

Title: Japan's Input to N3388 (Two Kana Characters)

Date: 2008-10-9

Source: Japan

Status: National body contribution

Re: N3388, N3394

## 1. SUMMARY

Japan national body reviewed the proposal, contacted the original submitter of the proposal, Nozomu Katō, had some discussion with him, and concluded as follows:

Japan supports the encoding of the proposed HIRAGANA LETTER YE in UCS.  
Japan opposes against the KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E this time.

## 2. A brief history

Kana is a script derived from Chinese ideographs. The earliest material that can be considered to be written in kana is from late 8th century. It is around 10th century that kana formed a consistent writing system.

Researchers agree that distinction between the sounds /e/ and /ye/ in Japanese language disappeared at least before 10th century. After the days, Japanese language lost the distinction. Researchers discovered the possible distinction of the sounds in the older Japanese language in late 18th century.

## 3. Concerns on the proposed HIRAGANA LETTER YE

Japan national body understands the requirements discussed in the proposal. We see no strong objection to have that character in UCS.

However, we do not consider that the demand is either high or urgent. In particular, most of the books and papers in the area (study of Japanese classical

literatures and the language) do not use the proposed letter. They usually use side lines or dots on ordinary kana letters for /e/ to denote distinction between /e/ and /ye/ or use original kanji instead of kana shapes when necessary, even in the researchers' hand-written manuscripts or woodblock printed books. Modern researchers more often use romaji (Latin transliteration) when discussing sounds of historical Japanese language. Use of the proposed hiragana letter is rare, even in the researchers' communities.

Japan national body also discussed on the relationship between this proposal and ones so-called hentai-gana (variant kana). It is apparent that there are some demands on the encoding of hentai-gana in Japan for some limited purpose. It is unclear, however, whether they should be handled as glyph-variants of existing hiragana repertoire or encoded as independent characters. In any case, hentai-gana have a variety of repertoires and their whole set can hardly be determined. One apparent fact is that there is a hentai-gana letter that has same shape as the proposed hiragana letter, which typical modern Japanese speakers recognize as a variation of え and pronounce as /e/. If we are to encode the proposed HIRAGANA LETTER YE in UCS, we need to make clear that this addition is for a historical letter and is not intended for hentai-gana.

#### 4. Concerns on the proposed KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E

Japan sees several problems with this proposal. Japan does not support encoding of the proposed katakana letter this time. Japan feels that further study is needed.

Japanese language lost the distinction between /e/ and /ye/ before, or as same time frame as the kana formed a consistent writing system. During the dates, distinction of hiragana and katakana was unclear. There were just several (not two) different letter forms to represent same sounds. We see no reason we need set of hiragana and katakana for the purpose of the sound distinction.

The intended use of this katakana letter is that, when an author needs distinction between the sounds /e/ and /ye/, and for some reason the author wants to use katakana to represent the sounds of historical Japanese, use existing

KATAKANA LETTER E to represent the sound /ye/, and use the new letter KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E to represent the sound /e/. This convention is clearly confusing even for experts in this area. Japan national body is not comfortable with promoting this not-widely accepted convention by encoding a new katakana letter as specified in N3388.

Moreover, there is a doubt that the proposed letter (shape) may be inappropriate. As far as Japan national body understands, the shape Okumura proposed in his book for the letter is different from the one proposed in N3388. Of course, UCS encodes characters, not glyphs nor shapes, so this point can be considered as a minor issue.

#### 5. Notes on the attachments

① and ②: Examples of modern text books that show distinction of /e/ and /ye/ using Latin transliteration and/or Kanji. ①: Hiroshi Tsukishima, *Kokugogaku* (Japanese Studies), University of Tokyo Press, 1964. ②: Takuya Okimori, *Nihongoshi* (History of Japanese Language), Ohfu, 1989.

③: Two copies of the book *Kogen E-Ye-ben* (古言衣延辨, Discourse on E and Ye in Old Literatures), that is listed under References of N3388, showing a different shape for the letter corresponding to KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E.

I: 1891 reprint by Unkondo.

II: 1835 manuscript.

④ and ⑤: Examples from modern researcher's papers. These tables are called *kana jitai hyo*, list of shapes of letters appearing on a particular old manuscript. Researchers require distinctive notations for /e/ and /ye/ as the index to the table. ④ uses ideographs, 衣 for /e/ and 江 for /ye/. ⑤ uses ordinary katakana ɛ for /e/ (that is to represent /ye/ in the convention proposed in N3388) and an ideograph 江 for /ye/.

「あめつち」には「えのえを」と「え」が  
 二つあるが、これは本来はア行の **エ e** (穂) とヤ行の **エ ie** (戩) との区別を表わしたものと見られる。そして、e と ie との書分けは、天曆の頃まで保存されていたようであるから、「あめつち」が作られたのはそれ以前であろう。而して、奈良時代には、キケロなど清音で十二の仮名が各二類に区別されており、それが平安時代の初頃には大部分が混同されて各一音になっていたと見られるから、「あめつち」が作られたのは多分平安初期或いはそれ以後に限られよう。従って、この誦文は、平安初期(中期頃(西暦九〇世紀))に作られたとすべきであろう。尤も実際に行われたのは天曆よりも数十年後にまで及んだようであるが、院政時代に入ると殆ど「いろは歌」として代られるようになったらしい。

ア行の **エ [e]** とヤ行の **エ [ie]** は、『新撰字鏡』(八九二―九〇〇年成)に「衣女虫」「江女虫」(衣はア行のエ、江はヤ行のエを表す万葉仮名)というように区別しない例が見え、源順(九一一―九八三年)の『和名類聚抄』(九三二―九三八年成)にも「江 和名衣」のように区別がありませんが、混同が一般化するの是一〇世紀後半以降です。統合し

○今の世草假字に用るえは衣丸草書にて阿行也ひは江の訓にて古書  
 乃假字には延曳などを用て夜行也然るにひは字音よあらざる故近世  
 の國學者は用るとなくえ或は延など通はし用るあり片假字のエは則  
 江の傍なきばこそ訓にて夜行なり片假字に阿行のえなしされば今  
 草假字にも阿行にえ夜行にの片假字には阿行に **衣** (衣丸表の) 夜行にエ  
 を用ふひエをもに訓あれども音訓交へて用る事も奈良の朝以來の例  
 なれば嫌ふべきにもあらじと

今世草假字は阿行にえ夜行にの江行假字は阿  
 行に **衣** 夜行にの字音よあらざる故近世  
 の國學者は用るとなくえ或は延など通はし用るあり片假字のエは則  
 江の傍なきばこそ訓にて夜行なり片假字に阿行のえなしされば今  
 草假字にも阿行にえ夜行にの片假字には阿行に **衣** (衣丸表の) 夜行にエ  
 を用ふひエをもに訓あれども音訓交へて用る事も奈良の朝以來の例  
 なれば嫌ふべきにもあらじと

憲法十七條一曰以和為貴

④ 築島裕、『平安時代訓點本論考 ヲコト點圖假名字體表』、汲古書院、一九八六年

部二第	(9)5 (950a)	藏所	石山寺(卷第三)・中田祝夫氏(卷第六)	帳裝	卷子本	ヲト	順曉和尚點	白	
題	妙法蓮華經玄贊	二卷		年書	平安時代初期	者書			
代點	天曆(四七九五)頃			加點		者點	淳祐		
ア	アア	イ	イイ	ウ	ウ	エ	エ	オ	オ
カ	カカ	キ	キキ	ク	ク	ケ	ケ	コ	ココ
サ	ササ	シ	シシ	ス	ス	セ	セ	ソ	ソソ
タ	タタ	チ	チチ	ツ	ツ	テ	テ	ト	トト
ナ	ナナ	ニ	ニニ	ヌ	ヌ	ネ	ネ	ノ	ノノ
ハ	ハハ	ヒ	ヒヒ	フ	フ	ヘ	ヘ	ホ	ホホ
マ	ママ	ミ	ミミ	ム	ム	メ	メ	モ	モモ
ヤ	ヤヤ			ユ	ユ	エ	エ	ヨ	ヨヨ
ラ	ララ	リ	リ	ル	ル	レ	レ	ロ	ロロ
ワ	ワワ	ヰ	ヰ			ヱ	ヱ	ヲ	ヲ
坐	ナ	云	云	給	給	奉	奉	テシ	テシ
符聲	トト	有	有	ナ	ナ	事	事	時	時
命	ナ	所	所	ス	ス	也	也	耳	耳
人	ナ	以	以	ル	ル	也	也	龍	龍

○中田祝夫『古點本の國語學的  
的研究譯文篇(昭33.3)  
依上音エ上  
沿革史料 一〇面  
古訓點研究 二七三頁  
古點本研究 四八九頁  
訓點語研究 五七七頁  
平安語新論 一一〇頁  
高山寺目錄 頁  
石山寺目錄 八〇四頁  
高山寺目錄 頁  
新編石山寺書目 一二五頁

⑤ 沼本克明、『日本漢字音の歴史的研究—體系と表記をめぐって—』、汲古書院、一九九七年

書名	悉曇學草	盛嚴寺和尚本藏	一巻	所藏	東寺觀智院藏
書写	平安初期写	(田行(七九八、八五二)本の伝承有り)		ヲコト点	(子シ)
加點	平安初期加點			宗派	
梵語					
ア	阿	イ	以	ウ	予
カ	可	キ	岐	ク	久
ガ	伽	ギ		グ	
サ	佐	シ	志	ス	使
ザ	咎	ジ	日	ズ	
タ	答	チ	知	ツ	川
ダ		ヂ		ヅ	
ナ	奈	ニ	化	ヌ	ぬ
ハ	波	ヒ	比	フ	不
バ	馬	ビ	美	ブ	步
マ	万	ミ	未	ム	无
ヤ	也			ユ	由
ラ	行	リ	利	ル	留
ワ		ヰ			
リ	久			ル	无
悉	戔	悉	戔	悉	草
悉	去	悉	沙	悉	取
悉	ヤ	悉	江	悉	江