Manchu, Mongolian, & Chinese Books

We have recently acquired a collection of Chinese, Manchu, and Mongolian books, printed in the Qing period and the early days of the Republic. The books were assembled by a French businessman, who travelled frequently to Shanghai, from the 1930s to the 1960s, where he had a store selling French mattresses and beds. After the closure of his store, he came back to France with his mistress and their substantial collection of books.

1. LI, Youtang. Mongolian: *Altan ulus-un eki adag-un kereg-I temtegsen sastir* [Record of Events of Jin History from the Beginning to the End]. Trans. by Temgetu. Five vols. 8vo, orig. brown wrappers printed with titles on upper covers, orig. stitching. “Neyislel” [Beijing]: Monggol Bizig-un Qoriy-a [Ch.: Meng wen shu she; Mongol Book Company], “dumdadu arad ulus-un ulayan baras on du” [“Printed(?) in the year of the Red Tiger of the Republic of China”], 1926. $4750.00

First edition in Mongolian of the *Jin shi ji shi ben mo* of Youtang Li (1837-1905), which was first published in 1893 and went through a number of later editions in the original Chinese. The 52-juan-long *Jinshi jishi benmo*, a historical work on the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234), “is divided into two parts, the first consisting of the text based on the official history *Jinshi*, while the second part are critical comments (*Kaoyi*) on sources whose statements differ from the ‘official’ version. This part is of great help for the study of the history of the Jin, even if Li Youtang exaggerated somewhat in the abundance of sources he used and in the selection of untrustworthy material.”–ChinaKnowledge.de (online resource).

The text is written in the thematic style of *jishi benmo* (“historical events in their entirety”), in which events are reported in an annalistic style but with integral themes included throughout.

The publisher and translator Temgetu (1888-1939), an enterprising Mongol from the Qaracin Right Banner, developed a Mongolian movable type font in 1919 after study in Japan. He received a patent for this technology from the Chinese government in 1923.
publishing house was established in the same year as the first modern Mongolian publishing enterprise.

Temgetu’s publishing house printed several historical works on the so-called “conquest dynasties” of the Khitan (Liao), Mongols (Yuan), and Jurchen (Jin). All have clear relevance for the history of the Mongol people, which is perhaps why they were of interest to Mongolian readers.

Temgetu, whose name is a Manchu word meaning “seal” or “mark,” had a big birthmark above his right eyebrow. For the Manchu, birthmarks were seen as auspicious, a mark of someone destined to do great things.

Fine set, preserved in a hantao. The charming publisher’s device is printed on the lower wrapper of each volume.

Dieter Kuhn, The Age of Confucian Rule. The Song Transformation of China (Harvard University Press), p. 314—the Chinese edition is cited as one of the primary sources.

2. (MANCHU SHAMANISM). Two albums containing 134 photographs (each 160 x 110 mm.) of the Manchurian manuscript 2774 held by the Toyobunka Kenkyusho, Tokyo Daigaku. Two vols. 8vo (228 x 152 mm), orig. cloth. N.p.: n.d. but early 20th century. $1500.00

The text of this important illustrated manuscript — “The Complete Description and Illustration of Sacrifices” — was supposedly written in 1771 by the shaman Cangcing and contains prayers and sacrifices of the Susu Gioro clan. The shamanic prayer songs are in Manchu, and the explanations and instructions for offerings are in Chinese.

In fine condition.

Alessandra Pozzi, Manchu-Shamanica illustrata: Die mandschurische Handschrift 2774 der Toyobunka Kenkyusho, Tokyo Daigaku (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992)—the first introduction of this manuscript to the scholarly world.

“An Indispensable Source of Late-Imperial History”—Struve


The Veritable Records are the primary sources for the study of the Qing dynasty (see Struve, cited below, who discusses the importance of the archives on pp. 365-66). Compiled by Qing court historians, these daily state chronicles were never intended to be published. Our illustrated edition was prepared from a facsimile (Shenyang: 1930) of the 1779-81 auxiliary manuscript of the Manzhou shi lu held at Chongmo Ge at the imperial palace in Mukden (today’s Shenyang), the Qing’s secondary capital. It is an illustrated official history, originally completed in 1635, of the Manchu state under the rule of Nurhaci (1559-1626), whose descendants completed the conquest of China and established the Qing dynasty in 1644. Our edition is a photo reproduction of the above-mentioned 1930 edition and was printed in 1937 by the Manchukuo government.

The typographical layout of this work is unusual: the text in three languages appears on each page in compartments instead of in parallel columns.

Very fine and fresh set, preserved in the original publisher’s hantao, with original printed
Lynn A. Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict*, pp. 368-69—“Though a relatively late product, the *Manzhou shilu* is thought to be a quite faithful reproduction of precious earlier materials.”

4. **QAYISAN (or KHAISAN).** *Meng Han he bi wu fang yuan yin*; Mongolian: *Monggol Kitad bicig-i yer gabsurysan tabun jug-un aquu ayelgu bicig; [Mongolian Han Bilingual Original Sounds of the Five Regions]*. Port. of Qayisan [or Khaisan or Haishan] inserted. Much printing in red, including large publisher’s seal on verso of title. 10, 14, 181, 5 folding leaves. 8vo, orig. wrappers, remains of orig. printed label on cover, orig. stitching. Beijing: Beijing wai guan heng sheng hao, 1917. $5000.00

First edition of the second-earliest Chinese-Mongolian dictionary; it is rare. This work is based on the *Wufang Yuanyin [The Original Sounds of the Five Regions [or] Proto-sounds of Speech in All Regions]*, a popular rhyming dictionary compiled in the middle of the 17th century by Tengfeng Fan (1601-64).

Fan’s dictionary was adapted by Khaisan (ca. 1862-1917), to suit the needs of Mongolian learners of Mandarin Chinese. Khaisan, one of the leading figures of the Outer Mongolian revolution of 1911 for Mongolian independence from China, was a member of the Kharchin Right Banner of the Zost League. He had received an excellent education and knew with fluency Mongolian, Manchu, Chinese, and (later) Russian.

In this dictionary, Khaisan used traditional Mongolian scripts to transcribe the Mandarin pronunciation.

Fine copy, preserved in a hantao.


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**A Prominent Example of the Plurilingual Philology Practiced at the Qianlong Court**


[with]:

**Qinding Jinshi yujie [Imperially Authorized Explanations of Terms in the History of the Jin].** Printed throughout in Manchu & Chinese. 12 *juan* in three vols. 8vo, orig. wrappers, stitched as issued. [China]: Jiangsu Shuju, 1878.

[with]:

**Qinding Yuanshi yujie [Imperially Authorized Explanations of Terms in the History of the Yuan].** Printed throughout in Manchu & Chinese. 24 *juan* in six vols. 8vo, orig. wrappers, stitched as issued. [China]: Jiangsu Shuju, 1878. $3250.00

These three works form a set collectively referred to as *Qinding Liao, Jin, Yuan san shi guoyu jie [Imperially Authorized Explanations of Terms in the National Language in the Three Histories of the Liao, Jin, and Yuan]* (although this title does not appear in the books themselves). They list the non-Chinese names of people, places, titles, etc., in the dynastic
histories of the Khitan Liao, Jurchen Jin, and Mongol Yuan — three empires that ruled parts or all of China and Inner Asia from the early tenth century CE (Liao) to the late fourteenth century (Yuan).

The histories, compiled in the fourteenth century, contain words from the languages of these peoples transcribed into Chinese characters. In the 18th century, the Qianlong emperor, who initiated several large-scale editorial projects on the history of the Manchu people and their Inner Asian predecessor states, found fault with these transcriptions. When read in Mandarin Chinese of the period, the transcriptions did often not accord with the corresponding words in Mongolian, Manchu (which stood in for Jurchen), etc., of the 18th century. The emperor thus ordered the transcriptions revised and recorded in Chinese characters and in the Manchu script.

These revised transcriptions are collected here. From the point of view of modern linguistics, Qianlong’s premise was faulty, since both the sounds of the Chinese language and of the languages that the transcriptions in the histories sought to represent had changed in the meantime (or disappeared altogether, such as the Khitan language). Our set is thus primarily interesting as a prominent example of the plurilingual philology that was practiced at the Qianlong court.

The books were commissioned in 1782, finished in draft in early in 1786 (Qianlong 50, 12th lunar month, hence not 1785), and collated for inclusion in the manuscript transcript of the imperial library — the Complete Books of the Four Repositories [Siku quanshu] — in early 1789 (Qianlong 54, 2nd month). They were printed (as opposed to written up in manuscript) for the first time in 1824 in 46 juan in 16 volumes. We assume this edition was printed at the palace in Beijing, but we have not seen it and this is conjecture.

Our reprint of 1878 was published by the Jiangsu Book Bureau, which had been set up in that province after the Qing government regained control of the lower Yangzi region after the Taiping rebellion.

Fine set, preserved in two hantao.

* Yong & Peng, Chinese Lexicography. A History from 1046 BC to AD 1911, pp. 382-83. Our description is entirely dependent on the report supplied by Prof. Marten Soderblom Saarela of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. His report is available for inspection.


First editions and very rare; not in WorldCat. These two works form a trilingual (Mongol, Manchu, Chinese) lithographed set in four volumes published in 1909. The books were produced for use by the Commission of Historiography (Shilu Guan), set up in 1909 for the compilation of the Veritable Records (Shilu) of the Guangxu emperor (1875-1908).

Veritable Records, a kind of court chronicle reproducing many high-level administrative documents such as certain edicts, were produced for all Qing emperors (except the last one, the Xuantong emperor, Puyi) in Chinese, Manchu, and Mongolian versions. Our volumes were for use by the Commission’s Mongolian office.

In this period, the Chinese text of the Veritable Records was produced first. The Manchu and Mongolian versions were translations. The texts in this set were intended as aids in this process. The layout of the books — where the Mongolian text, as far as we can tell, always follows the Manchu — suggests, perhaps, that the Mongolian version of the Veritable Records
was translated from the Manchu and not the Chinese, which would accord with what we know about the official translation practice current at the time.

These rare books give a glimpse into the workings of the multilingual imperial bureaucracy at a time when the forms of writing remained as they had been since the early years of the Qing empire, while the technology with which those writings were reproduced had already moved away from xylography and into lithography.

Very fine set, preserved in a hantao.

► Our description is entirely dependent on the report supplied by Prof. Marten Soderblom Saarela of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. His report is available for inspection.

The Official Language Reader of the Jirim League


$7500.00

First edition of this trilingual guide to the Manchurian, Mongolian, and Chinese languages; it is one of the earliest textbooks on the Mongolian language. This “reader” introduces many new words translated into Manchu and Mongolian (e.g., “telephone” and “telegraph”). This work was sponsored by Xiliang (M: Siliyang, 1853-1917), born into the Mongol Bordered Blue Banner. He was the enlightened and energetic Governor General of the Three Northeastern Provinces and one of the two most important frontier military governors to actively participate in Inner Mongolian land reform.


One of the regions Xiliang administered was the Jirim League (now Tongliao), a non-Han borderland region, located in the easternmost part of Mongolia. It was surrounded by a great number of Mongols to the west, Manchus to the east, and Chinese to its southeast. The Jirim League of Mongols was very much situated at an intersection of different cultures and languages. From the beginning of the 17th century, the Qing emperors adopted Manchu and Mongolian as the official languages of the Jirim League.

Xiliang discovered that the regional literacy rate in any language amongst the male population was only one or two percent. The Qing dynasty had always promoted linguistic pluralism, and as a result, Xiliang established a Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese trilingual educational system in order to rebuild Qing authority in the Jirim League by improving the spoken and written Mongolian and Manchu language skills of Chinese officials, in order to prevent language gaps from obstructing administrative affairs.

There was another important reason for this literacy drive in the Jirim League: with the projected forthcoming institution of a constitutional monarchy in 1917, the Qing dynasty needed a literate population — those unable to read Chinese were forbidden to vote — if the nation was to strengthen, become fully integrated, and be able to institute reforms.

Consequently, a trilingual reader for the Jirim Mongols was necessary, and the present work became the official language reader upon its publication in 1909. It was based on two earlier Chinese textbooks and translated into Manchu and Mongolian by Rongde, the Honorary Principal of the Fengtian Mongolian Language School. “Rongde completed the translation of the first four volumes by 1907. Xiliang thought that Rongde’s translation would ‘not only [help students] learn by analogy, but also avoid being unable to attend to
everything at once.’ Xiliang therefore distributed the translated volumes in the Jirim League and instructed Rongde to complete the translation of the other volumes. The Bureau of Mongolian Affairs fully funded the translation and publication of the trilingual textbook. At least six other translators in the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs assisted Rongde, all of whom were Mongolian and Manchu bannermen. At least eight colleagues helped copy the trilingual textbook in a standard script…

“Between 1909 and 1910, Rongde translated Volumes Five to Eight of the Chinese language reader, which became Volumes Five to Ten of the trilingual textbook. Under Xiliang’s instruction, the trilingual textbook became the official language reader in schools in the Jirim League. According to records kept by the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs, between 1909 and 1911, 60,000 individual copies of The Manchu-Mongolian Chinese Trilingual Textbook were produced. Individual copies totaling 45,520 were distributed to the Jirim League and a number of Manchu-Mongolian language schools in Manchuria, such as Rongde’s Fengtian Mongolian Language School.” – He Jiani, op. cit, pp. 92-93.

The textbook also briefly introduces astronomy, geography, zoology, botany, mining, chemistry, law, politics, economy, etc., and many Western concepts. Many new words are introduced into Manchu and Mongolian in this book.

Fine set, preserved in two hantao.