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SOME ISSUES ON THE MONGOLIAN AND TURKISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE “NİŞAN SAMAN-I BIDHE”

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Abstract

There are some literary works, that make or represent more than half of the literature of their languages. The position of “Nišan saman-i bidhe” is like that, in terms of Manchu literature. Among the archives full of Manchu manuscripts, it stands as the folk narrative that had the chance to be saved in written form. The manuscripts are important, and massive, yet, they consist mostly of either decrees, reports, or translations of Chinese classics. But Nišan, as a folk tale, represents the language of its people.

Luckily, Grebenshchikov had the opportunity to secure some scripts of the tale, by which we the world could have some insight into the tale, and the world it represents.

It provides a wide range of vocabulary, from multiple topics, covering the daily lives of hunting, military to religion, family relations to state structure. In addition, it sheds some light on spoken language, as the spelling of some words is not regular.

With the translations to sixteen languages, some concept as “Nishanology” is forming. The authors have made a recent translation of Nišan into Turkish, as a part of a Ph.D. study. In this paper, we are going to try to have a closer insight into some details of the process. For this aim, we will consider the relationship between the three languages, Manchurian, Mongolian, and Turkish; consider some unique features between these three, Altaic languages; and mention the glossary, which is due to appear at the end of the work, in addition to some interesting vocabulary from the glossary.

Keywords: Nišan, shaman, Nishanology, Manchu, folk tale, translation, Altaistic.



“NİŞAN SAMAN-I BIDHE”NİN MOĞOLCA VE TÜRKÇE ÇEVİRİLERİ ÜZERİNE KİMİ DEĞERLENDİRMELER

Öz

Kendi dillerinin edebiyatının yarısından fazlasını oluşturan ya da temsil eden kimi edebiyat yapıtları vardır. “Nişan saman-i bidhe”nin konumu da Mançu edebiyatı açısından böyledir. Mançu yazmalarıyla dolu arşivler arasında, yazılı olarak saklanabilmiş bir halk anlatısı olarak yerini korumaktadır. Diğer yazmalar da kuşkusuz önemli ve çok sayıdadır, ama çoklukla ya buyruklar ile raporlardan, ya da Çince klasiklerin çevirilerinden oluşurlar. Oysa Nişan, bir halk öyküsü olarak, halkının dilini temsil ediyor.

Neyse ki, Grebenşçikov'un elde edebildiği öykünün kimi yazmaları sayesinde, bizler öyküye ve temsil ettiği dünyaya yakından bakabilme şansımız oldu.

Bu metin günlük yaşamdan avcılığa, askerlikten dine, aile ilişkilerinden devlet yapısına çok sayıda konu başlığını içeren geniş bir söz varlığı sağlıyor. Buna ek olarak, kimi sözcüklerin yazımının düzenli olmadığına bakarsak, konuşma diline de bir ölçüde ışık tutuyor.

On altı dile çevirisiyle, bir tür “Nişanoloji” oluşmaya başladı. Bu makalenin yazarları, bir Ph.D. çalışmasının parçası olarak yakın zamanda Nişan'ı Türkçeye çevirdi. Bu yazıda, bu sürecin kimi ayrıntılarına daha yakından bakmaya çalışacağız. Bu amaçla, Mançuca, Moğolca ve Türkçe arasındaki ilişkiyi irdeleyeceğiz; bu üç Altay dili arasındaki kimi özgün özellikleri değerlendireceğiz; yapıtın sonunda karşımıza çıkacak olan sözlükçe ile bu sözlükçeden birkaç ilgi çekici söz varlığına değineceğiz.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Nişan, kam, Nişanology, Mançu, halk öyküsü, çeviri, Altayistik.

1. Introduction

One direction based on the composition titled “Nişan saman-i bidhe,” which is a very important source for the Manchu oral tradition, has been built within the world’s Altaistic field, and formed a complete study frame as “*Nishanology*.”

It is not clear when this tale of a Manchu shamaness started to occur. There are some researchers who mention that this tale of a shamaness was narrated among the peoples of northern Manchuria in the form of a legend or a tale, and spread to wider audience.

There is a good number of studies, publications, translations, and individual prints of this literary work¹ in different countries such as Mongolia, China, Russia, Korea, Japan, Italy, Romania, Germany, United Kingdom, Hungary, Türkiye and so on.

There are couple of variants of the Manchu original of this literal work. For instance, during his expedition in northeast China, the Soviet anthropologist A.V.Grebenshchikov bought one manuscript near Qiqihar in 1908, and another manuscript in 1909. In 1913, during his visit to Vladivostok, a person called Degdenge offered him a third manuscript. In other words, Grebenshchikov had found three manuscripts, and among them, the most detailed is this third, and it was printed in Moscow in 1961. This 1913 manuscript is in very wide common usage. It consists 92 pages, the first 69 featuring 10, and the rest 11 lines.

Volkova² pointed that, in the Qiqihar manuscript, the tenses were separately written.

¹ Stary, G. (1983). *Three unedited Manuscripts of the Manchu epic tale “Nişan saman-i bidhe”*, Facsimile edition with transcription and Introduction, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 101 + XIII pp.



Again, Korean Prof. Seon Baeg In made the first translation and publication of “Nišan saman-i bidhe” in Korean.³ In the second publishing in 2008, he mentioned that he acquired a new variant. Oyuuntsetseg mentioned that, among the traditional tales, there is an Evenk variant which is different than “Nišan saman-i bidhe.”⁴

It is possible to evaluate “Nišan saman-i bidhe” as a tale that reflects the folk oral narrative. In the script that reached to us today, the influence of the Buddhist religious teaching was reflected in a good deal. Yet, since the main character of the tale is a shamaness, the shamanic belief and many details related with it are very common in this literary folk tale.

In Mongolia, “*Нишан удганы бичиг*” was translated by L. Mishig⁵, and published in limited number of copies for the first time in 1995. In 2009, T. Otgontuul added the photographs of the Manchu original,⁶ offered it to the public use, together with the scientific transliteration of the abovementioned manuscript, and the original manuscript study, and she specifically pointed at the differences between the spoken and written varieties of the Manchu language. She also compared the shamanistic rules and traditions, and the related terminology as appearing in this tale with the Mongolian shamanistic tradition, and added upto three hundred explanations in the notes.

The first Turkish translation⁷ of “Nišan saman-i bidhe” came relatively in a recent time. It was based on the work of Nowak and Durrant. It aroused some interest to both the shamanic culture and the Manchu identity among the Turkish youth.

The author made the Turkish translation, taking the 1913 manuscript acquired by A.V.Grebenshchikov into their focus. Mishig’s translation also provided a lot of help, and it will be mentioned below in this paper. Eventhough there are some more similar features between Turkish and Manchurian, apparently Mongolian is a good intermediary between the other two, which have been distant from each other for a substantially long period.

As a translator for twenty nine years now, this was the author’s first translation about Manchurian. And as languages with similar structures, there are some details the author would like to point about the translation between Altaic languages. The author made the translation twice, former as a rehearsal, and latter as a study source for their Ph.D. work. During this work, the author made use of the classical Turkish, specifically in terms of vocabulary in the fields of animal husbandry, horse harnesses, hunting, military, religioun, and among them prominently shamanic practices where they found it more appropriate. This effort resulted in a new book. At the end of the book, they provided a glossary for three languages, hoping that it might be useful for future and comparative studies in any of the three languages.

There is a number of ways in transliterating Manchu script into Latin. During the entire process, the author resorted to the one as accepted by the National University of Mongolia.

² Волкова, М.П. (1961). *Нишань самана битхэ (Предание о нишанской шаманке): Издание текста, перевод и предисловие*, Институт народов азии, Академия наук СССР, с.1.

³ Seon B.I. [成百仁] (1974), 滿洲샤만神歌 [*Nisan Saman-i Bidhe*].

⁴ Цыбенков, Б.Д. (2020). *О фольклоре эвенков Хулун-Буира// Эпос “Гэсэр” - духовное наследие народов Центральной Азии*, pp. 202-204, Издательство БНЦ СО РАН, Улан-Уде.

⁵ Л.Мишиг (1995). *Нишан удганы бичиг*. МУИС, МСХ, Улаанбаатар.

⁶ We have two manuscripts of “*Nišan saman-i bidhe*” in our hands, and from these two, we made use of the 1961 original (from the manuscript corpus of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia in the Russian Academy of Sciences) from A. V. Grebenshchikov.

⁷ Özalan, U. (2021), *Mançuca Nišan Şaman Hikâyesi*, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, Ankara.



2. Translation Process

The author translated the “Nišan saman-i bidhe” more than twice. His introduction with the text and the first activity occurred in the Manchurian sources class during his Ph.D. In the lectures, the text was being examined together with its Mongolian translation. In his process, the lecturer had stated that she thinks the a bit of older Mongolian fits more suitable in the translation of Manchu texts. We’ll revisit this information below.

Since the author had translated the Secret History of Mongols from Mongolian to Turkish, his department wanted from him, as his Ph.D. work, to translate the Nišan text to Turkish, even though translations are not evaluated, and to conduct a trilingual study. Thus, the first full translation started in the spring-summer 2023. This was some kind of pre-translation. The author was both getting to know the text, and was looking for suitable correspondings to the terms he encountered.

Here, we need to specifically mention the vocabulary, as appearing in the text, regarding the animal husbandry, hunting, military, and religion. In the language of the Turks, as a society with a herder, nomadic past, there is a rich vocabulary about the animal husbandry, hunting, and military, which may directly correspond to the ones in the text. In this regard, the approach of using the older Mongolian terms, as mentioned during the lectures, would be appropriate for Turkish, too. For this aim, beginning with the 8th century Orkhon Inscriptions, the Turfan manuscripts and the Divan by Kashgari provides an important vocabulary. About the matter of belief, even though the Turkic societies have adopted other religions a long time ago, there are significant groups among them, who carry the shamanic religion on, to this day. On the other hand, whichever belief they might have assumed, they have traditions and practices from the shamanic belief, which they carried to our day. Again, we find a valuable vocabulary from the manuscripts issued in Turfan, dating back to the early eleventh century. The aid from such sources had a huge support to the translation.

In connection with that, for instance, the author preferred to translate i.e., the wording “ayta morin” as “at yunt.” The reason is, that the Manchu word “ayta” would be “at” and “morin” would be “yunt” in classical Turkish. Again, it was more appropriate to translate the word “yegse” i.e., the headgear of a shaman person, as “ülbürek” into Turkish, rather than “başlık” or any other similar word.

That first one, as also mentioned above, was a pre-translation. The second translation started during the autumn 2023. This time, being acquainted to the text, the author preferred to produce a new translation work, independent from the previous raw one. He had the confidence of knowing the text, but even though, under the normal conditions, he could translate the text in three days, he didn’t make haste, but proceeded by translating one page of the manuscript per each day. And that, neglecting the spare days in between, makes ninety two days. In the end, some terms needed to be discovered, still. Finally, by the beginning of 2024, the translation was ready.

During this process, the author made use of the dictionary by the compiler named “ajiu,” as well as the Manchurian-Mongolian-Turkish dictionary he himself produced during his study period in Uxulja (Yining). These two dictionaries, both were not sufficient for such a comprehensive text. Hence, a third dictionary/source was needed.



3. Translation Between the Altaic Languages

It's worth to mention that since the Altaic languages are “almost identical in terms of their syntax,” the translation is relatively easy. In this case, moreover, the loss in meaning is minimal, and it produces a closer translation to the original text.

Right in this topic, there are two examples the author brings in the scope of the text of Secret History of Mongols, which he translated over fifteen years ago. He made the translation, based on Ts. Damdinsüren's edit.

Issue 74, poetry:

Ц. Дамдинсүрэн's text

Онон мөрнийг өгсөж уруудаж

Олирс мойлыг түүж явж

Өчүүхэн хөвүүдээ хайрлан тэжээж

Өдөр шөнийг аргацсан өнгөрүүлэв.

M. L. Kaya's text

Onon kıyısında inip çıkıp

Kuş kirazı toplayıp

Küçücük oğullarını sevgiyle besleyip

Gündüz geceyi bir biçimde geçirdi.

And then, the earlier Turkish translation by Temir was based on the German translation by Haenisch:

Haenisch's text

Lief sie am Onan-fluß aufwärts und abwärts,

Las Ebereschen und Moilcho-Beeren auf und

Fütterte Tag und Nacht die Kehlen der Kinder.

A. Temir's text

Onan nehri boyunca bir aşağı, bir yukarı koştı,

Yabani armut ve moyilho (meyvası) toplayarak

Gece gündüz çocuklarını besledi.

So, should we compare the two Turkish translations, the result is:

M. L. Kaya's text

Onon kıyısında inip çıkıp

Kuş kirazı toplayıp

Küçücük oğullarını sevgiyle besleyip

Gündüz geceyi bir biçimde geçirdi.



A. Temir's text

Onan nehri boyunca bir aşağı, bir yukarı koştu,
Yabani armut ve moyilho (meyvası) toplayarak
Gece gündüz çocuklarını besledi.

Here, as can be seen, Temir's text is in three lines, in parallel with the German text, rather than the original, and it could not produce correct words for the given wild fruits.

Issue 111, poetry:

Ц. Дамдинсүрэн's text

Хулд муу шувуу
Хулгана оготно идэх заяатай байтал
Хун галууг идье гэж
Хошуугаа билүүдэх мэт

M. L. Kaya's text

Kötü tuygun kuşunun
Yazgısı sıçan yemek iken
Kuğu kaz yiyeyim diye
Gagasını bilemesi gibi

Haenisch's text

Ein gemeiner Vogel wie der Bussard
Hat nach seinem Lose Mäuse und Feldmäuse zur Nahrung.
Dabei aber begehrt er, Schwäne und Keiher zu fressen.

A. Temir's text

Kötü huladu⁸ kuşu için
Sıçan ve farelerle
Beslenmek mukadder olduğu halde,
Kuğu kuşlarına ve turnalara göz koyarak
Tamahkârlık eder.

Again, comparing the two Turkish translations, the result is:

⁸ "huladu=хулд" harrier. In the footnote, it is explained as "crow."



M. L. Kaya’s text	A. Temir’s text
Kötü tuygun kuşunun	Kötü huladu kuşu için
Yazgısı sıçan yemek iken	Sıçan ve farelerle
Kuğu kaz yiyeyim diye	Beslenmek mukadder olduğu halde,
Gagasını bilemesi gibi	Kuğu kuşlarına ve turnalara göz koyarak
	Tamahkârlık eder.

And here, again, Temir’s text is even longer than the German translation, but still in parallel to it. In the text, he didn’t give the meaning of “huladu” but in the footnotes mentions it as “karga” i.e., crow, whereas it is a harrier (hense, Turkish “tuygun”) in reality. He also translated “галуу” as turna, i.e., crane, which is supposed to be “a goose.”

4. The Contribution of Mongolian

Eventhough the coreland Manchurian is technically dead, there still is a means to study it efficiently. The author resorted to that way. There was (and hopefully is) a department dedicated to Sibe-Manchu studies, at the Ili Normal University, Uighur Autonomous Region. Sibe, the people of the nearest county of Cabcal, still spoke (and hopefully speak also today) and use the language in their everyday’s life. There are some differences between the tow varieties, Manchu and Sibe, but those are not difficult to detect, or to distinguish. Accessing to that remote location is not easy, yet, it is not impossible, either. Having lecturers from the mentioned university might be an easier alternative, though.

Still, the matter that the author wants to mention here is that Turkish and Manchurian had lived next to each other for some period. They have many common features with Mongolian. These three have a very odd case in this regard. Some features of Mongolian, standing geographically right in the middle of the other two are similar with that of Turkish, and some with that of Manchurian, as expected. But meanwhile, since Mongolian has some unique features of its own, those features are common or similar between Turkish and Manchurian. Among them, there are similar vocabulary, as well as syntactic examples. Since these make the matter of the author’s Ph.D. study, they will not be mentioned here in detail.

On the other hand, Turkish and Manchurian remained far from each other in a long time, and the studies in this field are close to none, therefore it was a challenging process to try to translate such a detailed Manchu text into Turkish, even for a translator of about twenty nine years. So, there is a need for a mediator, in order to better understand some concepts and structures. Mongolian, which stood together with Manchurian for centuries, which compiled a large archive, and which, moreover, has a rich study corpus, perfectly resolved this deficiency.

Thus, during the translation, the author made use of the L. Mishig translation, and the online dictionary prepared by Prof. Kuribayashi Hitoshi was very beneficial. This dictionary is only Manchu-Mongol, and T. Otgontuul has important contribution in its preparation. So, it offered a certain solution in finding the vocabulary, in topics such as wild animals, plants, shamanic tradition, Buddhist tradition, bureaucracy, etc., which do not exist in other sources. Study of Manchu language, without the Mongolian sources, is almost impossible.

Here, for a comparison, the author would like to give an example. The phrase beginning in the page 51 of the manuscript, when Nišan starts her shamanic mass, might portrait the comparison for the rich variety of vocabulary, too.



Ma. kerani kerani dergi alin-de kerani kerani tomoho kerani kerani degdere yasha kerani kerani čangling alin-de kerani kerani čaqûra moo čanggisa kerani kerani mangqan alin-de kerani kerani tomoho kerani kerani mangmoo manggisa kerani kerani uyun da meihe kerani kerani jaqûn da jabjan kerani kerani wehe uydun kerani kerani sele guwan-de kerani kerani tomoho kerani kerani taran tasha kerani kerani onioqo lefu kerani kerani alin-be šurdere kerani kerani aisin ingyali kerani kerani muyden-be šurdere kerani kerani menggun ingyali kerani kerani deyere giyahûn kerani kerani dalaha daimin kerani kerani alaha daimin kerani kerani nai jule se kerani kerani uyun uri kerani kerani juwan juwe faidan kerani kerani geren julese kerani kerani hûdun hahi kerani kerani deyeme hoton-de kerani kerani dosifi yajireo

Мо. кэрани кэрани зүүн ууланд кэрани кэрани оршигч кэрани кэрани дэгдэгч шувуу кэрани кэрани Чанлин ууланд кэрани кэрани хар хус модны улаан хүзүүтнүүд кэрани кэрани манхан (элсэн) ууланд кэрани кэрани оршигч кэрани кэрани царс модны мангиснууд кэрани кэрани есөн алд могой кэрани кэрани найман алд аварга могой кэрани кэрани чулуун нүхэн гэр кэрани кэрани захын төмөр өрөөнд кэрани кэрани оршигч кэрани кэрани газрын барс кэрани кэрани зээх өтөг кэрани кэрани уулыг тойрогч кэрани кэрани алтан цэгцгий кэрани кэрани мандалыг тойрогч кэрани кэрани мөнгөн хөх цэгцгий кэрани кэрани халигч харцгай кэрани кэрани тэргүүн их бүргэд кэрани кэрани алаг бүргэд

кэрани кэрани ходогчингууд кэрани кэрани есөн сэгсээр [хөмрөг] кэрани кэрани арван хоёр эгнээ болон кэрани кэрани олон ходогчин, кэрани кэрани хурдан яаруу кэрани кэрани нисэн хотод кэрани кэрани орж авчирмуу

Tu. Kerani kerani doĝu(daki) daĝda kerani kerani yerleşen kerani kerani sıçrayan kuş kerani kerani Çanliĝ daĝında kerani kerani karakayın ağacı(nın) elmabaşları kerani kerani Mañqan (kum) daĝında kerani kerani yerleşen kerani kerani meşe ağacı(nın) (dişi) porsukları kerani kerani dokuz kulaç yılan kerani kerani sekiz kulaç böke kerani kerani taş oyuĝu kerani kerani demir kurganda kerani kerani yerleşen kerani kerani yer kaplamı kerani kerani ayı porsuĝu kerani kerani daĝı dolaşan kerani kerani altın kuyruksallalyan kerani kerani küreyi dolaşan kerani kerani gümüş kuyruksallayan kerani kerani uçan doĝan kerani kerani başçı kartal kerani kerani ala kartal kerani kerani yeryüzü kutları kerani kerani dokuz sele kerani kerani on iki sıra kerani kerani pekçok kut kerani kerani tez çabuk kerani kerani uçup şehre kerani kerani girerek getiresiniz.

5. Glossary

During the working process, the author and his advisor considered adding an index at the end of the text, which later on they made into a book. But since the index would increase the size of the relatively large book by eight or nine fold, i.e., approximately eight thousand pages, to a size that no one would want to read, they gave this task up. Still, they added a glossary, to the end of the book, that consists of the nominative cases of the nouns, and the infinitive forms of the verbs that appear in the text. The text contains different spelling for some words, which shows the influence of the spoken variety of the narrator, or their dialectical difference. In the glossary, though, such words are given according to their standard spelling, which were given in the footnotes to the text.

This glossary consists of four columns.

In the first column, the nominative cases of the nouns and the infinitive forms of the verbs from the Manchu text were listed in the alphabetical order. Some words were written different



than the standart spelling, reflecting the spoken variety by the source person. Such details were pointed at the footnotes to the translation, so here, the words were given according to their standard spelling. Again, though in Manchu dictionaries, the verbs appear as their future tense forms, i.e., with the -mbi suffix, here the authors preferred infinitive forms without suffix, i.e., abala-, afa-, etc.

In the second column, Mongolian corresponds were given for each.

There are present day Turkish corresponds in the third column. And in the fourth column, the authors tried to give the classical Turkish counterparts, as much as it was possible to find. In this column, for instance, it would claim your attention, that the concepts are missing, such as “Orus,” which appeared in a later period, as well as the vocabulary that cannot be obtained from the sources of the period. This means, this glossary is open to development.

In this form, the glossary looks like this:

951	ongyo-	март-	unut-	unut-
952	ongyolo	урьд	önce(ki)	öñ
953	ongyoho	гэдрэг	sırt üstü	
954	oñniqa	зээх өтөг	ayı porsuğu	
955	ordo	орд	konak	ordu
956	orho	өвс	ot	ot
957	orin	хорь	yirmi	yigirmi
958	oron	орон	yer, konum, zemin	orun
959	oton	тэвш	tepsi	tepsi

The authors opine that this glossary is an important contribution to the Altaic studies, firstly in terms of double or tripple comparison of the vocabulary in the three languages; secondly in terms of the vocal and vocabular changes that Turkish underwent in the last millenium; thirdly in terms of including some important and interesting findings regarding the vocabulary of the three languages.

Making use of this occasion, the author would like to point to two details, derived from the abovementioned glossary.

One, in the three languages, there are three seperate forms for ordinary drum such as

Ma. imčin (it was scribed as “yemčen” throughout the manuscript)

Mo. keŋgerge (хэнгэрэг)

Tü. köbrüg/köbürge

while there are very similar examples for the shaman’s drum, such as

Ma. duŋgen

Mo. düngür (дүнгэр)



Tü. tünjür

They are in the opinion that this vocabulary wouldn't be borrowing, since the shamanism has a tradition with a very long past.

Two, is even more interesting that the first one. There are verbs in the three languages for “to wee” that suggests a common origin:

Ma. site-

Mo. sigе- (шээ-)

Tü. sid-

Here, the attention is driven to the detail that the vocabulary in this field are among the primal conceptual signs of each language, and that no language of earth would borrow it from an other language. Therefore, these verbs in three languages must have originated from the ancestor language.

6. Discussion

The paper is mostly about any studies to be conducted between the Altaic languages, namely Manchurian, Mongolian, and Turkish, here. This study aims to compare these three languages, based on the text of “Nišan saman-i bidhe,” with a piece of hope to some contribution to the field.

But this is not the beginning of this voyage, as it is not the end of it. The studies in comparative Altaistics are very scarce, and there is a vast area to be covered and discovered. So, the author personally wants to invite anybody interested in languages, linguistics, Siberian peoples, and languages to join in this trip. Certainly, acquiring the required knowledge of each of these languages is important. Required knowledge of some language, to give an example, is the knowledge that one can use while bargaining at a local market. Otherwise, it does not go beyond the scope of comparing some tables on the pages, without knowing their accuracy.

Definitely, the studies of the Manchu language have the least chance among them. The main body of the language is in a desperate state. But its controversial off-shoot, the Sibe variant is still alive. The author has another work, in comparing the Sibe and Manchu lects, so here, we will not dive into that topic in detail. Still, the author would like to drive everybody's attention to studying Sibe by any means.

With the number of works in this field increasing, the knowledge will increase, as well as our mistakes will also come to light. So, we all need to go beyond spreading the same old information and put our hands under the rock. Combining our abilities is going to help the formation of a stronger comparative Altistic field.

7. Conclusion

The studies and works on “Nišan saman-i bidhe” have increased to form a concept that we may comfortably name “Nishanology.” It is good that it claims the attention of many researchers and scholars from different portions of the world. Yet, what is done until today is just some portion of the coastline of an ocean. We are in the beginning phase of a whole journey.

As mentioned above, the text and the study of “Nišan saman-i bidhe” is important in that it includes vocabulary and covers topics from a very wide spectrum, and important details about



the everyday lives of the once-Manchu speakers. The author strongly believes that the information to be achieved through such studies would shed light on the matters, concerning any types of relations the Manchu language might have had with the other languages.

Without the Manchu language and its knowledge, the Altaic studies are always going to remain short of some of its features. Definitely, there is good information about Altaics that we may obtain from the Manchu studies. The vocabulary, and word formation would certainly give us some clues, which would not be completed by this single study, mentioned in this paper.

Sadly, the Manchu studies are confined to the official documents from or addressed to the Qing court. By this, the author does not mean that the studies on the Manchu official papers are useless. They are essential, they are basic. But, when the first quarter of the twenty-first century is about to be over, we need to go a little further than basics. The author’s lecturers at the university mentioned that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the nobles used to speak Manchurian in their everyday lives. Now, one century after, there is no trace of it left, other than a very rich archive of official documents. Once an imperial official language, should not go into the void, only after one century. So, here, the author would like to emphasize the importance of Sibe language study and knowledge once more.

The authors of this paper are aware that the above-mentioned work is just a very unremarkable drop in the ocean but strongly invite anybody to join in this adventure. May the “Nišan saman-i bidhe” mark the beginning of a new direction in the chain of studies, related to both Manchu and Altaic linguistics.

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