no clear modern reading). A shorter inscription in the body of the vessel dedicates it to one of Xiaozi X's ancestors.

    11. Cf. Shirakawa (2004:605), who refers to the vessel as the *Rong gui*, interpreting the inscription to mean that the vessel was cast not by the Marquis of Xing but by Rong, another individual mentioned in the inscription.

    12. It is not clear whether the division of the text into two blocks a short distance apart, a feature known from other lengthy inscriptions as well, had something to do with casting technique or is instead a sort of paragraphing of the text.

    13. Cf. Qiu (2000:26), who cites a square module (*fānggé*) composition rule to explain why the same character components are often placed in different positions within characters but who does not address the problem of the origin of the script's modular design or note the frequent use of rectangular rather than square modules.

    14. A faint grid visible in the area of the inscription has to do not with the laying out of the inscription, I believe, but with the preparations for casting inscriptions on curved surfaces.

7

The Development of Writing in Japan

David B. Lurie

    Writing in Japan has been continuously remade, from the earliest appearance of artifacts inscribed with Chinese characters around the first century BCE to the present era of postwar script reforms and digital communications. But the pace and consequences of change have not been always the same: the seventh through twelfth centuries CE were the critical period in which the fundamental set of technical innovations for writing and reading in Japanese developed. Furthermore, even within those six-hundred-odd years, the core developments took place early, during the seventh and eighth centuries. One of the keys to this history is that it begins in medias res. Inscribed artifacts first appear in Japan well over a millennium into the recorded development of writing in China, and the core period of innovation there takes place long after Chinese writing had begun to be adapted to the non-Sinitic languages of the Korean peninsula. In surveying the development of writing in the linguistic environment of the Japanese archipelago, this chapter deals with transformations of transformations, and an underlying question is to what extent the authority of an "original" system persists.[1]

HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC PARAMETERS

    The earliest inscribed artifacts in the Japanese archaeological record appear in what scholars now refer to as the Yayoi period (early or mid-first

millennium BCE to ca. 250 CE). Almost all of these objects are bronze coins and mirrors with cast inscriptions imported from China, and there are no signs that the characters on them were systematically associated with particular linguistic forms in the archipelago. The inscriptions seem rather to have been significant patterns, valuable for magical effects or perhaps merely for their association with rare prestige goods from overseas. As the small chiefdoms of the early centuries CE gave way to more extensive polities, much of the archipelago (from Kyushu to northern Honshu) came under the control of a league of local rulers associated with paramount kings in the Yamato region (the area around the modern cities of Osaka and Nara). The huge mounded tombs that emerged at this time have commonalities in design that are thought to reflect these associations and that provide the name of the Kofun (Old Tomb) period (ca. 250–600 CE) (Barnes 2007; Piggott 1997). Several of these mounds have yielded fifth-century swords with inlaid inscriptions that show that the Yamato kings employed scribes from the Korean peninsula (and probably their descendants), but there is little to suggest much use of writing for administration or extensive language-based communication in these centuries (Lurie 2011; Seeley 1991:9–25).

This situation changed dramatically over the course of the seventh century, especially in its latter half. As China, newly unified under the Sui (581–618 CE) and then Tang (618–907) dynasties, put diplomatic and military pressure on its eastern periphery, a long period of strife among three kingdoms on the Korean peninsula ended with its unification by the state of Silla. The Yamato rulers on the Japanese archipelago had intervened in this conflict on the losing side, and in the last decades of the seventh century, they were greatly concerned about further hostilities. This anxiety and related domestic developments that spurred the growth of a more powerful central government triggered a rapid expansion of the scope and variety of written communication.[2] The resulting interdependent process of state formation and development of writing culminated in the emergence of an elaborate world of legal codes, histories, belletristic writings, local administrative documents, sacred scriptures, personal letters, and so on. As might be expected from the varied Chinese and Korean influences, this world involved a palette of different techniques of reading and writing shaped by complex interactions among multiple languages. Contrasting styles of inscription functioned in parallel: there was some replacement of the old by the new, but the tendency was for multiple practices to coexist as those with earlier origins continued to develop alongside newer counterparts.

The classical state that formed in the late seventh century, centered on the emperors and their court and elaborately regulated by written laws and amendments, remained in place (as an ideal, at least) for nearly a millennium, but from the tenth century there was considerable growth in local autonomy, leading ultimately to diarchic rule in which the court was paralleled by increasingly independent military authorities.[3] This institutional complexity generated many new contexts for written communication as land titles and records of service by military vassals became central to the fates of new and old elites alike. The same period also saw the emergence of popular literary forms, involving the circulation of itinerant oral performers but also production of written works that drew on and influenced spoken (and sung) genres. In the tumultuous years of what has come to be seen as a medieval era (roughly the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries), increases in population and productivity were accompanied by further expansions in the scope and variety of writing (Amino n.d.; Conlan 2009; Fröhlich 2007). Endemic warfare caused the loss of large numbers of early manuscripts and records (especially in the fifteenth century), but it also spurred the spread of court culture and associated literary practices into the provinces.

This was a largely manuscript culture, with all manner of texts brushed by hand onto paper (wooden slips were also used extensively in the seventh through early ninth centuries and thereafter primarily in limited forms like luggage tags). Printing was known, however, from as early as the mid-eighth century, and great temples in the cities of Nara and Kyoto produced extensive woodblock editions of both Buddhist and secular works. From the end of the sixteenth century, there was a transformative change in the technology of writing as printing expanded out of these niche areas (though copying by hand persisted in various contexts). The rise of printing accompanied the development of the central regime of the Tokugawa shoguns, who sponsored the industry in its earliest stages. The Tokugawa ruled over the newly (though by no means completely) unified country from the early seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries.

These decades saw the formation of new cultures of literacy as new types of education (government-sponsored schools on various levels but also private academies) and new printed genres came to include widening sectors of the population, which itself increased markedly through the early eighteenth century (Berry 2006; Kornicki 1998; Rubinger 2007). Development of urban communities, expansion of commerce, and rising numbers of people who could read and write all contributed to a massive increase in the production of documents and records across the archipelago, a

less familiar counterpart to the oft discussed burgeoning of popular genres, annotated classics, and practical guides in woodblock print editions during this period.

The pre-existing variety of scripts, genres, and styles developed further in the new niches for writing created over these centuries. With the rise of commercial printing, there were changes in the content, layout, and, of course, quantity of circulating texts, but woodblocks allow for remarkable continuity between handwritten and printed texts and there was no fundamental change in the technical bases of Japanese inscription. Some standardization came with the increased integration of the country and circulation of both people and printed materials, but considerable variety continued.

Much of this culture of publishing and education continued unchanged for decades after 1868, when the Tokugawa Shogunate fell and was replaced by a government of oligarchs ruling in the name of the emperor, but two developments of the late nineteenth century had a transformative effect on Japanese writing (Twine 1991; Ueda 2008). Movable-type printing brought about a considerable degree of script standardization, and direct government involvement in schooling changed the ways that literacy was imparted to increasing portions of the population. A third development, whose influence was more gradual, not becoming decisive until the mid-twentieth century, was the engineering of new prose styles closer to the standard language (which was itself partly a product of the newly emergent nation-state). More visibly influential on the nature of the writing system have been postwar script reforms, which are responsible for the specific form taken by Japanese in the vast majority of contemporary publications, from newspapers to novels to websites.

Despite considerable ferment in the styles and functions of written Japanese between the seventh century and the present, the fundamental building blocks of the system exhibited remarkable continuity. With the exception of Sanskrit (used in limited Buddhist contexts) and the Roman alphabet (first encountered in the sixteenth century and important, though in a decidedly subsidiary way, since the nineteenth), the raw material for all forms of writing employed in Japan has been the Chinese writing system. As discussed below, the nature of that system is controversial, but for the time being it will suffice to stipulate that, taken as units—that is, not analyzed into modular graphic subcomponents—Chinese characters correspond to morphemes of literary Chinese.[4] These morphemes are monosyllabic and the majority of words in the literary language are monomorphemic, so characters also correspond to syllables and in many cases to words.[5] Syllables consist of an initial consonant (in earlier times,

often a cluster of consonants), a vowel nucleus, and an optional final consonant. (The tones that are such a distinctive feature of the language from at least the period following the fall of the Han dynasty in mid-third century CE may have developed as the consonant repertory was reduced.) Though it appears not to have been the case for earlier stages of the *spoken* language, in literary Chinese there is little sign of inflection or affixing (hence the traditional designation of Chinese as an "isolating" language). In general, relations between words are expressed through grammatical particles and word order, the fundamental patterning of which is Verb Object (VO), as in English.

If one were to set up a laboratory experiment in script adaptation for a radically different language, it would be difficult to find a more vivid case of linguistic contrast than that provided by Japanese as it comes into contact with the Chinese script. Japanese morphemes are generally polysyllabic, especially before the absorption of Sinitic loanwords; verbs and adjectives are highly inflected; and plentiful affixing creates complex conglomerations of free and bound morphemes (hence its traditional designation as an "agglutinative" language). Syllables, comprising a vowel nucleus and an optional initial consonant, are open and far simpler than those of Chinese, and there are fewer distinct consonants and vowels as well. Grammatical relations are indicated by inflections and postpositioned particles, as well as word order, which, though amenable to a degree of inversion, is fundamentally Object Verb (OV).

In using the Chinese script to inscribe this very different Japanese language, one strategy is to take the syllabic values of the Chinese graphs and use them as phonographs for similar Japanese syllables.[6] In part because this process fits deep-seated prejudices about how writing should function and hence how it evolves over time and across languages, the development along these lines of sets of phonographs is by far the best-known aspect of the history of Japanese inscription. By virtue of its familiarity and its undeniable importance, it is the focus of the first of the following sections. But the central point of this chapter is that phonography is neither the sole nor the most important strategy for the adaptation of Chinese writing in Japan: the subsequent section takes up the comparatively neglected story of *logographic* adaptation and the related issue of the importance of reading practices for the history of writing.

PHONOGRAPHY: THE *KANA* SYSTEMS

There is a long history of phonographic use of characters for their syllabic values in Chinese-language environments. Indeed, part of the

controversy over the "original" nature of the Chinese writing system is the prevalence in early texts of sound-based substitution and glossing of characters. Characters used phonographically, with little or no attention to the semantic associations of the morphemes with which they were otherwise associated, were also widely employed in the transcription of special terms and proper names from non-Sinitic languages. In Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras, such characters were even used to record entire incantations (*dharani*) in Indic languages, providing a precedent for phonographic transcription beyond the realm of individual foreign words.

Early Chinese treatises on the culture and society of surrounding "barbarians" transcribe terms and names in this manner, and those devoted to the *Wō* 倭, the Chinese ethnonym for the inhabitants of the archipelago, contain what are commonly believed to be the first recorded forms of pre–Old Japanese. In particular, the history of the Wei dynasty (220–265 CE) in the third-century *Sanguozhi* 三國志 contains a famous account of these inhabitants with numerous words spelled out phonographically, although there is insufficient evidence for firm identification of their later forms. It is, in fact, not even certain that they are from earlier stages of what became Old Japanese (Miyake 2003:6–7). Regardless, it is clear that the Chinese practice of using characters as phonographs for non-Sinitic languages underlay the first transcriptions of pre–Old Japanese terms undertaken within the Japanese archipelago. The fifth-century sword inscriptions produced by scribes from the Korean peninsula or their descendants contain numerous personal and place names, spelled out character by character. The best known of these, that found in the Sakitama-Inariyama burial mound (north of Tokyo), contains a genealogy of service to a "great king" (大王) that spells out nine personal names and one place. There are clear signs that the large number of Chinese graphs available for particular syllables had already been reduced to a smaller set of characters. Furthermore, there are parallels between this set and the characters used for phonographic transcription of names and terms from Korean languages in sources quoted in later Japanese histories.

As writing in Japan expanded out of the narrow niche it had occupied in the fifth and sixth centuries, multiple sets of phonograph characters emerged, distinguished by the historical and geographical changes in the Chinese (and Korean) pronunciations on which they were based. Some of these sets appear earlier or later than others, but there are also cases of simultaneous use in different contexts. Within the sets as well, the norm was for multiple characters to be employed for given syllables, a practice that meant a large reserve of homophonic alternatives. In some cases, it

seems that differing levels of formality were involved in selection among these alternatives, but the sociolinguistic implications of graphic variation are not always apparent. (And, as the following section makes clear, multiple phonographs for given syllables were only the beginning of the potential variation.)

Regardless, all of these phonographs were derived by ignoring the meaning of the Chinese morpheme or word originally linked to the character and using it solely as an indication of an Old Japanese syllable phonetically similar to that morpheme. Formally, these graphs were indistinguishable from the Chinese characters on which they were based, but retrospective scholarship has dubbed them *man'yōgana* 萬葉假名.[7] Metalinguistic discussion of writing is rare in early sources, but the preface to the 712 *Kojiki* 古事記 (Record of Ancient Matters) describes writing based on these phonograph characters as "stringing out [words] using sounds [of characters]" 以音連.[8]

In seventh- and eighth-century sources, phonograph characters are used in various contexts. Substantial prose texts written out entirely phonographically were rare, but vernacular poems—often incorporated into longer works but also freestanding as graffiti or writing practice—were frequently inscribed this way. Tantalizingly, two eighth-century business letters written out phonographically survive in the Shōsōin storehouse of Tōdaiji, the great eighth-century temple in the then capital of Nara; it is unclear whether they represent flukes or chance survivals of a widespread practice. As in earlier periods, phonographs were also employed to write proper names and special terms, but another important function was glosses in notes and lexicons, as well as the related role of auxiliary specification of grammatical elements.

Phonographic use of graphically unmodified Chinese characters continued after the eighth century in particularly formal contexts, lexicography, and antiquarian or archaizing writing. The use of such characters for proper nouns never ended, and they were also often used for common grammatical elements and honorifics in conventionalized paronomastic spellings known in subsequent ages as *ateji* (宛字 or 當字). However, the trend from around the early ninth century onward was toward formal simplification, which eventually yielded loosely organized sets of phonographs that were visually distinct from their original Chinese characters.[9] There were two main pathways of graphic simplification: cursivization and abbreviation.

Formally, Chinese characters had already evolved through several stages before the beginning of widespread writing in the Japanese archipelago. The clerical script (*lishū* 隸書) of the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE)

eventually gave rise to three broad stylistic categories that dominated artistic and everyday calligraphy from the Six Dynasties (317–589 CE) onward. Standard script (*kǎishū* 楷書), later the basis of printed fonts, was the fundamental style in seventh- and eighth-century Japan. The remaining two formalized styles, semicursive (*xíngshū* 行書) and cursive (*cǎoshū* 草書), were produced by running together and simplifying the separate strokes of the clerical style. Varying degrees of cursivization were already apparent in Japanese writing before the ninth century. The line of graphic simplification that continued from these practices was an extension of cursivization processes already codified in Chinese calligraphic styles (and, more importantly, embodied in everyday writing in China, Korea, and elsewhere). The written form of phonograph characters was gradually simplified to the point where they took on a visual identity distinct from cursive-style Chinese graphs: 安 > あ or 以 > い. Significantly, numerous intermediate forms coexisted, in some cases as stylistic registers explicitly distinguished by Japanese readers and writers (fig. 7.1).

The other line of graphic simplification, abbreviation, also drew on Chinese precedents. The characters' modular structure (Ledderose 2000:16–18), at least in their noncursivized manifestations, meant that components could easily be alienated and made to stand in for absent wholes, as in the Buddhist abbreviation of "bodhisattva" (*púsà* 菩薩) as 艹 (Tsukishima 1981). Existing phonograph characters were similarly abbreviated, yielding simpler graphs: 加 > カ *ka* or 伊 > イ *i* (fig. 7.2).

These two pathways loosely correspond to sets of graphically distinct phonographs (*kana*) that were used for different purposes and in different contexts and that emerged over the initial century or so of the Heian period (794–1185 CE). The modern term for the set stemming largely from cursivization, *hiragana* 平假名, emerged relatively late, but there are Heian references to the term for the set largely derived through abbreviation, *katakana* 片假名. Because the terms *hiragana* and *katakana* are likely to summon anachronistic images of simple sets of forty-eight discrete moraic signs, in this chapter I refer to their pre-modern manifestations as "cursive phonographs" and "abbreviated phonographs," respectively. (It is important to keep in mind, however, that there was some mixing of graphs produced by the two principles—or, indeed, both, as abbreviation could be followed by cursivization, or vice versa.)

To some extent, the emergence of these sets of *kana* meant an increase in the variety of available phonographs because the earlier, graphically undifferentiated variety persisted in some contexts and there were now contrasts in degrees of cursivization or abbreviation. These influences were
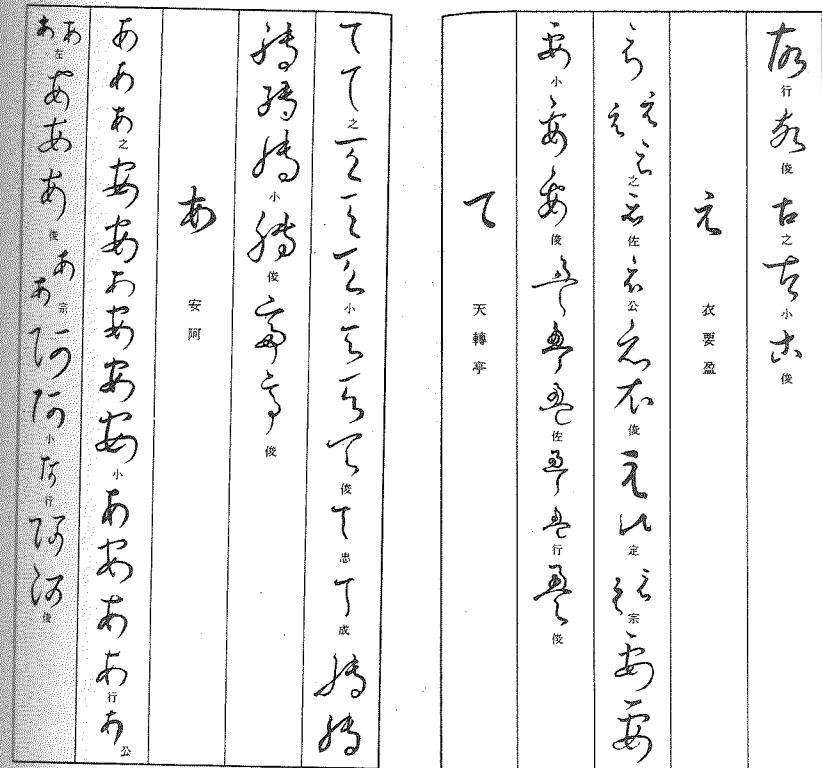

FIGURE 7.1

Variant forms of cursive phonographs used in premodern manuscripts of vernacular literary works. The heading columns indicate the syllables with modern standard hiragana *(from the right, e [え], te [て], and a [あ]) and provide the noncursive phonograph base characters underneath (these are formally identical to standard printed Chinese characters). The two columns following to the left of the headings collect examples of cursive phonographs for the syllable in question (with one-character indications of the calligraphers to whom the original manuscripts are attributed). From an appendix to a widely used guide to variant character forms,* Hōshōkai henshūbu 1916.

counterbalanced by a tendency toward reduction and standardization of the number of base characters, as well as their final simplified forms, but even so a great deal of variety persisted, between (of course) but also within the sets of cursive and abbreviated phonographs. This graphic diversity persisted long after the twelfth century. Early attempts at movable-type printing of cursive phonograph texts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries maintained that homophonous variety, as well as accommodating

FIGURE 7.2

A chart of abbreviated phonographs employed in glosses on Buddhist manuscripts from the ninth and tenth centuries. From the right, the first five columns indicate the dates, titles, locations, annotators, and colors of ink employed in the glosses. The next ten columns show variant graphs for the following syllables: a (modern standard katakana form: ア), i (イ), u (ウ), e (エ), o (オ), ka (カ), ki (キ), ku (ク), ke (ケ), and ko (コ). From Ōya 1909, a report on a survey performed under the auspices of the official National Language Research Council (Kokugo shingikai), which was involved in script and dialect reform efforts in the early twentieth century (see Gottlieb 1995:54–66).

the calligraphic ligatures that were central to the aesthetics of this mode of writing. Subsequent woodblock printing, to say nothing of the thriving manuscript production of the same period, also continued to employ multiple homophonous phonographs. It was not until the late nineteenth-century adoption of Western moveable-type printing that the decisive steps were taken toward the modern one-to-one correspondence between *kana* graphs and syllables (technically, morae).

As an overview of the history of writing in Japan, the preceding may seem familiar. It might appear that, with the addition of an account of Chinese characters used as is to inscribe Sinitic loanwords, the story would be more or less complete. But actually the foregoing discussion tells only half—perhaps even less than half—of the story. Not only is it impossible to comprehend the development of Japanese writing in general without sustained attention to the role of logography, but such attention is also essential to understanding the appearance of the phonographic systems themselves. For complex reasons, both internal and external to Japanese linguistic thought, histories of writing have tended to overemphasize the importance of both phonography in general and the graphically distinct *kana* in particular. But there is much about Japanese inscription that does not make sense without tracing the immense role played by logographic writing during the early formative period and thereafter.

LOGOGRAPHY AND THE *KUNDOKU* METHOD OF READING AND WRITING

Thus far, this chapter approaches the problem of how writing developed in Japan as a matter of finding graphic signs for the transcription of the phonetic shape of the Japanese language. This is an undeniably important issue, but a very different picture emerges if the same history is approached through the question of how pre-existing graphic signs were rendered into that language: that is, the nature of reading in early Japan. The central phenomenon here is *kundoku* 訓讀, literally, "reading by gloss." This technique involves linking Chinese characters to Japanese words and then rearranging their syntax so that the reading accords with Japanese rather than Chinese word order.

The following is the opening of the Confucian *Analects* (*Lùnyǔ* 論語), glossed with its standard reading in modern Mandarin:

xué ér shí xí zhī   "To learn and at due times to repeat what
學 而 時 習 之   one has learned" (Waley 1938:83).[10]

The traditional Japanese vocalization of these characters is entirely unrelated to their Chinese reading: *manabite toki ni kore wo narafu*. This is a translation of the Chinese reading into literary Japanese, but in practice it is not derived from the phrase *xué ér shí xí zhī* (or any of its premodern equivalents) but directly from the five characters themselves. For example, the initial character, 學, is associated with Chinese words meaning "learning" or "study" and by interlingual extension with the equivalent Japanese verb, *manabu*. The second character, 而, is associated with a Chinese particle that

connects verbs in series: in *kundoku*, this grammatical relationship is indicated by conjugating *manabu* in the continuative form (*manabi*) and following it with the conjunctive particle *te*.[11] Similar equivalences link the fourth and fifth characters to the verb *narafu* (to practice) and the demonstrative pronoun *kore*, but to render an acceptable literary Japanese phrase, their order is reversed (from VO to OV) and the direct object marker *wo* is added: *kore* [this] *wo* [ACCUS] *narafu* [practice].[12]

Broadly, *kundoku* involves a lexicon of equivalences between characters and Japanese words and a set of transformations for rearranging syntax and adding grammatical elements that have no Chinese counterpart. In a sense, this is a form of translation, not least because in practice it involves complex interactions between an emerging sense of the whole and specific decisions about how to treat particular characters or patterns of characters. And many aspects of the history of *kundoku* parallel that of more familiar forms of translation; for example, from the fifteenth century until the early twentieth, the opposing positions in a Japanese scholarly debate about how closely the language of *kundoku* should hew to the patterns of Chinese resemble in many respects the contrasting German/foreignizing and French/domesticating approaches to translation in the European tradition (Venuti 2004:16–20).[13]

But the ways *kundoku* differs from interlingual acts of translation, at least as they are commonly conceived, are at least as significant. Literary translation replaces—or at least displaces—one text with another (even in the case of parallel-text translations, the two texts do not occupy the same space), but *kundoku* (at least in the abstract, idealized sense in which it has been treated thus far in this chapter) does not involve the production of a separate text. (In some respects, *kundoku* parallels oral interpretation but with the crucial difference that the "original" is not an oral utterance.)

The crux here is the nature of reading, which at the most fundamental level, we conceptualize as the generation of an utterance from graphic signs that, through their presentation of linguistic information sufficient for that generation, are inherently linked to the language in which the utterance takes place.[14] There are problems with these notions of "generation" and "presentation," but the important point here is that in *kundoku* the graphic signs cannot be said to be inherently linked to a particular language. On the page, the "original Chinese text" and the graphs that are read as the Japanese translation of the original are literally identical: in a step beyond Pierre Menard's *Quixote*, the text of the translation *is* the text of the original.

For these and other reasons, *kundoku* has serious implications for the history of writing in general, but I will postpone addressing those until I have considered its more local significance for the development of Japanese scripts. A crucial point in this connection is that *kundoku* is a method not only of reading but also of writing. The equivalences and transformations that make it possible to read, in Japanese, texts originally written "in Chinese" can be reversed, so a Japanese speaker in a Japanese-language environment can produce a text that is legible "in Chinese." (Certainly, this operation requires considerable training and experience, but then so does the production of correctly spelled, formal written English.) From the seventh century until the twentieth, a principal method of writing was *kundoku*-mediated production of character texts legible as literary Chinese. In practice, of course, writers aiming at a formal style in keeping with Chinese norms often fell short, such that there are admonitory catalogues of Japanese usages (*washū* 和習 [or, more pejoratively, writing that stinks of Japanese: 和臭]). But in principle and often in actuality, it was possible for correct literary Chinese prose and even poetry to be produced by people who did not speak Chinese—indeed, who did not read it, at least in our conventional sense of reading in a given language.

The historian of Japanese writing is thus faced with what might be called invisible vernacular texts: one cannot necessarily tell what language was associated with the writing and reading of a text that, on the surface, appears to be in formally correct Chinese.[15] But there are two ways in which the presence of *kundoku* reading practices becomes visible: (1) telltale departures from correct Chinese style and (2) the explicit indication of readings and transpositions in glossaries and dictionaries or annotated alongside characters of the texts themselves. The key to #1 is that in less formal contexts, writers who expected *kundoku* reading would maintain Japanese word order or include collocations that clearly indicate Japanese constructions rather than labor to produce a text that was legible as correct literary Chinese. As mentioned above, some such departures were inadvertent—and undesired—traces of inattention or inability, but some were so dramatic and so simple (most prominently and most commonly, OV rather than VO order) that it is hard to see them as mistakes. Essentially, if texts showing #1 or #2 can be traced to a certain period, then at least the possibility of reading by *kundoku* exists for all texts of that period, even those that on the surface are completely in accordance with literary Chinese norms.[16]

A flood of archaeological discoveries in recent decades and accompanying re-evaluation of transmitted manuscripts and epigraphic material have made it increasingly clear that *kundoku*-based reading and writing

were already present at or very near the beginning of widespread writing in the Japanese archipelago (Lurie 2007). For example, wooden tablets bearing fragments of character glosses—category 2 from above—have been excavated from seventh-century sites in the island of Shikoku and in Shiga (near what became the city of Kyoto), whereas stele and statue inscriptions, as well as wooden tablets, show non-Sinitic character arrangements—category 1 above—from the same period. Unsurprisingly, given the Korean origins of so many Japanese writing and literacy practices, it appears that *kundoku* developed first in the Korean states of Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla by the sixth and seventh centuries. Surviving Korean materials from this period are comparatively rare, but wooden tablets and stele inscriptions show evidence of #1 whereas manuscripts of later centuries attest to readings and transpositions into Old and Middle Korean (#2).[17]

If *kundoku* developed on the Korean peninsula and was transmitted to the Japanese archipelago at the onset of widespread reading and writing, there are profound implications for the history of writing and literacy. The complex of characters, the rules for their arrangement, and the associated mass of authoritative works (religious, technical, historical, belletristic, and so on) that arrived in Japan did not do so as a written manifestation of the Chinese language per se but as a script that was already multilingual or translingual (even, again, when not visibly so on the surface of the texts). As it developed in Japan, *kundoku* was not produced by incorporating translation into reading for the first time but rather by extending to Japanese already developed links to non-Sinitic Korean languages. It is important to keep in mind that this issue is distinct from the Korean provenance of the earliest strata of phonographs used to write Japanese proper nouns (and eventually employed more extensively). Important though the emergence and development of those phonographs was, in its core functioning the overall system of writing was logographic rather than phonographic. Indeed, the term *kundoku* could be translated as logographic reading and writing of non-Sinitic languages with "Chinese" characters.

From the mid-seventh century emergence of widespread reading and writing in Japan, *kundoku*-mediated logography lay at the center, with phonography a peripheral, auxiliary mode. From everyday communications brushed onto wooden slips by low-ranking clerks to lavish editions of the complete Buddhist canon on fine paper scrolls with brocade covers, from short messages with characters arranged in Japanese word order to extensive histories and treatises almost completely legible as correct literary Chinese, logographic writing was the basic and, in many cases, the only medium of inscription. Phonographs were employed alongside logographs

in both informal communications and more elevated contexts to indicate particles and other grammatical elements, to specify particular forms of conjugating words, or to write notes glossing logographic characters. In all of these cases, the phonographs spell out products of the *kundoku* process that could also be derived from logographs by themselves: they are, in essence, optional.[18]

From the earliest appearance on wooden slips (also around the mid-seventh century), written vernacular poetry had strong connections with phonography, and in eighth-century works like the *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720), poems are consistently spelled out with phonograph characters. But even this association is not absolute: of the twenty books of the *Man'yōshū* (an immense late eighth-century poetry anthology), thirteen (arguably, fourteen) are dominated by logographic inscription. Most of these poems do make use of phonographic adjuncts, but some are even written out entirely in logographs. At any rate, vernacular poetry is only a partial exception to the overall dominance of logographic inscription.

It is important to acknowledge another exception to the prevalence of *kundoku*, which is an alternative mode of reading known as *ondoku* 音讀 (reading by [or for] sound). This mode involved reading characters one by one, approximating their Chinese pronunciations (that is, pronouncing them in Sino-Japanese) and vocalizing them in their original order. The traditional picture of the development of writing in Japan posited *ondoku* as originally the sole method of reading, gradually replaced by *kundoku* after it developed (in Japan) and as Japanese knowledge of spoken Chinese deteriorated (Miller 1967). But the evidence available now is not consistent with such a late emergence. As mentioned above, it is increasingly apparent that Korean models of *kundoku* predated and probably aided the rise of writing as a widespread practice in the seventh century. At this point, it seems likely that from the beginning, *ondoku* reading was used in limited contexts, such as recitation of rhymed Chinese-style poetry or formal intonation of highly valued religious and philosophical works, and was always accompanied by the possibility of *kundoku* reading. A more important aspect of *ondoku* is the rendition in Sino-Japanese pronunciation (*on'yomi* 音讀み) not of entire texts but of particular characters or compounds. Within an overall framework of *kundoku*, piecemeal *on'yomi* readings were often inserted when for stylistic or other reasons, the reader chose to avoid "translating" those terms. This incorporation of Sino-Japanese readings was a major vehicle for the adoption of the Chinese loanwords that by the eighth century had already begun to reshape the Japanese lexicon.

Logography, animated by *kundoku* reading and writing, continued to

play a central role after the emergence of visually distinct phonographs (Heian *kana*) from the ninth century on. Moreover, that emergence itself only makes sense within the broader context of continued logographic inscription. This simultaneity is clearest in the case of the abbreviated phonographs (ancestors of modern *katakana*), which developed from phonographic character annotations of *kundoku* glosses. Such annotated texts survive from the turn of the ninth century on (although, as mentioned above, separate glosses of *kundoku* readings appear as early as the seventh century). From the ninth century and increasingly thereafter, plentiful annotated manuscripts of Buddhist and, eventually, secular works attest in detail to the emergence of this lineage of visually distinctive phonographs (Seeley 1991:59–69; see also Kobayashi 1998; Tsukishima 1981).[19] Given the small amount of space available and the limited time for writing (many of these annotations record readings expounded during lectures on the texts), it is natural that simplified forms would rapidly develop, and abbreviation had the advantage of speed and clarity. (Even so, as mentioned earlier, cursivized phonographs did play a limited role in this line of development, and some abbreviated graphs were subsequently further simplified through cursivization.)

The central role played by *kundoku* in the emergence of the abbreviated line of visually distinctive phonographs could not be more clear: such phonographs evolved in order to record *kundoku* readings and only subsequently came to be employed more independently in mixed logograph/phonograph styles and eventually in pure or nearly pure phonographic inscription.[20] It is not as obvious or direct, but nonetheless there is a relationship between *kundoku*-mediated logography and the cursivized line of visually distinct phonographs (ancestors of modern *hiragana*). The two major contexts for their development were mixed (logograph/phonograph) and all-phonograph texts. The mixed style originates, in effect, as an expansion of purely logographic writing, specifying phonographically certain aspects of the *kundoku* reading. All-phonograph texts include vernacular poetry, which seems to have been one of the major venues for the emergence of cursivized phonographs, but the two eighth-century all-phonograph prose letters from the *Shōsōin* archive in Nara were forerunners of similar prose writings from the ninth century onward. (This mode of writing is the origin of the Heian *kana*-based style that was the medium for the *Tale of Genji*, the *Pillow Book*, and other classics of high Heian vernacular prose.) This sort of all-phonograph writing may seem to be outside the realm of *kundoku*'s influence, but syntactical patterns and particular usages—and more broadly, the logical armature of vernacular prose in its

earliest stages—show extensive debts to it (Okumura 1978a, 1978b, 1985, 1988, 1999; Tsukishima 1965, 1969).

Indeed, the complex of logographic characters and the *kundoku* practices used to read and write with them had a lasting fecundity, generating new forms of written (and, indirectly, spoken) Japanese throughout its recorded history. This influence is true for the mixture of logographs (*kanji*) and phonographs (*kana*) that is the graphic basis of most forms of written Japanese, but it is also true for its various linguistic styles (involving usage, lexical registers, syntactical patterns, and so on). For example, much attention has been devoted to the late nineteenth-century emergence of a written style more consistent with vernacular speech than the various forms of literary Japanese. This new style, *genbun itchi* 言文一致, eventually became the sole modern prose style in almost all contexts, but at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the term "regular written [style]" (*futsūbun* 普通文) referred to a variety of what would now be termed "literary Japanese" derived not from the language of Heian vernacular prose classics but from *kundoku* as it was practiced in the mid-nineteenth century (Yamada 1935).

From the seventh century until the twentieth, *kundoku*-mediated logography, with or without phonographic adjuncts, remained the privileged—and in many cases the only—mode for legal, historical, religious, scientific, lexicographic, and administrative writing (fig. 7.3). Even in literature, where vernacular prose and poetry have been strongly—and to a large degree misleadingly—associated with visually distinct phonography, *kundoku*-based logography sustained a long-standing tradition of Chinese-style writing and mediated a striking degree of absorption and exchange between that tradition and the intimately related development of vernacular writings (Kurozumi 2000; Wixted 1998). Chinese-style logographic writing was central to the education, aspirations, ideals, and daily lives of male elites into the twentieth century and represented an expressive model and source of quotations, allusions, and catchphrases even for those who were unable to read and write the texts themselves.

CAUSES OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

There is, then, ample reason to contend that *kundoku* logography occupied the center of written Japanese until the twentieth century. But not to qualify such an assertion would be to prejudge unacceptably the history of literacies in Japan. Until the twentieth century, purely logographic texts remained common, especially in elite contexts, but logographs were also often accompanied by phonographic adjuncts in one form or another.
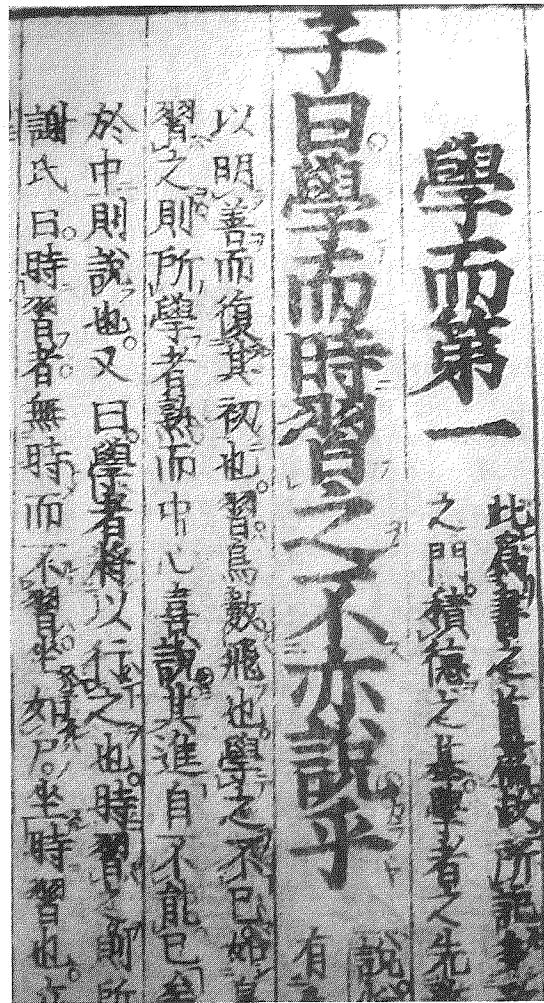
FIGURE 7.3

The initial passage of the Analects of Confucius, *from a late nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock edition that incorporates a commentary by the influential Chinese thinker Zhu Xi (1130–1200 CE) and glosses attributed to the prominent Japanese scholar Gotō Shizan (1721–1782). The text of the work itself begins with the second column and is followed in small graphs by Zhu Xi's commentary. Circles on the lower right corners of a number of graphs are punctuation marks indicating pauses or stops, but there are also extensive diacritics specifying the* kundoku *readings of the text. In the initial string of characters, discussed in this chapter, abbreviated phonographs on the lower right of the third, fifth, sixth, and seventh graphs spell out final syllables of words or grammatical particles:* (manabi)te テ, (toki)ni 二, (nara)fu フ, (kore)wo ヲ. *On the lower left of the sixth character, the* L-*shaped mark indicates that this graph is to be transposed with the following one.*

Although logography was never supplanted by phonography—even the contemporary simplified orthography is a mixture of the two—it was undeniably supplemented by it in complex and varied ways, with important consequences for the social extent of acts of reading and writing.

This is clearest for the various modes of purely or mostly phonographic writing. In addition to vernacular poetry (written in phonographic characters in many cases in the eighth century and most—eventually, nearly all—cases thereafter) and high Heian belletristic prose (in cursivized phonographs), there are reports, letters, petitions, and other documents relying to varying degrees on cursivized or abbreviated phonographs from the late Heian period onward (Amino 1993: 353–404; Fröhlich 2007). After the rise of extensive woodblock printing, some of the most popular illustrated genres were written almost entirely in cursivized phonographs.[21] Perhaps even more important is the supplementary use of phonographs, which ranges from indication of grammatical elements (modern *okurigana* 送假名) to glosses on logographs. Such glosses appeared as interpolated notes, as interlinear annotations added by readers, or eventually as smaller graphs written alongside the logographs by the author or scribe (*furigana* 振假名 or *tsukegana* 付假名), which were standard in most printed texts from the seventeenth century until the mid-twentieth (Ariga 1989).

The intense and varied *mixture* of writing in Japan has important consequences for the history of literacy, as well as for the question of how and why the shape of script changed—or remained the same—during what I have called the critical period (from the seventh to the twelfth centuries) and thereafter. The parallel use of logographs (arranged in the Chinese style and otherwise) and various sets of phonographs, in different contexts and also within the same texts or genres, meant that a wide range of social groups, separated by class, gender, location, and so on, had access to distinctive, though overlapping, bodies of texts. To become a competent reader and writer of Chinese-style belletristic prose and poetry required many years of concerted effort, but mastering the limited number of logographic characters and patterns of usage needed for basic documentary forms would have been a far simpler matter. Similarly, writing poetry or prose in elegant cursivized phonographs required extensive training, of one's hand and one's eye (that is, taste), but scrawling a rough-and-ready note in simple phonographs would become possible comparatively quickly. In a sense, visually distinct styles of writing (combinations in varying degrees of varying types of phonographs and logographs) instantiate the plural literacies that have been theorized so extensively in recent decades (Collins 1995; Collins and Blot 2003). But the same readers and writers

would often have had contact with multiple modes of inscription, so in many cases there is no one-to-one correspondence between particular populations and distinctive styles.

One of the most important aspects of the prevalence of *kundoku* is that this written variety does not map onto linguistic variety, at least in the sense of visually distinctive forms of writing corresponding to writing "in" different languages. At a given time, the vocalizations of the various forms of writing were linguistically contiguous, though there were profound stylistic differences between the Japanese used to read logographic texts in the Chinese style and that used to read phonographically inscribed vernacular poetry or popular fiction. But despite the differences, the contiguity of these styles meant that crossing over was possible. For example, a phonographically written vernacular poem could echo a classical Chinese work (without including any loanwords or characters from it), or a fictional character could make a grand vernacular proclamation that drew on the rhetoric and usage of the Chinese classics. Moreover, the vocalization of those classics through *kundoku* meant that they were orally accessible to and, in a sense, culturally possessed by those who had no ability to "read" them on their own.[22]

These factors make it particularly difficult to speculate about the reasons for or consequences of change in the history of writing in Japan. On the one hand, logographic texts in the Chinese style, read or written primarily through *kundoku*, held a central position from the seventh to the twentieth centuries and were never dislodged by the various phonographic systems that developed over that span of time. Moreover, the phonographic systems themselves and various strategies for using them independently or mixing them with logographs had all developed by the twelfth century. There have been changes in the graphic styles and internal structures of these sets of logographs and phonographs, but up to and including the present age of digitization, the fundamentals of how the syllables and words of the Japanese language are represented in writing have not changed significantly.

On the other hand, the emergence of visually distinct phonographs had profound impacts in many areas. Socially, they expanded access to writing and reading in general (and more narrowly, to glossed or otherwise supplemented logographic texts as well). The coexistence of parallel scripts also provided writers with resources for a range of expressive effects, such as shifts in mode for emphasis (along the lines of italics) or play with tensions between logographs and the phonographic glosses paired with them. In cultural terms, the visually distinctive phonographs were scripts

that in particular contexts—and often when discussed by writers with strong ideological investments—came to be conceived of as a "native" mode of inscription (Shinkawa 2002).

But the last of these—the identification of *kana* as native scripts—is a consequence, not a cause, of their development. The tenth- to twelfth-century siniform scripts of Central Asia (Kara 1996; Kychanov 1996; Nakamura 1988) and the fifteenth-century Korean alphabet (Ledyard 1966, 1997; Lee 1997) were officially promulgated with state sponsorship. But the various modifications of "Chinese" writing in Japan—from the initial adaptation of Korean *kundoku* and phonograph characters onward—were driven by expediency and evolved gradually rather than instantiated by fiat. Physically, countless writers formed the same characters under similar conditions, leading to graphic simplification; linguistically, the phonology and morphology of the Japanese language created a kind of "design space" (to use a neo-Darwinian term) within which scripts adapted to selection pressures for speed and clarity. Such factors undoubtedly spurred the considerable changes that did occur, but their influence does not mean that the considerable continuities—most notably, the persistence of logography—were retrograde developments stemming from the stifling of a natural progression. Moreover, if scriptural authority, accordance with past precedent, and social prestige were also selection pressures that slowed or eliminated change in certain aspects of the overall writing system, it is only from an anachronistic, ahistorically "moralizing" perspective that they can be seen as undesirable or extraneous.

Much as was the case in China itself, where the classical written language (*wényán* 文言) maintained a central position long after the development of a written vernacular (*báihuàwén* 白話文), in Japan, logography in the Chinese style was the most authoritative medium and extended its influence into other forms of writing—and even into actual speech as well.[23] The combination of *kundoku* and phonographs (both supplementary and independent) meant that the overall system of writing in Japan maintained a remarkable degree of flexibility, in some areas remaining rooted in ancient authority and in others becoming accessible to lightly trained readers—or even, through vocalization, to "nonreaders." The overall writing system was essentially capable of simultaneously changing and staying the same.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HISTORY OF WRITING

In conclusion, I will outline a few comparative consequences of the Japanese experience with script change. The first is not necessarily

comparative: the implications of the foregoing for the history of the Chinese writing system, broadly construed. As mentioned above, the nature of that system is a controversial subject (Lurie 2006). Scholars like Peter Boodberg (1940) and John DeFrancis (2002) are quite right to reject the notion that Chinese characters are or ever have been "ideographs"—that is, signs that indicate ideas directly—but there is still room to argue about how logographic or phonographic the script has been in its various "implementations." One of the principal contributions of the history of Japanese writing to this debate is that it illustrates the importance of context and usage, indicating that the outward formal continuity of "Chinese" graphs (and more broadly, any writing system) can be deceptive. The historical origins of the system, its formal structure, and its sundry uses to write earlier forms of Chinese, modern Mandarin, or various stages of Japanese, Korean, and so on, are all distinct issues, and any argument for a fundamental phonographic or logographic essence must consider in detail the historical and linguistic variety of character-based writing and reading. It is appropriate to insist on the priority of phonography in particular contexts—certainly the earliest and most recent uses of the characters to write Chinese are more phonographic than has traditionally been maintained—but the phenomenon of kundoku and its central importance to the history of writing and reading in Japan (and Korea) means that logography must also be given its due. The extent to which characters were adapted, both visibly and—especially—invisibly, in non-Sinitic contexts (and here I have alluded merely to Vietnamese and Central Asian writing) also encourages us to rethink the easy identification of this writing system with the Chinese language.

The central and enduring role of logography in the history outlined here also has implications for the study of writing in general, which is still shadowed by the remnants of Gelb's (1963) influential teleology of development towards full phonography, a teleology that was, of course, expressive of fundamental cultural attitudes toward what writing is and should be. I wholeheartedly agree with Bruce Trigger's critique of the notion that logographic writing is "inherently inferior to phonographic and especially alphabetic scripts," but there is room to complicate his stipulation (following Gelb) that "the major shifts towards more phonographic writing occurred when scripts were adopted by foreign peoples" (2003:602–603). In certain cases, that has been true. But in East Asia, one could argue that adoption by foreign peoples actually led to an intensification of logography.[24]

Further comparative insights lie in the recognition that kundoku is not as exotic as it initially seems. It is very likely that the large number of graphically discrete individual characters, as well as the metalinguistic and cosmological ideas that shaped their development, contributed to the phenomenon in East Asia, but there are numerous suggestive parallels in other traditions of writing. Perhaps most strikingly, in medieval Europe, Latin texts were glossed with diacritics and other markings that suggest they may have been translated and read, on the fly, into local vernaculars (King 2007). The parallels between Sumerian and Akkadian writing and the mixture of phonographs and logographs in Japanese have been frequently noted, and there is room to speculate about Akkadian readings of Sumerian texts (not just individual cuneiforms). Another suggestive example from the same region is the use of whole Aramaic words in the Aramaic alphabet as "heterograms": word-signs for unrelated Parthian and Middle Persian words (Skjærvø 1996).

More broadly, attention to kundoku and the persistence of logography in Japanese writing encourages us to take more seriously the many ways in which writing goes beyond the transcription of speech sounds, such as orthography, punctuation, and spacing. In place of anachronistic notions about the integrity of national languages or prescriptive dicta about the absolute superiority of phonography, the complex interactions between writing and language are better approached through emphasis on factors such as the coexistence of (visible and invisible) old and new forms, the influence of metalinguistic discourses like that of lexicography, and the context-dependence of scripts and the literacies that are their lives in society.

Notes

1. This chapter is a condensation of arguments from Lurie 2011, which contains more extensive discussion and references. For a survey of the entire history of writing in Japan, see Seeley 1991; another important anglophone resource is Kornicki 1998, a history of the Japanese book that concentrates on the early modern period (sixteenth through nineteenth centuries) but provides extensive information on earlier developments.

2. A critical factor in the seventh-century expansion of writing was the presence of trained personnel, including refugees and prisoners of war from the conflict on the peninsula and also people from the archipelago (some from lineages of peninsular extraction) who around the turn of the century had begun going to China and the Korean states as secular or Buddhist students.

3. The term "emperor" (tennō) is often translated "sovereign," in part because in this period (and until the modern era) Japan had no empire to speak of, unlike China. Here I have opted to employ the more familiar English term.

4. I use the problematic term "literary Chinese" for the written language exemplified by and then modeled on the transmitted classics of the Warring States and Han

periods (accompanied, as written languages are, by a standard—and by no means static—vocalization considerably different from the spoken language of later periods and possibly also the periods in which the written language developed).

5. One of the problems presented by this sort of discussion is the difficulty of sorting out the role played by the characters themselves in the development of concepts like "word," not to mention their role in less abstract aspects of both metalinguistic ideas and actual functioning of written (and eventually certain registers of spoken) language.

6. The basic unit of modern Japanese phonographic writing is not the syllable but the subsyllabic mora (Backhouse 1993:40–41). Syllables like *kō* こう, *tsū* つう, and *man* まん are bimoraic, whereas *ko* こ, *tsu* つ, and *ma* ま are monomoraic, as reflected in both sets by the number of hiragana required to write them. For a summary discussion of the mora versus syllable distinction in modern Japanese, see Tsujimura 1996:64–72.

7. The misleading term *man'yōgana* literally means *kana* (a blanket term for various phonographs derived from Chinese characters) of the *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集 (an immense late eighth-century anthology of vernacular poetry). Although the *Man'yōshū* does contain numerous poems written partially or entirely in phonograph characters, they are not the dominant method of inscription in the anthology as a whole, and conversely, they were widely used in other texts and contexts.

8. This emphasis on *use* of the same characters contrasts with metalinguistic or metagraphic discussion in works of the Heian period (794–1185 CE), which refer to distinctive sets of graphs and styles of writing using those sets (Seeley 1991:76–80).

9. The process of graphic simplification that produced visually distinctive phonographs was accompanied by two dramatic changes in the internal structure of the script. One reflected a shift in Japanese phonology: as three pairs of vowels (possibly dipthongs, vowels with glides, or other combinations [Miyake 2003]) fell together, the number of homophonous phonographs increased. The other was a purely graphic change: although the phonograph sets of the seventh and eighth centuries distinguished, for the most part, between voiced and unvoiced consonants like those in *ga* and *ka*, the visual simplification of graphs was accompanied by abandonment of this distinction, so distinguishing between voiced and unvoiced became a contextual matter. (Diacritics indicating voicing eventually developed, but their application was inconsistent until the twentieth century.)

10. A more pertinent romanization would be one derived from a reconstruction of Early Middle Chinese, but the specific details of how this passage would have been vocalized in China at the time *kundoku* arose in Japan are not germane to this discussion, hence the expedient anachronism.

11. Here and below, English equivalents of the traditional Japanese grammar are used (see Shirane 2005; Wixted 2006); for an alternative account more in keeping with modern Western linguistic analysis, see Vovin 2003. On literary Chinese grammar, I rely on Pulleyblank 1995.

12. Lurie 2011 presents a fuller analysis of the *kundoku* process as applied to this phrase from the *Analects*.

13. This is not the place to address the vexing problem of defining translation, whether in an ideal or historical sense. For the time being, I stipulate that it is the production of an utterance or text modeled on, and in some way equivalent to, another pre-existing utterance or text from a different language. Jakobson distinguishes "interlingual translation or *translation proper*" from "intralingual translation or *rewording*" and "intrasemiotic translation or *transmutation*" (1987 [1959]:429); both of these other kinds, but in particular the latter, are relevant for this discussion of the nature of *kundoku*.

14. In a discussion of "reading" that raises fundamental and unexpectedly difficult problems for the study of writing, Wittgenstein opens by stipulating, "I am not counting the understanding of what is being read as part of 'reading' for the purposes of this investigation: reading here is the activity of rendering out loud what is written or printed; and also of writing from dictation, writing out something printed, played from a score, and so on" (1958:61, §156). As is suggested by the subsequent direction of this discussion, the problem of "understanding" in reading haunts the study of the history of literacy.

15. R. A. Miller vividly states that in the early period "people often did not really know what language they were writing in, Chinese or Japanese; and we are often in no better position to make a judgment on the question when we study some of the documents they produced" (1967:131). A better way of putting the former point would be to say that in this period the notion of "writing in" a specific language is not always an appropriate description of what scribes and authors were doing. Seeley quite appropriately adopts "an 'agnostic' approach," using the term "Chinese style" for "a form of writing in which Chinese characters are arranged and used according to the conventions of literary Chinese syntax" (1991:25). But it is necessary to extend this approach to incorporate "agnosticism" toward the *reading* of texts imported from China (such as the *Analects*) as well.

16. Of course, it is quite possible that *kundoku* was an option in certain contexts and excluded in other contemporaneous ones, but as argued below, the overall tendency in sources from the mid-seventh century on suggests that it was the default norm for reading from very early on.

17. A brief overview of writing in early Korea can be found in Lurie 2011; see also

Ledyard 1966, republished as Ledyard 1998; Lee and Ramsey 2000:45–55; Yi 2005. Discussions of Korean *kundoku* include Fujimoto 1988, M. Kim 1988, and Y. Kim 2005.

18. An apparent exception is the use of phonographs to spell out words that are difficult to "translate" into Chinese and thus not susceptible to being represented logographically by the existing stock of characters. This category includes distinctive terms such as local plant and animal species and also, of course, proper nouns. In many, perhaps most contexts, it was often more convenient to spell out such words phonographically than to search for logographic representations. But at least in principle, such representations would have been available. A Japanese word that does not correspond to a single character could be circumlocutorily represented by multiple characters as a kind of composite logograph, or a new logograph could be created from the modular components of "Chinese" characters. Such new logographs, or *kokuji* 國字 (graphs of [our] country), are a minor element of the development of scripts in Japan (in strong contrast to their prominent role in the central Asian scripts of the tenth through the twelfth centuries and Vietnamese *chu nom*), but they are particularly common in hard-to-translate lexical areas like plant and animal names. Significantly, they are usually created by combining semantic determinatives without the phonetic element that is present in the majority of characters created in China (Commons 1998; Sasahara 2006). A good example of terms initially rendered phonographically but then replaced with logographic equivalents is provided by the foodstuffs and other products referred to in wooden slips found at the site of the eighth-century Heijō palace compound in Nara (Kobayashi 1983, 1988:306–318).

19. The primary context for the development of abbreviated phonograph characters is marginal glosses of *kundoku* readings, but the converse is not the case. Glosses can also be found as slightly or extensively cursivized phonographs, as well as in the form of *okoto-ten* 乎古止点, coded marks (dots or lines) whose position on a character indicates what grammatical elements should be added to it. One of the great subfields of Japanese linguistics (*kokugogaku* 國語学) has been the study of the language preserved in such annotated manuscripts, which provide many insights into vocabulary and usage (admittedly, in limited contexts) of the Heian period in particular (see Yoshida et al. 2001).

20. Amino Yoshihiko (1993) argues that these abbreviated phonographs (*katakana*) never lost their association with recording the spoken voice, even as they came to be used in post-Heian documents by surprisingly rural and plebeian writers. (For an introductory treatment of the same ideas in English, see Amino n.d.)

21. For popular literacy after the emergence of widespread printing, see Rubinger 2007.

22. This is a major reason for rejecting the still prevalent distinction between masculine elite Chinese literacy and feminine (or popular) Japanese literacy in the Heian period and thereafter. It is also a key to the enduring enthusiasm at many levels of society for literary Chinese anecdotes, catchphrases, and rhetorical flourishes—all of which circulated in oral form, as well as written (see Maeda 2004 and Sakaki 2000:91–97).

23. A major source of that authority and a likely factor in the persistence of logographic writing in much of East Asia was a set of normative ideas about correspondences between the order of the cosmos and graphic patterns (paradigmatically, the hexagrams of the *Yijing* (the *Classic of Changes*) and thus between words or concepts and graphs (Boltz 1994; Lewis 1999). As embodied in lexicography and commentary (themselves locked in a productive feedback loop), these ideas provide a kind of justification for the development and persistence of *kundoku* itself.

24. Of course, in Japan this intensification of logography was accompanied by the development of graphically simplified phonographs, but this serves as a reminder that contradictory changes can occur simultaneously.

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Cover illustration: *Top left: Xiaozi X you,* inscription in the lid. Photo courtesy Kyle Steinke.
Bottom left: Top section of the painted wooden coffin of Sebekaa, Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum
45. Twelfth Dynasty, Egypt. Paler signs in the copy are inscribed in red. (After Lepsius
1867:Plate 41.) *Right:* Latin inscription with cursive Roman numeral for 556, seen at the
end of line 5. (Mallon 1948:Plate I.)

For Carol Salomon (1948–2009),

cherished explorer of language