

AISIN GIORO Ulhicun

Professor, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University: Researcher, Center for Eurasian Cultural Studies, Kyoto University: Doctor of Literature

Professor Aisin Gioro is the second daughter of Aisin Gioro Qizong, a famous scholar of studies on Jurchen, Manchu, and Mongolia. She is also an eighth-generation descendent of Yongqi, Prince Rongchun, the fifth prince of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty. Beile Yihui and his wife Xilin Taiqing, one of the greatest poetesses of the Qing and an equal of Nalan Xingde, are her sixth-generation ancestors from the generation of Emperor Daoguang. Her grandfather is Aisin Gioro Hengxu (Jin Guangping), a famous scholar of the languages and scripts of the Jurchen, Khitai, and Manchu. From her childhood, the professor Aisin Gioro was trained in the academic tradition of her family, went to study literature and history, and now studies the language, script, history and culture of Khitai, Jurchen, and Manchu.

Recent grant-in-aid supported research projects for which professor Aisin Gioro was the chief researcher:

- (1) A historical comparative study of the Khitai and Jurchen scripts
- (2) An investigation of epitaphs in the Khitai scripts in Shangjing and Zhongjing of the Liao dynasty and a study of the history of the Liao dynasty
- (3) A computerized historical philological study on the Khitai large script
- (4) Computerization of the Jurchen large script and a comparative study with the Khitai large script
- (5) A study of steles in the Jurchen large script of the Jin and Ming dynasties
- (6) An investigation and study of inscribed cultural relics excavated in Heilongjiang province, China
- (7) A Compilation of a Khitai dictionary

Projects for which professor Aisin Gioro was a researcher:

- (1) A study of ethnic history of Xianbei and Khitai
- (2) A study of the complex culture centered on the Manchus in Manchuria
- (3) Research on inscriptions of Jin dynasty in Mongolia
- (4) A study of ethnic groups in the northern frontier region of China before the third century B.C. based on research on sources concerning bronze cultures in the eastern inner Mongolia.

Main works of professor Aisin Gioro on Jurchen;

A Study of the Jurchen Dictionary, Fugasha, 2001: A comprehensive reconstruction and deciphering of the Jurchen dictionary, which was compiled in the early Jin era and excavated at Beilin in Xi'an in 1973.

A New Study of Jurchen Language and Scripts, Meizendo, 2002: A systematic study of the phonology and grammar of the Jurchen language and structure and changes in the Jurchen scripts seen in materials of the Jin and Ming eras, focusing especially on case, plural, conjugations, and absence of secondary long vowels in the Jurchen language.

“The Stone-Carved Jurchen Inscriptions on the Nine Peaks Cliff of Mongolia,” in *Research on Inscriptions of Jin Dynasty in Mongolia*, Report of the Scientific Project Grant-in-Aid JSPS, Basic Research (C), 2005: A study of the stele in the Jurchen large script excavated in Mongolia in 1986, and the newest study of the Khitai origin of the word 札兀惕·忽里 seen in the *Secret History of Mongols*.

History of the Liao and Jin Dynasties and the Khitai and Jurchen Scripts, Academic series in memory of Jin Qizong, No.2, Association of Eastern Literature and History, 2004: A study confirming that the most extant Jurchen writings are examples of the Jurchen large script, but the Jurchen script inscribed on tallies excavated in Manchuria and Hebei provinces are in the Jurchen small script.

“On a Jin-Dynasty Stele in the Jurchen Large Script Excavated near the Shangjing Site: In Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of Late Jin Qizong,” *Researches on Eastern Literature and History* 2008.2: Professor Aishin Gioro deciphered the stele completely. This stele shows the thriving state of education on the Jurchen script in Shangjing due to Emperor Shizong's establishment of prefectural schools. This is the important discovery of the Jurchen large script, second only to that of the Serven Khaalga stele excavated in Mongolia in 1986, 22 years ago. Her decipherment is a brilliant achievement and highly significant for the field.

Main works of professor Aisin Gioro on Khitai,

A Study of the Khitai Language and Scripts, Academic series in memory of Jin Qizong, No.1, Association of Eastern Literature and History, 2004: This is the latest study on both the phonology and characters of the Khitai small script in terms of phonograms and ideograms; it contains a phonological reconstruction of 287 Khitai small characters, and research on gendered endings seen in Khitai ordinals, which are similar to Medieval Mongolian, and the presence of gendered endings in names of Khitais and some verbs. It confirms that endings -n/-in used in the composition of style names of Khitais are not possessive endings, but endings from which certain adjectives are derived. It focuses especially on case, number, conjugation, and relative address in the Khitai language. These results have radically improved the standard for studies on the Khitai language and scripts.

A Study of the Khitai Large Script, Academic series in memory of Jin Qizong, No.3, Association of Eastern Literature and History, 2005: This study clarifies many historical facts seen in the *Liaoshi*, based on a new deciphering of all extant excavated Khitai epitaphs; and also investigates members of the Imperial family of the Liao dynasty such as 匣馬葛. It also traces the original meaning of the Khitai word Hengzhang; investigates the Guoqiuzhang and the 初魯得 clan; refutes the mistaken claim that the term “Jurchen State” was used in the early Jin era on the basis of newest decipherment of the Khitai large and small scripts; refutes the claim that the state name of the Liao dynasty was Qara Kitai and concludes that it was actually Hul 𐰺 i Kitai or Kitai Hul 𐰺 i: makes a phonological reconstruction of 543 characters in the Khitai large script; makes a comprehensive study of differences between the Khitai large and small scripts in terms of phonograms and ideograms etc; traces the relationship of the Jurchen large script back to the

Khitai large script; and documents the absence of entering tone endings -k and -t and the presence of -p in the northern Chinese during the Liao era, based on Chinese transliterations seen in Khitai epitaphs.

A Study of the History of the Liao Era in View of Khitan Epitaphs, Shokadoh, 2006: This work attempts to elucidate the history of the Khitai (Liao) based on materials written by Khitais themselves. It makes up for omissions and deficiencies, corrects errors, and newly recognizes the history of the Khitai (Liao) based on descriptions seen only in Khitai source materials. This study of the Khitai (Liao) history is a pioneering effort based on a comprehensive method of historical research, including historical philology and paleography. The field of Chinese dynastic historical studies will be revitalized because of this work's novel form and dynamic development. Significantly, this book attempts to synthesize history, historical philology, and paleography while providing advanced studies of the clans and tribes of the Khitai, their social organization, imperial family and their maternal relatives, as well as customs and culture based on a deciphering of all extant excavated epitaphs. Because of the paucity of written sources when compared to other periods, the study of Khitai (Liao) history generally depends to relatively high extent on the archaeological record and excavated materials. This book also relies almost entirely on excavated materials. This is the first study published anywhere in the world to apply the decipherment of Khitai epitaphs to the study of Khitai history and thereby discover a wealth of new knowledge. In order to study the history of Kitais, it is necessary to observe their world from their viewpoint. Khitai epitaphs provide abundant source material to investigate historical facts. They offer a glimpse of historical reality recorded by the Khitais themselves, and much like the *Secret History of Mongols* in the study of Mongolian history, the information obtained from them is not available in Chinese sources. This book pioneers a new path in the study the history of Khitai (Liao), and its significance clearly lies in the fact that it offers a vibrant dynamism by which the field can be further developed. Moreover, the significance of this book is not limited to the field of the history of Khitai (Liao). First of all, the current state of scholarship on the history of the Khitai tends toward either a study of the scripts or of history. There are few scholars in the world who are engaged in the former, and studies of the latter have seen no new breakthroughs because of the limitations of Chinese source materials. Even fewer scholars can combine both methods and have the ability to study both the Khitai scripts and the Chinese sources. Progress in scholarship in the study of Khitai scripts during the 21st century has largely been due to professor Aisin Gioro's *A Study of the Khitai Language and Scripts* (2004), *A History of the Liao and Jin Dynasties and the Khitai and Jurchen Scripts* (2004), and *A Study of the Khitai Large Script* (2005). This book, which provides a compilation of 40 Khitai epitaphs that have been deciphered as primary source materials, a comprehensive study of the script from a phonological reconstruction to explanation of meaning, is the newest compilation of studies on Khitai language and scripts since 2006. Secondly, the contents of Khitai epitaphs have a close cultural relationship to the Chinese dynasties in China proper, containing many Chinese transliterations. In this book, many of these Chinese transliterations concerning the dating of the tombs and the owner's belongings, as well as the Liao dynasty's system of naming objects have

been deciphered. This work is an extension of earlier papers, such as "The Characteristics of Northern Chinese in the Liao Era in View of the Khitai Small Script "(2004), and "The Foundation of the Phonological System of Chinese Loan Words in Epitaphs in the Khitai Large Script "(2006), and as it further expands the scope of decipherment, it will provide a very significant material to study of medieval northern Chinese.

Main works of professor Aisin Gioro on Manchu

Manchu Grammar and Manchu Reader, Neimeng gureenmin chubanshe, (Japanese edition, Kitakyushu Chugoku Shoten):

A Phonological Study of Manchu Language, Genbunsha: a comprehensive study of phonology, grammar, and scripts of the Manchu language.

Ancient Manchu Myths, Neimeng gureenmin chubanshe, (Japanese edition, Kitakyushu Chugoku Shoten): A record and studies folktales narrated in contemporary Manchu dialects.

A Collection of Studies on the Manchu by Three Generations of Scholars from Aisin Gioro Family, Yuanfang chubanshe, 1996: *A Collection of Studies on the Manchu by Three Generations of Scholars from Aisin Gioro Family*, Meizendo, 2002: Studies on the history of the Qing dynasty and its use of Manchu and Jurchen language materials and related problems of Manchu culture.