

# A Manchu Word-List From 1682

Giovanni Stary

## Preface

Kao Shih-chih (1645-1793) often lingered with the [K'ang-hsi] emperor till late at night, helping him in calligraphy and poetry. He accompanied him on many tours . . . <sup>1</sup>

In 1682, Kao Shih-chih accompanied the emperor during his second tour of Manchuria, and compiled a diary about it, known by the title of *Hu-ts'ung tung-hsün jih-lu*--"Daily notes on the journey to the East following [the emperor]." <sup>2</sup> The work consists of two chapters and an appendix containing thirty Manchu words phonetically transcribed with ideograms, and with definitions in Chinese. Most are words for objects used in daily life, and names of typical Manchu foods. In some cases Kao Shih-chih quotes the Mongolian name instead of the Manchu one, thus showing that we are concerned with a living language, recorded on the spot, as the author himself specifies in a brief introduction:

Accompanying [the emperor] I undertook a journey to the East, also stopping on the banks of the Sung-hua-chiang [Sungari]. For more than ten days I observed the local population, and [their] objects of daily use, food, drink and various ways of life. I examined and noted down [their] various names, so as to describe them accurately in an appendix to my "Daily notes . . ." <sup>3</sup>

The words, whose recording with ideograms sometimes led to considerable distortion of their pronunciations, do not always correspond to the "classical" (written) Manchu terms. However, neither can it be excluded that in some cases these variations may be due to dialectal influences coming from various sources; in fact, it should not be for-

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<sup>1</sup> A.W. Hummel (ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, I-II (Washington 1943-1944), 413.

<sup>2</sup> Latest reprint in *Liao-hai ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1 (Shenyang, 1985), 215-234.

<sup>3</sup> *Liao-hai ts'ung-shu*, 232.

gotten that in that very period in Ula city a big shipyard was being built to turn out ships to stop the Russian advance along the rivers of Northern Manchuria. As a result, Ula became a center in which the worst kinds of Manchu dialect were spoken. It should also be borne in mind that Kao Shih-chih recorded the words as he heard them, without knowing the Manchu language. This can be seen for example in the word "feshen," recorded twice (but with different ideograms).

The scientific value of this collection is perhaps to be found first and foremost in the explanations which the author adds to every single word--for example the use of a cake during Shaman ceremonies (item 26) or the strange "Manchu water" (item 25). These bear witness to the habits and customs of a cultural world that was still alive in the second half of the seventeenth century, and was very different from the Chinese one. Perhaps it was this very fact which roused Kao Shih-chih's curiosity.

## The 1682 Manchu Word List

### 1. a-la kuei-tzu 亞拉桂紫

This means "wardrobe of birch bark." Many beautiful birch trees grow on the mountains and the local population use them to make wardrobes to store their clothes in. [The wardrobes] are of wood and bark, [and so] have rich linear-form ornaments; no paint is used.

In written Manchu *ala(n) guise* (< Chinese *kuei-tzû*). *ala* is considered the archaic form of *alan*.

### 2. t'an-t'a-ha hua-shang 攤他哈花上

This means "hempen paper." In Ula there are no paper [factories], and when the first snow announces the arrival of autumn in the eighth month, the grass used as a lining for the cast-off clothes is removed and placed in water, to soften it. [Then] it is dried and hung on threaded reed mats. In this way sheets are obtained [rather like paper], which, after firming up become like leather. They are sewn together and applied to the [frame of the] windows.

The written Manchu reconstruction is *tantaha hoošan*, lit. "beaten paper" (< *tantambi*); however, based on the description of its making, it is more likely to be an etymology linked to the Chinese *t'an* ("to spread," "to spread out"), the ideogram of which is used to tran-

scribe the first syllable. The grass used is called *sišari*-"hemp gathered after a frost from which grass-linen can be woven" (Norman, p. 246).

### 3. **ni-ma-ha su-ko o-t'u-k'u** 你嗎哈蘇姑厄圖枯

This means "clothes of fish skin." A fish called "ta-pu-hai" lives along the sea shore and although its flesh is not tasty its skin is tough. It is several *ch'ih*<sup>4</sup> long. Every spring it swims up the high water of the Wu-lung-chiang and reaches the mountain streams. The population then obstructs the [stream] Wu in order to catch it. Its flesh is cut and dried out, and clothes are made of its skin. It is used for the padded kind of clothes used both in winter and in summer. In the light of the sun it shines with five colors like a multicolored blanket.

In written Manchu *nimaha sukū etuku*: Cf. O. Lattimore's "The Gold Tribe, 'Fishskin Tatars' of the Lower Sungari."<sup>5</sup> For the fish "ta-pu-hai" Kao Shih-chih records the Mongolian name *dabha*, in Manchu *dafaha* (chum salmon).

### 4. **sa-la** 薩喇

This means "wooden shoes." They are more than one *ch'ih* long and are worn in winter in place of shoes, on steep and dangerous mountains when one goes hunting. They permit rapid movement.

This is linked to the Mongolian word *sal*, in Manchu *ada* ("plank, wooden board"). It is more likely to be a reference to the Mongolian *cana*, in Manchu *suntaha*: "Gleitschuh zum Gehen über Schnee und wasserdurchweichetes Land" (Hauer, p. 832)--a kind of snowshoe.

### 5. **mo-mu-lo** 摩母羅

This means "wooden bowl" and resembles a small bowl or cup. It is decorated with rough carvings. It is used to offer food or prepare hors d'oeuvres. It is neither simple nor artistic and is used by everyone.

In written Manchu *moo moro*: "wooden bowl."

<sup>4</sup> One *ch'ih* = 32 cm.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, 40 (1933).



## 6. **ch'ai-fei** 差非

This means "wooden spoon." It is 4 *ts'un*<sup>6</sup> long and pointed. The top part is richly [ornamented], the bottom part is smooth. It is made of wood and bent over the fire. It is carried attached to the belt in place of chopsticks.

In written Manchu *saiḥi*: "spoon."

## 7. **fu-ssu-hei** 服寺黑

This means "wooden pot." It is shaped like a bowl and has a diameter of more than two *ch'ih*. The base is smaller than the top part. On the edges there are holes to let the steam through. It is filled with millet and placed in the steam. At the start of spring it is not suitable for cooking purposes.

In written Manchu *feshen*: "A tiered bamboo or wooden rack used for steaming various foods" (Norman, p. 86-87), more precisely "in den Kochtopf gesetzte hölzerne Kochkiste für die Zubereitung von Gebäcken und breiartigen Speisen" (Hauer, p. 283).

## 8. **meng-ku-ch'o** 猛姑戳

This means "clay bottle." It is six-seven *ts'un* tall; the central part is shaped like a jug, the opening is as small as a coin, the neck is thin; it has curved supports, is made of clay and has a wooden sound. It is tall and gracious. In that zone it is frequently used to keep millet wine.

In written Manchu *monggocon*: "A bottle with a narrow mouth and long neck" (Norman, p. 200).

## 9. **wei-hu** 威護

This means "boat." To build it one uses a hollowed-out trunk which is pointed in front and behind. The large ones can take five-six people, the small ones being for two-three people; every man has two oars; with one oar in his left hand and one oar in his right hand they move well through the water.

In written Manchu *weiḥu*: "boat made from a single tree, a hollowed-out canoe" (Norman, p. 306); see German "Einbaumkahn."

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<sup>6</sup> One *ts'un* = 3.2 cm.

10. **mo hu-lang** 摩呼郎

This means "chimney." On first sight it seems to be an empty trunk cut and planted in the ground like a pole. It is placed outside [of the house next to] the oven bed and is connected to the chimney of the stove. On the outside it is curved in the shape of a basket. In this way it avoids rain and snow getting into it. On the outside it is very large.

In written Manchu *moo hūlan*: literally "chimney-tree," it is the typical kind of chimney still used today in Manchu villages.

11. **hu-chu** 護主

This means "wooden trough." A trunk is cut in the same way as if one intended building a boat. It is able to hold more than one *tan*<sup>7</sup> of water. It is placed next to the stove and is also used like a basin.

In written Manchu *hujū*: "trough."

12. **fa-la** 法喇

This means "sledge, cart without wheels." For transport it is provided with a superstructure, but this must not be overloaded. Otherwise one runs the risk of breaking the ice. It is very useful in the snow.

In written Manchu *fara*: "an ox-drawn sleigh used for carrying hay or wood" (Norman, p. 83).

13. **ch'a-pu hsia-la** 搽不蝦喇

This means "branched candlestick." For the supports, three hooks are used, correctly cut and folded and a handle is attached to them. With a drill [a hole is made to] insert the candle.

The correct written Manchu form for branched candlestick is *hiyabulakū*: see *hiyabun* (candle), *lakiyakū* (a rod); the recorded form reconstructible with *cabhiyala* could suggest the influence of the Chinese *ch'a*, for example in *ch'a-chu*: "to insert a candle [on the branched candlestick]."

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<sup>7</sup> One *tan* = 12 English pecks.

14. **so-erh-ho te** 梭兒合得

This means "Korean table." The surface is smooth, the edges are trimmed. It can be as tall as seven *ts'un* and wider than two *ch'ih*. It is possible to close it by folding it, and it can be extended or reduced.

In written Manchu *solho dere*: "Korean table."

15. **shih-hang** 石杭

This means "wooden barrel." A large tree is cut and hollowed out. Wine can be left to ferment in it and salted leeks can be kept there.

In written Manchu *sihan*: "barrel, cask."

16. **hu-niu** 呼扭

This means "willow bucket." It is made by interlacing branches from the willow tree, and is used to draw water or as a measure for millet.

In written Manchu *hunio*: "bucket."

17. **hui-t'a ku-erh-ha fei** 纓他姑兒哈非

This means "*ula* grass." Since the roads of the frontier territories are covered with stones, or are rather marshy, it is not possible to travel along them wearing leather shoes. Therefore they use shoes wrapped in *ula* grass. *Ula* grass is tough but is not suitable for directly wrapping feet in. The pools are full of it, it is soft and as fine as silk. It is gathered up and beaten. Its fruit does not contain seeds. The name [of the grass] is [also] used [to indicate the fruit].

In written Manchu *hūwaitame gūlha foyo*: "Ula-Gras, das sind Schilfblätter, die man um die Stiefel bindet" (Hauer, p. 393)--"als Schuh-und Stiefeleinlage und als Matratzenfüllung verwandt" (*ibid.*, p. 306). According to some Chinese sources the word *ula* ("river") derives from *gūlha* (>*hula* > *ula*), that is "leather shoes."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Jin Qizong, *Manzu de lishi yu shenghuo* (Harbin, 1981), 85. German translation by G. Stary, in *Geschichte und Leben der Mandschu* (Hamburg, 1984), 82.

18. **t'a-ssu-ha o-lo-huo** 他四哈阿落火

It means "black henbane." The stem is small like a hen leaf, the flowers are pointed and like cotton. Its fruit is not edible. He who eats it goes mad.

In written Manchu *tasha orho*, literally "tiger grass" (*Arisaema thunbergii*) (Norman, p. 273). The identification with "nettle" (Hauer, 892: "Brennessel") is probably wrong.

19. **ha-shih-ma** 哈食馬

This means "river crayfish." This is an aquatic animal which has chelae like a crab and a type of armor like a [common] shrimp. It is a little larger than one *ts'un* and breeds in mountain streams. The local population call it "Precious jewel of celestial kitchen." The old animals are sacrificed on the tombs."

In written Manchu *hasima*: "Manchurian crayfish" (Norman, p. 126).

20. **ying-o** 英莪

This means "duckweed." It has fruit that hangs from it like mulberries. It is a strong plant and prefers the swamps. It is also called *ying-ko*, but the name of this plant is often distorted. The exact name is *ying-o*.

In written Manchu *inggari orho*: "duckweed." The word *ying-ko* probably indicated the Manchu *ingga*, an antiquated form of *inggari* ("the down or fuzz from the bloom of the willow tree," Norman, 149); see also *ingga moo*: "a type of camphor tree."

21. **yi-erh-ha mu-k'o** 一兒哈木克

This means "flower water." It owes its name to its color: [certain] leaves are placed on the floor and mixed with [specific] seeds. The surface is bright, light red in color and resembles a carpet of fallen leaves. The smell of this carpet is pleasant. [The water that comes out of it] is used in many sauces and people go to great pains [to find it].

In written Manchu *ilha muke*: "flower water."



22.    **wu-li** 烏立

This means "cherry." The trunk is elastic, the leaves are small. Its fruit is like pearls, is purple in color, has an acidulous taste and smells of wood. The fruit is picked because it is thirst-quenching. According to an old local custom in the past [the fruit] was filtered and the juice was used to clean precious stones.

In written Manchu *uli*: "fruit of the flowering cherry, *prunus sinensis*" (Norman, p. 295).

23.    **chiao wu-lang** 交烏郎

This means "deer's tail." This is a mushroom which grows under large trees and in rainy areas, under the brushwood. When it is young it is covered in fine hairs, resembles the *Chih* plant and has a pleasant, oily taste. The local population does not like it very much and says that it is deadly for animals.

In written Manchu *gio ura*: "*Agaricus querus* Eichschwann" (Hauer, p. 357).

24.    **ch'ia-erh-mi** 伽爾密

This means "water-pepper sprouts." It grows in the area of Ula. The sprouts are picked when they are still young, similar to flowers. They are covered and kept in a damp place. The cut plants are dried on the edges of the oven-bed. Thanks to the natural heat and steam the sprouts grow and produce threads. They are tender-red in color and have a pungent taste.

In written Manchu *jabnin*: "knotweed" (Norman, p. 155), "Wasserpfeffer" (Hauer, p. 520).

25.    **chu-shen mu-k'o** 諸申木克

This means "Manchu water." In ancient times the Manchus were called *Chu-shen* [jušen]. "Water" is called *mu-k'o* [muke]. One takes a leek, puts it in a wooden casket, adds salt and fills it with water. When the liquid has become a little acidulous, it is removed and used in place of acidulous spices.



In written Manchu *jušen muke*: "Jushen [~"Jurchen," i.e., "Manchu"] Water."

**26. fei-shih-hei o-feng 飛石黑阿峰**

This indicates a cake made with a sticky type of corn which is very important for religious rites because it is used for the sacrifices. It is yellow, and is shaped like a precious stone. It has an oily taste like grease and is very aromatic. All the families sacrifice it with aromatic wine to enable them to find a wife or husband. This happens while the drum is being played. The relatives cannot take part; men and women take part seated in a circle. At the end they mix amongst themselves, sit down and divide the cake up with the other sacrificial food. It is important for the neighbors to take part also.

In written Manchu *feshen efēn*: the cake (*efēn*) cooked in the *feshen* (see entry number 7). "Kochkistenkuchen" (Hauer, p. 288), "steamed bread, *mantou*" (Norman, p. 87).

**27. chan-ch'ung nu-li 詹冲努力**

This is a rice or millet wine. The grains are boiled until a liquid mass is obtained which is similar to yeast dough. The fermentation begins immediately afterwards. [The liquid] is left to sit for a day and can already be drunk on the same evening. It has a sweet taste and even if a lot of it is drunk it does not cause intoxication.

In written Manchu *jancuhūn mure*: "sweet wine," also used during the Imperial Shaman sacrifices in the K'un-ning-kung Palace in Peking.

**28. hsi-fu po-le 希福百勒**

This means "millet." Rice does not grow in the fields of the frontier territories and so millet (which grows spontaneously) is cultivated instead. The grains withstand the snow; they are dried out on the fire and then ground. After removing the bran [the grains] are round like corn and white like pearls.

In written Manchu *hife bele*: "millet."

**29.    ma-lung ni-meng 媽龍膩盟**

This means "[black] sesame oil." The seeds are violet like those of the [common] sesame, but the leaves are not violet. [The plant] grows in the fields like corn. The fruit is picked piece by piece. After being dried out they are boiled, placed in bamboo containers, which in turn are placed in wooden containers to be pressed. From one *tan* of seeds one *sheng*<sup>9</sup> of oil is obtained.

In written Manchu *malanggū nimenggi*: "sesame oil."

**30.    hsia-p'eng 蝦棚**

This means "oil lamp." The remnants of old oil are used and are mixed with a mixture of corn and a type of raspberry.<sup>10</sup> It is shaped like a candle but is ten times longer. Its light is bright and shining. It gives off a smoke similar to clouds. It is used instead of candles.

In written Manchu *hiyabun*: "lantern."

**References**

- Hauer:       E. Hauer, *Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache*, Tokyo-Hamburg-Wiesbaden, Lieferung I-III, 1952-1955.
- Norman:      J. Norman, *A Concise Manchu-English Lexicon*, Seattle-London, 1978.

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<sup>9</sup> One *sheng* = 1/10 of a peck.

<sup>10</sup> *Erigeron kamtschaticum*.