
112	There is nothing he cannot do.	77		42	
113	This person's shame is that they spent a whole day dancing!	82 ¹²⁰	2:30	21	21
114	In the past, there were two people.		2:23	12	14
115	Is the relationship between you two good?		2:28	19	19
116	Which of these two was chosen at the evaluation yesterday?		2:31	29	22
117	Where are your family members?		2:33	4	
118	There is not one person today who is fond of accomplishments and merit.			50	

117. The text of this dialogue is substantially different across the different manuscripts.

118. *Muwa gisun* only contains one sentence from this dialogue.

119. *Muwa gisun* only contains one sentence from this dialogue.

120. *Muwa gisun* only contains one sentence from this dialogue.

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