

Summer 2013 / Manchu S-A

Tues 9 July

Interrogatives: *ai* and its derived forms

The use of the particles *-o* and *-ni* to mark questions by adding them to predicates has already been covered. In addition to these forms, there is a large set of interrogative words based on the following simple root words:

<i>we</i>	who
<i>ai</i>	what
<i>aibi</i>	where
<i>aiba</i>	where

Case particles may be used with all of these, giving, for instance:

<i>wei</i>	whose (gen.)
<i>aibe</i>	who (acc.)
<i>wede</i>	to whom (dat.)
<i>aibide</i>	at which place, where (loc.)
<i>aibaci</i>	from which place (abl.)

Thus:

<i>bi inu aibe aliyambi</i>	“What else shall I regret?”
<i>si aibide bihe</i>	“Where were you?”
<i>ini ama aibaci jihebi</i>	“Where did his father come from?”
<i>han i morin be bi wede bumbi</i>	“To whom shall I give the khan’s horse?”

Other common interrogatives include

<i>ya</i>	what, who, which
<i>adarame</i>	how, why

ya works mainly as an attributive rather than a stand-alone word. Thus:

sini ere unggihe bithede. ai gisun araha. ya biya de unggihe.
“In this letter you sent, what language did you write it in? In which month did you send it?”

ereci amasi ya niyalma nungneci
“After this, whatever person you harm . . .”

note also

yaya all kinds of, all manner of, various sorts of

adarame

damu mini jergi dubei aha. adarame. ejen i nesuken hese wasimbufi. fonjire be alime mutembi.
“Your majesty having sent a mild edict, how should a lowly slave as myself be able to bear your queries [after my health]?” (KXMaZPZZ)

By far the largest class of interrogative words involves compounds with *ai*, some of which express a range of idioms.

ai

<i>ai ocibe</i>	no matter what
<i>ai seme</i>	why?
<i>ai gelhun akū</i>	how (would I) dare?
<i>ai hendure</i>	not to mention
<i>aici (jergi)</i>	what kind of
<i>ai uttu</i>	how thus
<i>ai ai</i>	all kinds of

<i>ainambi</i>	how (is it)	
<i>ainaci ojoro</i>		What can be done?
<i>ainaci ainakini</i>		If that's how it is, that's how it is.
<i>ainaha</i>		What happened? What's wrong?
<i>ainaha seme</i>		no matter what (lit., "however it may be")
<i>ainahai</i>		how could it be
<i>ainara</i>		what sort of
<i>ainu</i>		how (is it), why

There is also *aika*, "what"

<i>aika baita</i>	what thing
but remember that <i>aika</i> also (and more commonly) means "if":	
<i>aikabade</i>	if, in the case that
<i>aikanambi</i>	if it is so

si ai turgunde doigonde wesimburakū

"Why have you not written [a memorial] for so long?" (KXMaZPZZ)

aha bi ai jergi niyalma

"What kind of person am I, your servant?" (KXMaZPZZ)

aha bi umesi emu dubei jergi buya niyalma. ai hūhuri fengšen bifi. enduringge jalan de banjinjifi.

"Your servant is a most insignificant and unworthy person. By what kind of good fortune did I come to be born in a golden age?" (KXMaZPZZ)

hese wasimbuhanngge. ere hergen. ai niyalma arahangge be donjibume wesimbu.

"Edict: Tell [me] who it was who wrote these characters." (KXMaZPZZ)

amasi Julesi baitakū yabufi ainambi

"What are you doing, going back and forth getting nothing done?" (YZMaZPZZ)

si ainu donjibume wesimbuhakū

"Why did you not report this?" (YZMaZPZZ)

damu ce ai uttu dusihiyen

"But how could they be this stupid?" (YZMaZPZZ)

ere sinde ai dalji baita. uttu largin wesimbufi ainambi. ulhicun akū

"What does this affair have to do with you? What's the idea of sending such a wordy memorial? Clueless." (YZMaZPZZ)

Si An i tacin ambula sain uthai julgei fe Manju i an kemuni bisire gese. ere tacin be Si An i bade ainaha seme halaci ojurakū.

"The customs of [the garrison at] Xi'an are quite fine; it's like the old Manchu ways of yore are still around. No matter what, these practices at Xi'an must not be changed." (KXMaZPZZ)

ainahai ere majige menggun be tebufi encu bade baitalambi.

"How could it be that he put away this small amount of money in order to use it on something else?" (expressing doubt, implying, "It's not possible") (QLMaZPZZ)

aha mini ser seme saha babe. ai gelhun akū yargiyan be jafame ejen de tucibume wesimburakū

"How would I dare not bring to His Majesty's attention the truth of the little bit that I know?" (QLMaZPZZ)

Arigūn beye jiyanggiyūn ofi hono uttu wesimbuhe bade fejergi urse geli ai hendure.

"If Arigūn, himself a garrison general, can yet write such a memorial, what can be said of people below him?"