Literate in What Language? The Qing Empire's Trilingual Policy towards the Jirim League (1901–1911)

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This paper discusses how the Qing government revised its multilingual policy towards the Jirim League and what *guo* 國/*gurun* (nation, state) meant when referring to the Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese languages. I argue that the Qing Empire established a Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese trilingual educational system in order to improve literacy in the Jirim League rather than transforming it into a monolingual Chinese one. Under the revised trilingual policy, the importance of Manchu and Mongolian was manifested in their supportive role of promoting Chinese learning and improving popular literacy. In the revised trilingual system, the *guo* in *guowen* 國文 (national language, Chinese) represented a nascent Chinese nation, but the *gurun* in *gurun-i gisun* (*guoyu* 國語, the dynastic language, Manchu) referred to the empire founded by the Manchus and was characterized by linguistic pluralism.

识文断字，识何文，断何字？清帝国对哲里木盟的三文教育政策，1901-1911

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摘要

本文探讨了清政府如何针对哲里木盟修订其多语文政策，以及“国”在指称满文，蒙文和汉文时的不同含义。本文认为清政府之所以建立起一个满蒙汉三语文的教育体系，并非是为了将哲里木盟改造成一个以汉语文为单一语文的地区，而是为了提高哲里木盟的识字率。在修改后的三语文政策下，满文和蒙文的重要性得以新的方式显现——它们在提倡汉语文学习、提高普通民众的识字率中发挥着支持性作用。改革后的三语文系统中，“国文”的“国”（指汉文）代表了一种新兴的民族国家意识；而“国语”（*gurun-i gisun*）的“国”（*gurun*）则指满人建立起的多语文帝国。

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摘要

本文探討了清政府如何針對哲裏木盟修訂其多語文政策，以及“國”在指稱滿文，蒙文和漢文時的不同含義。本文認為清政府之所以建立起一個滿蒙漢三語文的教育體系，並非是為了將哲裏木盟改造成一個以漢語文為單一語文的地區，而是為了提高哲裏木盟的識字率。在修改後的三語文政策下，滿文和蒙文的重要性得以新的方式顯現——它們在提倡漢語文學習、提高普通民眾的識字率中發揮著支持性作用。改革後的三語文系統中，“國文”的“國”（指漢文）代表了一種新興的民族國家意識；而“國語”（*gurun-i gisun*）的“國”（*gurun*）則指滿人建立起的多語文帝國。

Introduction

From the 1930s to the 2000s, many scholars, such as Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, Ni Haishu 倪海曙, John DeFrancis, Elizabeth Kaske, and Federico Masini, have discussed the idea of national language in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century China, and how it influenced philology, literature, journalism, and education.¹ While academics have often taken for granted that the late Qing Empire promoted Chinese, few works have discussed how the Qing Empire implemented language policies in the polyglot borderlands inhabited primarily by non-Han Chinese people. Similar to the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian Empires, multilingualism was the basis of the Qing's language policy. The Qing rulers encouraged divergent peoples speaking and reading a variety of languages, such as Manchu, Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan, and Uighur, to maintain their distinctive linguistic features. This multilingual policy created a large number of non-Chinese speakers and documents during the Qing dynasty. Therefore, we may question whether the dissemination of Chinese in the late Qing period caused the decline of other languages, whether Qing multilingualism collapsed or was transformed into other forms, and whether the borderlands had similar experiences to the provinces within China proper.

This paper focuses on one region in these non-Han borderlands, the Jirim League

1. Ni Haishu, *Qingmo Hanyu pinyin yundong biannianshi* 清末汉语拼音运动编年史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1959); Li Jinxi, *Guoyu yundong shigang* 國語運動史綱 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934); John DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950); Elizabeth Kaske, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895-1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Federico Masini, *The Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon and Its Evolution toward a National Language: The Period from 1840 to 1898* (Berkeley: Project on Linguistic Analysis, University of California, 1993), 1-295.

(Zhelimu meng 哲里木盟, now Tongliao 通遼). The Jirim League was located in the easternmost part of Mongolia and bordered Shengjing 盛京, Jilin 吉林, and Heilongjiang 黑龍江 to the east. To the southeast, the league bordered the Willow Palisade (Liutiaobian 柳條邊). Surrounded by a great number of Mongols to the west, Manchus to the east, and Chinese to its southeast, the Jirim league was situated at an intersection of different cultures and languages.

The Jirim Mongols were the first of the Mongol groups to come into contact with the Manchus and contributed to the early Qing campaigns in Mongolia and China.² After they joined the Manchus, this Manchu-Mongol alliance defeated Ligdan Khan in 1634. This victory eliminated the Chahar Mongols' threat to the Jirim Mongols. Meanwhile, the Manchus, who had made a great contribution to this victory, consolidated their reign over the Jirim Mongols. In 1636, the newly founded Manchu Qing dynasty established the Jirim League, consisting of ten banners. The six banners of the Khorchin Tribe (Ke'erqin bu 科爾沁部) of the Jirim League were under the jurisdiction of the general ruling Shengjing; the Gorlos Front Banner (Guo'erluosi qian qi 郭爾羅斯前旗) under the jurisdiction of that in Jilin; the Gorlos Rear Banner (Guo'erluosi hou qi 郭爾羅斯後旗), the Jalaid Banner (Zhalaite qi 扎賚特旗), and the Dörbed Banner (Du'erbote qi 杜爾伯特旗) under the jurisdiction of the general ruling Heilongjiang.

From the early seventeenth century, the Qing emperors adopted Manchu and Mongolian as the two official languages in the Jirim League to maintain the special Manchu-Mongol relationship and the Mongols' relatively independent power within the Qing Empire. According to *The Collected Statutes of the Great Qing* (*Qinding Da Qing huidian shili* 欽定大清會典事例), the Qing emperors prohibited the Jirim Mongols from using Chinese in order to restrict the influence of Chinese culture.³ Meanwhile, the Qing encouraged the Jirim Mongols to learn Tibetan so as to demonstrate the Qing's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism and to maintain their reign over the Jirim Mongols in the spiritual realm.

Until the early twentieth century, Manchu and Mongolian remained the two official languages of the League. Most Jirim Mongols read neither Mongolian nor Chinese as stated in the *Report of the Investigation on the Ten Mongolian Banners of the Jirim League* (*Zhelimu meng shiqi diaocha baogaoshu* 哲里木盟十旗調查報告書) by the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs of the Three Eastern Provinces (Dongsansheng Mengwuju 東三省蒙務局) between 1910 and 1911. Instead, they spoke Mongolian in everyday life and learned Tibetan in lama temples.⁴

In 1907, the Qing government transformed the Manchurian military divisions –

2. Owen Lattimore, *The Mongols in Manchuria* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935), 193.

3. Kungang 崑岡 et al., *Qinding Da Qing huidian shili* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1976), ch. 993, Lifanyuan 理藩院, Jinling 禁令, Neimenggu buluo jinling 內蒙古部落禁令, 56a-b.

4. Dongsansheng Mengwuju, *Zhelimu meng shiqi diaocha baogaoshu* (abbreviated *DCBGS*; Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2014).

Shengjing, Jilin, and Heilongjiang – into a provincial system consisting of Fengtian 奉天, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces.⁵ Fengtian, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provincial governors replaced the generals governing Shengjing, Jilin, and Heilongjiang and became heads of provincial governments. All three provinces, which were usually called the Three Eastern Provinces (Dongsansheng 東三省), were under the jurisdiction of Governor General of the Three Eastern Provinces. From then onwards, “civil government is responsible for managing administrative and judicial affairs [in the Jirim League], while *jasaghs* are in charge of [Mongolian] banner affairs and training soldiers to guard the borderlands.”⁶

In 1909, Xiliang 錫良 (1853–1917), Governor General of the Three Eastern Provinces, issued an official letter to the Jirim League to encourage education and local industries.⁷ Scholars have traditionally considered this policy, which is in general defined as “national language education” (*guoyu jiaoyu* 國語教育), the start of the Qing’s efforts to disseminate Chinese as a national language among the Jirim Mongols.⁸ This perspective, however, oversimplifies the Qing dynasty’s language policy towards the Jirim League in the context of constitutional reform. This paper will discuss how the Qing government revised its multilingual policy towards the Jirim League. Based on this, I will also discuss the various meanings of *guo* 國/*gurun* (nation, state) when referring to the Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese languages.

I will argue that the Qing Empire established a Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese trilingual educational system in order to improve literacy in the Jirim League rather than transforming it into a monolingual Chinese one. Under the revised trilingual policy, the importance of Manchu and Mongolian was manifested in their supportive role of promoting Chinese learning and improving popular literacy. In the revised trilingual system, while the *guo* in *guowen* 國文 (national language, Chinese) represented a nascent Chinese nation, the *gurun* in *gurun-i gisun* (*guoyu* 國語, the dynastic language, Manchu) referred to the empire founded by the Manchus and characterized by linguistic pluralism.

I will first introduce the translation and publication of a trilingual Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese textbook that was disseminated in the Jirim League in the context

5. Zhao Yuntian 赵云田, “Wanqing dongbei junzheng guanli jigou de yanbian” 晚清东北军政管理机构的演变, *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中国边疆史地研究 1992.4: 13-20; Dan Shao, *Remote Homeland, Recovered Borderland: Manchus, Manchoukuo, and Manchuria, 1907-1985* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011), 8-19.

6. Xu Shichang 徐世昌, “Dongsansheng zongdudeng zou diaocha Dongsansheng ge Mengqi qingxing chouni biantong banfa zhe” 東三省總督等奏調查東三省各蒙旗情形籌擬變通辦法摺 (1909), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-1067.

7. Xiliang, “Zha Zhelimumeng shiqi xingxue quanye wen” 札哲里木盟十旗興學勸業文 (1909), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-18189.

8. Yu Fengchun 于逢春 and Liu Min 刘民, “Wanqing zhengfu dui Mengguzu de guoyu jiaoyu zhengce” 晚清政府对蒙古族的国语教育政策, *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 2008.2: 67-77; Cai Fenglin 蔡凤林, “Qingmo Mengguzu jiaoyu” 清末蒙古族教育, *Minzu jiaoyu yanjiu* 民族教育研究 1992.3: 82-85; Yu Fengchun, *Zhongguo guomin guojia gouzhu yu guomin tonghe zhi lichen – Yi ershi shiji shangbanye dongbei bianjiang minzu guomin jiaoyu weizhu* 中国国民国家构筑与国民同和之历程——以20世纪上半叶东北边疆民族国民教育为主 (Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006).

of constitutional reform. I will then discuss the practical importance of Mongolian as the Jirim Mongols' native language and that of Manchu as an intermediate language between Mongolian and Chinese for helping Mongol students learn Chinese. After this, I will examine how the Qing dynasty implemented the trilingual policy towards local officials in order to train qualified candidates who could handle borderland and diplomatic affairs when the influence of Russia and Japan grew in Manchuria. Finally, I will discuss the relationship between *guowen* and *gurun-i gisun* in the trilingual educational system and the various meanings of *guo* and *gurun* when referring to the Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese languages.

The Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese Trilingual Textbook:

From the Fengtian Mongolian Language School to the Jirim League

During the New Policies (1901-1911), the Qing dynasty promulgated two *Regulations of Schools* in 1902 and 1904.⁹ One of the expected achievements of the junior elementary school was to “create an increasing number of literate citizens.”¹⁰ In the junior elementary school curriculum, the Chinese language (*Zhongguo wenzi* 中國文字) was taught for four hours per week. The aim was to let students “know the most-often used characters in everyday life and understand simple and easy readings.”¹¹ Meanwhile, the 1904 *Regulations for Schools* emphasized the Confucian Classics in order to preserve the “national essence” (*guocui* 國粹). It required students to spend a substantial part of their time reading Classics.¹²

In September 1906, the Qing dynasty issued an edict to institute a constitutional monarchy.¹³ Convening provincial assemblies and implementing local self-government were two important parts of constitutional reform, which were officially promulgated in July 1908.¹⁴ The *Principles for the Constitution* (1908) declared that “people who are illiterate do not have the right to vote.”¹⁵ According to the “List of Annual Tasks” at-

9. Zhang Baixi 張百熙, “Jincheng xuetao zhangcheng zhe” 進呈學堂章程摺 (1902), in *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao* 中國近代教育史資料, ed. Shu Xincheng 舒新城 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1981), 194-97; Zhang Baixi, Rongqing 榮慶, and Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, “Xuewu gangyao” 學務綱要 (1903), in *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao*, 197-217.

10. “Zouding chudeng xiaoxuetang zhangcheng” 奏定初等小學堂章程 (1903), in *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao*, 411.

11. Ibid., 415, 417-20.

12. Ibid., 197-217.

13. “Xuanbu yubei lixian xianxing liding guanzhi yu” 宣布預備立憲先行釐定官制諭 (1906), in *Qingmo choubei lixian dang'an shiliao* 清末籌備立憲檔案史料, ed. Gugong bowuyuan Ming-Qing dang'anbu 故宮博物院明清檔案部 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 43-44.

14. “Xianzhengbianchaguan Zizhengyuan huizou xianfadagang ji yiyuanfa xuanjufa yaoling ji zhunian choubei shiyi zhe fu qingdan er” 憲政編查館資政院會奏憲法大綱及議院法選舉法要領及逐年籌備事宜摺附清單二 (1908), in *Qingmo choubei lixian dang'an shiliao*, 54-61.

15. Ibid., 60.

tached to the *Principles*, the Ministry of Education aimed at increasing the literacy rate in China to 1% by 1914, to 2% by 1915, and to 5% by 1916.¹⁶ Achieving literacy in Chinese became an urgent need under the Qing Empire's tight schedule for constitutional preparation.

Whilst the *Principles for the Constitution* and the "List of Annual Tasks" set a specific goal to improve literacy, these documents did not provide a clear definition of literacy. Modern studies on literacy, however, emphasize the diversity of literacy skills. They distinguish between full literacy, functional literacy, and maintenance literacy, as shown in the work of Evelyn Rawski, Alexander Woodside, Benjamin Elman, and Elizabeth Kaske.¹⁷ Late Qing officials, however, generally argued that popular literacy in China was extremely low. Rather than providing an accurate estimate of the literacy rate and discussing which category of literacy such an estimate fell, the Qing government was preoccupied with an idea that poor literacy impeded China's self-strengthening and reforms and that improving literacy was the only way to nurture modern citizens under a new constitutional regime.

In this context, in order to integrate the Jirim Mongols into the process of constitutional reform, Xiliang sought to improve literacy in the Jirim League. But Xiliang noticed that:

"Fewer than one or two per cent of people [in the Jirim League] can read. [Most people] read neither Chinese nor Mongolian. Those who study in lama temples learned only chanting [Tibetan Buddhist] sutras [in Tibetan] besides learning Sanskrit . . . All of these block Mongols' knowledge, result in decadent customs and difficult livelihoods, and cause the Mongols to become poorer and poorer everyday . . . [Even] many hereditary *taijis* do not read Mongolian, let alone Chinese, and we can infer that *taijis*' subordinates cannot read any language either."¹⁸

Whether Xiliang's statement was objective can be further examined. He used approximate numbers such as "most" and "few" or examples of *lamas* and *taijis* in his evaluation of Mongols' illiteracy, suggesting that Xiliang did not aim to measure the literacy rate in the League. Moreover, under the Qing Empire's urgent agenda for improving literacy and implementing local self-government, Xiliang's statement about Mongolian illiteracy may not reflect the situation within the

16. Ibid., 61-67.

17. Elizabeth Kaske, *Politics of Language in Chinese Education*, 34; Alexander Woodside, "Real and Imagined Communities in the Chinese Struggle for Literacy," in *Education and Modernization: The Chinese Experience*, ed. Ruth Hayhoe (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), 26-27; Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xxx-xxxi, 240-50; Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 10-17.

18. Xiliang, "Zha Zhelimumeng shiqi xingxue quanye wen."

League. Mongolian remained one of the official languages in the Jirim League until the early twentieth century, and Mongol officials used Mongolian in government documents.¹⁹ Owen Lattimore recognizes the differences among the linguistic habits between the Mongols who had long lived with Chinese people and the Mongols who were still segregated from Chinese in the early twentieth century. Lattimore states that “some of the Mongols in the oldest zone of Chinese penetration, in the east, have lost their language, but all Mongols to the west of the present line of Chinese colonization retain their language and a strong national consciousness.”²⁰ Therefore, it would be an exaggeration to state that the Jirim Mongols rarely read.

Xiliang emphasized the Jirim Mongols' illiteracy primarily because boosting literacy was the basis for incorporating the Jirim Mongols into a new administrative system in the context of constitutional reform. Moreover, only those who read Chinese had the right to vote. In 1911, Zhou Shumo 周樹模 (1860–1925), the Heilongjiang provincial governor, reported the annual plan for constitutional preparation. In the report, Zhou raised a question concerning the eligibility to vote of people who read only Manchu or Mongolian but not Chinese. The Department of Constitutional Preparation (憲政籌備館) replied that “those who read only Manchu and Mongolian in Heilongjiang cannot be regarded as literate, and therefore they are not eligible to vote.”²¹ The Department's reply reflected the Qing's assertion of the importance of Chinese for conducting constitutional reform and for nurturing citizens even in multilingual northeastern borderlands.

In 1909, Xiliang suggested establishing local schools in each banner to promote mass literacy in Chinese (excluding females) and looked for a language reader suitable for the Jirim Mongols. Eventually, the trilingual textbook, *Manju monggo nikan ilan acangga šu-i tacibure hacin-i bithe* in Manchu, *Manju mongyol kitad yurban neičetiü udq-a yin suryaqu jüil ün bičig* in Mongolian, and *Man-Meng-Han sanwen hebi jiaokeshu* 滿蒙漢三文合璧教科書 in Chinese (hereafter, *The Manchu-Mongol-Chinese Trilingual Textbook*) became the official language reader in 1909. The textbook was translated by the Honorary Principal of the Fengtian Mongolian Language School Rongde 榮德 (dates unknown) from *The Up-to-date National Language Reader for Lower Primary Schools* (*Zuixin chudeng xiaoxue guowen jiaokeshu* 最新初等小學國文教科書, 1906) written

19. “Dongsansheng yutu Mengqi diming duoque qingchi tianzhu you” 東三省與圖蒙旗地名多缺請飭填註由 (1909), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-6198.

20. Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria*, 205.

21. Zhou Shumo 周樹模, “Wei Heilongjiang shengqi Mengren bushi Hanwenzhe yingfou yi shiwen yilunshi zhi Xianzheng bianchaguan dianbaogao” 為黑龍江省旗蒙人不識漢文者應否以識文議論事致憲政編查館電報稿 (1911), First Historical Archives of China 09-01-02-0021-015; Zhou Shumo, “Wei Heilongjiangsheng dongnanqi Han zaju geshu nengshi Man-Meng wenzi renshu yi chi diaocha xuanju zige shi lingbiao huibao shi zhi Xianzheng bianchaguan dianbao” 為黑龍江東南旗漢雜居各屬能識滿蒙文字人數已飭調查選舉資格時另表匯報事致憲政編查館電報 (1911), First Historical Archives of China 09-01-02-0021-019.

by Zhuang Yu 莊俞 (1878–1940) and Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873–1958) and originally used in Rongde's school.²²

In 1906, Rongde, a Mongolian right-flank assistant military commander, was appointed as translation commissioner in the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs of the Three Eastern Provinces. In the same year, Xiliang and Zhang Heling 張鶴齡 (1867–1908), the educational commissioner of Fengtian (*Fengtian tixue* 奉天提學), finally recommended him to be the Honorary Principal of the Fengtian Mongolian Language School and language instructor.²³ In 1907, Rongde adopted the official language reader written by Zhuang Yu and Jiang Weiqiao for his school, because “old textbooks . . . do not introduce the most recent science and the newest terms.”²⁴ But Rongde found it difficult to teach Chinese to Mongol students using Zhuang and Jiang's work, because the book would “open people's mind when used in the inner land [*neidi* 內地], whereas it results in many [linguistic] conflicts when distributed in the outer tribes [*waifan* 外藩]. It will be difficult to promote education, because spoken and written languages are different [between the inner land and outer tribes].”²⁵ Rongde therefore translated the Chinese language reader into Mongolian and Manchu so that students could learn Chinese with the assistance of their native language.

Rongde completed the translation of the first four volumes by 1907.²⁶ 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.”²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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-*

22. Zhuang Yu and Jiang Weiqiao, *Han-Man-Meng hebi jiaokeshu*, trans. Rongde, 1912 edition, Liaoning Provincial Library, abbreviated MMHBJKS.

23. Rongde榮德, “Xu” 序, in MMHBJKS, 3a-4a.

24. Ibid., 5a-b.

25. Ibid., 8a-9b.

26. Ibid., 4b-6a.

27. Xiliang, “Xu,” in MMHBJKS, 9a-b.

28. Xiliang and Cheng Dequan 程德全, “Dufu zha Mengwuju” 督府札蒙務局 (1909), and “Yishu huibao” 譯書匯報 (1910), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-2807; “Yishu suoyong jin'e huibao” 譯書所用金額匯報 (1911), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-13926.

29. Rongde, “Xu,” in MMHBJKS, 11b-12a.

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.³⁰

Mongolian: The Native Language of the Mongols

Since few Jirim Mongols understood Chinese in the early twentieth century, local officials and instructors agreed that both spoken Mongolian and the Mongolian texts in the trilingual textbook would help students understand Chinese. Based on an investigation of the Jirim League conducted by the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs between 1910 and 1911, the Bureau reiterated the importance of a good command of Mongolian for teaching students to read Chinese in classes. The investigation report concerning the Khorchin Tribe stated that “when teaching children, it is most important to explain [texts]. This is the case when Han Chinese people [learn Chinese], let alone Mongols. If [a language instructor] does not understand Mongolian, how can his explanation be clear?”³¹ In some banners where no one spoke or read Chinese, Mongolian was of even greater importance for instructing students. The Jalaid banner claimed, “How can we develop education if no one understands Chinese in our banner?”³² As for the banners that had such situations, the Office suggested that the only way to promote education was to “teach students to read Mongolian first, after which it would be possible for these banners to discuss how to teach Chinese and establish [new-style] schools.”³³

Leading students to learn to read is the primary purpose of language teaching, but not the only one. The emphasis on explanation showed that the Manchurian government encouraged students to understand the messages conveyed in the textbook rather than learning by rote. As Rongde stated in the preface to *The Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese Trilingual Textbook*, “This textbook briefly introduces astronomy, geography, zoology, botany, mining, chemistry, law, politics, economy, and so on. The book also collects materials and writes about the way to get on in the world and everything needed for leading a life.”³⁴ Under the 1902 *Regulations for Elementary Schools*, official textbooks contained many Western elements, which helped students understand concepts such as nation, citizenry, and the geography and history of China in a global context.³⁵ Learn-

30. “Dufu zha Mengwuju” 督撫札蒙務局 (February 23, 1909); “Pai yiyuan Rongde bianyi Mengwen jiaokeshu qingkuan dengjian” 派議員榮德編譯蒙文教科書請款等件, Liaoning Provincial Archives JC10-1-2807; Rongde, “Yishu weiyuan Rongde jinjiang yuan'an niqing fenfa gechu jiaokeshu shumu shanju qingzhe” 譯書委員榮德謹將援案擬請分發各處教科書數目繕具清摺 (September–October 1911), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-13926.

31. DCBGS, 21.

32. Ibid., 102.

33. Ibid.

34. Rongde, “Xu,” in *MMHHBJKS*, 6b–7a.

35. Peter Zarrow, *Educating China: Knowledge, Society and Textbooks in a Modernizing World, 1902–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

ing Rongde's textbook was therefore associated with disseminating the new learning (*xinxue* 新學) and nurturing modern citizens. In view of the fact that many Jirim Mongols did not understand Chinese, the Manchurian government hoped that language instructors could convey these ideas to students in Mongolian.

Besides school education, Manchurian officials sought to improve popular literacy in the Jirim League through nurturing Mongols' reading habits in their everyday life. Under the New Policies, Jilin province favored the publication of newspapers that were written in vernacular Chinese to spread knowledge among people with limited education.³⁶ But the provincial office soon understood that the situation in Jirim banners was different. The Office stated that "Mongolian banners have stuck to their old customs, and their knowledge and mind have therefore been blocked. Moreover, the difference between [the Chinese and Mongolian] languages creates more obstructions. To open Mongols' minds and enrich their knowledge, [we] must begin with Mongolian language [teaching]."³⁷ In 1908, Jilin province suggested publishing *The Mongolian Colloquial Newspaper* (*Menghua bao* 蒙話報). The provincial government first collected Chinese articles concerning Mongolian affairs, rewrote them in Chinese vernacular, translated them into Mongolian, and published the *Newspaper* in Chinese and Mongolian.³⁸ Yu Sixing 于駟興 (1875–?), Head of the Harbin Office of Foreign Affairs, also proposed publishing *The Mongolian Vernacular Newspaper* (*Mengwen baihua bao* 蒙文白話報) in Fengtian, which Yu believed would become "a forerunner for developing education."³⁹ Likewise, between 1909 and 1911 in Tibet, "there was also an attempt to produce a Tibetan-language newspaper named *Xizang baihua bao* (*The Tibetan Vernacular Newspaper*) sponsored by the *amban* (high official) in Lhasa."⁴⁰ In all of these cases, a native language was considered important and necessary to facilitate the learning of Chinese, especially for those who had limited schooling experience.

Manchu: An Intermediate Language Between Mongolian and Chinese

Despite an agreement on the importance of Mongolian for helping Mongol students understand Chinese, Rongde and some local officials thought that Mongolian alone

36. Jilin xingsheng gongshu 吉林行省公署, "Jilin xingsheng gongshu zhaohui Mengwuju jiangsong Menghua baowen" 吉林行省公署照會蒙務局檢送蒙話報文, in *Dongsansheng Mengwu gongdu huibian* 東三省蒙務公牘彙編, ed. Zhu Qiqian 朱啓鈐 (Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 218.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Yu Sixing, "Ha'erbin jiaoshe zongju zongban Yu Sixing shang Fengtian xingsheng gongshu jingying Mengwu bing" 哈爾濱交涉總局總辦于駟興上奉天行省公署經營蒙務稟, in *Dongsansheng Mengwu gongdu huibian*, 222.

40. Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, "Representation of Religion in *The Tibet Mirror*: The Newspaper as Religious Object and Patterns of Continuity and Rupture in Tibetan Material Culture," in *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, ed. Benjamin Fleming and Richard Mann (New York: Routledge, 2014), 77.

was insufficient to achieve this goal. Manchurian officials doubted the quality of Mongolian translation because many Chinese terms in science, humanities, and the social sciences, which were recently translated from Japanese or European languages, did not have corresponding translations in Mongolian. In the original Chinese language reader, Zhuang Yu and Jiang Weiqiao used simple language to introduce the most recent intellectual findings and new terms in fields ranging from geography to law, from chemistry and mining to the way to get on in the world.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Rongde found it “difficult to decide on translations for the terms that do not have corresponding Chinese characters [in existing reference books].”⁴² Rongde, Xiliang, and Cheng Dequan 程德全 (1860–1930), the Fengtian provincial governor, therefore suggested that students also learn Manchu because they believed that it could provide a supplementary explanation when a Mongolian translation failed to convey the meaning of the Chinese.

Whilst Manchurian officials emphasized the Mongolian origin of written Manchu, they tended to agree that Manchu had developed during the past centuries whereas Mongolian declined. When Rongde summarized his translation work, he stated, “I made a painful effort to compile this textbook, but it is a difficult task. Except for *Mengwen huishu* 蒙文匯書 (*Collection of Mongolian Writing*), there have not been fine [Mongolian] reference books.”⁴³ Li Maochun 李懋春, who also participated in the translation and proofreading of the trilingual textbook, agreed with Rongde’s opinion that there was a lack of Mongolian reference books. Moreover, Li explained in his post-script to the textbook that Manchu became more developed than Mongolian thanks to numerous translation projects launched by the Qing dynasty. According to Li,

“Following [Nurhaci], the sage emperors appointed scholar officials and established a department to translate the *Six Classics* and various historical works [into Manchu]. This is a clear and complete set of work. Besides, generation after generation, there have been works privately translated [into Manchu]. By contrast, as for Mongolian, only the *Shengyu guangxu* 聖諭廣訓 (*Amplified Instructions on the Sacred Edicts*) has been compiled and published. [I] have not heard of other publications except for the [*Mengwen*] *huishu*.”⁴⁴

Cheng Dequan also believed that Manchu was more sophisticated than Mongolian. In his preface to the trilingual textbook, Cheng stated:

“[Mongolian] is originally simple in terms of its meaning and style. The use of Mongolian is also limited. Manchu originated from Mongolian. However, since [our]

41. Rongde, “Xu,” in *MMHHBJKS*, 6b–7a.

42. Ibid., 10b–11a.

43. Ibid., 9b–10a.

44. Li, “Ba,” in *MMHHBJKS*, 2b–3b.

state valued literacy and advocated the study of classic texts, all Chinese classical and historical works have been translated into [Manchu]. Since then, Manchu has been enriched and has gradually become perfected, whereas Mongolian has been dying out.”⁴⁵

In short, as Xiliang put it in the preface he wrote, “Mongolian is originally simple in its meaning and style and fully relies on Manchu to explain its meaning. Therefore, it is difficult to apply [Mongolian] language skills unless one learns Manchu and Mongolian together.”⁴⁶

Government Manchu translation and publication projects, in particular those in the eighteenth century, did enrich and standardize the Manchu language.⁴⁷ Throughout the Qing dynasty, Manchu also had an influence on Mongolian in lexicon, grammar, and style.⁴⁸ However, it is difficult to define a standard to evaluate linguistic sophistication and therefore impossible to justify Manchu’s linguistic superiority over Mongolian. Many polyglot dictionaries, such as trilingual, quadrilingual, and pentaglot reference books produced in the eighteenth century, included Mongolian entries. A Manchu-Mongol dictionary, *The Imperially Commissioned Dictionary of the Manchu and Mongol Scripts* (*Han-i araha manju monggo gisun-i buleku bithe* 御制滿蒙合璧清文鑒), was produced in 1717. A trilingual version, *The Imperially Commissioned Dictionary of Matching the Sounds of Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese* (*Han-i araha manju monggo nikan hergen ilan hacin-i mudan acaha buleku bithe*), was published in 1771. The compilation of *The Imperially Commissioned Dictionary of Manchu in Five Scripts* (*Han-i araha sunja hacin-i hergen kamciha manju gisun-i buleku bithe* 御制五體清文鑒) was the high point of polyglot printing in the Qing dynasty. Each item in this dictionary was written vertically in Manchu, Tibetan, the Manchu syllabic spelling (*qieyin* 切音) of Tibetan, the corresponding Manchu sounds (*duiyin* 對音) for Tibetan, Mongolian, Uighur, the Manchu *duiyin* of Uighur, and Chinese.⁴⁹ The compilation of these polyglot reference books helped standardize translation among Manchu, Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan, and Uighur – the languages included in the Qing multilingual system.

Mongolian publications in a wide range of fields, such as language aids, history, and religion, greatly contributed to the preservation of the language.⁵⁰ Throughout the Qing dynasty, the Lifanyuan, which was staffed primarily by Manchu and Mongol banner-

45. Cheng Dequan, “Xu,” in *MMHBJKS*, 8b-9b.

46. Xiliang, “Xu,” in *MMHBJKS*, 5b-6a.

47. Pamela Kyle Crossley and Evelyn S. Rawski, “A Profile of the Manchu Language in Ch’ing History,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53.1 (1993): 66, 70-75.

48. Changshan 长山, “Qingdai Manwen dui Mengguwen de yingxiang” 清代满文对蒙古文的影响, *Altai Hakpo* 27 (2017): 211-25.

49. *Yuzhi wuti qingwenjian* 御製五體清文鑑 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1957).

50. Evelyn Rawski, “Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-Wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 304-31.

men, retained the tradition of using Manchu and Mongolian as two official languages. In the Jirim League, Mongolian remained an indispensable administrative language until the early twentieth century. Although Manchu may have helped Mongol students understand some Chinese words that were new to them in the early twentieth century – similar to the role of Latin in linking Manchu and Russian when signing the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689)⁵¹ – the argument for Manchu's linguistic superiority over Mongolian seems farfetched. In the 1870s, Vanchinbalyn Injinash (1837–1892), a Mongolian poet and novelist who came from a highly literate family among the nobles of Inner Mongolia, also criticized his fellow Mongols in Southern and Eastern Mongolia for feeling inferior to Chinese culture and lifestyle.⁵² Whether Manchu would facilitate the understanding of original Chinese terms, as suggested in the prefaces and postscript of the trilingual textbook, must await further comparative research.

From the early Qing period, Manchu had been an indispensable part of the Manchu-Mongolian-Tibetan trilingual system in the Jirim League. Through this non-Chinese language system, the Qing emperors aimed at maintaining Manchu rule over the Jirim Mongols and restricting the influence of Chinese culture. By contrast, in the context of constitutional reform, the promotion of Manchu was associated with the Qing Empire's need for improving Chinese literacy and integrating the Jirim League into a constitutional China. Rongde, Xiliang, and Cheng Dequan hoped that the Manchu texts in the trilingual textbook would make learning Chinese easier for the Jirim Mongols so that they would soon become eligible to vote in local elections. In the revised Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese trilingual regime, Manchu served as an intermediate language connecting Mongolian and Chinese, rather than as a political tool to segregate the Jirim Mongols from Chinese culture as the early Qing emperors had proclaimed.

To Facilitate Communication: Manchu and Mongolian in Professional Language Schools

The Qing dynasty had a deeper concern over its reign in the Jirim League when Russia and Japan had a growing influence in Manchuria in the early twentieth century. Manchurian officials noticed that Russian and Japanese visitors who had good Manchu and Mongolian language skills established close relations with the Jirim Mongols. In order to rebuild Qing authority in the Jirim League, the Qing dynasty established professional Manchu and Mongolian language schools to train local officials who could handle borderland and diplomatic affairs in Manchu and Mongolian.

51. V. S. Frank, "The Territorial Terms of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk, 1689," *Pacific Historical Review* 16.3 (1947): 265-70; Peter Perdue, "Boundaries and Trade in the Early Modern World: Negotiations at Nerchinsk and Beijing," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43.3 (2010): 341-56.

52. John G. Hangin, *Köke Sudur (The Blue Chronicle): a Study of the First Mongolian Historical Novel by Injannasi* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973), 20.

Japan and Russia expanded their influence in Manchuria during the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901). The Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) marked increasing Russian and Japanese influence in Manchuria and Mongolia. Russian and Japanese “travelers,” who were usually military officers or investigators, collected information for military campaigns and economic supplies, and they purchased military supplies from local residents.⁵³ The Russian consul armed the Khorchin Right Flank Front Banner with more than one thousand handguns.⁵⁴ Russia and Japan also recruited local residents as temporary soldiers, particularly local bandits who owned military equipment and had combat experience.⁵⁵ Japan became the most influential power in Manchuria after it won the war in 1905. In 1906, the South Manchuria Railway Company (南滿洲鐵道株式會社) took over the southern branch of the former Russian railway from Changchun to Lüshun 旅順.⁵⁶ But Russia still retained its power and influence in Mongolia and northern Manchuria. Russia and Japan established special agents and offices in Harbin and Changchun respectively to handle Mongolian affairs in their newly occupied territories.

Besides, colleges and language schools in Japan and Russia trained a large number of investigators, interpreters, and military officers to communicate in Mongolian. In Russia, Mongolian language teaching began earlier than Chinese. In 1702, Peter I (1672–1725) established a school for Mongolian language instruction in Moscow.⁵⁷ As P. E. Skačkov states, “Russian sinology is characterized by the equal significance of the Chinese, Manchu, and Mongolian languages from the very start.”⁵⁸ In 1807, Kazan’ University established the Oriental Faculty which included the departments of Arabic and Persian languages, Turkic and Tartar languages, and Mongolian.⁵⁹ In 1864, St. Petersburg University established the Faculty of Chinese, Manchu, and Mongolian. Students had to learn Chinese and Manchu or Mongolian.⁶⁰ Many graduates from these institutes had visited Manchuria and Mongolia or worked in these regions as interpreters, investigators, and officers.

53. “Zhi Rehe dutong Beiyang dachen Zhili dutong dian” 致熱河都統北洋大臣直隸都統電 (1905), in *Junjichu dianbaodang huibian* 清代軍機處電報檔匯編, ed. Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan 中國第一歷史檔案館 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2005), vol. 39, no. 519, 318.

54. *DCBGS*, 77.

55. “Wubiaoti” 無標題 (1904), in *Junjichu dianbaodang huibian*, no. 1119, 384, no. 1152, 397.

56. Ramon H. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria: The South Manchuria Railway Company, 1906-1933,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 101-32; Felix Patrikeeff and Harold Shukman, *Railways and the Russo-Japanese War: Transporting War* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 92-109; Y. Tak Matsusaka, “Japan’s South Manchurian Railway Company in Northeast China, 1906-34,” in *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: An International History*, ed. Bruce Elleman and Stephen Kotkin (London: Routledge, 2015), 37-58.

57. Meng Ssu-ming, “The E-lo-ssu kuan (Russian Hostel) in Peking,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960-1961): 35.

58. Pang, “A Historical Sketch of the Study and Teaching of the Manchu Language in Russia,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 35.1/2 (1991): 123; see also P. E. Skačkov, *Očerki istorii russkogo kitaevedenija* (Moscow: Izdat. “Nauka,” 1977), 285.

59. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan wenxian qingbao zhongxin 中國社會科學院文獻情報中心, *Esu Zhongguoxue shouce* 俄蘇中國學手冊 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1986): 2: 105.

60. *Ibid.*, 106-7.

In Japan, from the 1890s onwards, studies on Manchuria were closely related to Japan's military activities. In Manchuria and Mongolia, the SMR not only managed the railways, harbors, and mines but also conducted research and supported and established educational and cultural facilities.⁶¹ In 1908, the East Asian Association (東洋協會) established a Department of Academic Research, which promoted the study of history, languages, customs, politics, and economy of Asian countries and ethnic groups.⁶² It was in this period that Manchu and Mongolian studies became a new and more important part of Sinology in Japan.⁶³ In the Japanese Office of Mongolian Affairs in Changchun, there were “approximately eighty military students who disguised themselves and learnt the Mongolian language.”⁶⁴

After the establishment of civilian governments in Manchuria in 1907, more Chinese officials came to Manchuria. However, Chinese officials found it difficult to deal with legal cases involving Mongolian, Russian, and Japanese parties because Russian and Japanese officials had a greater understanding of Mongolian and Manchu than their Chinese counterparts. This can be seen from a report regarding the *Regulations for Mongolian-Russian Relations* (*Meng-E jiaoshe zhangcheng* 蒙俄交涉章程) written by the Bureau of Railways in Mongolian Banners. The report stated that “Russians have been working on making contact with Mongol banners for more than a year . . . especially in the banners located near Russia The outsiders [i.e., Qing officials] do not know their methods of contact . . . [due to] the language barrier [between Chinese and Mongolian] and the uncertain whereabouts of Russians and Mongols.”⁶⁵ According to the archives of the Fengtian provincial government, this case was not the only instance where Chinese officials felt that they could not prevent Russia and Japan from expanding their influence within the Jirim League. Having an understanding of Mongolian made travelling to the League much easier for Russian and Japanese officials. After the Qing prohibited foreigners from mapping and conducting investigations in Manchuria in 1909,⁶⁶ most Russian and Japanese visitors used disguises and false identities to hide

61. John Young, *The Research Activities of the South Manchurian Railway Company, 1907-1945: A History and Bibliography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); James Graham Boyd, *Japanese-Mongolian Relations, 1873-1945: Faith, Race and Strategy* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2011), 52-61.

62. Li Qing 李庆, *Riben Hanxueshi: Qiyuan he quli* 日本汉学史：起源和确立 (Shanghai: Shanghai waiyu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 1: 391.

63. He Changqun 贺昌群, “Riben xueshujie zhi Zhinaxue yanjiu” 日本学术界之支那学研究, in *He Changqun wenji* 贺昌群文集 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003), 1: 447; Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Zhaizi Zhongguo: Chongjian youguan Zhongguo de lishi lunshu* 宅兹中国：重建有关中国的历史论述 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 381.

64. Zhu Qiqian, “Mengwuju duban zicheng Dongsansheng dufu qing zaizou qingkuan bing chouyi tieluwen” 蒙務局督辦咨呈東三省督撫請再奏請款並籌議鐵路文 (1908), in *Dongsansheng Mengwu gongdu huibian*, 60-62.

65. Menggu tielu ju 蒙古鐵路局, “Guanyu Menggu geqi teilu jiaoshe anjian fu Hua-E dingding jianzao tielu hetong shisan tiao” 關於蒙古各旗鐵路交涉案件附華俄訂定建造鐵路合同十三條 (1906), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-2403.

66. “Riben you baiyuren fenfu Mengdi cehui ditu bingyou zhuanren fu ge Mengqi gouchuan shangren ji waijiaobu yu Riling jiaoshe jingguo qingxingjuan fu Riren cehuiyuan renshu lujun cehuiguan mingdan” 日本有百餘人分赴蒙地測繪地圖並有專人赴各蒙旗勾串商人及外交部與日領交涉經過情形卷附日人測會員人數陸軍測繪官名單, Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-1876.

from the authorities and thereby continue their research.⁶⁷ In 1911, the temporary magistrate of Liaoyuan Prefecture noticed that “among thirty-six Japanese travelers, only fourteen of them use names that are identical to the names on their passports.”⁶⁸

Facing the fluidity of peoples and languages, Manchurian officials believed that early Qing language policy, which separated Mongols and Chinese, impeded its administration in the League and created a power vacuum for Japan and Russia to enter. This undermined the military significance of the Jirim Mongols and challenged Qing authority in the Jirim League.⁶⁹ Yao Xiguang 姚錫光 (1857–?) stated in his memorial to the Guangxu emperor that “the Mongols have changed from fierce warriors who had followed the dragon [the Qing] and established a great enterprise to dogs and sheep that were only able to keep watch at night.”⁷⁰ Such concerns impelled the Qing Empire to reform its traditional multilingual policy and to rebuild a channel of effective communication between the Jirim Mongols and Qing officials.

Despite the dissemination of the trilingual textbook among the Jirim Mongols, local officials were concerned that it would take a rather long time to boost literacy in the Jirim League. Ye Dakuang 葉大匡 (?–1918), a commissioner in the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs who conducted the aforementioned investigation in the Jirim League between 1910 and 1911, suggested that Mongolian banners needed at least another ten years to learn to read and write Mongolian-Chinese bilingual documents, as the number of Mongol officials versed in Chinese was extremely limited.⁷¹ The Lifanbu and the Ministry of Education also agreed that it would be a long-term project to implement educational reforms to non-Han Chinese groups.⁷²

In view of Russia and Japan’s growing influence within the Jirim League, the Bureau strove to improve spoken and written Mongolian and Manchu language skills of Chinese officials to prevent language gaps from obstructing administrative affairs. Ye Dakuang suggested that in this transition period Mongolian language schools in Manchuria should select thirty to forty students to attend a special training class for one year. In these classes, the students would learn to write official documents so that they could help manage Jirim administrative affairs in Mongolian after graduation.⁷³ One month later, the Bureau of Mongolian affairs approved Ye’s suggestion.⁷⁴

For this reason, the Bureau built several Manchu-Mongolian language schools in

67. DCBGS, 25.

68. “Ribei you baiyuren fenfu Mengdi cehui ditu.”

69. Roger V. Des Forges, *Hsi-liang and the Chinese National Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 155.

70. Yao Xiguang, “Xiguang qingjian dayuan zhuanban Neimeng kenwu zhe” 錫光請揀大員專辦內蒙墾務摺 (1907), in *Dongsansheng Mengwu gongdu huibian*, 25–26.

71. Ye Dakuang, “Kangping xian chengqing sihou Mengqi gaiyong Meng-Han gongwen bing zhengdun yanjie Nei Mengqi gexiang xinzheng” 康平縣呈請嗣後蒙旗改用蒙漢公文並整頓延界內蒙旗各項新政 (1907), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC10-1-786.

72. Yu and Liu, “Wanqing zhengfu dui Mengguzu de guoyu jiaoyu zhengce,” 69–70.

73. Huang 黃, “Fu shangwen” 覆上文 (1909), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC10-1-786.

74. Ibid.

Manchuria. In 1907, the Jilin Manchu-Mongolian Language Middle School (*Jilin Man-Mengwen zhongxuetang* 吉林滿蒙文中學堂) was established to “train qualified personnel versed in Manchu and Mongolian, who can conduct Manchu and Mongolian studies, and who can continue their education in the Manchu-Mongolian Language College.”⁷⁵ The Bureau also established the Fengtian Manchu-Mongolian Language Middle School (*Fengtian Man-Mengwen zhongxuetang* 奉天滿蒙文中學堂) for these reasons.⁷⁶ The Jilin Office of Banner Affairs stated that it was necessary to preserve Manchu and Mongolian because they were indispensable for handling Mongolian affairs and Qing-Russian affairs in Manchuria.⁷⁷

In Beijing, the Ministry of Education suggested establishing a Department of Manchu and Mongolian Literature in the Imperial College to “correspond to the court’s determination to plan domestic affairs, maintain the foundation [of the dynasty], stabilize borderlands, and train talent.”⁷⁸ Likewise, the Ministry established the Manchu-Mongolian Language College in Beijing in order to train officials who mastered local languages so that they would be qualified and competent at their jobs and so that the court could achieve the goal of pacifying borderlands.⁷⁹ As a result, the Manchu-Mongolian Language College enrolled not only Manchu and Mongolian bannermen but also Chinese students who had completed secondary school and wished to devote themselves to studying Manchu and Mongolian and the handling of borderland affairs.⁸⁰ Under the influence of Russia and Japan, the Qing dynasty sought to boost literacy in Manchu and Mongolian among local officials, a supplementary method to reconstruct Qing control over the Jirim Mongols especially when most Jirim Mongols did not speak or read Chinese. In so doing, the Qing Empire emphasized the practical significance of Manchu and Mongolian in Jirim League borderland and diplomatic affairs.

75. Liu Wentian 劉文田, “Wei zunzao buzhang congxin niding xuetang zhangcheng shi gei Jilin tixueshi Cao Guangzhen xiangwen” 為遵造部章從新擬定學堂章程事給吉林提學使曹廣楨詳文 (June 5, 1911), in *Jilinsheng dang’anguan-cang Qingdai dang’an shiliao xuanbian* 吉林省檔案館藏清代檔案史料選編, ed. Jilinsheng dang’anguan 吉林省檔案館 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 21: 304.

76. Wang Fenglei 王風雷, “Fengtian baqi Man-Mengwen zhongxuetang chutan” 奉天八旗滿蒙文中學堂初探, *Neimenggu shifan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 內蒙古師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 39.1 (2007): 120.

77. Liu, “Qingmo Jilin xinshi qiren ji Manwen xuetang jiaoyu,” 105-6.

78. Xuebu 學部, “Fuzou daxuetang zengshe Man-Meng wenxue yimen pian” 附奏大學堂增設滿蒙文學一門片, *Xuebu guanbao* 學部官報 23 (1907): 195a.

79. Ibid., 194b.

80. Xuebu, “Zoupai Man-Mengwen gaodeng xuetang jiandu zhe” 奏派滿蒙文高等學堂監督摺, *Xuebu guanbao* 23 (1907): 194a-b.

National Language and *Gurun-i gisun*

Manchu had been the *gurun-i gisun* since Nurhaci instructed Erdeni 額爾德尼 (1592–1634) and Gagai 噶蓋 (?–1600) to modify the Mongolian script and create the script of the Manchus.⁸¹ In 1902, Wu Rulun 吳汝倫 (1840–1903), Director of Studies at the Imperial College, was the first to introduce the Japanese idea of *kokugo* (national language) to China and to suggest the creation of a Chinese *guoyu* 國語 (Chinese national language).⁸² In 1906, Zhuang Yu and Jiang Weiqiao first used *guowen* in the title of the language reader that was officially sanctioned by the Ministry of Education. In this section, I will discuss how the Qing dynasty handled the relationship between the *gurun-i gisun* and Chinese national language within the revised trilingual system.

The hierarchy of the three languages – Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese – can be seen from the title of the textbook, in which Rongde followed the conventional Qing way of organizing multiple scripts in *kamcime* writings and placed Manchu, the *gurun-i gisun*, and Mongolian ahead of Chinese.⁸³ In the preface to the trilingual textbook, Xiliang elucidated that “[I] worry that the Manchu and Mongolian languages are declining. [This book] will preserve the *gurun-i šunggiya* [*guocui* 國粹, national essence] [by teaching these languages].”⁸⁴ By *gurun-i šunggiya*, Xiliang referred to the Manchu and Mongolian heritage, of which their languages were an important part, instead of the Chinese national essence advocated by the *guocui pai* 國粹派 (the school of national essence).⁸⁵ This conceptualization of the Manchu and Mongolian languages as “national essence” can also be seen in local officials’ suggestions about language education in Manchuria. For example, the Bureau of Mongolian Affairs stressed that “the Mongolian language is the national essence [國粹] of the Mongol people, which cannot be discarded.”⁸⁶ In this context, “*guocui*” referred to the heritage of the Mongol state in history, particularly the Mongol Yuan Dynasty.

In elementary schools in the Jirim League and Manchu-Mongolian language schools in Manchuria, although Chinese classes were named *guowen* 國文 (national language)

81. *Manzhou shilu* 滿州實錄 (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1969), 3.108a-110b. The Manchu text is also available in Gertraude Roth Li, *Manchu: A Textbook for Reading Documents*, 2d ed. (Honolulu: National Foreign Language Resource Center, 2010), 37-38.

82. Kaske, *Politics of Language in Chinese Education*, 135.

83. However, under the Republican regime, the sequence of languages was changed. From 1912, in accordance with the instructions of Minister of Education Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), the title of the trilingual textbook was changed to *Nikan manju monggo ilan acangga šu-i tacibure hacin-i bithe* in Manchu, *Kitad manju mongyol yurban neičeti udq-a yin suryaqu jüil ün bičig* in Mongolian, and *Han-Man-Meng sanwen hebi jiaokeshu* 漢滿蒙三文合璧教科書 in Chinese (*The Chinese-Manchu-Mongolian Trilingual Textbook*, abbreviated MMHBJKS). See Cai Yuanpei, “Jiaoyu zongzhang ziqu Han-Man-Meng hebiwen xiaoxue jiaokeshu yizi caiyong” 教育總長諮取漢滿蒙合璧文小學教科書以資採用 (1912), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC 10-1-13926.

84. Xiliang, “Xu,” in MMHBJKS, 7b-8a.

85. Kaske, *Politics of Language in Chinese Education*, 325-47.

86. DCBGS, 21.

or *Zhongguo wenxue* 中國文學 (Chinese literature),⁸⁷ they were put after Manchu and Mongolian classes in syllabuses and transcripts.⁸⁸ Moreover, the term *guowen* was not universally used in school regulations and government documents. For example, the senior elementary school curriculum of 1904 considered the unification of languages as “one aim of teaching *guanhua* 官話 (Mandarin).”⁸⁹ At other occasions, Qing officials frequently used *Hanwen* (漢文) to refer to Chinese. For example, in Xiliang's official letter to the Jirim League, he stated that “the Mongols have not read books written in *Hanwen* for a long time.”⁹⁰ In official writing, Manchurian officials used *Hanwen* to refer to Chinese.⁹¹

Qing officials still used *guoyu* 國語 (the dynasty's language) or *guoshu* 國書 (the dynasty's script) to refer to Manchu as they did in the early Qing period. In the preface to the reprinted *Manju gisun-i uheri isabuha bithe* 清文總彙 (*The Comprehensive Manchu Dictionary*, 1897), Zhikuan 志寬 (dates unknown) and Peikuan 培寬 (dates unknown), two language instructors in the Jingzhou 荊州 Garrison who initiated and led the reproduction of a series of Manchu reference books, explained that they reprinted these books in order to preserve *guoshu*.⁹² In 1904, the same year when the Ministry of Education promulgated the *Regulations for Schools*, Yude 裕德 (?-1905) and other members of the Hanlin Academy memorialized the Guangxu emperor, requesting the establishment of a Manchu Translation School (*Manzhou fanyi xuetaang* 滿洲翻譯學堂) so as to “attach greater importance to the *guoshu* and strengthen the foundation [of the dynasty].”⁹³ Yude stated that “all countries regard the Manchu language as the foundation of our court,”⁹⁴ and therefore suggested training Manchu translators in order to preserve the script that represented the Qing dynasty.

In 1907, the Ministry of Education suggested establishing a Department of Manchu and Mongolian Literature (*Man-Meng wenxue* 滿蒙文學) in the Imperial College,

87. Pufu 普福, “Wei gengzao qusui diyiji xuesheng lüli fenshubiao shi gei Jilin tixueshi Cao Guangzhen wen 為更造去歲第一級學生履歷分數表事給吉林提學使曹廣楨文,” April 30, 1910, in *Jilinsheng dang'anguancang qingdai dang'an shiliao xuanbian*, vol. 20. 417-8, 421-2.

88. Pufu, “Wei gengzao qusui diyiji xuesheng lüli fenshubiao shi gei jilin tixueshi Cao Guangzhen wen,” 417-18, 421-22. Liu Wentian, “Wei baosong bennian shangxueqi liangban xuesheng kaoshi fenshubiao qing fagei xiuye wenping shi gei Jilin tixueshi Cao Guangzhen xiangwen” 為報送本年上學期兩班學生考試分數表請發給修業文憑事給吉林提學使曹廣楨詳文 (October 4, 1911), in *Jilinsheng dang'anguancang Qingdai dang'an shiliao xuanbian*, 22: 92-99.

89. “Zouding gaodeng xiaoxuetang zhangcheng,” 431.

90. Xiliang, “Xu,” in Zhuang Yu and Jiang Weiqiao, *Man-Meng-Han hebi jiaokeshu* 滿蒙漢合璧教科書, trans. Rongde 榮德, Cambridge University Library FK 347.1-4 (1909), 1a.

91. Ye Dakuang, “Dufuxian zha ju Kangping xian chengqing sihou Mengqi gaiyong Meng-Han gongwen bing zhengdun yanjie Nei Mengqi gexiang xinzheng” 督府憲札據康平縣呈請嗣後蒙旗改用蒙漢公文並整頓延界內蒙旗各項新政 (1909), Liaoning Provincial Archives JC10-1-786.

92. Zhikuan and Peikuan, *Qingwen zonghui Manju gisun-i uheri isabuha bithe* (1897), xu 序; Chunhua 春花, *Qingdai Man-Mengwen cidian yanjiu* 清代滿蒙文詞典研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2008), 368.

93. Yude et al., “Zoubao shijiang rongguang chengqing daizou wei niqing zhuanshe Manzhou fanyi xuetaang yi zhongyong guoshu er pei genbenshi” 奏報侍講榮光呈請代奏為擬請專設滿洲翻譯學堂以重用國書而培根本事 (1904), Taipei National Palace Museum no. 162979.

94. Ibid.

because the original syllabus emphasized Chinese at the expense of Manchu and Mongolian. The Ministry stated:

In accordance with the *Regulations for Colleges*, there are nine departments in the humanities division of the Imperial College, including Chinese and foreign history, geography, Chinese literature, English, French, Russian, German, and Japanese. However, Manchu and Mongolian is only a sub-subject under Chinese dialects (中國方言) in the geography department.⁹⁵

Instead, the Ministry suggested “establishing an independent department for teaching Manchu and Mongolian Literature.”⁹⁶ Moreover, the Ministry required that this department should be “prioritized over the Department of Chinese Literature to ensure that the origin of Manchu and Mongol [culture] and their geography and customs are taught in a better way.”⁹⁷ This request was approved a few days later. In 1908, the Manchu-Mongolian Language College (*Man-Mengwen gaodeng xuetang* 滿蒙文高等學堂) was established, the aim of which was “to bring up versatile persons in the Manchu and Mongolian languages, to preserve national essence, and to benefit important governmental matters.”⁹⁸

By revising the trilingual system, the Qing maintained its *tongwen* 同文 and *hebi* 合璧 (*kamcime*, simultaneous) tradition in the Jirim League in the early twentieth century. Edward Rhoads’s study shows that Manchu emperors and ordinary people maintained their distinctiveness in the last decade of the Qing dynasty.⁹⁹ During the New Policies, while Qing emperors sought to forge a modern Chinese nation, they maintained the Manchu characteristics of the constitutional monarchy. This twofold political aspiration can also be seen in the new multilingual regime in the Jirim League. While Chinese was entitled *guowen* in schools, Xiliang required the Jirim Mongols to learn Manchu and Mongolian, because Manchu was the *gurun-i gisun* and both of the languages were part of the *gurun-i šunggiya* of the Qing Empire.

Some Chinese linguists and reformers who worked on romanizing Chinese and creating a Chinese national language also referred to Manchu as *guoshu*. In the preface to *Guanhua hesheng zimu* 官話合聲字母 (*Phonetic Spelling of Mandarin*, 1900), Wang Zhao 王照 (1859–1933) referred to *Yuding yinyun chanwei* 御定音韻闡微 (*The Imperially Sanctioned Explanation of Subtleties on the Initial, Final, and Tone of Chinese*

95. Xuebu, “Xuebu zouqing jiang daxuetang zhangchengnei zengshe Man-Meng wenxue men” 學部奏請將大學堂章程內增設滿蒙文學門, *Xuebu guanbao* 23 (1907): 195a.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

98. Xuebu, “Xuebu zisong xianzheng bianchaguan zhun Man-Mengwen gaodeng xuetang zisong zhangcheng wen (fu zhangcheng)” 學部咨送憲政編查館准滿蒙文高等學堂咨送章程文(附章程), in *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao*, 3: 822.

99. Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

Characters), stating that his work “followed the phonetic method of *guoshu* [national Manchu script].” In the trilingual educational system in the Jirim League, *guo/gurun* had different meanings when referring to different languages. In Chinese *guoyu* classes, *guo* represented a nascent Chinese nation being forged by Chinese nationalists. When referring to the *gurun-i gisun* and *gurun-i šunggiya*, *gurun* referred to the state founded by the Manchus and characterized by cultural pluralism.

Conclusion

The history of language changes in the Jirim League under the influence of the Qing's New Policies was far more complicated than has been suggested in studies of the national language movement in China. Rather than a simple linguistic transformation from multilingualism to monolingualism, the Qing implemented a trilingual policy in which the effort to foster Chinese learning and the attempt to preserve Manchu and Mongolian intertwined.

From 1909, *The Manchu-Mongolian-Chinese Trilingual Textbook* became the official language reader in the Jirim League. Xiliang, Governor General of the Three Eastern Provinces, required the Jirim Mongols to learn these three languages at the same time. The trilingual policy also applied to young students who would become prospective candidates for managing Mongolian affairs, because most Mongols didn't speak or read Chinese at the time. Between 1907 and 1911, several Manchu-Mongolian language schools were established and expanded in Manchuria and Beijing. Similar to the Jirim situation, the trilingual educational policy was also implemented in Mongolian banners in other regions, such as Kulun and Kobdo.¹⁰⁰ In the early twentieth century, the Qing Empire implemented a trilingual educational policy rather than a Chinese monolingual one in many Mongolian banners.

Xiliang played a crucial role in implementing the trilingual language regime and maintaining Qing authority in the Jirim League. Xiliang promoted the trilingual policy among the Jirim Mongols because he was concerned about the growing influence of Russia and Japan, which Roger Des Forges amply discusses in his work.¹⁰¹ Moreover, this was because Xiliang was aware of the special position of Manchu and Mongolian in the Qing's multilingual regime and Manchuria's sacred position in the empire. Xiliang's policy revealed the paradox between the Qing's ambition to implement constitutional reform and to maintain the court's Manchu distinctiveness. Moreover, Xiliang considered the trilingual regime as a resolution

100. Yanzhi 延祉, “Zou Yanzhi deng qingshe Mengyang xuetang zhuanxi Man-Meng-Han yuyan wenzi you” 奏延祉等請設蒙養學堂專習滿蒙漢語言文字由 (1908), Taipei National Palace Museum no. 165833.

101. Des Forges, *Hsi-liang and the Chinese National Revolution*, 154–59.

to the conflict between conducting constitutional reform and preserving Manchuness in the Jirim League.

In the trilingual educational system, the symbolic roles of Manchu and Mongolian as *gurun-i gisun* and as part of the *gurun-i šunggiya* underscored their indispensable positions in the Qing hierarchy of languages. Despite the rise of Chinese nationalism during the New Policies, the distinctiveness of the Manchu reign was still noticeable in the Jirim League, as Edward Rhoads argues in his research on Manchu-Han Chinese relations.¹⁰² But, under the influence of Russia and Japan, Manchu and Mongolian became important in the Jirim League particularly when more people began to master them. Local officials could improve their handling of Mongolian affairs if they could easily communicate with local Mongols. After learning Mongolian and Manchu, it was easier for Mongol commoners to learn Chinese, because the two languages would help explain new Chinese terminologies unfamiliar to the Jirim Mongols. In early Qing times, the three languages taught in the Jirim league were Mongolian, Tibetan, and Manchu, to segregate the Mongols from Chinese culture. Within the new trilingual teaching system, however, the significance of Manchu and Mongolian was manifested in their supportive role for the promotion of Chinese. In the context of constitutional reform, by facilitating Manchu and Mongolian learning among the Jirim Mongols, the Qing government aimed at redefining and disciplining the Jirim Mongols, who used to be imperial subjects, as modern national citizens who would be eligible to vote like the Chinese under a Manchu constitutional monarchy. Encouraging local officials to learn Manchu and Mongolian was also part of the scheme to construct an effective channel of communication between local governments and the Jirim Mongols. Language reform in the Jirim League was thus not a linear linguistic progress towards the dissemination of a Chinese national language, but a fundamental change in Manchu rule over the Jirim Mongols.

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102. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han*.

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