Lesson 11: Negation

**Negation**

1. There are five major negative forms in Manchu: *waka, ume, unde, akū, and umai*.

2. *waka* is used to negate a nominal predicate – that is, it is roughly equivalent to the English “is not” or the Chinese 不是, except that it follows the noun that it negates – *ere niyalma mini ama waka* (This man is not my father). Note that *waka* can be the final word in a noun-modifying phrase – *yargiyan waka baita be ainu agdambi* (Why do you believe this matter which is not true?)

3. *ume* is used preceding an imperfective participle to create a prohibition/negative command – *ume genere* (Don’t go!)

4. *unde* is used following an imperfective participle to mean not yet – *aga nakara unde* (The rain has not stopped yet)

5. *akū* is the most commonly seen negative. On its own, it negates existence (“there is not” “isn’t here”), like the Chinese 没有 or 無 – *boode niyalma akū* (“there are no people in the house”)
   a. *akū* can also negate an attribute (for instance, an adjective), in which case its translation is more like that of *waka* (“is not” or 不) – *ubaci goro akū* (“it is not far from here”).
   b. Like *waka*, *akū* can be used in noun-modifying form – *günin akū niyalma* (“a person without thoughts,” i.e. a stupid person)
   c. *akū* is also the negative form used to negate verbs. It can only be combined with participles (ha/he/ho or ra/re/ro). Participles ending with ra, ha, re, ro, and ho will end with *akū* in the negative (that is, *ojoro* becomes *ojorakū*, *genere* becomes *generakū*), but those ending with he or (ke) keep the original e (*genehe* becomes *genehekū*) – *bi manju gisun be tacirakū* (“I am not studying Manchu” or “I will not study Manchu”), *si minde niru be buhekū* (“You did not give me the arrow”).
   d. Note that *raki* is sometimes shortened to *rkū*, especially in Sibe texts. In classical Manchu this is most commonly seen with the verb *sambi*, so “don’t know” is usually written *sarkū*.
   e. To negate verbal forms other than the participle, the following forms are used
      i. Imperative: *ume* + imperfective participle (see #3 above)
      ii. Conditional (ci): *akū* + *oci* – *si generakū oci, uthai simbe bucebuki* (If you do not go, then I shall kill you).
      iii. Optative (ki): this is very rare in Manchu texts, but either *ki* + *serakū* or *kū* + *oki* seems to be acceptable.
      iv. Adverbial modification (me): *rakū*. The imperfective participle in the negative can fill an adverbial role, and indeed, some negative participles have become words in their own right (e.g. *lakcarakū*,...
meaning “ceaselessly” or “without end” comes from lakcambi, meaning “to break off” or “to come to an end”)

f. When questions are formed with negative verbs, the question marker ni is frequently shortened to n – geneki serakūn (“Don’t you want to go?”).

g. Similar to Chinese, yes or no questions can be formed by putting a positive and negative verbal form in succession – mimbe cihalambi cihalarakū (“Do you love me or not?”).

6. umai, which precedes the phrase being negated, combines with akū or waka to enhance the negation, with umai taking the meaning “(not) at all,” “totally,” or “entirely” – umai akara baita akū (“there is absolutely nothing to be sad about”).
Practice sentences

Vocab
aha = slave
aika = if
ainaha seme = surely, categorically
ajigan = young
baimbi = to seek
booi sonjoho cooha = “Household Selected Soldiers” – a particular division of bannermen
buya juse = young children
dalji = relation, connection
dosinambi = to go in, to go to enter
eifu kūwaran = graveyard
ejen = lord
faššambi = to act vigorously, to exert effort, to take pains
fe = old
gelembi = to fear
ging hecen = 京城
halambi = to change, to correct
hoton = city
jiyanggiyūn = 將軍
kejine = many, a lot
kemuni = still, yet, often
mujakū = extremely
mukūn falga = clan
nenene tušan = refers to the former holder of a post (前任)
neneme = previously, formerly
nikacilambi = to act like a Chinese person
tacibumbi = to teach
tacin = habit
tookabumbi = to neglect, procrastinate
ulhisungge = clever, intelligent
ulhiyen ulhiyen i = gradually
umbure = to bury
urse = people
weile arambi = to punish