

Some Lexical Differences between the First and the Second Half of the Manchu Version of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*¹

HAYATA Suzushi

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show that in *Ilan gurun -i bithe* ‘book of the three kingdoms’ (a Manchu translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), with a preface dated the year *Shunzhi* 7th (1650), the first and the second half of the work have different lexical characteristics, and that this difference may have been caused by the fact that the translators utilized during their translation of the first half the unfinished translation by *Dahai Baksi*, who had already died by the *Shunzhi* period.

1. Introduction

Ilan gurun -i bithe (IGB)² ‘book of the three kingdoms’ with a preface of the year *Shunzhi* 7th (1650) is a Manchu version of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. According to the preface, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* was translated into Manchu by the order of the Qing prince regent *Dorgon* (1612-1650, the regency 1643-1650). In the distribution of words and phrases used in the translation, however, we find some peculiarities. In this paper we will examine them and suggest why they were brought about.

2. Distribution

When we examine the distributions of words and phrases in IGB, consisting of twenty four volumes, what is noticed is that some pairs of synonyms show a skewed distribution: one of paired synonyms is found equally in every volume, whereas the other of the pair occurs exclusively in the first twelve volumes. In the following sections we will look at frequency distributions of such examples.

2.1 *heb(e)de-* ‘to consult’

In IGB, there are two verbs for ‘to consult’, *heb(e)de-* and *heb(e)še-*. They share the noun *hebe* ‘meeting’ as

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² The electronic text of IGB was created by Teruhiro Hayata and the present author.

their derivational base. The first Manchu-Chinese dictionary *Daicing gurun -i yooni bithe* 大清全書 (prefaced in 1683) defines *heb(e)de-* and *heb(e)še-* as follows: ³

- (1) *hebedembi:* 商議
‘to consult’
- hebešembi:* 相商議
‘to consult each other’

According to these descriptions, the verb *hebede-* means ‘to consult’, and the verb *hebeše-* means ‘to consult with each other’. However, although the morpheme *-še-* is a reciprocal verbal suffix, the two verbs appear to be used interchangeably. In the following examples, the original Chinese 商議 ‘to consult’ is translated into Manchu as *hebede-* in (2) and *hebeše-* in (3).

- (2) *uthai* *geren hafasa be* *isabu-fi* **hebede-re de.** ⁴
immediately many officials ACC assemble-CONV consult-PART LOC⁵
‘Where (the lord) called many officials and held a meeting immediately,’
急聚衆官商議。 ⁶
‘(The lord) called many officials and held a meeting immediately,’
(IGB 2-94 a)

- (3) *uthai* *geren hafasa be* *isabu-fi* **hebeše-re de.**
immediately many officials ACC assemble-CONV consult-PART LOC
‘Where (the lord) called many officials and held a meeting immediately,’
急聚衆官商議。
‘(The lord) called many officials and held a meeting immediately,’
(IGB 12-84 b)

The following table shows the distribution of these synonymous verbs *heb(e)de-* and *heb(e)še-* in IGB.

Table 1: Distribution of words for ‘to consult’

Vol.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	total
<i>heb(e)de-</i>	11	15	12	15	16	3	10	3	17	2	1	3							1						109
<i>heb(e)še-</i>	29	8	21	9	6	13	22	22	5	4	29	27	39	36	29	19	12	10	26	19	15	25	18	18	461

³ There is also a verb *hebedše-* (← *hebe* + *-de-* + *-še-*) in some dictionaries. However, there are no examples of *hebedše-* in IGB.

⁴ In transcribing the Manchu examples, we use the Möllendorff romanization system.

⁵ ACC: accusative CONV: converb LOC: locative PART: participle

⁶ For the original Chinese text of IGB see Kishida (1997: 36-47).

It is clear from Table 1 that *heb(e)de-* occurs exclusively in the first twelve volumes, except for one occurrence in the eighteenth volume, while *heb(e)še-* is distributed almost evenly over all of the twenty four volumes.

2.2 *medege/medehe* ‘information’

Medege/medehe and *mejige* are doublets, and loan words from Mongolian. *Medege/medehe* was not borrowed from spoken Mongolian into spoken language of classic Manchu but borrowed from written Mongolian into written language of classic Manchu.⁷ In older writing system, so-called Manchu script without dots and circles (*tongki fuka akū hergen*), both *mejige* ‘information’ and *majige* ‘little’ are spelled the same way, and thus *medege/medehe* was often used instead of *mejige*. In new writing system, so-called Manchu script with dots and circles (*tongki fuka sindaha hergen*), the ambiguity of vowels in *mejige* and *majige* was cleared up by a diacritical dot added to the right-hand side of the vowel *e*.⁸

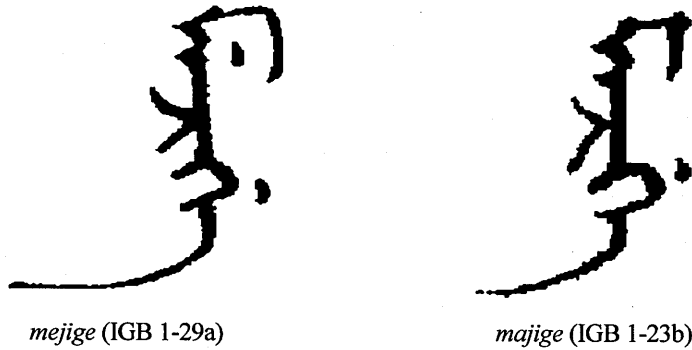


Fig. 1: *mejige* and *majige* in Manchu script with dots and circles

The following table shows the distribution of these synonymous nouns *medege/medehe* and *mejige* for ‘information’ in IGB.

Table 2: Distribution of words for ‘information’

Vol.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	total	
<i>medege/medehe</i>	4	2			7							1														14
<i>mejige</i>	7	4	5	12	9	20	16	10	11	17	5	7	12	6	11	9	13	12	19	19	14	15	9	9		271

As can be seen from Table 2, *medege/medehe* occurs exclusively in the first twelve volumes, while *mejige* is distributed almost evenly over all of the twenty four volumes.

⁷ In modern spoken Mongolian, *medege* is pronounced like *medee*. The form *mede* ‘information’ is already attested in Manchu passage dated the year *Tiancong* 2 (1628) in *Man wen yuan dang* ‘Original Manchu Archives’.

⁸ The official revision into Manchu script with dots and circles was in 1632.

2.3 *šun dekdere (ergi)* ‘east’ and *šun tuhere (ergi)* ‘west’

It is likely that Manchu had no single words for cardinal directions originally. Although mostly ‘east’ is translated into *dergi* and ‘west’ is translated into *wargi* in translated documents, *dergi* is a word meaning ‘above’, ‘up’, ‘upstream’ etc., and *wargi* is a word meaning ‘under’, ‘downstream’ etc. Therefore cardinal directions indicated by *dergi* and *wargi* could have depended on location where speaker is or where speaker is from.

Šun dekdere (ergi) ‘east’, lit. ‘(the direction from which) the sun rises’ and *šun tuhere (ergi)* ‘west’, lit. ‘(the direction towards which) the sun sets’ are frequently (ca. 40 times) used for cardinal directions in *Man wen yuan dang* ‘Original Manchu Archives’ (records from 1607 to 1636, its corpus size is about the same as IGB). As for a novel, in *Gin ping mei bihe* (a Manchu translation of *The Golden Lotus* prefaced in 1708, its corpus size is also about the same as IGB)⁹, *šun dekdere (ergi)* for ‘east’ occurs three times and *šun tuhere (ergi)* for ‘west’ occurs two times.

The following table shows the distribution of the two phrases and the two words used for ‘east’ and ‘west’ in IGB.

Table 3: Distribution of words for original Chinese *dong* ‘east’ and *xi* ‘west’

Vol.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	total
<i>šun dekdere</i>	1				3	2					1														7
<i>dergi</i>	14	20	32	21	5	19	13	40	57	47	24	24	16	12	29	27	41	18	12	36	22	16	16	11	572
<i>šun tuhere</i>		1	1		3																				5
<i>wargi</i>	8	7	13	16		5	14	18	6	10	4	17	17	8	9	7	5	18	20	18	14	6	13	14	267

It can be seen from Table 3 that *šun dekdere (ergi)* and *šun tuhere (ergi)* occur exclusively in the first twelve volumes, while *dergi* for ‘east’ and *wargi* for ‘west’ are distributed almost evenly over all of the twenty four volumes.

3. *Dahai*’s translation of *san guwe sy*

The findings mentioned above remind us a passage on July 14, 1632 (*Tiancong* 6) in *Man wen yuan dang* ‘Original Manchu Archives’, describing the event that *Dahai Baksi* died of illness and left his translation of *san guwe sy* (*san guo zhi* 三國志) unfinished. Some scholars argue that *Dahai*’s translation of *san guwe sy* is not a translation of *Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志 but a translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 三國演義. Kishida (1997: 26-27) says as follows (translation by the present author):

It is thought that in the early years of the Qing Dynasty, the first emperor (*Taizu*) Nurhachi, the second emperor (*Taizong*) *Hong Taiji* and others were fond of reading *Romance of the three kingdoms*. Taking it into consideration, it is appropriate to consider, probably, *Dahai*’s translation of *san guwe sy* to be a translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

⁹ The electronic text of *Gin ping mei bihe* was created by Teruhiro Hayata.

If this is the case, the limited distribution of one of the pairs of doublets and synonyms, which we have pointed out in this paper, may thus be considered the result of the fact that the translators of IGB in the *Shunzhi* period utilized *Dahai*'s unfinished translation of the same work during their translation of the first twelve volumes. Our findings are also an indirect evidence supporting the argument of Kishida (1997) and others.

4. Conclusion and further studies

The first and the second half of IGB have different lexical characteristics, and this difference may have been caused by the fact that the translators in the *Shunzhi* period utilized the older unfinished translation by *Dahai*, who had already died by the *Shunzhi* period. In the present paper, we dealt with some pairs of doublets and synonyms. Other lexical and non-lexical features that differ between the first and the second half should be investigated in further studies.

Manchu and Chinese texts

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『満文三国志』の前半部と後半部における 若干の語彙的相違について

早田清冷

キーワード： 満洲語 古典満洲語 三国志演義 正史三国志 ダハイ・バクシ

要旨

本稿では、順治7(1650)年序の『満文三国志』に於いて、一部の表現に用いられる用語が前半と後半で異なる傾向で現れる事を示す。本資料に於いて medege/medehe「情報」、東を表す šun dekdere (ergi)「太陽の昇る(方向)」, 西を表す šun tuhere (ergi)「太陽の沈む(方向)」は前半部分にしか見られず, heb(e)de-「相談する」もほぼ前半部分にしか見られないが, さきの語と同じ意味で用いられている dergi「東(文字通りには, かみ手)」, wargi「西(文字通りには, しも手)」, mejige「情報」, heb(e)še-「相談する」は前半, 後半を通して用いられている。

満文原檔のダハイ・バクシ病没の記事(1632年7月)に, ダハイが三国志を満文訳していたが途中で終わった事が述べられているが, ダハイが訳していた三国志が正史ではなく演義であるという主張が一部の研究者によって為されている。従って, 順治序文の満文三国志の翻訳に際して既に未完成の満洲語訳三国志演義が存在し, 順治期の前半部分の翻訳の際に参考にされた可能性がある。

(はやた・すずし 日本学術振興会/京都大学)