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Cover Illustration  A painting commemorating the *Huanghua gang* martyrs by the Famous Lingnan School painter He Jianshi  何剑士, Xiu Jinhua, *Huanghua gang gongyuan* [The Huanghua gang Park], Guangzhou: Lingnan Meishu Chubanshe, 2001, p.53.
THE MISSING FIRST PAGE OF THE PRECLASSICAL MONGOLIAN VERSION OF THE HSIAO-CHING:  
A TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

Igor de Rachewiltz

The Preclassical Mongolian version of the Chinese *Classic of Filial Piety* (Hsiao-ching 孝經) is a well-known text, several times edited by Mongol and Western scholars and twice translated into English.¹ It is the only ‘Mongol’ book of the Yuan period to have physically survived in China, almost certainly because it was a Chinese classic in a bilingual NB (Abbreviations: ch. = Chinese; mo. = Written [Script] Mongolian; mmo. = Middle Mongolian; pmo. = Preclassical Mongolian)

The only other Preclassical Mongol work to have survived the Ming restoration and the nationalist fervour accompanying it is the famous tetraglottal blockprint of 1431 of two Buddhist Tantric texts edited by W. Heissig in W. Heissig, "Zwei mutmasslich mongolische Yüan-übersetzungen und ihr Nachdruck von 1431," ZAS 10 (1976): 7–115. It is quite possible that the Hsiao-ching version that has been handed down is also a Ming print, possibly made from original Yüan blocks. See de Rachewiltz, "Preclassical Mongolian version," 1982, pp.17, 25, n.25.

A single leaf (5r-v) from another (lost) exemplar of the same work was found by W. Fuchs in Peking in the 1930s; it was published together with a transcription, translation and commentary by A. Mestaert in Monumenta Serica 4 (1939–40): 325–9.

See Lu, 4 (lines 2, 4–7); Cleaves, “The first chapter,” 1982, p.71 (lines 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7); de Rachewiltz, “Preclassical Mongolian version,” 1982, p.28 (lines 6–7).

As it will become apparent, the strict limits imposed by the amount of space available for the Mongol text in each line leave little room for choice. Therefore, while in theory several reconstructions are possible, this is not so in practice.

The measurements in ems are purely conventional, but since they are used for comparison with passages and lines throughout the book, they are valid for the purpose of the present reconstruction.

With regard to (1), it is evident that the first line of 1r contained the Chinese sectional title in line 3, but it has spread its Mongol counterpart over lines 4 and 5, thus reducing too much the remaining space (lines 6 and 7) for the first two sentences of the text. 

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Cf., e.g., the Su-pu ts'ung-k'ao 四部叢刊 (First Series) edition of the Hsiao-ching (reproducing a Sung edition) where, in the first line of the text, we have 孝經一卷.
Concerning the book title in the first line, it is likely that it was followed by the two words i chüan 一卷 'one chapter'.\(^{11}\) Since the Mongol term böölog 'chapter' is used by the translator to render ch. chāng 章 'chapter, section' throughout the work (see below), the only other term that could be employed in the circumstances is debter 'book, volume'. There is, indeed, some evidence that in the 13th–14th centuries the word debter was used in the Mongol translations of Buddhist texts in the same way as ch. chüan.\(^{12}\) However, since it is by no means certain that in this book the title Hsiao-ching was followed by i chüan, I shall put both i chüan and its presumed Mongol version nigen debter in parentheses.

As for the Mongol rendering of Hsiao-ching, I have discussed the issue in de Rachewiltz 1982, 19, where I reached the conclusion that, contrary to Luvsanbaldan’s opinion, it must have been a phonetic transcription of the Chinese followed by bičig 'book', viz. *Qiaung bičig. In place of *Qiaung, Ligeti suggested *Kauging.\(^{13}\) Since either transcription is possible,\(^{14}\) I propose *Qiaung/*Kauging bičig (nigen debter) for the Mongol title of the Hsiao-ching in 1r2.

For the rendering of the section title 開宗明義章第一, lit. ‘First Section on (Opening =) Explaining the Essentials and Elucidating the Meaning,’\(^{15}\) comprising altogether seven characters, its Mongolian version in the fourth line must have ended with the words nigeɗiγer böölog ‘first chapter’ as shown by Cleaves 1982, 75, n.3, on the basis of the regular renderings of section numbers throughout the text. Since the fourth line began at the same level of the third line, the space available for the Mongol version of the first four Chinese characters of the title is, by necessity, limited, and a full literal rendering is excluded. In the available space we cannot, in fact, fit more than five average-length words (ca. 45ems, see below), two of which are nigeɗiγer böölog, together with their suffixes.\(^{16}\)

What the Chinese four-character text says in effect is that this section explains the essence of Confucius’ discourse and the meaning of filiality; the Mongolian version must say the same with not more than three words.\(^{17}\)

Now, ‘to explain, elucidate’ in pmo. and mo. is tāyil-, and ‘meaning’ is udqa, written udqa.\(^{18}\) For ‘essential’, i.e., ‘basic’, the two words that immediately come to mind are yool and tib, both also well attested in pmo.\(^{19}\) The expression yool udqa is, indeed, a common compound in mo. and the modern Mongolian languages for ‘basic meaning, central concept(s) → plot (of a play),’ ‘idée de l’essentiel’;

\(^{12}\) Cf., the title of the lost Preclassical Mongolian translation of a known Buddhist sūtra discussed by G. Kara in his article “On a lost Mongol book and its Uighur version,” in G. Hazai, P. Zieme, Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der altaiischen Völker, Protokollband der XII. Tagung der Permanent Inter-

\(^{13}\) This factor alone would preclude the rendering proposed in Li, pp.4, 24–5, which consists of ten words altogether. Cf. Cleaves, “The first chapter,” 1982, pp.75–6, n.5.


\(^{15}\) Cf. 3v (5 words), 4v (5 words), 6r (4 words), 8r (5 words), 9v (5 words), etc.

\(^{16}\) For yool and tib (= mo. tōb), see E. Haenisch, Wörterbuch zu Manghol un Niucu Tobcan’ (Yuan-ch’ao Pi-shOo (fl. 154): 45

\(^{17}\) national Altaistic Conference (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1974), pp.287–289, at p.287. In the second line we have the expression goyar debternom ‘a book in two parts’, in which goyar debter would obviously correspond to ch. erh chüan 二卷 ‘two chapters.’ See Kara's remarks, ibid., p.288. Cf. also the use of
although to my knowledge not attested in pmo. texts, there is no reason to doubt that this expression already existed in the 13th–14th centuries.20

From the early 14th-century Mongolian version of Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and other preclassical texts we know that the word *udqa* had a rather wide semantic range, expressing notions like ‘purpose, aim, intention (➔ duty, obligation)’, ‘concept, idea’, ‘the essential (= what is useful), essence’, and ‘(natural) quality or qualities’, beside that of ‘meaning (➔ truth)’–a conceptual relation existing between ‘quality’ and ‘essence’, and between these and ‘concept’, ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’.

Several of these derivative meanings developed under Buddhist influence.21

Thus, the translator of the *Hsiao-ching*, taking advantage of the polyvalent nature of the word *udqa*, could have brilliantly solved the problem confronting him by rendering the Chinese sectional title with a simple sentence like *Foo udqa-yi tayilqur nige’dügr bölog*, i.e., ‘First Chapter Explaining the (Central =) Fundamental (or Basic) Meaning of the Text’, viz., the very essence of the work. Such a sentence, while adequately conveying the sense of the original,22 occupies only 45 ems and is exactly within the space limit. Cf. 3v1 (44+7 ems), 4v3 (47 ems), 6r4 (41+4 ems), 8r1 (46 ems), 9v5 (48 ems), 10v4 (43+6 ems), etc.

I wish to emphasize that, while other solutions are of course possible, they would involve a greater number of words (as the one proposed in Lu) or longer words, which in either case would automatically disqualify them.

The fifth line would necessarily begin with the first sentence of the *Hsiao-ching*: 仲尼居曾子侍, lit. ‘Chung-ni (i.e., Confucius) was sitting (and) Tseng-tzu was waiting upon (him)’, i.e., ‘When Chung-ni was sitting (at leisure, at home) and Tseng-tzu was waiting upon him, ...’.

Taking into consideration the pmo. language and the space available in the line, the above sentence could be rendered as *Jungni sayuyu Singsi taqin büküi-dür* “When Jungni (= Chung-ni) was sitting (and) Singsi (=...

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Tseng-tzu) was waiting upon (him)."23 The space occupied by these words is 43 ems, also within the permissible limit. Cf. 6v2: 43 ems followed by six Chinese characters, exactly as in our sentence but in the inverse order, which makes no difference.

The sixth line contains thirteen characters of text, viz., 子口先王有至德要道以順天下, lit. "The Master (i.e., Confucius) said, 'The former kings possessed (supreme =) perfect virtue and the essential course (i.e., principles, rules) of conduct by means of which they regulated (all) under Heaven = the world'."24 The space left in that line is 5.9 cm., which is just what is required to accommodate the first two words of the Mongol translation, viz. Kungvusi ügiler·in 'Kungvusi (= Confucius) said.'25 Cf. 14r5 which has fourteen characters: if we remove the fourteenth character and measure the remaining space, it is 5.9 cm. The length of the two words Kungvusi ügiler·in in 11r2 is exactly 5.9 cm.

The seventh line would then contain the first part of Confucius' statement which continues in 1v1–2. The following reconstruction, proposed in 1982,26 still stands (the continuation of the sentence in 1v1–2 is given in parentheses): uridu boydas qad anggan-u sayin ayali aburi (töör yosun qoyar-iyor deleke ulus-i ilubtege[n], jasaqsan-u tula) "(because) the sage rulers of old (suitably governed the world with) perfect virtue (and propriety)."27 Both Lu, 4, and Cleaves, 71, omit in their reconstructions of the same line the words anggan-usayin which render ch. cbib 至 (supreme =) perfect', but they should not be left out since they are not only required by the context, but there is space for them in the line. With their inclusion, the last line of 1v occupies 56 ems—a long line indeed, but there are even longer ones in the Mongol text. Cf., e.g., 13v7 (65 ems!).

By combining the Chinese and Mongol texts of the missing first page (1r) of our Hsiao-ching, we obtain the following tentative reconstruction, line by line:

23 For the names Jüngni ¼ Chung-ni, and Singsi ¼ Tseng-tzu, see Cleaves, "The first chapter," 1982, p.76, nn. 6, 8. Pmo., mo. sayu (mm. sa u) is the exact counterpart of ch. cbib 居 to dwell, stay; to sit, just as pmo. taqi (mm., mo. taki) is of ch. shib 侍 'to attend upon, to wait upon.' In § 216 of the Secret History of the Mongols these two verbs occur in close association in the following alliterative passage: ēqaqan de el emišcū / ēqaqan aqta mu'ulū / sa ʻuri de're / sa ʻulū takijū 'He (i.e., Old Üstün) shall wear a white dress / And ride a white gelding / He shall sit on a (high) seat / ... And be waited upon.' Cf. The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian epic chronicle of the thirteenth century, translated with a historical and philological commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz (Leiden: Brill, 2004), I, p.148. Cf. also the use of both verbs in lines 15–17 of the Mongolian text of the Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1335 studied by Cleaves [HJAS 13 (1950): 72–3], where tayi = taqi. I have little doubt that sayu- and taqi- were likewise used in the passage of the Hsiao-ching under discussion.

24 For a discussion of the key expressions found in this sentence, see de ~Rachewiltz, "Preclassical Mongolian version," 1982, p.53, n.6. In his reconstruction, Lu, p.4, ignores the space taken by the thirteen Chinese characters, whereas Cleaves, "The first chapter," 1982, p.71, makes them fill the entire sixth line. Both authors are obviously at fault.

25 For the Mongolian transcription 'Kungvusi' of ch. 'K'ung fu-tzu' 孔子 (Master 'Kung', K'ung being Confucius' surname, see Cleaves, "The first chapter," 1982, p.76, n.10. For the expression Kungvusi ügiler·in—a recurrent one in the Mongol version of the Hsiao-ching, see ibid., pp.76–7, n.11.


27 In my former transcription of the Mongol text of 1v1 (ibid., p.28), I wrote ilübtidekeni. It is now my opinion that this word should instead be read ilübtidegeni, as in Lu, pp.4, 28 (d), the meaning being unaltered (suitably). I think, in fact, that the Secret History word ilübte in § 280, meaning 'convenient, suitable' (see Haenisch's Wörterbuch, 82; cf. de Rachewiltz, The Secret History of the Mongols, I, p.216, II, p.1030), corresponds to the ilübde, id., of the Hua-i i-yu 華夷譯語 of 1389, IIb, 6v4. See A. Mostaert, Le matériel mongol du Houa i i yu 華夷譯語 de Houang-ou (1389), I, ed. by I. de Rachewiltz with the assistance of A. Schönbaum (Bruxelles: Inst. Beige H.E.C., 1977), p.63. Pace Cleaves, "The first chapter," 1982, p.78, n.19, I regard both the ilübte of the Secret History and the ilübdhe of the Hua-i i-yu as nomina adjectiva in-te (~ mmo. -de) from *ilūb 'advantage, convenience.' See de Rachewiltz, "Preclassical Mongolian version," 1982, p.52, n.4. However, I now believe that the end suffix is not, as formerly assumed, the so-called diminutive suffix -ken/-qan, but the rare suffix -gen(-yan), on which see A. Mostaert, F. W. Cleaves, "Trois documents des Archives secrètes vaticanes," HJAS 15 (1952): 452–3.
1. [孝經 (一卷)]
2. *Qiauging/* Kauging bičig (nigen debter)
3. 閣宗明義章第一
4. *Tool u dq a- yi tayilqu ngedüger böög
5. 仲尼居曾子侍 Jungni say'ju Singsi taqin büküi-dür
6. 子曰先王有至德要道以順天下 Kungvusi ügüler ün
7. uridu boydas qad angqan-u sayin ayali aburi]

In memory of my friend James Russell Hamilton, 1921–2003

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