Sino-Japanese Hybrids
between Writing Systems
—*Wakan konkōbun* seen through grammatology—

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In the history of written language, some societies, including ancient Japan, highly valued adherence to a textual model and deemed it essential in the process of acculturation and intellectual improvement on the part of the elites, lay and religious alike.

Language variation within the same group was determined by the language's social purpose as defined by use, not user, suggesting that the so-called written "styles", i.e. *buntai* 文体, share more than one similarity with the forms commonly described in linguistics as diatypes.[1]

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[1] In linguistics a diatype is a variety of language defined according to its purpose, identified by certain characteristic vocabulary choices, grammatical constructions, etc. For a detailed definition of diatype as language variation which is determined by its social purpose see Michael Gregory, "Aspects of Varieties Differentiation", *Journal of Linguistics*, 3, 1967, pp. 177-197.

In the case of written Japanese, we have a main frame set up by different registers of the native language intersecting at various levels with a foreign one, i.e. classical Chinese. These diatypes are different, but constitute parts of the same lexico-syntactic repertoire shared by the community, whose use is determined by context. Hence, the type of code in use depends on the field, purpose, and tenor of the message.[2]

This theory, however, is only valid when one can establish a direct relationship between a group of writings and the diatype that identifies them in a mutual correspondence, e.g. the alleged connection between "pure" Early Middle Japanese, or *wabun* 和文, and the ornate prose of tenth- and eleventh-century *monogatari* 物語. On the contrary, when the boundaries between textual categories start to mingle and contamination takes place, the distinctive lines between literary genres — intended here in the broadest sense possible, ranging from scripts with a practical purpose to those with a didactic or entertaining one — become unclear too.

We can therefore assume that a strong mutual relation exists between a codified group of writings and their corresponding diatype, which provides scholars of historical linguistics with a set of distinct patterns to arrange, synchronically and diachronically, after a detailed analysis of its contexts. A social community characterized by highly complex parameters — for instance, the presence of a literate society centered on lay and religious elites, a group of highly educated women well versed in prose and poetry, and a strongly hierarchical bureaucratic class — should therefore correspond to a set of written formats that reflect the same degree of complexity.

These sociolinguistic premises mirror the current state of the field in

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[2] Joseph D. Oliver, "Diatype identification in a bilingual community", *Anthropological Linguistics*, 14, 1972, pp. 361-367. Norman Denison, "Some Observations on Language Variety and Plurilingualism", in Edwin Ardener (ed.), *Social Anthropology and Language,* London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 157-184.

the study of Japanese written diatypes. Despite some thought-provoking findings that have emerged in a relatively short time, *buntai* studies still constitute a complex and intricate discipline within which many questions remain to be answered. The issue of classification is one of these questions and, along with the absence of an established scholarly vocabulary in the field, probably one of the most urgent to be solved.

A somewhat schematic yet well-known outline of the evolution of the Japanese written language sets its beginning in the eighth century, at a time of flourishing interest in Chinese culture which resulted in the development of a written language highly indebted to continental models. This was followed, in the tenth century, by the emergence of a new native style codified in the refined literary prose of the period. Later on, the turbulent years of the late twelfth century brought further renovation not only in society but also in language: with the diffusion of Buddhism among common people, literati monks and scholars began to play an active role in the creation of an innovative hybrid way of expression, merging the rational Sinicized variety of the eighth century with the tenth century's lyrical native style, paving the way for pre-modern Japanese.

The history of the written language evolves far more slowly than that of the spoken one. If writing is defined as a deliberate product of human intellect consisting of a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer, then it becomes necessary for a writing system to represent the sounds of a language properly. On the other hand, when languages are represented in more or less permanent visual form, their orthographies differ widely in the level or levels of linguistic form that are expressed explicitly and systematically.[3]

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[3] Peter T. Daniels, "The Study of Writing Systems", in Peter T. Daniels and William Bright (eds.), *The World's Writing Systems*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 3-13.

As a result, the history of a written language is usually complicated by the nature of the writing system used for the language itself. In this respect, as I will argue in the pages that follow, the study of the evolution of Japanese written diatypes raises a number of challenging questions.

Over the entire history of the Japanese written language, Japanese intellectuals faced the problem of how to write their own language. The influence exerted by the Chinese writing system is universally acknowledged by scholars.

Since the introduction of Chinese characters — *kanji* 漢字 — to Japan, the Japanese had to come to terms with the morphological and syntactic differences between the two languages. Even without knowing the exact Chinese pronunciation, words could be easily recognized through visual memory, but the same could not be said for postpositions and for the inflectional morphemes of verbs and adjectives. In order to solve this practical problem, the Japanese developed a complex system of morphosyntactic glosses consisting of dots and other similar keys, later called *okototen* ヲコト点. Placed around the perimeter of a Chinese character or within its area, *okototen* marked a postposition or a functional word. The creation and the subsequent success of this method during the eighth century were due not only to the inadequate development of a pure phonogrammatic system of writing, as some scholars have indicated, but also to the advantages offered by a quick and compact way of notation.

Nevertheless, is undeniable that only the development of a pure phonogrammatic system of writing such as *kana* 仮名 — namely *hiragana* 平仮名 and *katakana* 片仮名 — boosted the growth of an authentic Japanese culture and the flowering of a refined literary prose during the ninth and tenth centuries.

New ways of using writing are devised as new needs arise. Of the three main kinds of diversification of scripts that can be observed at work

in society — functional, religious and political[4] — in ancient Japan the motivations for the adaptation of Chinese script to Japanese language were unquestionably prompted by functional needs such as the transition from a non-literate to a literate society.

In order to fulfill the requirements of a typologically different language, a fully developed writing system like Chinese necessarily underwent a long adaptation process involving three different strategies: 1) Lexical reinterpretation of the existing signs; 2) Phonetic interpretation of the extant existing signs; 3) Modeling of new signs based on those of the donor system.[5]

With the creation of the two phonogrammatic syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana* — respectively by cursivization and reduction of a Chinese character to one of its elemental components — Japanese language achieved its full potential. Such potential was expressed by a standard multilayered orthography which combined an adapted version of a pre-existing system borrowed from a foreign country and two different set of signs intended, at first, as special purpose scripts, i.e. functionally distinct writing systems: *hiragana* for informal writings and *katakana* for formal ones. Nonetheless, this system was still far from being an efficient form of expression.

The father of grammatology, Ignace J. Gelb (1907-1985), states in his pioneering work *A Study of Writing* that the "sacred traditions" of writing prevented creators of scripts from making changes; it was foreigners who were able to introduce reforms because they were not afraid to break with tradition.[6] In the case of the Japanese writing system this is only partially

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[4] Peter T. Daniels, "Use and Adaptation of Scripts", in Daniels and Bright, op. cit., p. 625.

[5] Florian Coulmas, *Writing systems: an introduction to their linguistic analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 179-180.

[6] Ignace J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (2nd ed), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1963, p. 196.

true, because the Japanese weren't able to free themselves completely from the massive influence of Chinese script. The attitude shown by ancient Japanese towards language and writing strategies is, in certain sense, surprising. They did not impose limitations on characters, lexicon and forms of expression in the effort to create a homogeneous system, but joined different elements together, trying to assimilate the features of each.

On the other hand, the Japanese script is rather awkward and even fuzzy as an overall system when compared to other orthographies in terms of performance. Unable to break with tradition, the Japanese preserved Chinese characters — a group of signs borrowed almost indiscriminately without any prior linguistic interpretation of their adaptability to the host system — and only at a later stage did they integrate such characters with two subsystems more adequate to the phonological structure of their language.

This resulted in an ambiguous system where, in order to try to keep a balance between the semantic and the phonetic aspect, primacy is given to a polyvalent written sign, which is to be properly interpreted on the basis of context, because the script itself bears no indication of which reading is intended.

This, obviously, raises the problem of how to determine the correct reading of a character. Due to the lack of a commonly shared textual interpretation key or of some sort of reading aids, the reader cannot expect to figure out the intended reading of the text, and the decoding process of distinct writings must rely upon a variety of different strategies.[7]

As Coulmas has pointed out, the Japanese writing system, then, is to be considered as a mixed system based on two levels. One is the subsystem of Chinese characters with most signs allowing for two or more

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[7] John DeFrancis, *Visible speech: the diverse oneness of writing systems*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1989, pp. 134-138.

interpretations that may be: a) purely phonetic syllables, b) syllables linked to morphemes or c) entire words. At another level, the Japanese one is a mixed system in that it employs two functionally distinct subsystems, i.e. *kanji* and *kana*.[8] It is the continuous shifting between these two levels within a single text that makes the Japanese script ambiguous and the documents written in it complex and hard to decode.

We have, in other terms, a distribution of several systems used to convey at least three different linguistic diatypes — i.e. Chinese, Japanese and Sino-Japanese — among intersecting groups of the same society. To cite Mountford: "In profiling the literacy of groups in such a society, account must be taken not only of biliteracy, i.e. literacy in more than one language, but of bisystemacy, i.e. literacy in more than one writing system for any given language."[9]

The main issue, then, is to try and define properly who uses which writing system and when, who the addressee is, along with context and purpose; one must also determine whether the adoption of one orthography in lieu of another one yields some kind of choice at a lexical or syntactic level. It was in order to find an answer to this very intricate set of questions that studies on written diatypes began at the end of eighteenth century in Japan.

As previously stated, the history of a written language is complicated by the nature of the writing system(s) used to express the language itself. In the case of written Japanese the features commonly used to classify the different diatypes are mainly lexical or syntactic, but in the works of most scholars there is often no clear distinction between the so called "style" and the orthographic form conventionally used to identify it.

For example, the above mentioned outline of the evolution of the

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[8] Coulmas, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

[9] John Mountford, "A Functional Classification", in Daniels and Bright, op. cit., p. 627.

Japanese written language should also be presented in the light of the evolution of the writing systems, i.e. from *kanji* to *kana,* pointing out that the more the Japanese attempted to write whole texts in their own language, the more they had to rely on a phonemic script. Following this different interpretation, at the very beginning of its history Japanese was an unwritten language; writing became possible only after the introduction of Chinese characters. Consequently, the first written diatype the Japanese learned was classical Chinese — *kanbun* 漢文. *Kanji,* an orthographic form difficult to separate from the language it conveyed, were the tools to express that writing. In the tenth century the process of standardization of *katakana* and *hiragana* began, with the latter finding wide application in *wabun,* the new native literary prose by court ladies, who used it to convey the innermost feelings of the human heart. With the late twelfth century new social needs arose and the decentralization of culture resulted in the creation of a new hybrid form of expression that merged the formal world of men, revolving around diatypes expressed with the aid of Chinese characters, with the lyric one of women heavily relying upon a pure phonogrammatic system of writing — *wakan konkōbun* 和漢混淆文.

For didactical purposes it is easy to draw a parallel between a written language and the orthographic form adopted in it, but this doesn't mean that differences in the writing systems naturally imply differences on a syntactical or lexical level. Elaboration is a distinguishing feature shared not only by linguistic contents but also by orthographies.

A quick survey of the different classifications of written diatypes proposed by Japanese scholars reveals that this is a controversial point even among specialists. The main approaches to an overall taxonomy of the Japanese written language seen from an historical perspective can be summarized as follows:

1*) Kanbuntai* 漢文体 and *kokubuntai* 国文体

2) *Kanbuntai, wabuntai* 和文体 and *hentai kanbuntai* 変体漢文体

3) *Junkanbuntai* 純漢文体, *junkanbuntai* 準漢文体, *junkokubuntai* 純国文体 and *junkokubuntai* 準国文体

4) *Kanbuntai* 漢文体 *magana kanbuntai* 真仮名漢文体, *waka kanbuntai* 和化漢文体, *senmyō buntai* 宣命文体, *magana buntai* 真仮名文体

Proceeding from 1) to 4) there is an increasing tendency toward specification but, despite the effort, this doesn't imply a clear exposition of the contents. Point 1) can be taken as representative of the classic twofold taxonomies based on a syntactical approach — i.e. if Chinese syntax is used or not —.[10] Most of these theories attempt to draw a clear distinction between writings focusing on the opposition of *kan* 漢 "Chinese" and *koku* 国 — or *wa* 和 — "native". The classification proposed in 2) still relies on a syntactical approach but supplements 1) with a pivotal if frequently neglected category in the evolution of Japanese language, the non-orthodox variant of classical Chinese — *hentai kanbun* —.[11]

3) and 4) are models elaborated by Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司 (1902-1991) and Tokumitsu Kyūya 徳光久也 with respect to Old Japanese but can also be cited as examples of the uncertainty scholars experience when they have to deal with classification issues in the descriptive history of written Japanese.[12]

Kurano creates two groups of symmetrical categories of Chinese and Japanese based diatypes respectively named "pure" — *jun* 純 — and "semi-" — *jun* 準 —. In Kurano's terminology "pure Chinese" stands for

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[10] Yoshizawa Yoshinori, *Nihon bunshōshi*, in *Kokugo kagaku kōza*, 5, Tōkyō, Meiji shoin, 1934.

[11] Hashimoto Shinkichi, *Kokugogaku gairon*, in *Iwanami kōza Nihon bungaku, jō-ge*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1932.

[12] Kurano Kenji, *Kojiki ronkō*, Kyōto, Kyōto inshokan, 1944, pp. 126-127. Tokumitsu Kyūya, *Jōdai Nihon bunshōshi*, Tōkyō, Nanundō Ōfūsha, 1964, pp. 89-281.

classical Chinese, and "semi-Chinese" for all the non-orthodox variants of classical Chinese. When it comes to Japanese he states that "semi-native" written forms are those orthographically similar to the transcription of the imperial proclamations — *senmyō* 宣命 — or *shintō* prayers — *norito* 祝詞 — where the semantic component is usually written with a Chinese character and all the inflectional endings with small Chinese characters used as phonograms and placed to the right or center of the main column of text, naming them also *senmyō-noritotai* 宣命祝詞体. Similarly, "pure" native forms of the written language are those composed only in phonograms and, therefore, labeled *kanatai* 仮名体.

Tokumitsu shifts his view from a syntactical to an orthographic perspective. With the sole exception of classical Chinese, and its non-orthodox Japanized version — *waka kanbuntai* — typical syntactic definitions, he adds two ambiguous categories to the composite script of *senmyō* that mixes logograms with phonograms. The first, *magana kanbuntai,* is adopted to indicate a sort of pure Chinese where only proper names are written with Chinese characters used as phonograms — i.e. *magana* — characteristic of some records by the first immigrant scribes, while *magana buntai* is used to designate every kind of epigraphic text written only with Chinese characters as phonograms.

Of the four typologies illustrated above, those based on a description that mixes syntactical and orthographical features not only fail to offer a clear picture of the development of the Japanese written language, but also make it difficult to give proper collocation to the various Sino-Japanese hybrid forms produced since the eighth century.

The main problem with the analysis of these texts is not only their large number, but also the different levels of syntactic and lexical irregularity that occur in each work. This high degree of variation is not only due to factors such as convenience in practical use and a lack of proficiency in writing in Chinese. On the contrary, the increased tendency

to turn to this sort of diatype, a choice at first made by the Japanese mostly unconsciously, led to the strengthening of the features of their own language in a more or less Sinicized context.

The most rational and lucid explanation, therefore, is the one proposed by Hashimoto and others at point 2) because not only does it give the proper importance to the so-called "pure" forms of writing both Chinese — *kanbun* — and native — *wabun* — but it also considers the non-orthodox variant of Chinese — *hentai kanbun* — as a third independent pole in the development of written discourse.

As a written form which preserved the visual outline of a Chinese text but was very different from it in lexicon and syntax — particularly in word order — *hentai kanbun* has naturally found a place in most of the modern taxonomies of Japanese language, because it shares the orthographical feature of a Chinese script but, is closer to the syntax of the native language. Unfortunately, the same is not true for one of the most controversial diatypes in the history of Japanese language: *wakan konkōbun* — the Sino-Japanese hybrid.

The problem with its classification, mostly due to the highly hybrid nature of this written form, has helped generate a lively discussion. The term *wakan konkōbun* has been used by and large to indicate any style that combined, in different ways, classical Chinese and Japanese.

The most commonly accepted analysis is the one that considers *wakan konkōbun* as an independent form of the written language which developed from the Insei period 院政期 (1086-1185). Based on the syntax of native and Sinicized diatypes of the Heian period 平安時代 (794-1086), has in its framework typical elements of these two particular written forms and integrates them with vernacular lexicon — i.e. *zokugo* 俗語 — and non-orthodox Chinese features, both lexical and syntactic. Therefore, the peculiar characteristics of the Sino-Japanese hybrid should allow us to count it among such other typical forms of the Japanese written language

as *wabun*, *kanbun* and *hentai kanbun*. Though the general trend among scholars is to support its existence, theories emerging since the 1980s have challenged its role as a distinct formal diatype of the Japanese language.[13]

As a result, from the point of view of the writing systems, distinctions between *wakan konkōbun* and *kana majiribun* — the precursor of modern orthography where Chinese characters are used for semantic elements, supplemented by phonograms for inflections and particles — is not as clear as one might like. Both can be understood as "a mixed form of Chinese and Japanese" and can be traced back to the late Heian and Kamakura 鎌倉時代 (1185-1333) periods. One recurring issue when it comes to definitions concerns the type of *kana* used; *wakan konkōbun* is a mixture of Chinese characters and *katakana*, as seen in the medieval war tales such as the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語, therefore Japanese scholars have unanimously argued that *gunki monogatari* 軍記物語 should be considered as a model for *wakan konkōbun*.

A survey of the history of written Japanese, however, reveals the presence of Sino-Japanese hybrids, if at a latent stage, since the very beginning of the history of Japanese writing, and the evolution of *wakan konkōbun* doesn't seem to be directly linked to the development of the graphs, as variations in copying texts and manuscripts might alter the style of a text at surface level.

According to Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕:

> The definition used so far has not always been clear, being used to indicate a text that mixes *wabun* with *kanbun* (*kundoku*) and, in most cases, adopt *kanji kana majiribun* as formal orthography. Specifically, it indicates *gunki monogatari* of the Kamakura period such as the *Heike monogatari* and *Taiheiki*. In this kind of writing, based on the syntax of Middle Japanese as seen in *wabun* and *kanbun kundoku* materials, numerous Chinese loan words (*kango*)

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[13] Yamada Toshio, "Wakan konkōbun", in Ōno Susumu, Shibata Takeshi (eds.), *Iwanami kōza Nihongo*, 10, *Buntai*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1979, pp. 257-277.

are used together with many late Middle Japanese vernacular expressions; elements of *hentai kanbun* are also very common. In a broad sense it can be defined as a *buntai* that merges elements of *wabun* and *kanbun kundoku*, but this sort of generalization is not always possible. Indeed, it is undeniable that *kanji kana majiribun* is a definition pertaining to the classification of the systems of writing, and that *wakan konkōbun* is a concept used in the taxonomy of genres.[14]

In the pages that follow I propose a partial systematization and integration of the history of Japanese written language seen from the perspective of the evolution of its writing systems.

The aim of the present study is, therefore, to investigate the possibility of interplay of script and language in classical Japanese, identifying some key features that defined the formation process of written Sino-Japanese from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries, i.e. to explore the role of writing systems as a linguistic variable.

Written diatypes and orthographies

Japan never developed any form of autonomous writing. According to *Kogoshūi* 古語拾遺

> 蓋聞、上古之世未有文字。貴賤老少、口口相伝。前言往行、存而不忘。
> According to tradition, characters were unknown in ancient times, so that all people, noble or humble, old or young, transmitted the traditions inherited from one generation to another orally. In doing so, saying and deeds of the men of the past were handed down without being forgotten.[15]

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[14] Kokugo Gakkai (ed.), *Kokugogaku daijiten*, Tōkyō, Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1980, pp. 937-938.

[15] Nishimiya Kazutami (ed.), *Kogoshūi*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1985, p. 13. Translation by the author, if otherwise indicated.

The legends of the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720) state that the first texts introduced from the continent were the *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*) of Confucius 孔子 (551-479 BC) and the *Qianziwen* 千字文 (*The Thousand Character Classic*, a Chinese poem used as a textbook for teaching characters to children). They reached Japan during the reign of Emperor Ōjin 応神天皇 (270-310) thanks to Wani 王仁, an immigrant Korean scholar who also produced a Japanese version of the two works. However, based on the cultural level of Japan at the time and on the historical reliability of the two chronicles, these events should be dated to at least one hundred and twenty years later, assuming they happened at all.

The first reliable sources are then epigraphic inscriptions on metal or stone (*kinsekibun* 金石文) that reflect only a gradual penetration of Chinese characters and language within Yayoi society (300 BC - 300 AD). This sort of evidence cannot be directly linked to the birth of a native writing system, and much less to a full understanding and mastery of writing. The bronze mirrors produced around the third century AD after imported Chinese models showcase a number of characters which are either written upside down or are imprecise in shape, corroborating the theory that these signs were probably understood as simple graphic patterns and not as components of a writing system.

The oldest extant Japanese artifacts to bear correct Chinese inscriptions are objects made in China and brought to Japan at the time of the first diplomatic missions between the two countries. Among them, one should mention the *Kan no wa no na no kokuō no in* 漢委奴国王印, a small golden seal discovered in 1784 in Chikuzen 筑前 — the north-western area of modern-day Fukuoka Prefecture in Kyūshū — and the inscription on the blade of a sword excavated from a *kofun* 古墳 (ancient burial

mound) in the town of Ichi no moto 櫟本 in the municipality of Tenri.[16]

These and others famous findings such as the Etafunayama burial mound sword inscription[17] — *Etafunayama kofun tekken* 江田船山古墳鉄剣 — or the Suda Hachiman shrine mirror[18] — *Suda Hachiman jinja jinbutsu gazōkyō* 田八幡神社人物画像鏡 — are usually treated by scholars as evidence of the progressive introduction of Japanese expressions in a Chinese context. This interaction resulted in some syntactical modifications, such as changes in word order so that it would be closer or more specific to the Japanese language, as well as changes in the use of Chinese characters as phonograms to record native proper nouns. Examples of the former include the use of expressions — e.g. prefixes and auxiliary verbs — characteristic of the honorific language, while the latter is evident in the records of personal and geographical names.

This last feature in particular is the one most scholars consider as the pivotal element in the process of Japanization of a Chinese medium. The *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), for example, is written in a diatype close to orthodox Chinese, but the names of *shintō* deities, emperors, toponyms, *et cetera*, had to be somehow read in Japanese even without the aid of an adequate visual outline; the same holds true for other expressions such as, to name one, 幸魂奇魂, probably read *sakimitama kushimitama*,[19] or *ama no ukihashi* 天浮橋.[20]

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[16] For a text of the inscription see Yamaguchi Yoshinori, *Kodai nihon buntaishi ronkō*, Tōkyō, Yūseidō, 1993, p. 17.

[17] Shimonaka Kunihiko (ed.), *Shodō zenshū*, 9, *Nihon 1 – Yamato, Nara*, Tōkyō, Heibonsha, 1965, p. 45 (Table 1).

[18] Komatsu Shigemi, *Kana — Sono seiritsu to hensen*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1968, p. 18.

[19] Sakamoto Tarō (ed.), *Nihon shoki, jō*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 67, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1967, p. 80.

[20] Ibid., p. 130.

What we have here is a strong emphasis on the birth of native features within a different linguistic environment. At the same time, there is no readily available evidence to help clarify this point, for the interpretation of the script is left to the reader and to his way of decoding the strings of characters. As mentioned earlier, the script itself bears no indication as to which one is the proper reading, which explains why some works that were highly praised and often read in the past ended up gathering dust in the centuries that followed.

To cite one example, the string 幸魂奇魂 may appear to be "purely" Chinese at first, since it is written with logograms, none of which suggests a potential native reading. Even if one tried to decipher this string by means of an autochthonous register, giving the Chinese characters their corresponding Japanese reading, there is no evidence for the need to supplement the reading for 魂 with the honorific preposition *mi-*. At the same time, no indication is given as to which reading is preferable between *tama* and *tamashihi*, both of which existed at the time.

Analysis of glossed manuscripts of the *Nihon shoki* from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, moreover, has shown that, with the exception of names of foreign countries, terms related to Buddhism, and words that could not be read otherwise, the text should be deciphered according to native readings rather than Sino-Japanese ones. Also, several passages cannot to be interpreted in the same way as texts in classical Chinese were — i.e. character by character. A much freer interpretation, akin to a paraphrase, is adopted in lieu of a literal reading.[21]

The readings given by Japanese scholars in modern annotated editions are based not only on accurate philological surveys, internal reconstruction,

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[21] Tsukishima Hiroshi, *Heian jidai no kanbun kundokugo ni tsukite no kenkyū*, Tōkyō, Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1963, pp. 128-181.

and other such methods, but also on the sensibility of a native reader who would have chosen a word over of another using such personal criteria as nuance or musicality — criteria that cannot be scientifically organized. Ancient and modern readers alike are thus expected to have some sort of innate understanding of the rules associated with the deciphering of the document, an understanding that rests upon the readers' cultural background.

A poem from the *Hitachi fudoki* 常陸風土記 (713) offers a poignant example of experimental contamination between the visual layout of a text and the range of its possible interpretations.

愛乎我胤	巍乎神宮	*Hashiki kamo aga sue, Takaki kamo kamutsu miya*
天地竝齊	日月共同	*Ametsuchi to hitoshiku, Hitsuki to tomo ni*
人民集賀	飲食富豐	*Tamigusa tsudohihogi, Mike miki yutakeku*
代代無絶	日日彌榮	*Yoyo ni tayuru koto naku, Hi ni ke ni iya sakae*
千秋萬歲	遊樂不窮	*Chiaki yorozu yo ni, Tanoshimi tsukiji*

How precious to me, these my descendants
How lofty the sacred shrine!
Together with heaven and earth
Together with the sun and the moon
The folk assemble to give praise
Food and drink in abundance
Age after age without end
Day by day more flourishing
For a thousand autumns, a myriad years
Happiness unceasing.[22]

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[22] Akimoto Kichirō (ed.), *Fudoki*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 2, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1958, p. 41. English translation by Helen Craig McCullough, *Brocade by night: "Kokin wakashū" and the court style in Japanese classical poetry*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985, pp. 75-76.

With five contrapuntal couplets of four characters per line, the written text is reminiscent of a traditional type of Chinese poetry. The two lines have a one-to-one correspondence in their metrical length and lexical and semantic opposition, while the last characters of four out of five couplets — 宮, 同, 豊, 窮 — share the same ending rhyme according to Chinese standards. The meaning of the text, therefore, can be conveyed by the original script without any changes, simply by using the text as a visual outline to facilitate comprehension; in theory, it would also be possible to give a tentative Chinese reading. On the other hand, as shown in the *rōmaji* transliteration, the poem was probably written with a vernacular reading in mind, possibly in the form of a native ballad. At this stage, the latent Sino-Japanese hybrid comes to fruition by way of a logographic writing, which is related to a foreign system, and of a more or less native interpretation chosen by the reader without any kind of codification to follow.

The poem itself, it should be pointed out, is problematic. It is not pure in syntax according to Chinese standards — 榮 doesn't rhyme with the others four characters — but at the same time it is not purely native either because the alleged reading is not in compliance with traditional Japanese metric based on the alternation of five and seven sound units. Others may object to the choice of poetry rather than prose, though such choice makes sense if one takes into account the importance and ubiquity of poetry in eight-century Japan. Rejecting as it does the use of characters as phonograms and relying instead on the interchange between a sign and its native interpretation as an entire lexical unit, this poem undoubtedly offers a fascinating case study for the Japanization of a Chinese context. Moreover, coincidental as it may be, one cannot help but notice the similarity between this text, with its juxtaposition of couplets expressing similar or contrasting contents, and the parallel prose, *pian wen* 駢文, of the Six Dynasties (220-589 AD). This elaborate style, which makes extensive use of such poetic techniques as parallelism, sound patterns, and allusion, is often identified as

the model for later Japanese *wakan konkōbun* prose, epitomized by the incipit of such literary works as *Heike monogatari* and *Hojōki* 方丈記.

The first Japanese author to deal with the challenge of choosing an adequate writing system for his native language was Ō no Yasumaro 太安万侶 (? – 723). In his famous preface to the *Kojiki*, Yasumaro states that in the days of old speech and concepts were simple, which makes it difficult to rearrange them in a proper way using Chinese characters. Narrating the events semantically — i.e. by means of *kun* 訓 — would result in an inadequate rendition of the meaning, while recording them phonetically — i.e. by means of *on* 音 — would make the contents too lengthy. That is why he sometimes choses a mix of semantic and phonetic writing even in the same sentence, while other times he opted for a purely semantic way of expression.[23]

The *Kojiki* effectively showcases the great efforts made toward the implementation of an orthographic system that would better represent the native language. As it shares the same writing system with a totally different diatype, the boundaries between the two languages tend to be fuzzy, especially during the reading process. Still, particularly when compared to the *Nihon shoki*, there is no denying that the *Kojiki* was intended to be read as Japanese in spite of a visual layout that, at first sight, resembles orthodox Chinese.[24]

The next step was to keep the Chinese characters as an orthographic surface while integrating them with a growing number of native features (both at the lexical and syntactic level). Such features were concealed under a visual layer that suggested the adoption of a foreign set of rules. More than literature, which was still an immature form of expression at the

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[23] See Takeda Yūichi and Kurano Kenji (eds.), *Kojiki*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 1, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1958, pp. 46-49.

[24] The debate is still ongoing as to exactly how many native readings were envisioned. See Kamei Takashi, "Kojiki wo yomeru ka", in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi (ed.), *Kojiki taisei, Gengo moji hen*, Tōkyō, Heibonsha, 1957, pp. 97-154.

time, the platform to implement such a plan came in the form of practical or private writings where formal irregularities, conscious or otherwise, could be ignored or more easily tolerated.

桑内真公解　　　　申不参事
右真公、頭出瘡、弥大施痛苦、此令見於人、虫瘡_{止云}、仍請薬師、比来之間治作、
雖然未能寮、因録怠状、以解送、謹申
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　寶龜三年三月廿三日

桑内真公解す。　　参事せざる[こと]を申す。
右、真公頭に瘡出づ。弥大にして痛苦を施す。此を人於見せ令む。虫瘡と云ふ。
傍りて薬師を請ひ此来之間治を作す。然りと雖ども未だ能く寮〔療〕すこと能はず。
因て怠状を録し、以て解し送り、謹みして申す。
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　寶龜三年三月廿三日

I, Kuwauchi Magimi cannot attend work for the following reason.
Dermatitis appeared on my head. The rash became increasingly large and was accompanied by pain. I showed it to a doctor who said it was *mushigasa*. I have asked a pharmacist to cure it, but it still has not healed. This is the reason why I have written this letter of apology that I humbly present to you.
23rd day, 3rd month, 3rd year of Hōki (772)[25]

The linguistic diatype of the message complies for the most part with orthodox Chinese syntax.[26] However, one cannot help but notice an orthographic convention characteristic of *senmyō* in the direct quote where the logogram 止 is used phonetically for the postposition *to*, it is written in smaller body, and is placed to the right of the main column of text with the sign 云 indicating the verb *iu*. The latter, according to Japanese syntax, is positioned at the end of the sentence. Furthermore, the noun 虫瘡, centerpiece of the quotation, is only in appearance borrowed from the Chinese.

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[25] Sasaki Nobutsuna and Hashimoto Shinkichi (eds.), *Nankyō ibun*, Tōkyō, Seigei shuppan, 1921, Table XV.

[26] One exception is given by the string 此令見於人 where the orthodox Chinese word order would be 令於人見此.

A quick perusal of the main dictionaries of the first half of the eleventh century — the *Ruijumyōgishō* 類聚名義抄 (Kanchiin edition) and the *Iroha jiruishō* 色葉字類抄 (Maeda edition) — reveals in fact that no entry for such a term exists, suggesting a native coinage produced by matching the two Japanese readings *mushi* and *gasa* for the characters 虫 and 瘡, respectively.

As previously stated, from a purely visual perspective the non-orthodox variant of classical Chinese results in a text written only in *kanji* and which is very similar in appearance to the orthodox continental form. However, a closer look at syntax and wording reveals the presence of numerous native features. In other words, despite the name that identifies it as a variant of Chinese, *hentai kanbun* is, in latency, a form of written Japanese. What the author had in mind during the writing process was a diatype that, orthographic layout notwithstanding, was to be read as the Japanese rendition of a Chinese text. The result was a sort of parallel text in the target language which kept a visual outline pertaining to a completely different source. Such script was accessible only to those who were well versed in the native language: a perfect knowledge of Chinese was of no help in decoding it properly.

Because of this multi-layered dichotomy embedded in the text beginning with the drafting stage, *hentai kanbun* shows a dual nature that combines native features with a foreign model. According to Minegishi Akira 峰岸明, over time a growing group of texts began to adopt the same Chinese character in association with the same native word — i.e. *wago* 和語 — with existing differences attributable to personal choices made by the individual authors.[27]

This diatype also owed its success to practical factors such as materials used and time required. This Japanized version of the Chinese script did not

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[27] Minegishi Akira, "Heian jidai kiroku bunten buntai shiron", *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, LI, 4, 1974, pp. 39-57.

require an accurate character-by-character recording of particles and auxiliaries — which were to be integrated autonomously by the reader in the decoding process. It is, in other words, a compact and functional form of writing especially ideal for bureaucratic and private records: it saves considerable of space on paper and can be written in a relatively short time.[28]

It is not surprising, then, that the diaries of Heian period noblemen rely on this script. Moreover, following the standardization of *kana* these documents came to include new features indicative of the Japanization of the written language, features characterized by a peculiar use of orthographies, especially *hiragana*.

To cite one example, in the *Midōkanpakuki* 御堂関白記 (995), the diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027), not only the *waka* 和歌 but also the portions of text that precede and follow the *waka* are sometimes written in *hiragana*, as if they were following the rapid flow of the brush.

廿一日、癸亥、水定
此夜御悩甚重 興 居給宮 給殿々几帳下給被仰ツ由のミの久さのやと利爾木ミを於
キてちりをいてぬることをこそ於毛へとおほせられて臥給後不覚御座奉見人々流泣
如雨（寛弘八年［1011］六月二十一日）

21st day, *mizunotoi, suijō*.[29]

This evening the pain [of the retired emperor Ichijō 一条法皇, 980-1011] has become unbearable. He sat up in bed and turned to the empress [Shōshi

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[28] Valerio L. Alberizzi, "Problemi di tassonomia dei diatipi della lingua classica scritta: lo *hentai kanbun*" (Taxonomic problems in the analysis of written Japanese diatypes: the *hentai kanbun*), in *Atti del XXVI Convegno di Studi sul Giappone* (Torino, 26-28 settembre 2002), Venezia, Cartotecnica Veneziana Editrice, 2003, pp. 31-54.

[29] Literally "the water *dhyāna*" in which one becomes identified with water. While in a state of trance, one may become water; stories are told of devotees who, having turned into water, woke up to find stones inside their bodies. These stones had been thrown into their bodies when they were in a liquid state and could only be removed during a second trance. Cited in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb/index.html).

彰子, 988-1074] who was behind the curtains, saying: "I will leave you in an abode of dew-drenched grass, freeing myself from the dust of this earthly world". <u>After having recited this poem</u> he laid down and lost his consciousness. Everyone who was present at the scene burst into tears of despair.[30]

For a late-tenth-century Japanese like Michinaga, native poetry was to be written exclusively in *hiragana;* this set of characters was strictly related to native registers and their use. This explains the presence of the honorific verb *ohosu* おほす, used in reference to an action performed by the emperor, immediately following the citation of a Japanese poem, written in the phonogrammatic script selected to express the native language.[31]

In Fujiwara no Teika's 藤原定家 (1162-1241) *Meigetsuki* 明月記 (1189), as well as in the *waka*, similar examples are found even in prose passages — which, unlike the poems, could have been written using Chinese characters — while the dialogues quoted in the text are transcribed in a form close to colloquial language mixing *katakana* and *hiragana* freely. The more the Japanese tried to reproduce a form close to their own language, the more they had to overlook Chinese syntax, the formal way of expression. Their choices were reflected in the selection of the orthographies.[32]

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[30] Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo (ed.), *Midōkanpakuki, chū*, in *Dainihon kokiroku*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1953, p. 111. Photographic reproduction in Yōmei bunko (ed.), *Midōkanpakuki 2*, Kyōto, Shibunkaku shuppan, 1983, p. 180.

[31] One should also point out that, unlike the original manuscript by Michinaga, subsequent copies of the *Midōkanpakuki* transcribed the parts in *kana* using Chinese characters according to a non-orthodox form of Chinese. This was likely done to protect the reputation of the famous statesman.

[32] Mitani Kuniaki, *Monogatari bungaku no gensetsu*, Tōkyō, Yūseidō, 1992, pp. 349-352.

よるにしに火ありかはたうのみなみ一条のきたときく（天福元年 [1233] 十月十一日）

At night a fire broke out in the western area [of Kyōto] involving the districts to the south of Gyōganji and to the north of Ichijō.[33]

殿下令申大殿給之由密承之太郎はいかゞ候らん次郎に訓程の事は皆知て候う存外事歟成長語之（嘉禎元年 [1235] 正月二十四日）

I'm listening secretly the opinion His Highness is expressing to the Minister. "What do you think about Tarō? Everyone knows he is giving lessons to Jirō. Are you surprised? This shows how much he has grown up and matured."[34]

The efforts to integrate *kana* within a Sinicized context were hampered by the different degrees of social prestige accorded to the logographic system versus the phonographic one. One tale from the *Kojidan* 古事談 (ca. 1212) collection well illustrates this point. During the reign of Emperor Daigo 醍醐天皇 (885-930) Ōe no Koretoki 大江維時 (888-963), a renowned scholar who held the office of head of the imperial archives, was ordered to write a list of the names of all the flowering trees in the imperial garden. Koretoki knew that if he used Chinese characters nobody would be able to read them, so he recorded the names in *kana*. Because of this, the other noblemen mocked him when he presented the emperor with the list. Later, the emperor ordered to Koretoki to compile another index of all the flowers in the imperial garden, but this time in *kanji*. As Koretoki had predicted, no one was able to read the names and those who tried had to go to him for clarification.[35]

Although it was possible to write just about every word indicating objects, customs, ceremonies, proper names, *et cetera*, by means of Chinese characters, most people did not know how to read them. Moreover, even if

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[33] Kokusho kankōkai (ed.), *Meigetsuki 3*, Tōkyō, Kokusho kankōkai, 1970, p. 399. Photographic reproduction in Reizeike Shiguretei bunko (ed.), *Meigetsuki 5*, Tōkyō, Asahi shinbunsha, 2003, p. 532.

[34] Kokusho kankōkai (ed.), *Meigetsuki 3*, cit., p. 443.

[35] Kobayashi Yasuharu (ed.), *Kojidan, ge*, Tōkyō, Gendai shichōsha, 1981, p. 163-164.

recording official documents in a Japanized form of written Chinese had been possible, it would still have been very difficult for an author to paint a detailed picture of that which he wished to express. This was not due to poor knowledge of the Chinese characters, but simply to the fact that some of these characters were not considered effective in conveying certain specific contents. Therefore *kana* was used in their stead.

Is it correct to assume that with the tenth-century standardization of the phonographic systems the Japanese refined *hiragana* as a special purpose script used only to express their native language? In other words, can we argue that there existed an indissoluble bond between a linguistic diatype and an orthographic form in ancient Japanese?

There are two possible answers to this complex question. One is yes, if we consider the span of time from the end of the tenth century to the end of eleventh. The other is no, if we consider the first half of the tenth century and the years from the beginning of the twelfth on.

The famous preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905) by Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (868-945) offers a prime example. This text is often referred to as the first complete document in pure Early Middle Japanese entirely written in *hiragana*. However, Japanese scholars have shown that the preface is not an original composition, but rather a sort of adaptation inspired by the foreword to the *Shijing* 詩経 (*The Classic of Songs*). In fact, a closer analysis reveals the presence of vocabulary used exclusively in the glossed readings of Chinese manuscripts — *kanbun kundoku* 漢文訓読.

> こゝに、いにしへのことをも、哥のこゝろをも、しれる人、わづかにひとり、ふたり也き。
> しかあれど、これかれ、えたるところ、えぬところ、たがひになむある。
> After that there were one or two poets who knew the ancient songs and understood the heart of poetry. However, each had strengths and weaknesses.[36]

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[36] Saeki Umetomo (ed.), *Kokin wakashū*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 8, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1958, p. 99. English translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd, *Kokinshū: A collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, Boston, Cheng & Tsui, 1996, p. 43.

そのほかに、ちかき世に、その名きこえたる人は、すなはち僧正遍昭は、哥のさま
はえたれども、まことすくなし。<u>たとへば</u>ゑにかけるをむなを見ていたづらに心をうご
かす<u>がごとし</u>。

Among the others, one of the best known of recent times was Archibishop
Henjō, whose style is good but who lacks sincerity. His poetry is like a painting
of a woman which stirs one's heart in vain.[37]

大伴のくろぬしは、そのさまいやし。いはゞたきゞおへる山人の花のかげにやすめる<u>が
ごとし</u>。

Ōtomo no Kuronushi's songs are rustic in form; they are like a mountaineer
with a bundle of firewood on his back resting in the shade of the blossoms.[38]

<u>たとひ</u>ときうつりことさり、たのしびかなしびゆきかふともこのうたのもじあるをや。

Times may change, joy and sorrow come and go, but the words of these poems
are eternal.[39]

The underlined adverbs, connectives, and auxiliaries such as *tagahi ni* たがひ
に, *tatoheba* たとへば, *ga gotoshi* がごとし, *ihaba* いはば, and *tatohi* たとひ, are
normally absent from the court literature of the Heian period, but are
frequently used in the glossed readings of Chinese texts. While it is difficult to
prove that their presence in the preface could be directly linked to vernacular
readings of the *The Classic of Songs*, one may argue that such a vocabulary was
at least known to the author who used it almost unconsciously.

The same introduction features such distinguishing elements as old
Japanese words with glossed text vocabulary that reveal a close
relationship between the author and official documents that used a diatype
quite different from the everyday parlance.

Tsurayuki is also the author of the *Tosa nikki* 土左日記 (935),
generally considered a pioneering work written in a genuine native style
that uses *hiragana* as its main orthographic outline. Even this work,

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 100 and p. 43.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 101 and p. 46.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 103 and p. 47.

however, showcases several differences with the great classics of court literature and reveals a strong influence of Sinicized diatypes both in terms of vocabulary and contents.

> といふ<u>あひだ</u>にかぢとりもののあはれもしらで、おのれしさけをくらひつれば、はやくいなんとて、「しほみちぬ。かぜもふきぬべし。」とさわげば、ふねにのりなんとす。
>
> … while he was reciting the poem the captain of the boat, a rude man who did not know the aware of things, having being paid enough to drink as much as he wanted, was anxious to leave immediately. "The tide has risen! The wind is blowing!", he shouted, going on board.[40]

> こゝろざしあるに<u>ゝたり</u>。
>
> He seemed to be a well-mannered and kind man.[41]

> あるひとのこのわらはなる、<u>ひそかに</u>いふ
>
> The child of one of the passengers bashfully said....[42]

> <u>そもそも</u>いかゞよんだるといぶかしがりてとふ。
>
> "Tell me, then, what was your poem going to be?", asked a person eager to hear [the child poem].[43]

In a way akin to the preface to the *Kokinshū*, there are many adverbs and connectives that are not used in Japanese literary prose of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In lieu of *tagahi ni* or *hisoka ni*, a pure *wabun* text tends to adopt *katami ni*, *shinobiyaka ni* or *shinobite*, words sharing the same semantic value with the previous two but more contextualized within a native diatype. This cannot be simply explained in terms of a close relationship between the author and the world of orthodox Chinese. In

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[40] Suzuki Tomotarō (ed.), *Tosa nikki*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 20, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1957, p. 30.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

spite of the above mentioned examples, the *Tosa nikki* nonetheless presents numerous features typical of the Early Middle Japanese written diatype — e.g. vocabulary, *kakari musubi* 係り結び —. A comparison with the diaries of noblemen and court officials in *hentai kanbun*, induced some scholars to think that Tsurayuki was attempting to realize a *kana* version of this sort of written diatype to which he should have been well acquainted.[44] This would explain the presence of elements of different origin in the same context which, after having being properly polished, paved the way for the later refined "pure" native written language.

Along with the transition from *kanji* to *hiragana*, a parallel process took place between the eighth and eleventh centuries which resulted in the birth of a mixed orthography of logograms and phonograms. This is a knotty problem in the debate over Sino-Japanese hybrids, because every kind of script that uses in the same context a combination of the two systems is considered to be written in *wakan konkōbun*.

Imperial proclamations began to be transcribed in the eighth century; in order to convey the emperor's will without mistakes it was necessary to rely on a diatype that was different from orthodox Chinese. Why? Not only because the contents had to be intelligible to everyone, but also because the imperial proclamations were transmitted in Japanese orally: this made it impossible to adopt complex forms based on a written language such as Chinese-based diatypes. Of course, it was possible to adopt individual Chinese characters as phonograms, but this would have made the text too lengthy. The solution was to write the semantic components in regular size characters and the variable and functional parts of speech in signs smaller than the main body of the text to indicate a reading for their phonetic value.

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[44] Tsukishima Hiroshi, "Tosa nikki to kanbun kundoku", in Hattori Shirō, Kamei Takashi and Tsukishima Hiroshi (eds), *Nihon no gengogaku*, 7, *Gengoshi*, Tōkyō, Taishūkan shoten, 1981, pp. 389-401.

This orthographic form, known as *senmyōtai* 宣命体, appears for the first time in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (797), followed by the *norito* of the *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (927) and in some private writings.[45] Such an orthographic rendering is also found in the ancient records preserved in the Shosōin 正倉院, testifying to the use of this script beginning in the second half of the eighth century. The following example, dating back to 748, is one of the oldest.[46]

是以祖父父兄<u>良我</u>仕奉<u>祁留</u>次<u>尒</u>在故<u>尒</u>海上群大領司<u>尒</u>仕奉<u>止</u>申
是を以て、祖父・父・兄<u>ら</u>が仕へ奉<u>りける</u>次<u>に</u>在るが故<u>に</u>、海上の群の大領司<u>に</u>仕へ奉ら<u>むと</u>申す。
Therefore, being in direct line of descent from my grandfather, my father and my brothers who all have served [from generation to generation], I request to be placed in active service under the Governor of a district near the sea.[47]

With the exception of the opening connective, an elementary Chinese structure easily reorganized according to Japanese syntax, the entire text is written following Japanese word order and features distinguishing native lexical features such as the use of honorifics. Like a modern text in *kanji kana majiri*, moreover, independent words are recorded by means of Chinese characters that are used semantically, while inflectional morphemes and postpositions are rendered by means of small *kanji* that are used phonetically.

The same strategy is deployed in the *norito*, *shintō* prayers that share with *senmyō* a strong connection to the spoken language, formal writings

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[45] Shirafuji Noriyuki, "Jōdai senmyōtai bunken kanken", *Kokugo kenkyūshitsu*, 6, 1967.

[46] Sakakura Atsuyoshi, "Kokugo shiryō to shite no mokkan", *Kokugogaku*, 76, 1969, pp. 17-26. Kotani Hiroyasu, "Senmyōtai no seiritsu katei ni tsuite", *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, XLVIII, 1, 1971, pp. 16-25.

[47] Cited in Yamaguchi, op. cit., p. 30. The highlighted characters were written in small size.

and the world of the divine. Imperial proclamations were the means through which the emperor, a god descended on earth, spoke to the people, while *norito* were the way humans spoke to the gods when asking for divine intervention.

Formal and practical writings provided a creative platform to experiment in the direction of a more compact and functional script. Bureaucrats, scholars, priests, and monks shared the need for a faster and more straightforward way of writing.

A poignant case is offered by the copy of the *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō* 金光明最勝王経[48] discovered at the Saidaiji 西大寺 in Nara. This glossed manuscript was produced around 762 and annotated in 830. Kasuga Masaji's 春日政治 (1878-1962) monumental study demonstrates that *Konkōmyō saishōō kyō* is nothing but a character-by-character rendering of orthodox Chinese. From a grammatological point of view, this document showcases the combination of a logographic system — i.e. Chinese characters — with a phonogrammatic one — i.e. *kana* — with the latter used to integrate native readings and dependent words.

For this reason, according to Kasuga, the birth of a Sino-Japanese hybrid, if only at a latent stage, can be dated back to the beginning of the ninth century due to the decoding techniques of the glossed reading of Chinese texts.[49]

是時王子〔…〕於餓虎前委身而臥由此菩薩慈悲威勢虎無能為菩薩見已即上高山
投身于地。
是の時に王子…〔於〕餓(ゑ)たる虎の前に身を委セて〔而〕臥(し)ヌ。此の菩薩の
慈悲の威勢に由(り)て、虎い能ク爲ること無し。菩薩い見已(り)て即高キ山に上(り)
て、身を〔于〕地に投グ。

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[48] A translation of the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsôttama-sūtra* by Yijing (635–713), a Tang period (618-907) monk.

[49] Kasuga Masaji, "Wakan konkōbuntai no seiritsu", in Kasuga Kazuo (ed.), *Kasuga Masaji chosakushū*, 2, Tōkyō, Benseisha, 1983, pp. 246-247.

> In that moment the prince […] stood in front of the starving tigers and laid down offering his body to the beasts. Confronted with his Bodhisattva's compassion, even the tigers couldn't do anything. Then, the Bodhisattva climbed a high peak from which he threw himself [into the animals].[50]

By means of an autochthonous register, the Chinese characters of the original text were given a corresponding Japanese reading by adding small phonograms to the right or left side whenever necessary. The texts were also supplemented by marks that showed the correct punctuation to follow during the reading process. Other types of notations such as explanatory glosses about the content were also frequently added at the margins. While there exist substantial similarities between these strategies — such as the adoption of paragraphematic marks to indicate a syntactical inversion or the cursivization of signs selected as phonograms — the manner of notation and its frequency vary greatly depending on the documents.

The religious sphere was a source of innovation and implementation when it came to the writing system. Adding vernacular readings to an orthodox Chinese text by means of marginal glosses in *kana* meant a step towards the creation of a Sino-Japanese hybrid and toward the introduction of *katakana* as a special purpose script.

However, the glosses were minor fragments that only partially suggested readings or inflective parts of the speech; the body of the text was not coherent as a whole unit and the main Chinese script was covered with annotations. The influence of this form of writing is evident in yet another group of texts with practical features meant for everyday use, namely the drafts of sermons to be read aloud during public religious services.

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[50] Kasuga Masaji, *Saidaijibon Konkōmyō saishōōkyō koten no kokugogakuteki kenkyū*, Tōkyō, Benseisha, 1985, p. 191.

The *Tōdaiji fujumonkō* 東大寺諷誦文稿 from the first half of the ninth century is one such draft. It differs from the *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō* — where *katakana* script for interlinear glosses was smaller and auxiliary to the main body of the text — because both logographic and phonetic signs are equal in size, just as in the modern language. It was natural for a monk to use the orthographical form he was more familiar with — i.e. a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana* — to record annotations and personal thoughts on the message he was going to deliver to the public. Freed from specific linguistic conventions, our monk would naturally use in the same context expressions he deemed more useful for his purpose, mixing native and Chinese vocabulary along with a combination of native and non-orthodox Chinese syntax, and representing them graphically in a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana.*

The *kanji katakana majiri* thus found ample application in the world of learning and bureaucracy. After a developing process that lasted approximately two hundred years, it spread to other areas of literacy, including didactic literature — i.e. *setsuwa* 説話. Even in this case, however, one must wonder whether there existed an indissoluble bond between Sino-centered linguistic diatypes — i.e. *kanbun, kanbun kundoku, hentai kanbun* — and an orthographic form — i.e. *katakana* — in ancient Japanese.

Textual analysis suggests a two-folded answer similar to the one offered for the *hiragana.* Yes, the bond existed if we look at time between the end of the tenth and the end of the eleventh centuries; but it does not if we consider the first half of the tenth century and the years from the beginning of the twelfth century onward.

An exemplary text in this respect is the *Konjaku monogatarishū* 今昔物語集 (first half of the 12th century) which, thanks to a script in pure *kanji katakana majiribun,* is frequently identified as a key document in the transition toward medieval *wakan konkōbun.* As previous studies have demonstrated,

this collection of Buddhist tales features a great variation in diatypes depending on the three main sections into which it is divided: Tenjiku 天竺 (India), Shintan 震旦 (China) e Honchō 本朝 (Japan).[51] The independent words written in *kana* in each of the tales, moreover, reflect this contextual situation including lexicon of the native diatype, of vernacular origin, and words which were difficult to render in Chinese characters.[52]

A turning point in the evolution of Sino-Japanese hybrids is more likely linked to the rise of new social realities that single-layered diatypes alone could not describe properly. The need arose for expressions that would combine the rational and concise script of Sino-centered diatypes with the lyric contents of native writings. The textual category that better fits this description is probably that of the *rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語, the historical tales where the encounter between chronicle and narrative paved the way for the formation of new forms of expression.

The earliest example of this genre is the eleventh-century *Eiga monogatari* 栄華物語, attributed to court lady Akazome Emon 赤染衛門 (957-1041 ca). Written in *kana*, it also incorporates rough translations from the *Baishi wenji* 白氏文集 (*Bai's Collected Writings*), an anthology of writings and poems by the Chinese literate Bai ju yi 白居易 (772-846), as well as Buddhist prayers and quotations from Genshin's 源信 (942-1017) *Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集 (985) rendered into Japanese.

植木静ならんと思へども風やまず子孝せんと思へども親待たず一切世間に生ある
物は皆滅す（壽）命無量なりといへども必ず盡くる期あり盛あるものは必ず衰う會ふ
ものは離別あり果報として常なる事なしあるひは昨日榮へて今日衰へぬ春の花秋
の紅葉といへども春の霞たなびき秋の霧立ち篭めつればこぼれて匂も見えずたゞ
一渡りの風に散りぬれば庭の塵水の泡とこそはなるめれ。

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[51] Yamada Iwao, "*Konjaku monogatarishū* ni okeru wakan ryōbunmyaku no konzai ni tsuite", *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, XVIII, 10, 1941, pp. 142-156.

[52] Yamaguchi Yoshinori, "*Konjaku monogatarishū* no keisei to buntai — kanagaki jiritsugo no imi suru mono", *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, XLV, 8, 1968, pp. 48-64.

> Though a tree may wish to remain motionless, winds never cease to blow; though a son may intend to be filial, parents do not live forever. Whatever lives dies. A life span may be immensurabily long, but there is always a limit. Those who prosper must decline; where there is meeting parting will follow. All is cause and effect; nothing is eternal. Fortunes that prospered yesterday may decline today. Even spring blossoms and autumn leaves are spoiled and lose their beauty when they are enshrouded by spring haze and autumn mist. And after a gust of wind scatters them, they are nothing but debris in a garden or froth on the water.[53]

The underlined part combines two quotations from the Tendai monk's work written in Chinese.[54] The seemingly pervasive Sinicized tone is actually offset by these paraphrases and, at a visual level, by the choice of orthography. Some scholars have emphasized a resemblance with the introduction to the *Hōjōki* or to the *Heike Monogatari*.[55]

Even war tales (or *gunki monogatari*) which tried to depict the transition between the world of the aristocrats and that of warriors could neither rely on a simple native diatype written in a pure phonogrammatic script nor on a Sino-centered one focused solely on logographic writing. The tumultuous world of the late eleventh century required a form that would adequately convey the sense of danger felt by the masses while evoking the psychological tensions of the times.

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[53] Yamanaka Yutaka and Matsumura Hiroshi (ed.), *Eiga monogatari, 1*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 75, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 1964, p. 457. English translation by Helen Craig McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, vol. 2, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1980, pp. 515-516.

[54] The two passages are: 人之在世所求不如意樹欲静而風不停子欲養而親不待。(往生要集大文第二の六)一切世間生者皆帰死壽命雖無量要必有終盡夫盛有必衰合會有別離。(往生要集大文第一の五). Cfr. Takakusu Junjirō (ed.), *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, 84, Tōkyō, Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1930.

[55] Nagazumi Yasuaki, "Wakan konkōbun no seiritsu", in *Nihon bungaku kōza*, 2, *Bungakushi no shomondai*, Tōkyō, Taishūkan shoten, 1987, pp. 117-146.

The social need for a written form that would adequately convey philosophical concepts to a large audience led to the creation of a structure based on a Sinicized diatype and capable of making the most of Chinese vocabulary, a structure to which the features of the native diatype could be added freely. This paved the road for medieval *wakan konkōbun.*

Conclusions

This paper has tried to shed light on the controversial issue of writing systems in Classical Japanese and their role as linguistic variables by focusing on the ongoing debate regarding the so-called Sino-Japanese hybrid — *wakan konkōbun.* Is it possible to establish a connection between a written diatype and the orthographic form(s) adopted therein? Does the selection of a script imply choices at the lexical and syntactic level? It is correct to assume that, since the standardization of the phonographic systems in the middle of the tenth century, the Japanese refined *hiragana* as a special purpose script used only to express their native language, while *katakana* was dedicated to Sino-centered diatypes?

For a long time Japanese scholars have supported this hypothesis, emphasizing the relationship between a codified group of writings and the orthographies adopted to record them. Such a trend is also revealed in the different taxonomies of the Japanese language proposed since the nineteenth century, taxonomies that show a combination of syntactic and orthographic approaches in categorizing the different models of classical Japanese. In this respect, *wakan konkōbun* offers a striking example of a grammatological classification of a written diatype because, from the viewpoint of the writing systems, both *wakan konkōbun* and *kana majiribun* can be understood as "a mixed form of Chinese and Japanese" and can be traced back to the late Heian and Kamakura periods.

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However, as the diachronic survey outlined in the previous pages has shown, the most plausible interpretation is two-folded and relies on a two-layered perspective. A direct relationship between a written language diatype and the script that identifies it is recognizable between the end of the tenth century and the end of the eleventh, a time when most of the classics of Middle Japanese literature were produced. However, in the documents produced in the first half of the tenth century phonogram standardization had not yet been completed, and cross-contamination started to take place starting with the beginning of the twelfth century, mingling the contexts.

The identity between diatypes and orthographic forms may have been theorized because of the strong visual component of the Japanese script, where a sign bears on the surface the socio-cultural context within which it was adopted. Chinese characters were difficult to separate from the language they were meant to express, and the same holds true for *hiragana* with the native language and *katakana* with the Sino-centered variants. Nevertheless, this convention did not prevent Ki no Tsurayuki, Fujiwara no Michinaga, Teika, as well as several anonymous writers from relying on *hiragana* to write words that pertained to the Sino-centered diatypes.

This survey confirms that since the very beginning of Japanese history there existed a multifold group of developing Sino-Japanese hybrids. For this reason, speaking of a Sino-Japanese hybridization is more fruitful than trying to identify the characteristics of a monolithic diatype.

Should the study of the grammatological characteristics of a document be included in the analysis of a *buntai*? Collected data suggest that it is difficult to relate a lexical or syntactic selection to the choice of a writing system, particularly in the case of texts written after the twelfth century, because contamination took place and variations in copying texts and manuscripts may also have altered the style of the text at a surface level.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that there exists a relationship between a

script and the text it expresses, and written Japanese is no exception. The choice of orthographic form, however, should be considered an ancillary feature that provides information on the socio-cultural context in which the text was written, enabling us to better understand the lexico-syntactic choices made by the writer.

For this reason, studies of hybrid diatypes should rely more prominently on documents written for practical purposes for, as we have seen, they offer a challenging field of research. Until recently, only a handful of Japanese scholars have paid attention to paleography and to the study of ancient letters and bureaucratic documents from a linguistic point of view. It is no surprise, then, that new perspectives in the studies of Sino-Japanese hybridization have emerged once Japanese scholars started analyzing such texts, in particular drafts of sermons and imperial proclamations.[56]

A study of these documents also reveals the need for new perspectives in considering the role of the two phonogrammatic systems within the Japanese language. As the imperial proclamations demonstrate, *katakana* was conceived of not only as a special script for formal purposes, but also as a specialized orthography for recording the spoken language when it was to be read aloud or recited. On the other hand, *hiragana* served as a special script for both men and women in informal writings, but was also a highly specialized script deployed for recording and reading purposes only. This would also explain why it was so strongly connected to the world of visual art — e.g. calligraphy —.

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[56] Yamamoto Shingō, *Heian Kamakura jidai ni okeru hyōhaku-ganmon no buntai no kenkyū*, Tōkyō, Kyūko shoin, 2006. Inui Yoshihiko, "Nihongo shoki no shitekina tenkai", in Kinsui Satoshi, Inui Yoshiko and Shibuya Katsumi, *Shirīzu Nihongoshi*, 4, *Nihongoshi no interface*, Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten, 2009.

Discussion: Sino-Japanese Hybrids between Writing Systems

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1. It seems to me that you are approaching the question of Japanese styles on the basis of the concept "diatype". This is based on Michael Gregory(1967)'s distinction between dialect (variation according to user) and diatype (variation according to use / social purpose). I think it is also necessary and useful to approach the question of Japanese styles from the viewpoint of dialect, becuase the style depends also on the properties (e.g. gender) of the author. What about extending your theory and/or discussion by incorporating the concept of dialect (à la Gregory).

2. You mentioned several times the influence of social situation and/or its change upon the change of styles. I learned from your paper that the middle part of the tenth century and the beginning of the twelfth century are critical points in these changes. I want to know what concrete historical, social, political or intellectual changes occurred in these points and how these extra-linguistic events influenced the styles.

3. I understand that one of your main points is that there is not always a direct correspondence between the style and the script, and I

agree fully with you on this point. But I wonder why you included the expressions "writing systems" and "grammatology" in the title. I think these expressions can mislead readers into thinking that you emphasize the close relationship between these two.

Thank you for your thoughtful and informative paper. I learned much from it.