Chapter One

Introductions

Grammar 1.1:

1. Word order and copular sentences

The basic word order of the Manchu language is S-O-V (subject-object-verb). The subject is unmarked in Manchu. Everything else in the sentence will generally carry a grammatical particle to indicate its relationship to the subject and verb. S-V-O word order means that a sentence will always finish with a verb. The only exception to this rule is the basic copular sentence. Although Manchu has several copular verbs (bi, inu, akū), they are occasionally omitted. Manchu requires no verb or other form of conjugation in these cases. For example, the above sentence:
Boode gemu sain?
Is your family well?

Omits the copular verb. Copular sentences can also end in negations (akū) and the word inu, which serves the function of the Chinese word ye 也因此

na i gorgan serengge. singgeri. ihan. tasha. gūlmahūn. muduri. meihe. morin. honin. bonio. coko. indahūn. ulgiyan inu.

The earthly branches are mouse, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, chicken, dog, and pig. (MG 19)

2. The particle de (locative, dative)

The particle de shows the location in time and space as well as the destination of verbs of motion. De can occur independently or can be added to a word. There are six primary uses of de, for now we will concern ourselves with its locative functions.

1. Location in space
De shows the location of something.
Boode – in the house, referring to the people in your household
Tasha alin de tehe – Tigers lived in the mountains
Abka de deyere gasha bi – Those flying in the sky are birds (MaGr, 211)

2. Location in time
De shows when something occurred, but de is not used for all time phrases.
Ere biya de - During this month
Ere erinde – During this time
Jihe de –

3. Destination of verbs of motion
De is used to show the relationship between locations and motion verbs. Usually rendered as to, on, towards, upon
Lefu boode jihe – Lefu went home
Honin alin de genehe – The sheep went to the mountain
Si abkai de genehe – You went to heaven.

3. The interrogative

Questions are formed in two ways. The most common way is to include interrogative words such as “which” ya or “where” aibi, aiba. These will be introduced later on. The second way to make an interrogative is to attach the suffix –o to the end of verbal forms.
Age jiheo – Brother, you’ve come?
Alin de tasha bio – Are there tigers in the mountain?
Honin boode geneheo – Did the sheep go home?
4. **Perfective particle ha/he/ho (ka/ke/ko)**

Ha/he/ho is a verbal suffix that attaches to verb stems (the part of verbs that remains when –mbi is removed eg. jimbi → ji-)

Manchu conjugation is done according to the rules of vowel harmony.

- **ha** pairs with back vocalic roots (a, o ū)
  
  \[ sambi \rightarrow saha \] – known

- **he** with front vocalic roots (e,i,u)
  
  \[ genembi \rightarrow genie \] – went, gone

- **ho** verbs with round vocalic roots
  
  \[ Toktomb \rightarrow tokotoho \] – fixed, settled

**Ka/ke/ko** are somewhat irregular and will be introduced later.

There are four major functions for the perfective participle

1. Conjugate verbs in the perfect (completed) form to function as a predicate.
   
   \[ Honin abka de genehe \] – The sheep went to Heaven

2. As an attribute
   
   \[ Jihe tasha \] – the tiger that came

3. As an object (more on this later)
   
   \[ Si gisurehe be donjiha \] – You heard what was said

4. With particles and postpositions
   
   \[ Si genehe de \] – when you went
   
   \[ Si genehe manggi \] – after you went
Grammar 1.2

1. Genitive -i, -ni

The particles i and ni (after n, anf ng) most commonly serve to show genitive case (possessive) relations. It also occasionally serves as an instrumental. After a vowel i is frequently added to the word, whereas after consonants it is written separately. Following n and ng it is written as ni.

1. Possessive genitive

Ya nirui – Which unit [do you belong to]?
Honin ni boo – the goat’s home
Oros i gūsa – Russia’s banner

2. Attributive genitive
Gūsai niyalama – Person of the Banner → bannerman

3. Instrumental

Morin ni genehe – Went by horse

2. Possessive nominal/adjectival suffix –ngge
This common suffix serves to nominalize verbs. It functions much like the Chinese 者 or mono in Japanese.
The suffix –ngge attaches to conjugated verbs (stem+sufﬁx) and reﬂects their tense.
Genehengge = genehe to have gone+ ngge nominalized = the ones who have gone.
Alin de tehengge – the ones who have lives in the mountains

Si ya gūsangge – Which banner’s are you?

This construction is frequently employed to mirror the Chinese 者…也 as in
Alin de tehengge tasha inu = the ones who lives in the mountain were tigers.

3. Topic Marker oci
Oci always comes at the end of a clause and it has two major functions. The most common function is as
the conditional “if.”

1. Si genhe oci… - If you went...
    Monggo gūsai oci ya jalan – If you are of the Mongol banners, which company?

And as a topic marker to show emphasis rendered roughly as “as for”

2. Honin oci alin de tembi – As for goats, they live in the mountains.

Translation exercise: Try to transcribe and translate the following passage from Muwa Gisun
kubuhe: Bordered

fulgiyan: Red

hala: last name

gebu: name

ai: what