

Clarifying Mongolian translation of “Manchu Anatomy” preserved in the National Library of Mongolia

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Abstract

Foreign and domestic scholars have not written about the existence of the Mongolian translation of "Deger-e-ēce toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçig" (Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body) or Mongolian version of the “Manchu Anatomy,” which was completed in the middle of the 18th century and retained in Mongolia until the end of the 1990s. Therefore, we decided to clarify the Mongolian translation of “Manchu anatomy” and the history of how it was preserved in Mongolia. From a historical point of view, the “Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body” was a textbook on the human body's structure and the research work of doctors in ancient Mongolian medical schools. Moreover, it proves that the development and use of the combination of Western medicine and traditional Mongolian medicine dates back to the 18th century.

KEYWORDS: Manchu anatomy, Mongolian translation, scriptures, ciowan lu bithe

1. Introduction

Academician Rinchen Bimbayev (Mongolian) published a photocopy of the book “Deger-e-ēce toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçig” (Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body) or internationally recognized as “Manchu Anatomy” **preserved** in the National Library of Mongolia in 1971 [1]. In his foreword to the photocopy book, he said: "Ancient medical book first translated from Latin into Mongolian in the 18th century, it is a unique and rare handwritten book with pictures of that time." Interestingly, this book was translated from Latin into Mongolian; therefore, we decided to expand our research in this area. Unfortunately, our research has determined that it was translated from Manchu into Mongolian, not from Latin into Mongolian. However, there are two main reasons why academician Rinchen Bimbayev noted that the book was translated from Latin into Mongolian. In 1971, Mongolia was a socialist country, and most information on internationally published articles was obtained only in Russian. Other foreign languages, especially English, were banned. At that time, the research articles on “Manchu Anatomy” were not published in Russian; thus, they were translated from Latin due to some of the content of the “Manchu Anatomy” and lack of information. From 1930 to the end of the 1990s, there was no official study of the “Deger-e-ēce toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçig." The Manchu book source is unavailable in the National Library of Mongolia. It is believed that no researcher was trained to research the only copy of the book in traditional Mongolian script. Due to Mongolia’s transition to a market economy in 1990, the social, economic, and political system changed, and it became possible to study ancient medical books and scriptures and read scientific articles written in English. Consequently, in the mid-1990s, we identified and studied the first English-language research paper on the “Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body,” published under the title “Manchu Anatomy.” The first research article we read was T.Kue-Hing Young's "French Jesuits and the Manchu Anatomy - how China Missed the Vesalian Revolution," published in 1974. Based on this research work and other sources (Marta E, Hanson 2006, Junsei Watanabe (2008), Daniel Asen 2009), the “Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body” was written by Dominique Parrenin (1665–1741) in Manchu language [2]. This Christian missionary first came to the Manchu Qing Dynasty in 1698. In addition,

some foreign researchers confuse another incomplete translation book, "Ge ti chiuvan lu bichig," published in Inner Mongolia in 1929, with the book "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" preserved in Mongolia [3]. Therefore, our research team presents the first results by investigating the difference between the Mongolian translation and the Manchu original script and how the complete Mongolian translation is preserved in the National Library of Mongolia.

Differences between Mongolian translations of "Manchu Anatomy" and other sources

Over the last 20 years, our research results have found two different Mongolian translations of "Manchu Anatomy" or "Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body," one kept in Mongolia and the other in Inner Mongolia, China. The title of the translation stored in Mongolia is "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг." In Manchu, it is called "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe." A manuscript written with a brush in old Mongolian script (The first volume has four parts; the second has two). These books are currently the only manuscripts preserved in Mongolia. We believe these books were translated together in the late 1740s when the Mongolian Shunkhan Tanjur¹ was translated. Since the last two parts of the second volume are missing, we translated them from the original Manchu version written by Dominique Parrenin in 1723 into Mongolian in 2022 [4]. Currently, all eight parts of the two volumes are in Mongolian, with translations of 6 parts in old and two parts in new. Foreign and domestic researchers and scholars have not studied these books since 1924 until the end of 1990. On the other hand, a book called "Ge ti ciowan lu bichig." It was translated from Manchu into Mongolian in 1929 and printed in Inner Mongolia. The original book is now kept in Inner Mongolia, China. It is entirely different from the books stored in our country and is not complete.

For example, there are the following differences, including:

1. The titles of the books are different. The name of the book that is kept in Mongolia is "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe" in Manchu and "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" in Mongolian. However, the one stored in Inner Mongolia is called "Ge ti ciowan lu bithe" in Manchu and "Ge ti ciowan lu bichig" in Mongolian.
2. According to our recent research, the book "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" was translated to Mongolian in the late 1740s. The book "Ge ti ciowan lu bichig" was translated by Soninbayar and Ulzijingaa from Manchu, and Mongolian scholar Temget painted a drawing and published it in 1929. There is a gap of almost 190 years between the two translations.
3. It also differed slightly from the Mongolian translation, preserved in Mongolia, in terms of vocabulary, meaning, and the translator's selection.
4. "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" retained in Mongolia has the first volume (4 parts) and the second volume (2 parts). We also translated the last two parts of the second volume from Manchu and published them in 2022. It will be eight volumes like the original Manchurian book "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe." However, in Inner Mongolia, the first and second parts of the second volume of the "Ge ti ciowan lu bichig" were published. Researchers have studied the "Ge ti ciowan lu bichig," which was printed in Inner Mongolia, such as Zhao, Baisui (1996), Watanabe, Junsei (2005), and Yang, Yiwang (2017) [5]. However, none of these researchers have mentioned a single copy or manuscript source preserved in Mongolia.

Two types of "Manchu Anatomy," their differences and features

The book titled in the Manchu language "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe," internationally known as the "Manchu Anatomy" with its title commonly translated into Mongolian as the "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" (Imperially et al. of Body) is preserved in Mongolia. From theoretical and methodological perspectives, this book was a textbook on the structure of the human body and a research work of students and teachers who studied at the Mamba datsan [*sman pa grwa tshang*]² in Mongolia from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The Mongolian translation of the "Manchu Anatomy," written using some of the theories of Oriental medicine based on the anatomy of Western medicine, is the main evidence that Mongolians at that time sought to learn about Western medicine and to enrich and develop their own medicine. We have been studying "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe" or "Manchu Anatomy" since 1998. In addition to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, we found and compared copies of this book in the St. Petersburg Branch of the

¹ Mongolian shunkhan Danjuur was translated into Mongolian in 1741-1742 by a team of 200 translators under the guidance of Janjaa Khutagt Rolbiidorj and Shiree Khutagt Luvsandambiiyam.

² Old Medical school was established in the Buddhist Monasteries from the end of the 17th century in Mongolia.

Institute of Oriental Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo. Consequently, the "Manchu Anatomy" sources and copies preserved in these countries have the same content and classification of the exact origin. However, a second different version was found to be kept in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle in France, and a copy was obtained and included in the research. As we presume, there are two different original copies of the book "Manchu Anatomy," one in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the other in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle. For comparative research, we have named these two book versions separately. The first version was named "Manchu Anatomy-1"³ (Bibliothèque nationale de France) and the second version "Manchu Anatomy-2"⁴ (Museum d'histoire naturelle). The four parts of the first volume of "Manchu Anatomy-2" fundamentally differ from "Manchu Anatomy-1" [6]. For example:

1. The translations are almost similar in time; both versions were written by Dominique Parrenin (1665-1741), but the format differs.
2. "Manchu Anatomy-1" is written on a blank paper, and "Manchu Anatomy-2" is written on a red border and line.
3. "Manchu Anatomy-1" is a stitch-bound book with a cover sized 300x200mm and 628 pages without a title. The color of the cover is not clear as it is a copy. "Manchu Anatomy-2" has a yellow cover sized 305x200mm, written in separate volumes, stitch-bound book. The title is written on a thin piece of paper with a reddish-brown background and pasted from top to bottom in the upper right corner of the book.
4. "Manchu Anatomy-2" has a special box. At the beginning of the book, there is a letter written in ancient French, and at the end of the letter, it is written May 1, 1723, in Peking. "Manchu Anatomy-1" begins directly from the title.
5. "Manchu Anatomy-1" is titled "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe," while "Manchu Anatomy-2" is titled "Ge ti ciowan lu bithe." The words "Dergici toktobuha"⁵ were omitted.
6. It is interesting to note that the structures of the human body are very different. "Manchu Anatomy-1" classifies the human body from the head, while "Manchu Anatomy-2" is classified from the abdomen.
7. Another distinctive difference between the two works is that "Manchu Anatomy-1" classifies five vital organs and six vessels' organs according to the five elements theory of Chinese astrology. For example, the classification of the five elements theory was used to divide into lungs and large intestine, stomach and spleen, heart and small intestine, kidneys and urinary bladder, and liver and gallbladder. However, in "Manchu Anatomy-2", the body is classified according to the classic classification of 17th-century European medical anatomy, such as a brief description of the abdominal cavity, the thoracic cavity, and the head.
8. As for "Manchu Anatomy-2", Dominique Parrenin secretly wrote and completed it following the structure of the European Anatomy Book. Later, after Enkh-Amgalan khaan⁶ passed away in 1722. On May 1, 1723, his letter to the French Academy of Sciences, "Manchu Anatomy 2," was sent in eight volumes. We have two copies of the manuscripts in the Manchu language. According to our research, it was found that the book "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" preserved in Mongolia is a translation of the book "Manchu Anatomy-1" or "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe."

A brief history of the "Manchu Anatomy" translated into Mongolian

Jamyan Sangajav, the head of the Scripture and Sutra Institute of Mongolia, first obtained the 226-volume Mongolian Shunkhan Danjuur book in 1924 with permission of Nayant Prince (1874-1921), a Mongolian national who was living in Beijing. Additionally, it was rumored that the library of Janjaa Khutagt Rolbiidorj (1717-1786), a Mongolian national and former state teacher of the Manchu Qing dynasty in Beijing,⁷ had a medical book called "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" [7]. Jamyan Sangajav discovered that this book is a single manuscript copy. Then he tried to obtain this book but was unable to find it. However, he found out that a Buddhist monk from Mongolia had taken the book from Janjaa Khutagt Rolbiidorj's library in Beijing. When Jamyan Sangajav arrived in Mongolia and began the search for the book again. He discovered that it was being used as a textbook in a Buddhist medical school in the Eastern Monastery of the capital city of Mongolia. Jamyan Sangajav met with the monk teacher at the Eastern Monastery medical school and explained that the book

³ "Manchu Anatomy-1" is a Manchu book called "Dergici toktobuha ge ti ciowan lu bithe"

⁴ "Manchu Anatomy-2" is a Manchu book called "Ge ti ciowan lu bithe"

⁵ Dergici toktobuha is a word meaning by order of the Manchurian king. "Manchu Anatomy-2" was named "Ge ti ciowan lu bithe" by Dominique Parrenin, who removed the word Dergici toktobuha from the title of the book he sent to France on May 1, 1723.

⁶ Enkh-Amgalan khaan is the Mongolian name of the Kangxi Emperor who reigned (1661-1722) the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty.

⁷ Janjaa Khutagt Rolbiidorj (1717-1786) was a state teacher of the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (1735-1796).

is a single copy, a manuscript, a rare and ancient book combining Western and Oriental medicine. Consequently, it was offered to be kept in the library of the Scripture and Sutra Institute of Mongolia but was not allowed. Therefore, he asked him to borrow and copy it by hand for temporary preservation in the library. Finally, the monk teacher agreed, giving the four books of the first volume one by one and copying them by hand. Jamyan Sangajav considered the book's importance and copied it with a bamboo pen. Lisovsky V.I. copied the figures in the book.⁸ Thus, it was possible to keep the manuscript in the library [8]. Regrettably, during the political repression that began in Mongolia in 1937, thousands of monks were killed, and millions of scriptures were burned. During this time, some of the originals of the book's first volume were lost. However, fortunately, the manuscripts from which it was copied survived. Now, two books of the second volume were found. Currently, two volumes and six books are in the National Library of Mongolia. From 1930 to the end of the 1990s, there was no official study of the "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг." The Manchu book source is unavailable in the National Library of Mongolia. Researcher Dagdanbazar Bodi observed that the book was not studied until the mid-1971-1990s and selected it as a research topic. He wrote in his Sc.D dissertation: "Although it was mentioned at that time as a medical book translated from Latin into Mongolian, as per a detailed study, it was found that the book was translated from not only Latin, but also contains Manchu, and Chinese words and statements, as well as names of ancient scholars, countries, and places, which indicates the need for further in-depth study" [9]. Academician Bold Sharav examined the book as a source and included it in his Sc.D dissertation [10] and his book "History of Traditional Mongolian Medicine." Furthermore, he indicated that the "Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body" was the main book of the school combining Western and Oriental medical science, one of the four major medical schools in Mongolia before the 20th century [11]. Dagdanbazar Bodi and Bold Sharavyn's research has significantly contributed to discovering the theoretical and methodological foundations of Mongolian medicine's physiology, experimental, and clinical traditions and enriching medicine's anatomy and physiology with new information. Researcher Gerelmaa Battogtokh earned a doctoral degree in 2020 by comparing the origins and history, creation date, and some of the contents of this source and putting historical facts into research circulation [12]. From a historical point of view, the "Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body" book was a textbook on the structure of the human body and the research work of doctors in ancient Mongolian medical schools from the late 19th century. This book is, therefore, still of interest to researchers today. In addition, it shows that the development and use of Western medicine combined with traditional Mongolian medicine predates the 18th century. However, the translation of this book into Mongolian only began in the late 19th century, and few research papers have been published. From a historical point of view, the "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" manuscript was a textbook on the structure of the human body and the research work of doctors in ancient Mongolian medical schools. Especially among the ancient doctor community of Mongolians, it became the primary tool for studying the combination of Western and Oriental medicine. In addition, this book is an important documentary source that uses the achievements of European medicine in ancient times. "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" was the main book of the medical schools combining Western and Oriental health science in Mongolia before the 20th century.

Conclusion

Mongolian medicine is one of the world's oldest known medical traditions. It is an integral part of Mongolian culture and has been developed for centuries. We believe that the origin of the Mongolian medical tradition is as old as the nomadic civilization itself. It has been proven that Mongolian medicine has undergone 5000 years of historical development, containing all the features of nomadic medicine. Our ancestors invented medical knowledge for staying healthy, living long, and overcoming sickness. This knowledge was rooted in their nomadic lifestyle; our ancestors then passed it on to the known world. During this long history, Mongolian ancestors have developed various medical knowledge such as theories and preventive, diagnostic, and treatment methods. Among these, medical knowledge and methods of ancient medicine and medical books from India, China, Manchu, Tibet, and Russia occupy an essential place. A clear example of this is the "Deger-e-eče toytoysan dürsü-yin tusbür-yig бүрүдкегсен биçиг" (Imperially Commissioned Complete Record of Body) or Mongolian translation of the "Manchu Anatomy" **preserved** in the National Library of Mongolia.

⁸ Lisovsky V.I. was a Russian Soviet scholar and curator of the State Museum (1926-1927) established by the Scripture and Sutra Institute of Mongolia.

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