

## Lesson 21: Script IV, Transliterating Chinese

Many Manchu transliterations of Chinese words are obvious for anyone who knows pinyin. The Manchu word *wang* is the same as the pinyin *wang* (and so, usually, refers to the Chinese character 王). Other transliterations, though not absolutely identical to pinyin, are quite easy to decipher – the Manchu *dung* is the same as the pinyin *dong*, the Manchu *cu* is the same as the pinyin *chu* (easy if you remember that the Manchu *c* is pronounced like “ch”), the Manchu *k’ao* is the same as the pinyin *kao*, the Manchu *šeng* is the same as the pinyin *sheng*, and the Manchu *liu* is the same as the pinyin *liu*.

The following are a few conventions for transliteration that are more likely to trip you up, and so are worth learning. If you’re ever stuck, a complete list of pinyin/Manchu equivalences is found in Roth-Li, pp.377-381.

1. The Manchu *eo* represents the pinyin *ou* (so *ceo* = *chou*, *jeo* = *zhou*, etc).
2. The Manchu *oo* represents the pinyin *ao* (so *boo* = *bao*, *loo* = *lao*, etc).
3. The Manchu *uwe* represents the pinyin *uo* (so *guwe* = *guo* – note that sometimes Manchu will represent *uo* simply by using *o*, but it’s worth recognizing *uwe*)
4. The Manchu *ioi* represents the pinyin *ü* (so *ioi* = *yu*, *sioi* = *xu*, *lioi* = *lǜ*, etc). However, note that when the pinyin *ü* sound is followed by an *n* (as in *xun* or *qun*), Manchu will use *iyūn* (so *ciyūn* = *qun*) and when the *ü* sound is followed by *an* (as in *quan* or *xuan*) Manchu uses *iowan* (so *siowan* = *xuan*).
5. Many Chinese diphthongs have their vowels separated by either a *y* (if the first vowel in the diphthong is an *i*) or a *w* (if the first vowel in the diphthong is a *u*) when represented in Manchu. (So *liyan* = *lian*, *hūwang* = *huang*, *jiyei* = *jie*, *cuwan* = *chuan*, *biyoo* = *biao*, etc)
6. The *j* in pinyin can be represented with either a *j* or a *g* in Manchu (so both *giyan* and *jiyan* = *jian*) but note that the Manchu *g* can also represent a pinyin *g* (so *ging* = *jing*, but *geo* = *gou*).
7. The pinyin *g* and *k* will always be represented by a front consonant, so if the following vowel is a back vowel, the special forms *g’* and *k’* will be used. Remember that these letters link to vowels in the same way as do the front *g* and *k* (so don’t for instance, mistake *g’an* for *g’a*).
8. The pinyin *x* is sometimes represented by a Manchu *s* and sometimes by a Manchu *h* (so both *hiyūn fu* and *siyūn fu* are possible forms of *xunfu* – 巡撫)
9. The pinyin *q* is sometimes represented by a Manchu *c* and sometimes by a Manchu *k* (so both *ciyan* and *kiyan* are possible forms of *qian*).
10. Remember the special rules for certain pronunciations of the pinyin *i*. *Chi*, *zhi*, *shi*, are written with the regular Manchu *i*, but using special consonant forms (*shi* is written as Manchu *ši*, *chi* and *zhi* have unique forms of *c* and *j* marked with a circle). Pinyin *si*, meanwhile, uses the normal *s*, but a special form of *i* (also used with *ts* to represent pinyin *ci*). Pinyin *zi* is written by attaching a short left-facing tail to Manchu *dz*.
11. Remember the special letters used for Chinese sounds: Manchu *dz* = pinyin *z*, Manchu *ž* = pinyin *r* (in initial position only, pinyin *er* is given as Manchu *el*), Manchu *ts* = pinyin *c*.

The back of this page has some Chinese place names, names, and words written in Manchu (words which might well appear in a Qing document). Try to identify each Chinese term.

