

# Must we treat Japanese as a language of open syllables or must we look for special meanings and functions in consonants and vowels?<sup>1</sup>

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I shall try to answer this question by examining some problems which Mr. Charles HAGUENAUER thinks to have solved in his *Origines de la Civilisation japonaise* I, Paris 1956.

After 178 pages of Introduction, Anthropology and Ethnography, we find 462 pages of 'Linguistique' of which the greater part however consists of phonetics and wordcomparisons with other languages. The spelling is quite personal, now and again interlaced with the international alphabet, and the Japanese words are chopped up in very small parts such as *nas.a-i.e*, *sim.a-h.u*, *wak.a-i.a-n.u* and the like. Such a spelling presupposes a thorough knowledge of the Japanese language, in fact a kind of inter-etymology of which one can but guess the meaning. Of course Mr. H. knows what he is up to with his intimate knowledge of Altaic, Mongol, Tungus, Corean, Ainu and Loochooan languages. I have the greatest respect for this knowledge and though I cannot verify any of his comparisons, one can feel how excited he must have been with each new item. The only thing I can check is the Japanese of the Nara-period, especially the *Manyōshū*. In the lists (Book-I p. 27/72) on which my reconstruction of the Nara-language was based, I find for instance, that the *kana i* and *yi*, with the same *kana*-sign, came from KARLGRÉN's *Ancient Reading*: *je*, *jäk*, *ien*, from an archaic <*d*>. Likewise *e* and *ye* also with the same *kana*-sign, came from *jwäi*, *jäi*, *iän*, *jwän* with an archaic <*d*>. Seen in this light, the remark of Mr. H. at the end of p. 212/3, does not hold good. There is no "chute d'une initiale consonantique qui a pu passer à la semi-voyelle y-, ou à tout autre son de remplacement". I propose that the *i*-initial was pronounced *i* or *yi*, and then: *ikusa*>\* *yikusa*> *yukusa* (Kyūshū); *ime*>\* *yime*> *yume*; *imu*>\* *yimu*> *yumu* (to dislike hate, avoid, shun) etc. is quite natural. For his "*ki/.e-i.u* <*Δ* *kiy.u*> *kiy.e*> *ki/.e*," p. 217, see Book I, p. 33/4, where I suggested the possibility of a yodized *k*: *kju*, *kjā* (>*ke*), *kjāsu* from which naturally *kesu* and *kiyasu*. P. 276, I think "*ihe* and

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<sup>1</sup> A continuation and affirmation of my article in the T.A.S.J. 1934, sec. series Vol. XI entitled: "Was Japanese a language of open syllables in the 7th century?" This paper appears so late, because I only received the book in question some months ago! Moreover it is not a criticism of H.'s work, but rather a motive to illustrate once more the open-syllabic theory.

ya\* are two different words. "iwa, iwa.ya, A iwa-n.ai.u" must of course be: *iva, iva-ya, iva naru*. Here we see the same mixing up of 'ha-gyō' and 'wa-gyō' as in the Hepburn spelling. His quotation *Manyōshū* (XX), for this last instance, is rather vague. It must be XX-124/4416. In XX-123 we have: *ive naru imo* (my dear wife who is at home), and in the following *uta* XX-124: *iva naru ware va vimo tokazu nemu* (then I, who remain at home, will sleep without loosening my sash). A simple alternation of *ive* and *iva* and not of *ive* and *ya*. p. 508 and p. 21/5 of the 'Liste des Additions et Corrections', give an incomprehensible mixing-up of the wellknown "wo . . . -mi"-construction, with the *renyōkei* forms on -*mi* of verbs on -*mu*. In 22 of the 38 different -*mi* forms, a verb on -*mu* doesn't even exist! Though I treated all the "wo . . . -mi"-forms of the *Manyōshū* in Appendix II of Book VI (1941), a reprint of my article in MN 1940, Vol. III, No. I, Mr. Haguenauer says on p. 21 of his 'Liste' (1956): "Ici encore, on regrette l'absence (du moins à ma connaissance) d'une étude soigneusement documentée et suffisamment approfondie . . .". (Of course one need not read [all] the books presented by colleagues, but here he could have found the "wo . . . -mi"-construction in the Index of each Book, pointing to Book VI, App. II.)

I shall not reproduce all his queer remarks, but the conjuring-trick with the case-particle *wo*, is worth while quoting in full, to show how easily Mr. H. eliminates or changes difficult particles or suffixes, which he cannot understand.

p. 24: "Puisqu'on doit catégoriquement refuser à -*wo* la valeur d'un indice du complément direct dans le tour ici considéré (surtout quand -*wo* précède un mot verbal intransitif (!)<sup>2</sup>, force est bien d'admettre qu'il y intervient- à titre occasionnel rappelons-le (on se souviendra dans le cas d'exemples empruntés à des poésies, que le poète doit se limiter à un certain nombre de syllables) avant tout comme une sorte d'outil expressif dont, du moins à notre avis, l'effet est tellement proche de celui qu'y exercerait -*mo* qu'on peut envisager qu'on se trouve là en présence d'une variante de -*mo* (>-*wo*?) . . .

Un court exemple illustrera l'emploi qui est fait du tour en question: . . . *yama-wo taka-mi ka mo/tsuki-no ide k.o-n.u* [*Manyōshū* VI], ([la] montagne [en serait-ce] [la] hauteur [le- s'élever haut] ? -la lune ne se montre point [n'est pas apparue])". (?)

With this *mo*, the -*mi* form need not be a verbal one, and then there are no more difficulties. Here again, we see how dangerous it is to work with dictionaries (as Mr. Haguenauer admits constantly, p. 22/31 etc.) instead of with texts. It takes longer (f. i. to translate and annotate the 20 Books of the M.), but it gives a solid base for the study of special problems. Of course nobody can work without dictionaries, but the text-study must be at the base of each special study.

As one can read in my article, Appendix II of Book-VI, there are 161 cases of which 115 have the -*mi* ending written phonetically, and 127 have the particle *wo* preceding the -*mi* form. Of the 46 which are not written phonetically,

<sup>2</sup> The verbal form on — *mi* is always *transitive*!

34 have *wo*. That the instances which are not written phonetically and which have no *wo* preceding them, are read *-mi* in all mss. results from the special force of these *-mi* forms. Of these 161 cases, there are 38 different forms. Among these, 22 have no verbal forms on *-mu*. There is not one instance with another particle than *wo*! All examples are stems of adjectives plus *-mi*. A *-mi* fixed to the stem of an adjective can form concrete nouns (*sira-mi*, *aka-mi*, *taka-mi*, *sige-mi*) in contradistinction to the abstracta on *-sa*. The verbal character of the \**wo . . . -mi*\*-forms excludes eo ipso these noun-formations. The only possibility then is that *mi* itself is the stem of a verb, and the only possible verb is *miru* (to see), perhaps from an older \**mu*, v. t. 4. The meanings 'to see, to see as, to consider, regard as, feel as, in view of, as, because', correspond well with the examples. All commentators explain this structure as: . . . *no de*. (i.e. *yama wo taka.mi*: to see as a high one the mountain, because of the highness of the m., as the mountain is (so) high; *vana wo yo.mi*, considering as lovely and beautiful the flower, because of the beauty of the flower, etc.)

As a kind of consolidation of this hypothesis, I should like to state two facts, regarding the script. In the first place the characters used phonetically for the syllable *mi* are <sup>[1]</sup>. Of these <sup>[2]</sup> are used to indicate our *-mi* suffix. That <sup>[3]</sup>, occurring 28 times, should indicate a form meaning 'to see', etc. is evident. The other four characters are not so evident and must be examined somewhat closer. <sup>[4]</sup> occurs 61 times, <sup>[5]</sup> 9 times, <sup>[6]</sup> 16 and <sup>[7]</sup> once. If we could connect these characters in some way or other with the idea 'to see', it would be of some value for our suggestion. Searching Masamune's indices, we find that the character <sup>[8]</sup> in the meaning 'to see' is represented in the first place by <sup>[8]</sup> and its composita, and in the second place chiefly by the characters <sup>[9]</sup>, <sup>[10]</sup> and <sup>[11]</sup>! If we further examine Hašimoto's double sets of *manyōgana* (1931), quoted on p. 377 of my Book. IV (1936), we find that all those characters used to represent not only our *-mi* forms, but also all the characters used phonetically for <sup>[12]</sup> are to be found in the *mi* (1) list on p. 388 (Book-IV). This coincidence rather startles us, for if my hypothesis was correct, the *mi* (1) form must be found under the *kami-itsidan* (1/-) conjugation in the case of *mi* being the stem of *miru*, or under the *yodan* conj. (4), in the case of *mi* being the stem of an obsolete verb \**mu*. We actually find both cases confirmed on p. 392 where Hašimoto's results are recorded. As a solitary fact it would not prove anything, but in connection with the preceding, it might reinforce my theory (and m. m. perhaps H's theory as well). See further p. 292 ff of my Book-VI.

Now what does Mr. Haguenaer, who does not understand the \**wo . . . -mi*\* construction, do with the suffix *-mi*, after having changed the *wo* into *mo*, as we have seen above? On p. 23 of the 'Liste des additions et Corrections' he

<sup>[1]</sup> 美, 弥, 三, 民, 御, 見, 未, 味, 尾,

<sup>[2]</sup> 見, 美, 弥, 三, 御 <sup>[3]</sup> 見

<sup>[4]</sup> 美 <sup>[5]</sup> 弥 <sup>[6]</sup> 三

<sup>[7]</sup> 御 <sup>[8]</sup> 見 <sup>[9]</sup> 美

<sup>[10]</sup> 弥 <sup>[11]</sup> 三 <sup>[12]</sup> 見

says: "Il semble bien que toute forme en *Δ -m.i* qui entre dans le tour pris ici en considération, tire sa valeur nominale du signe *.i*, ce qui est parfaitement normal (!). S'il en est ainsi, le suffixe *-m.* ne constitue par conséquent, dans ladite forme, qu'un suffixe formatif qui a pour rôle précis de faire passer le radical nu d'un mot de qualité ou celui d'un mot invariable (ex.: *hara, ventre > hara-m.u > hara-m.i*) à la fonction strictement verbale (tr. ou intr.)."

He breaks up the poor suffix in *m* and *i*, each with a special function. But on p. 508 sub N.B. he says: "Il est clair qu'on ne saurait prétendre accorder la valeur d'un signe de la fonction nominale au seul suffixe dérivatif *-m.* du Japonais. En fait, le mot verbal japonais obtenue par dérivation à l'aide dudit suffixe *-m.* ne prend la valeur nominale qu'à la condition d'être affecté d'une "voyelle thématique" *.i* (ou *.e*), auquel cas il constitue *exactement* une "base formative" . . .

And here, in a very roundabout way, Mr. H. admits that we must treat the Japanese language as a language of open syllables, from the first historical Japanese of the Nara-period, up to the present day. The *m* of *mi*, *mu*, *ma*, *me*, *mo* is a phoneme with which we cannot do anything, for the *m* of *mi* is different from the *m* of *mu*, and the *m* of *mu* is different from the *m* of *me* etc. We can only work with the open syllables *ma*, *mi*, *mu*, *me*, *mo* and the moment we try to break them up, we are nowhere. (See my article on: "Was Japanese a language of open syllables in the 7th century?" T.A.S.J. 1934, sec. series, Vol. XI with a 'Note by G. B. Sansom', who abandons the 'yuk-a' theory, and accepts wholesale the 'yu-ka' theory after examining my arguments.)

(By the way it sounds rather comical that Mr. H. reproaches me on p. 248, that I did not take into account the double sets of Hašimoto (mentioned above) when I made up my lists of *manyōgana* in comparison with Karlgren's Ancient Reading of the Chinese prototypes. Now my reconstruction of ancient Japanese was published in 1929 and Hašimoto's double sets were published in 1931!! I reproduced these sets, arranged in the same way as my lists in an Appendix of Book IV, p. 377/396, together with Karlgren's Ancient Reading, 1936).

P. 572 Mr. H. says that Kobayasi treats the word *miti* as "<*mi*, préfix + *ēi*, chemin, alors que rien n'autorise cette interprétation", but if we consider the compounds *umi-di* (III—128/366), *Nara-di* (V—75/867), *ama-di* (V—9/801), etc., we are obliged to note *di ~ ti* as meaning 'way, road'. (See also *tada-di*, the straight, direct road. (XI—268/2618).)

As for the prefixes *i-*, *ma-*, *sa-*, *la-*, I should like to state that *i-* has a slightly emphatic force, f. i. in *i-kakuru*, *i-tumoru* (I—17), *i-yukeba* (III—219), etc. *ma-* may mean 'true, genuine, honorific' like *mi-*; or else it may mean 'both' as in *ma-sode moti*, holding both sleeves; *ma-te*, both hands, *ma-yu*, both brows, *ma-kadi*, both oars. (This last meaning of *ma-* may be taken as 'sémantème' and must in that case be excluded); *sa-* may be honorific or it may stand for 'small, young, a kind of term of endearment': *sa-warabi*, the young ferns (VIII—1); *i mo nete si ga mo* (they passionately desired to sleep together), with the variant: *i mo sa-nete sika*, with the same meaning; *sanesi yo ya tune ni arikeru* (the nights we have slept together, ah would it

were forever!); *ta-* may be an emphatic or it may mean 'hand, arm'. In that last case it cannot be called a prefix: *ta-motovoruru* = *motovoruru*, 'to go round' (XI—29); *ta-yasusi*, easy (XI—231); *ta-yowaki*, weak (also *ta-wayaki*, a metathesis), (III—183); *ta-basamu*, to hold in the hand or under the arm (VI—21); *ta-basiru*, to jump or spatter (X—501, XX—7).

Of these prefixes, unanimously accepted by all scholars, Mr. Haguenaer says on p. 572ff: "La prudence invite à ne point faire état d'un préfixe *sa-* en Japonais" . . . "l'hypothèse suivant laquelle le Japonais aurait connu un 'préfixe' *ma-*, ne résiste pas à l'examen. En réalité on a affaire là à un sémantème *maiu* ~ *mat*/ qui signifie 'tout' (>complément) et qui entre en composition à titre d'élément déterminant tantôt sous cette forme et tantôt en subissant une modification (*maí*/ > *mak*, devant *k*-/ > *mas*, devant *s*-/ > *man*, devant *n*., etc.) ou une réduction de sa finale (*maiu* > *ma*) . . . (!) . . . *tabasiru*, jaillir, sera décomposé en *ta* + *hashiru* sans qu'on ait pris la peine de s'assurer que cette dissociation est correcte. Mais, n'a-t-on pas *tob. a-š.i-r.u* < *tob.*, sauter, dont *tab.a-š.i-r.u* n'est qu'un doublet? . . . "This is pure fantasy, because *a-š.i-r.u* does not exist. It is *ta-*, *to-* or *hodo-* + *vasiru*. Moreover *tobasiru* and *hodobasiru* are much later formations than *ta-basiru*. He does not mention *hodo-basiru* because this form doesn't fit in the '*tob.*'-theory. So if there should be a question of a 'doublet', then *tobasiru* is a doublet of *tabasiru* and not vice-versa. The question is not interesting, but it shows once more how superficially Mr. H. jumps at (wrong) conclusions, addressing his readers as a wise schoolmaster his pupils.

I haven't got the pretention to be able to criticize the work of Mr. Haguenaer, which would be a rather dangerous thing, when we see him knocking Miss Yokoyama on the pretty head, which was already blueish by me review in MN Vol. VIII, No. 1/2, 1952, p. 443/451. She chops up her own beautiful language in the opposite direction, so to say 'against the grain', f.i. *sak-in-ik-er-*' for *saki.nikeri*, which even Mr. H. cannot accept. He further attacks a.o. a certain Mr. Pletner, or Yositake or myself. I don't mind a rap on the head (as Mr. Sansom once said to me) and like it far better than flattery. But I am afraid Mr. H. will have a kind of disdain for my old-fashioned way of thinking in open syllables instead of in vowels and consonants full of meaning and ever so willing to be changed into other vowels and consonants or to melt away, pour le besoin de la cause. I don't know anything about Mongol, Turkish, Corean, Ainu, Tungus etc., but I have the (absurd) pretention to know more about the Nara-language than Mr. Haguenaer. A language which I attacked with my *Key to Classical Japanese*, based on Yamada and compiled in 1926 together with Eliséeff and since then daily used, corrected and amplified and re-edited in 1956 (Brill, Leiden). This Key has proved to be water-proof and I can safely recommend it to Mr. H.

I will finish these remarks with one more quotation: On p. 529 Mr. H. reproaches me another unpardonable omission in my article: 'The Japanese verbal forms on *-yu*' (Appendix I, Book—VI). Without mentioning why, he says 'du haut de sa grandeur': "Il va sans dire que nous n'acceptons pas ici la théorie selon laquelle *-yu* aurait constitué l'indice d'un 'Divine Passive'. Cet auteur n'a pas même pris la peine de distinguer

*omoy.u* ~ *omoh.u* ~ *omoi.u*, ce dernier dialectal, de *omoh.o.y.u* ~ *omow.a.i.u*. Par ailleurs il n'indique point que *ne.i.a.y.u* est pour *ne.i.a.i.u*."

Now *omoyu*, *omoru* do not exist and *omovayu*, same as *omovoyu* alternates with *omovaru* (cf. V—74/866, XIV—25/3372). *neraru* does not exist! He further mentions a form *kik.o.i.e* which does neither exist. In the *uta* which he quotes (XVI—82/3867), the form is *kikoye* or *kikare*, both written <sup>[13]</sup>. For the *kikoye* reading the Kogi suggests <sup>[14]</sup> for <sup>[15]</sup>.

The 'omission' of non-existing forms is quite pardonable in my eyes, but I doubt whether Mr. Haguenaer has actually read the whole article. This kind of denigration is not my conception of fair play, and though I cannot verify anything outside the *Manyōshū*, the things I can check are full of strange and unfounded remarks, which Mr. H. had perhaps better left unsaid. The thick book of 640 pages with a lot of 'Thanksgiving' and beautiful large print where Mr. H. offers us his own thoughts, and smaller print where he is in full action against others, gives the impression of a Standard Work on Things Japanese. This it is certainly not, at least for the part termed 'Linguistique'. All these suggestions and experiments could far better have been published in some periodical with his criticisms in the section 'Book-reviews'. The victims could then have been able to defend themselves. As 'Nachschlagebuch' it is useless, just like the four thick volumes on Japanese Phonetics by Mr. Wenck, because both lack an Index. Especially this last scholarly work would win 100% by an extensive Index. Contents are not sufficient for those looking for some special fact, for nobody reads such works. Perhaps a couple of students would gladly make an Index for their Leader and then, even the 'Linguistique' of Mr. H. could give many hints for those who are anxious to make comparisons with or without a solid base.

Resuming I think we may consider the Japanese language as a whole, from historical Japanese up to today, as a language of open syllables, making allowances for a number of phonetic changes. In fact all scholars, Japanese and foreign, have treated it as such and there is no problem which cannot be solved with the traditional interpretation of particles and suffixes. If Mr. Haguenaer, working with particles and suffixes divided into consonants and vowels, each with an own meaning and/or function, comes to a totally different translation of ancient and classical Japanese, then we will have to revise our translations and annotations in this new light. But then his methods and criticism must be better founded on exhaustive studies of the texts, taking into account all comments, Japanese and foreign, and not for the greater part on dictionaries.

It goes without saying that I wish to remain on historical ground, i.e. the literature of the Nara-period, and that I reject all pre-historic theories, which are greatly based on conjecture. They are interesting and tempting and they may even be correct, but there is always the possibility of total failure.

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[13] 所聞禮 [14] 衣 [15] 禮