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Computers and Japanese Literacy

Nihonjin no Yomikaki Nôryoku to Konpyûta

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Nihonzin no
Yomikaki
Nōryoku to
Konpyūta

Computers and
Japanese
Literacy

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Watakusi wa saikin, gendai
no konpyūta siyō to Nihongo ni
tuite kenkyū site orimasu.
Gengoakusya mo konpyūta no
nōryoku ya mondaiten ni tuite
iken o happyō suru sekinin ga
aru to omou kara desu.

Sate, Amerika no zen- Kōsei
Kyōiku tyōkan, John Gardner-si
no kotoba de hazimetai to
omoimasu. Sore wa "aizyō nasi
no hihan to hihan nasi no aizyō
(Eigo de iu to, "unloving
criticism and uncritical love")
to iu kotoba desu. Gardner-si
wa, Amerikazin no aikokusyūgi ni
tuite Amerika o sukosi de mo
hihan site wa ikenai to syutyō
suru hito wa kanqaetigai da,
aizyō nasi ni syakai ya bunka no
ketten o hihan bakari suru koto
wa motiron warui keredo, hihan
sore zitai o kiratte
kokusuisyūgi o susumeru koto mo
syōrai no tame ni yoku nai, to
iimasita. Kono koto wa bokoku
igai no syakai to bunka ni tai
suru baai de mo onazi de wa nai
desyō ka? Gengoakusya ya
rekisigakusya mo "aizyō nasi no
hihan to hihan nasi no aizyō" to
iu ryōkyokutan o sakeru yō ni
sita hō ga ii to omou no desu.
Watakusi wa Nihon no gengo to
bunka o senmon ni site, Nihon ni
tai site aizyō o motte orimasu
kara koso, Nihongo no hyōkihō ya
Nihonzin no yomikaki nōryoku ni

I am currently engaged in
research on contemporary
computer usage and the Japanese
language. Linguists too, I
believe, have a responsibility
to present their views on the
potentials and problems of
computers.

Let me begin by quoting the
former U.S. Secretary of Health,
Education, and Welfare, John
Gardner. I am thinking of his
phrase "unloving criticism and
uncritical love." By this, he
meant that it was wrong for
proponents of American
patriotism to oppose even the
slightest criticism of the
United States: although it is
bad to dwell unsympathetically
on finding fault with social and
cultural shortcomings, it is
equally bad for the future of
society to advance nationalism
and eschew all criticism. I
think that this is also true
when considering foreign
societies and cultures.
Linguists and historians would
do well to avoid the twin
extremes of "unloving criticism
and uncritical love." As
someone professionally involved
with the language and culture of
Japan, I have an affection for
the country, but for that very
reason, I wish to call into
question the accepted theory of
Japanese script and literacy.

tuite no teisetu o mondai ni site iru wake desu. Iwayuru zyōhōka syakai no zidai ni hairi, ippan no hitobito ga pasokon ya wāpuro o kozin-yō ni tukau yō ni naru ni turete, nettowāku tūsin, kyōiku-yō sohutowea, sōzōteki na puroguramingu nado ga yōkyū sarete kite iru desyō. Mosi sono konpon ni aru yomikaki nōryoku no henka to genzyō o gokai sureba, gōriteki na konpyūta siyōhō o kaihatu dekinai darō to omou kara desu.

Sate, hyōi mozi to iu kotoba wa Nihongo ni tuite no hon ni yoku dete imasu kara kokugogaku no yōgo da to itte mo ii hodo desu ga, hyōi mozi to iu mono wa zissai ni sonzai site iru desyō ka? Kyakkanteki ni kangaete miru to, dono gengo mo konponteki ni wa hanasu mono desu. Mozi wa syakaiteki, rekisiteki na men ga arimasu ga, mozi wa kotoba no imi no moto de wa arimasen. Tatoeba, itizi mo yomenai mōmoku no hito de mo, hoka no syōgai ga nai kaqiri, bokokuo ga kanzen ni hanaseru yō ni narimasu. Sitaqatte, hanasi-kotoba to wa mattaku kankei ga nai mozi nado to iu mono wa muimi na gainen desu. Gengo no imi wa gengo no kōzō kara hassei si, mozi wa sono han'ei de sika nai wake desu. Kore wa toku ni kore kara no konpyūta o kangaeru toki ni wasurete wa ikemasen.

Tokoro de, genzai, Nihon de urete iru pasokon nado wa hotondo iwayuru Nihongo zyōhō syori nōryoku ga tuite iru to iu koto ni natte imasu ga, zitu wa Nihongo zyōhō syori to iu yori, kanzi kanamaziribun syori to itta hō ga seikaku desu. Sono ue, Nihon no sohutowea kaihatu

As we enter the age of the so-called informational society, and as more and more ordinary people begin to use computers on an individual basis, demands on network communications, educational software, creative programming, and so on, will steadily increase. Unless we understand the present situation and history of literacy, which underlies all these applications, we cannot hope to develop a rational basis for computer usage.

The term "ideographic characters" appears so often in books on the Japanese language that one might say it has become a stock phrase of Japanese linguistics. I wonder, however, whether such things as "ideographs" actually exist. When examined objectively, all languages are fundamentally speech. Characters are not the source of the meanings of words, although they do have their social and historical aspects. For example, blind people who cannot read a single character can nonetheless speak their native tongues perfectly, unless they suffer from some other handicap. The very idea of characters totally divorced from speech is therefore meaningless. For the meaning of language emerges from the structure of language, of which writing is merely a reflection. It is particularly important that we not forget this when we consider the computers of the future.

Today, however, virtually all the personal computers sold in Japan are supposed to provide so-called Japanese information processing capabilities. But it would be more accurate to say that they provide Japanese script manipulating capabilities; moreover, Japanese

ga hādowea kaihatu hodo susunde inakute, sono hotondo zenbu wa mada Eigo ni motozuita puroguramu gengo (tatoeba BASIC ya FORTRAN) de okonawarete iru no desu. Tumari, Nihon wa sohutowea kaihatu ga okurete iru no ni, "kanzi ga tukaenakereba hontō no Nihongo wa kakenai" to iu kangaekata ga ōkō site iru no desu. Kō iu yō na kangae wa, tatoeba Keiō Daigaku no Suzuki Takao kyōzyu no Tozasareta gengo ya Tukuba Daigaku no Kaiho Hiroyuki zyokyōzyu no Kanzi o kaqaku suru to iu hon nado ni dete iru to site mo, gengogaku no zyōsiki kara hazurete imasu si, mata sinkei-gengogaku no zikken kekka ya rinsyō keiken to mo kuitigatte iru no desu. (Kore ni tuite wa, Canada no McGill Daigaku no Paradis, Hagiwara, Hildebrandt syosi no sugereta ronpyō o zehi sankō ni site itadakitai to omoimasu.)

Yō suru ni, Nihongo o konpyūta de atukau toki ni, sono kotoba no imi sae wakareba, kanagaki de mo rōmazigaki de mo zyūbun desu. Motiron, meibo sakusei, insatu nado, sunawati kanzi sore zitai ga dēta to naru baai ni wa, kanzi o nyūryoku suru hoka sikata ga arimasen ga, nitizyō no ōku no sigoto ni wa sonna hituyō ga arimasen. Sitaqatte, "kanzi ga tukaenakereba, Nihongo ga kakenai" to iu taido wa kangaetigai bakari de wa naku, sohutowea no mondai no omo na gen'in no hitotu ni tigai nai no desu. Dōyō no koto o, tatoeba Kokuritu Minzoku Hakubutukantyo no Umesao Tadao hakusi ya Tōkyō Daigaku Rigakubu no Yamada Hisao kyōzyu nado ga sude ni siteki site imasu ga, Nihon no seizi to bunka no sekai de wa kō sita tyūoku o ki ni tomete iru hito ga sukunai yō desu.

software development is not keeping up with hardware development, and is still being carried out in programming languages (such as BASIC and FORTRAN) based on English. In other words, the idea that "you can't write Japanese without Chinese characters" is widespread even though Japan lags behind in software development. Although this kind of thinking can be found in books, such as Suzuki 1975 and Kaiho 1983, by faculty at big-name universities, it flies in the face of the common sense of linguistic science, and is contradicted by both experimental and clinical results in psycholinguistics (Paradis et al. 1985).

To put it as briefly as possible, when one is dealing with the Japanese language on computers, all that matters is that word-meanings can be understood; either kana alone or Latin letters alone are sufficient. Of course, in applications such as preparing name lists and typesetting, in which Chinese characters serve as data in their own right, there is no option but to input Chinese characters; however, for most daily tasks, there is no such necessity. Therefore, the idea that "you can't write Japanese without Chinese characters" is not only a misconception; it is unquestionably one of the main reasons for Japan's software problems. This has already been pointed out by prominent Japanese such as Umesao Tadao (1972) and Yamada Hisao (1984).

Watakusi no tatiba kara mireba, Umeseo-si ya Yamada-si no siteki wa akiraka ni tadasii no ni, ōku no Nihonzin ga Suzuki-si ya Kaiho-si ni sansei site iru no wa zitu ni husigi na koto desu. Sono riyū ga wakattara, gendai Nihon no syakai-gengogaku o daibu sinpo saseru koto ga dekiru no de wa nai ka to omoimasu. Watakusi wa kotosi, Kokusai Kōryū Kikin no fellow to site kono mondai nado ni tuite kenkyū site orimasu ga, ima made ni wakatte kita koto wa tugi no tōri desu.

Mazu, Nihonzin no gengo taido wa Dainizi Sekai Taisen no ato wa kanari kawatte itta to iu koto ni tyūmoku site itadakitai no desu. Tatoeba, ima wa "Gaikokuzin wa kessite Nihongo ga masutā dekinai" to iu kangae o motte iru hito wa ōi desyō ga, Dai-Nihon teikoku zidai no Taiwan to Tyōsen ni tai suru kyōiku seisaku o sukosi de mo mireba, Nihon no kokusuisyugisya de mo gaikokuzin ni mo Nihongo ga masutā dekiru si, Nihonzin de nai hito ni Nihongo o kyōsei suru no wa tōzen da to omotte ita yō desu. Mō hitotu no rei wa kokuzi kaikaku no koto desu. Genzai wa Nihongo hyōkihō o sara ni kantan ni siyō to iu koe ga sukunaku narimasita ga, Meizi zidai syoki kara Taiheiyō Sensō no owarigoro made wa, seizi ga motto hosyuteki datta ni mo kakawarazu, Rōmazikai ya Kanamozikai, sara ni Monbusyō no Rinzi Kokugo Tyōsakai ya sono ato no Kokugo Singikai nado ga zutto katuyaku site ita no wa zizitu desu. Sono 70-nenkan no zyunbi kikan ga nakattara, Senryōgungawa no aturyuoku ni ōzite, iwayuru tōyō kanzi to

but it seems that few Japanese in the worlds of politics and culture have taken their advice to heart.

From my point of view, it is quite incredible that so many Japanese agree with Suzuki and Kaiho when the arguments of Umeseo and Yamada are so obviously correct. Surely, if we could understand the reason for this, we could greatly advance Japanese sociolinguistics. I have been doing research on this problem this year as a Japan Foundation fellow, and what follows are the conclusions I have reached so far.

First of all, I think we need to pay attention to the fact that Japanese attitudes towards languages underwent a considerable change following World War II. For example, there seem to be many people who hold the belief that "no foreigner can ever master Japanese," but if we look at the educational policies in Taiwan and Korea during Japan's imperialist phase, it seems that even the ultranationalists, so far from thinking that foreigners could not master Japanese, thought it reasonable to force Japanese on non-Japanese. Script reform provides another example. Not many people are calling for more script reform today, but it is a fact that the Romanization Society, the Society for Kana Writing, the Ministry of Education's Provisional National Language Survey Committee, and its successor, the National Language Investigation Committee were active from the Meizi Period right on to the end of the Pacific War, despite a far more conservative political

gendai kanazukai nado o tadati
ni kimetari dekinakatta hazu
desu.

Sono go, Syōwa 20-nen goro
kara Nihonzin no gengo taido ni
wa ziminzoku-tyūsinsyugi no
keikō ga dandan tuyoku natte
kita yō desu. Genzai no
konpyūta yūza no aida ni aru
"kanzi o tukaenakereba Nihongo
ga kakenai" to iu kangae nado ga
kono keikō no hitotu to sureba,
kore wa sensō o taiken sita hito
bakari de wa naku, sensō o
siranai hito ni mo aru kangae na
no de, sore wa haisen to iu
syakai no itidekigoto kara
hassei site kita hazu wa nai no
desu.

De wa, Syōwa 20-nen ga dō
site zyūyō na magari-kado ni
natta ka to ieba, watakushi wa
sinkyōiku seido no zissi ni yoru
senzen no kyūsei kōkō no haisi
de wa nakatta ka to omoimasu.
Sengo wa, seito ga danzyo byōdō
ni atukawareru yō ni natte,
nōryoku sae areba hotondo dare
de mo kōkō ya daigaku made
susumeru yō ni natta wake desu.
Kono koto wa senzen to
kurabereba yahari kakumeiteki na
henka desita. Sikamo mozi
kaikaku to dōzi desita no de,
Nihonzin no yomikaki nōryoku ni
bakudai na eikyō o ataeta no de
wa nai ka to omoimasu.

Nihonzin no yomikaki
nōryoku wa senzen mo sengo mo
amari tigatte inai to iu koto ga
teisetu ni natte iru yō desu ga,
sengo wa kanzi no siyōsū no
gensyō ya onkun-yomi no seigen

atmosphere than exists today.
Indeed, had it not been for this
period of 70 years of
preparation, it is unlikely that
the so-called tōyō kanzi and
gendai kanazukai reforms could
have been implemented so quickly
in response to Occupation
pressures.

It was later, from around
1945, that the ethnocentric
tendency in Japanese language
attitudes gradually grew
stronger. To the extent that
the attitude among today's
computer users that "you can't
write Japanese without Chinese
characters" is part of this
trend, it is something which
belongs to those who know
nothing of the war, not just
those who lived through it;
therefore, one cannot explain it
be saying that it came from a
single event, such as the
surrender, which traumatized
society.

What was it, then, that
made 1945 a turning point? I
would suggest that it was the
abolition of the prewar higher
schools effected by the
implementation of a new
educational system. After the
war, students, regardless of
sex, were treated equally, and
almost anyone could go on to
high school or university as
long as he or she had the
talent. This was a truly
revolutionary change when
compared with the prewar
situation. Moreover, it took
place simultaneously with script
reform, and so had an enormous
influence on Japanese literacy.

It is generally believed
that there is not much
differences between Japanese
literacy before and after the
war, but when one looks at the
whole Japanese nation today, the

ni mo kakawarazu, Nihon kokumin zentai o mireba, ippan no hitobito no gengo seikatu wa kanarazusimo kantan ni natta to wa kagirimasen. Naze ka to iu to, senzen wa, ōku no hito wa amari kanzi o yondari kaitari suru koto ga dekinakute mo ii to omowarete ita kara desu. Ippan no hitobito wa huriqana ga nakereba sinbun ya zassi wa yomemasen desita si, seikai ya keizaikai no sidōsya ga kansin suru yō na bunsyō de, sakubun dekuru hazu wa arimasen desita. Zyosei wa syōgakkō o sotugyō site mo, kōtō zyōgakkō ni susumu koto wa mezurasikatta no desu. Sore dake no riyū de mo, zenkoku no yomikaki nōryoku no heikin suizyun wa sengo ni kurabete yaya hikukatta wake desu. Sosite dansei no hō wa nanwari gurai ga tyūgaku izyō ni singaku sita ka to ieba, 2-wari ni mo tassite imasen desita. Kono setumei wa ato de simasu ga, ima wa kō iu zizyō ga atta koto o zentei ni site okimasyō.

Senzen to genzai o kurabete mita toki, yomikaki nōryoku wa dō kawatta desyō ka? Genzai no Nihon de wa tekirei zinkō no 95% gurai ga kōkō ni haitte iru sō desu. Kōkō ni yotte yōbō ni sa ga aru ka mo siremasen ga, Monbusyō wa kōkō ni hairu mae ni sukunaku to mo zyōyō kanzi gurai made wa syūtoku suru yō ni to itte iru yō desu. Zissai ni wa zyōyō kanzi de ziyū ni tukaikonasenai gakusei ga ōi no de wa nai ka to omoimasu ga, kore wa seihi no hōsin desu kara, tonikaku kizyun ni simasyō. De wa, senzen ni wa, kono kizyun no teido made kanzi ga dekuru no wa zinkō zentai no nanwari datta desyō ka? Rakkanteki ni mite mo, yahari 2-

"language life" of the average Japanese has not necessarily gotten any easier despite the reduction in the number of Chinese characters in use and limitations on character readings. This is because, before the war, it was generally believed that most people didn't have to be able to read or write Chinese characters at a very high level. The average person couldn't read newspapers or magazines unless they had huriqana (sidenotes in kana giving the readings of characters), and no one expected them to be able to write in the style approved of by the country's political and economic leaders. It was unusual for a girl to go on to secondary school, if she graduated from primary school at all; for that reason alone, the average level of literacy had to be low relative to the postwar period. And the number of boys going beyond junior high school couldn't have been more than 20%. (The justification for this estimate will be given later.)

How has literacy changed from the prewar period to the present day? Currently, 95% of the school-age population enters high school. There are perhaps differences in the quality of high schools, but the Ministry of Education seems to expect that all children will learn the 1,945 zyōyō kanzi before entering high school. There may be many students who do not actually learn how to use all these characters freely, but this is the government's policy, and so can be taken as a standard. Now what percentage of the population attained this standard before the war? Even the most optimistic estimate would not exceed 20%. In other

wari ni suginakatta desyō.
 Tumari, senzen no syōnen syōzyo
 no hobo 8-wari wa genzai no
 gakusei hodo kanzi syūtoku no
 omoni ga nakatta koto ni
 narimasu. Kari ni, muzukasii
 kanzi ga oboerarenai gakusei wa,
 senzen mo sengo mo onazi wariai
 datta to site mo, sengo, kōkōsei
 no kazu ga nanbai ni mo
 narimasita kara, ninzūteki ni wa
 kyūzō sita koto ni narimasu.
 Gyaku ni iu to, senzen wa
 itininmae no Nihongo ga
 kakenakattari, gakumonteki na
 hon ga yomenakattari site mo
 sunda no ni, sengo wa, sono
 gurai dekinakereba hazi da to iu
 kimoti ga oya ya sensei no aida
 de ippanteki zyōsiki ni natte
 iru no desu.

Sate, senzen no Nihonzin no
 yomikaki nōryoku ni tuite no
 tōkei ga hotondo arimasen no de,
 kore ni tuite kansetuteki ni
 kenkyū suru hoka sikata
 arimasen. Siryō wa sinbun ya
 zassi no hurihana siyōritu, hon
 no uriage, tyōhei kensa no
 kekka, bunkazin (tatoeba, Nitobe
 Inazō) no kozinteki iken nado,
 Nihongawa no kansetuteki na mono
 desu. Reigai no hitotu wa,
 Berlin Daigaku no Clemens
 Scharschmidt kyōzyu no 1924-nen
 no "Schriftreform in Japan" to
 iu ronbun desu. Kono ronbun mo
dēta no urazuke ni yowai no desu
 ga, tōzi no syōgakkō no
 sotugyōsei no gakusyū mokuhyō wa
 kanzi ga 2,380-zi yomete, sono
 naka no 1,360-zi ga kakeru koto
 de atta no ni, quntai ni nyūtai
 sita bakari no syōnen wa 1,000-
 zi sika yomenaku, 500-600-zi
 sika kakenakatta to iu tōkei ga
 dete imasu. Scharschmidt no
 kenkyū hōhō ga humei desu kara,
 kono sūzi no sinraisei wa
 wakarimasen ga, hoka no hitotati
 ni yoru sengo no kenkyū mo kōryo
 ni irereba, Scharschmidt no
 hōkoku wa tōzi no zituzyō ni
 kanari tikai no de wa nai ka to

words, a full 80% of prewar
 youth did not bear the burden of
 learning Chinese characters now
 borne by today's students. If
 even that relative number of
 students who cannot learn
 difficult characters, before and
 after the war, is the same,
 there must have been a rapid
 increase in the absolute number.
 To put it the other way around,
 one could get by in the prewar
 period without being able to
 write educated Japanese or read
 serious books, but after the
 war, it became "common sense"
 among parents and teachers that
 inability to do these things was
 a matter of shame.

Since there are virtually
 no statistics on Japanese
 literacy before the war, one
 must investigate the situation
 indirectly. On the Japanese
 side, the evidence consists of
 the hurihana usage found in
 newspapers and magazines, sales
 figures of books, military
 conscription test results, and
 the remarks of prominent
 individuals (such as Nitobe
 Inazō [1931]). One exception is
 Scharschmidt 1924. This article
 is short on data, but it does
 state that although elementary
 school graduates were supposed
 to be able to write 1,360
 characters and read 2,380, young
 conscripts could only write
 about 500 or 600 and read 1,000.
 Scharschmidt's research methods
 are unclear, and I do not know
 how reliable these figures are,
 but when research by others is
 taken into account (e.g. Taira
 1971, Twine 1983), it appears
 that the figures which
 Scharschmidt reports must be
 close to the actual conditions
 of the time.

omoimasu. Sengo no kenkyū de wa, Amerika no Illinois Daigaku no Taira Kōzi kyōzyu to Australia no Griffiths Daigaku no Nanette Twine kōsi no Meizi zidai no yomikaki nōryoku to mozi kaikaku undō ni tuite no kenkyū ga toku ni tyūmoku ni atai suru to omoimasu.

Sengo no siryō to site wa, Syōwa 23-nen no Nihon Yomikaki Nōryoku Tyōsa ga arimasu. Sono kekka ga Syōwa 26-nen ni syuppan sareta toki, itibu no mozi kaikaku suisinsya ga yosō sita hodo warui kekka de wa nakatta no de, ima de mo senzen no Nihonjin no yomikaki nōryoku wa zissai ni takakatta koto ni naru to omou hito wa ōi yō desu. Sikasi, tyōsa o tyūi site yomeba, mattaku hantai no keturon ga deru no desu. Tugi no in'yō o kiite kudasai:

Nihon kokumin no monmōritu wa kiwamete hikui ga, literacy o motu to mitomerareru mono no ritu mo kiwamete hikuku, 6.2% sika nai. (426 peizi.)

Kanzi no kakitori wa, mondai no uti de mottomo seiseki ga waruku, sikamo, tokuten no dankai mo, hoka no mondai to kurabete, issō itizirusii koto ga akiraka ni natta. Nihon kokumin ni totte mozi gengo no hutan wa "kanzi no kakitori" no ue ni ōkiku kakatte iru to ieru. (426 peizi.)

. . . kokugo kokuzi mondai o ronzzuru hitotati no iu, "Nihon kokumin no genzai no yomikaki nōryoku wa seizyō na syakai seikatu o itonamu no ni huzyūbun de aru" to iu kasetu wa seiritu suru. . . . Toku ni, kanzi no

As for postwar materials, we have the Literacy Survey of 1948. When its results were published in 1951, they were not as bad as had been predicted by some proponents of script reform, and even today there seem to be many who believe that it showed that the level of prewar literacy was actually high. If you read the survey itself, however, you will see that the conclusion is diametrically the opposite. For example:

Complete illiteracy among Japanese is extremely low, but the number of people who possess full literacy is also extremely low, only 6.2%. (p. 426.)

Questions requiring the writing of kanzi from dictation produced the poorest results, and in all groups tested produced significantly lower scores when compared with other problems. It can be said that the burden of written language for the Japanese depends largely on this skill (p. 426.)

The hypothesis, advanced by those who have studied problems of the national language and script, that "the literacy of today's Japanese is inadequate for conducting a full social life", was confirmed. . . . In

kakitori no tikara wa
itizirusiku hikuku, seizyō
na syakai seikatu ga yōkyū
suru kanzi no kakitori no
tikara wa akiraka ni
huzuyūbun de aru to ieru.
(425 peizi.)

Genzai no Nihon no yomikaki
nōryoku ni tuite wa, syōsai na
dēta ga motto ōi koto wa motiron
desu ga, Amerika no John
DeFrancis kyōzyu to Australia no
J. V. Neustupný kyōzyu no kenkyū
ni yoreba, Scharschmidt ga
kiroku sita toki no zyōtai to
genzai no zyōtai ni wa wazuka na
sōi sika nai no desu. Saikin,
tyūgaku o sotugyō sita gakusei
wa, senzen to dōyō, 500-zi sika
ziyū ni tukaenai wake desu.
Kono 60-nenkan ni wa, kari ni
yūtōseitati no tassei suizyun ga
takaku natte kita to site mo,
sore wa zinkō no itibubun ni
tuite no koto desu. Sore yori,
at random (musakui) ni erabareta
gakusei no nitizyō yomikaki
nōryoku no teido nado o zyūsi
sita hō ga ii no de wa arimasen
ka?

Sengo ni kokuzi kaikaku ga
okonaware, ippanzin no gengo
seikatu ga yutaka ni natta to wa
ie, sono kokuzi kaikaku wa kanzi
kanamaziribun no muzukasisa no
konpon o kaeru ni wa itarimasen
desita. Sono tame, kōtō kyōiku
o ukeru hito no wariai ga huete
kuru ni turete, kanzi nado ni
komaru hito ga zitu ni ōku natta
no desu. Iya, kokugo bakari de
naku, hoka no kamoku de mo
yahari onazi yō desita.
Tatoeba, 15-sai kara 24-sai made
no seinen no zisaturitu o miru
to, Syōwa 30-nen to 33-nen no
aida ga pīku to natte imasu.
Syōwa 34-nen kara 45-nen made
gyaku ni gensyō keikō ga
arimasita kara, Thomas Rohlen
hakusi ga 1983-nen no kenkyū de
siteki sita tōri, sengo no
seinen no zisaturitu wa zyuken

particular, the ability to
write kanzi from dictation
was remarkably low, and
clearly inadequate for a
full social life. (p.
425.)

There is, of course, much
more, detailed data regarding
current Japanese literacy;
however, according to DeFrancis
1984 and Neustupný 1984, there
hasn't been that much change
from the situation recorded by
Scharschmidt. Graduates of
modern junior high schools, as
in the prewar period, can freely
use only about 500 characters.
Even if we assume that, over the
past 60 years, the level of
accomplishment attained by the
best students has risen, we are
talking about only a small part
of the whole population.
Shouldn't we focus, rather, on
the everyday literacy of
students selected "at random"?

One might say that, due to
the script reform of the postwar
era, the "language life" of the
average person became richer,
but the script reform did not go
far enough to alter the
fundamental difficulties of the
mixed kana/kanzi writing system.
Consequently, as the proportion
of people who received post-
primary education increased, the
number of those who experienced
problems with kanzi actually
grew larger. Indeed, this seems
to be the case not only in
Japanese language classes, but
in other subjects as well. For
example, there was a peak in the
suicide rate of 15- to 24-
yearolds between 1955 and 1958.
From 1959 until 1970, there was
a decline; therefore, as pointed
out by Rohlen (1983), one cannot

benkyō no aturyoku ni seihirei suru to wa setumei dekimasen.

De wa, naze Syōwa 30-nen to 33-nen no aida ga tyōten ni natta ka to ieba, sono toki wa sentyū ni umareta kodomotati ga sinsei kōkō o sotugyō suru ziki to itti site iru kara de wa nai ka to omoimasu. Sotugyō ga tikazuku ni ture, singaku suru ka, syūsyoku suru ka ni mayotta koto desyō. Sensei ya oya nado wa sono sinkyōiku seido ni tuite no zyūbun na keiken ga nakatta no de, gakusei wa tekisetu na sigoto ya gakkō wa doko ka to nayande mo dare ni mo sōdan ga dekinatta desyō. Sore igo, zyugyō ni tuite ikenai kōkōsei no zettaisū wa huete ikimasita ga, sore ni mo kakawarazu, seinen no zisaturitu ga sagatta no wa, sono saisyō no ziki hodo huan o kanzinakatta kara desu.

Tada no gūzen ka dō ka sirimasen ga, tyōdo sono Syōwa 32-nen wa Kindaiti Haruhiko kyōzyū no Nihongo ya Oono Susumu kyōzyū no Nihongo no kigen nado ga besuto-serā ni natta ziki ni atari, "Nihongo būmu" to iu kotoba ga sinbun nado ni yoku deta mono desu. Kokugo Singikai wa okurigana kisoku o Syōwa 34-nen ni happyō simasita ga, Monbudaizin ga Zimintōnai no aturyoku ni sitagatte sono iin no hotondo sono yokunen made ni kaete simaimasita. (Kono sisai wa Ookubo Tadatosi-si no 1971-nen no kenkyū ni kakarete imasu.) Gengo ni okeru genzai no ziminzoku-tyūsinsyugi no keikō no kizasi wa yahari kono koro kara hakkiri site kuru no desu.

Matomete ieba, sono gen'in wa sinkyōiku seido no zissi ni

explain the juvenile suicide rate by saying it reflects increasing entrance examination pressure.

Why, then, the peak between 1955 and 1958? I think it is because it corresponds to the time when children born during the war were graduating from high school. As graduation approached, those children had to decide whether to try for college or seek employment. Their parents and teachers had not had sufficient experience with the new educational system, and so the students had no one to talk about the kind of jobs or schools they could expect to get into. Later on, the absolute number of high school students who couldn't keep up with the class increased; nevertheless, the juvenile suicide rate fell off because they didn't feel as much uncertainty as existed during this initial experience.

Perhaps it was just coincidence, but it was at just this time that Kindaiti 1957 and Oono 1957 became best-sellers, and the newspapers were talking about a "Nihongo boom." The National Language Investigative Committee announced rules for okurigana usage in 1959, but by the following year, the Minister of Education, under pressure from the Liberal Democratic Party, had packed the committee (see Ookubo 1971). It was from this period that the signs of linguistic ethnocentrism become clearly visible.

The cause of this, to summarize, was the establishment

arimasu. Syakai zentai no seisaku to kozin no sinri o nani ga tunaide iru ka to ieba, Nihongo no hyōkihō desu. Mondai wa hitokuti de ieba kanzi desu. Yō suru ni, tōyō kanzi nado no dakyōteki mozi kaikaku wa sore zitai waruku arimasen desita si, tōzi no kyōiku kaihō seisaku wa kitto yokatta to omoimasu ga, sorera o dōzi ni zissi sita koto ga omoigakenai kekka o unda no de wa nai ka to omoimasu. Kusuri ni tatoereba, betubetu ni nondara kiku no o ukkari site dōzi ni nonde simatta tame ni kaette byōki ga hidoku natta no to onazi de wa arimasen ka. Hukuzatu na sinrigakuteki riron o tateru hituyō wa issai arimasen.

Tumari, naze genzai no Nihonzin ga kopnyūta de kanzi ga tukaenakereba Nihongo ga kakenai to iu kangae o motte iru ka wa, kono yō ni syakai-gengogakuteki ni kaisyaku dekiru no desu. Sikasi, kono kangaekata wa, gōriteki na setumei ga arinagara, kekkyoku, kagakuteki na konkyo wa arimasen. Itirei to site, wāpuro o mainiti ka no yō ni tukatte iru Nihonzin no genzyō ni tuite kangaete mimasu. Kibōdo ni wa nōritu ga takai kizyun haireru wa mada arimasen. Kanzi henkan nyūryoku wa naraiyasui desu ga, Eibun no tatti taipu no supido to kosuto de wa dekimasen si, gairaigo ga hueru ni turete, sono kōka ga sukosi zutu sagatte ikimasu. Sono ue, kanzi henkan nyūryoku wa zituzikan tūsin (tumari tūsinmō tanmatu sōti) nado ni wa hutekitō desu. Sono kawari ni facsimile o tukatte mo ii to iu hito ga arimasu ga, ima de mo tegami ga kakitaku nai no de denwa o syottyū tukatte iru bizinesuman nado ga wazawaza tegaki nyūryoku o yorokonde suru desyō ka. Wāpuro o tukau to benri na men mo arimasu ga,

of the new educational system. The link between social policy and individual attitudes is to be found in the Japanese writing system itself. In a word, the problem is kanzi. The tōyō kanzi reforms were not bad in themselves, nor was the liberalization of education; but the combined effects of these two changes seems to have produced an unintended result. To make an analogy, it is like an illness which gets worse because one mixes two medicines which, taken individually, would effect a cure. There is absolutely no need for an elaborate psychological theory.

To put it another way, the question of why Japanese believe that Japanese cannot be written without kanzi can be given a sociolinguistic interpretation. The explanation of this way of thinking is rational, but the way of thinking itself is devoid of any scientific basis. To give an example, consider the case of Japanese who use word processors daily. There is no efficient keyboard standard. Kana- or rōmazi-to-kanzi conversion input is easy to learn, but cannot compete with English touch typing in speed or cost; moreover, as the number of loanwords from Western languages increases, the efficiency of such input systems declines. Furthermore, conversion input is inappropriate for real-time communications. Some people think that facsimile equipment can be used in these cases, but it is hard to believe that businessmen who avoid writing letters and are constantly on the telephone will happily switch to handwritten input systems. Word processors have their points of convenience, but

sizen ni kanzi no tukaisugi ya okurigana no matigai nado ga okori, rōdō no kōritu o takameru dokoro ka, kaette rōdō zikan ya sutoresu ga huete mo iru yō desu. Saigo ni, wāpuro ni tayotte iru hito wa genkō yōsi nado ni kaku toki kanzi o wasurete simatte iru koto ni ki ga tuku to iu gensyō ga arimasu. Desu kara, kanzi no syuturyoku ga hituyō na baai ni dake kanzi no nyūryoku o suru yō ni seigen site, zyūrai no tegaki mo heiyō sinakereba, sekkaku no kanzi bunka o ukkari nakusu yō ni naru desyō.

Iikaereba, syōrai, Nihonzin wa konpyūta no tame no hyōkihō to site kanzi to kana ni rōmazi o kuwaeta hō ga ii to omoimasu. Nihongo no dēta ya puroguramu o rōmazi de kaite mo aikawarazu Nihongo desu kara, kanzi sae tukawanakereba, ima sugu ni de mo Eigo nado to onazi sokudo de nyū medhia ya konpyūta ga riyō dekiru no desu.

they also encourage the overuse of kanzi, errors in okurigana usage, and, so far from raising productivity, often increase labor time and stress. As if this weren't bad enough, people who rely on word processors notice that they forget kanzi when they try to write with pencil and paper. Therefore, unless Japanese restrict kanzi input to those situations which require kanzi output, and integrate computers with the earlier handwriting technology, they will unwittingly lose the very kanzi culture they seek to preserve.

In short, I believe that Japanese will in the future have to add rōmazi to kana and kanzi in their writing system. Japanese data and programs written in rōmazi are after all just as much Japanese as those written in conventional script. In order to move into the new world of computers at the same pace as the English-speaking world, all that is necessary is giving up kanzi.

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