

## Summer 2013 / Manchu S-A

8 July 2013

### Questions, exclamations and onomatopoeia

#### 1. Questions

Most sentences in Manchu will end with a verb in one of the usual sentence-final forms (-mbi, -ha/-he/-ho, akū/-rakū, bi/-bi), or in the imperative form. It is also possible that a sentence may end as a question, in which case the final word ending will usually be -o or one of the other interrogative particles, -ūn, na/ne/ni. A longer list is found in Roth-Li, pp. 367-68.

*mimbe antaha i doro i tuwambio*  
Do you look upon me as a guest?

*mini ere juwe bethe geli inde niyakūrambio* (YZMaZPZZ)  
Are these two legs of mine supposed to bend down to him, too?

*sini beile ejen ci tulgiyen jai sinde tusa arame mutere niyalma ainaha bini* (YZMaZPZZ)  
Apart from your master, who else is there who might be able to help you?

#### 2. Emotive particles

Another way to end a sentence is with an exclamatory particle of some sort. Exclamations in Manchu, as in English, are used to express extreme feeling or emotion on the part of the speaker. We have already encountered the use of *kai* as an emphatic particle at the end of a sentence:

*ere geli enduringge niyalma. enduringge niyalma be amcame gūniringge kai.* (KXMaZPZZ)  
Here again, the thinking of wise men follows that of [other] wise men!

*ejen ama be eiterere holtoro oci. abka. ainaha seme guweburakū kai.* (KXMaZPZZ)  
If you should deceive your lord, Heaven will never forgive you, no matter what!

Other sorts of sentence-final particles include those expressing belief or likelihood (*dere*):

*ejen i beye urunakū ambula suilame joboho dere.* (KXMaZPZZ)  
No doubt His Majesty has suffered greatly.

Or dismissal (*dabala*):

*emu ajige hafan dabala.*  
Nothing more than a minor official.

*hiyoošun akū koimali jalingga ba be juwan ubu de araki damu emu ubu araha tucibuhe dabala.*  
Told to write ten times the words, "Unfilial and cunning," [he] turned it in after writing it no more than one time. (YZMaZPZZ)

Or fear (*ayoo seme*), i.e., of something not happening or of a negative outcome:

*tere fonde. aha bi se asigan dulba ofi. ama mafa de weile isinjirakū ayoo seme.* (KXMaZPZZ)  
At that time, your servant, being young and foolish, thinking that the matter would probably not reach father and grandfather.

*hūwangdi geli irgen. banjire babe ufarahangge bi ayoo. hafasai dolo ba na be joboburengge bi ayoo seme.*  
The emperor, too, is worried that the people will lack a means of living and that among the officials there will be the bringing of distress to their districts.

### 3. Onomatopoeia

Like Japanese, Manchu makes very extensive use of onomatopoeia in different expressions (and not just in describing how a dog barks or a horse whinnies). All kinds of sounds are employed to convey a wide range of meanings, some concrete, some abstract. Almost all require a periphrastic construction using *seme* (or some form of *sembi*), and vowel harmony is frequently noticeable. A short list is found in Roth-Li, pp. 355-56. Here are some others:

ar seme	shouting loudly
bar bar seme	many people talking together
batak seme	the sound of sthg metal hitting the ground
dur seme	the sound of many people talking or laughing
heo seme	to be of passable quality
hing seme	to do seriously, devotedly
lak seme	just right, on the button
ser seme	to be fine, light, minor, trifling (as rain)
šur seme	to come down hard (of rain)
tob seme	to be just right
yak seme	painful, heavy, hard to bear
yanggar seme	to sound for a long time
yar seme	to flow, to go on and on (of water, speech)
yonggor seme	ceaselessly
yumbu yumbu seme	to be in swarms
yur seme	billowing