TRAD 101: Languages and Cultures of East Asia Writing Systems
What is writing?
Writing Systems

What is writing?

- A way to record meaning, sounds, and/or other parts of a language
- Signs can be read a number of ways:
  - poison
  - poisonous
  - danger
  - skull and crossbones
  - pirate
Writing Systems

What is writing?

Writing can be:
- a visual symbol associated with a linguistic form
- correspondence with meaning (rather than concept)

Types of Writing Systems

- Alphabetic
- Syllabic
- Logographic
Writing Systems

Types of Writing Systems

- Alphabetic
  - symbol = phoneme or sound
  - c + a + t = cat
  - d + o + g = dog

- Syllabic

- Logographic
Writing Systems

- **Types of Writing Systems**
  - **Alphabetic**
  - **Syllabic**
    - symbol = syllable
    - ね (ne) + こ (ko) = ねこ neko “cat”
    - い (i) + ぬ (nu) = いぬ inu “dog”
  - **Logographic**
Writing Systems

- Types of Writing Systems
  - Alphabetic
  - Syllabic
  - Logographic
    - symbol = morpheme
    - 猫 neko “cat”
    - 犬 inu “dog”
Origin of Writing

- Earliest forms
  - Began with symbols used to represent large units of language (words or morphemes)
  - Moved towards smaller units
    - syllables
    - phonemes
Origin of Writing

- Sumerian
  - Mesopotamia (modern Iraq)
  - 3100 BCE
  - Cuneiform writing system
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Set 1</th>
<th>Set 2</th>
<th>Set 3</th>
<th>Set 4</th>
<th>Set 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIRD</td>
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</table>
Origin of Writing

- Egyptian
  - Egypt
  - 3000 BCE
  - Hieroglyphic writing
  - over 2000 hieroglyphs that could represent either a common object, an idea associated with that object, or a sound
  - rebus writing
Origin of Writing

Chinese

- 14th c. BCE (or earlier)
- oldest writing system still in use
- ~56,000 characters
- need to know about 3000 to read a Chinese newspaper (about 2000 characters for a Japanese paper; a few hundred for Korean paper)
Origin of Writing

- **Chinese**
  - Literacy in China is evaluated by the number of characters (not words) a person can read
    - graduates from primary school – 2500 characters
    - college graduates – 3500 characters
  - **Homophones**
    - large number of distinct characters sound alike, because the words they represent sound alike
    - characters make it easy to understand the correct meaning
Origin of Writing

- Chinese
  - Each character represents a morpheme
  - Chinese is an isolating language
  - No spaces between words
Internal Structure of Characters

- Pictograph
  - originated from a picture or an object
  - original form clearly shows the picture

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nSSSp8QFsA&feature=related
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sun (日)</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Sun Image" /></td>
<td>日日日日日日日日日日日日日日日日</td>
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<tr>
<td>moon (月)</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Moon Image" /></td>
<td>月月月月月月月月月月月月月月月月</td>
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<tr>
<td>cloud (云)</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Cloud Image" /></td>
<td>云云云云云云云云云云云云云云</td>
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<tr>
<td>rain (雨)</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Rain Image" /></td>
<td>雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨雨</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal Structure of Characters

- Ideograph
  - diagrammatic indication of ideas

木  tree, wood
刀  sword
水  water
Internal Structure of Characters

- Ideograph
- diagrammatic indication of ideas

木 - tree, wood
刀 - sword
水 - water
本 - center
切 - cut
冰 - ice

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mMftZN1oHg
Internal Structure of Characters

- Semantic-phonetic compounds
  - most frequent
  - consists of two parts:
    - radical – gives general meaning
    - phonetic – gives pronunciation
**Semantic-plus-Phonetic Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>semantic</th>
<th>Phonetic 264</th>
<th>Phonetic 282</th>
<th>Phonetic 391</th>
<th>Phonetic 597</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 亅 'person'</td>
<td>傲 (áo: 'proud')</td>
<td>亅 (cān: 'good')</td>
<td>亅 (jiāo: 'lucky')</td>
<td>亅 (fǔ: 'help')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 才 'hand'</td>
<td>傲 (áo: 'shake')</td>
<td>亅 (shān: 'seize')</td>
<td>亅 (nāo: 'scratch')</td>
<td>亅 (bǔ: 'catch')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 木 'wood'</td>
<td>傲 (áo: 'barge')</td>
<td>亅 (shēn: 'beam')</td>
<td>亅 (nāo: 'oar')</td>
<td>亅 (fǔ: 'trellis')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 氵 'water'</td>
<td>澪 (áo: 'stream')</td>
<td>亅 (shèn: 'leak')</td>
<td>亅 (jiāo: 'sprinkle')</td>
<td>亅 (pǔ: 'creek')</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chinese Writing

- Character writing
  - radical
  - phonetic element
  - there are 214 radicals, some common ones have to do with the 5 elements, people, etc.
  - you need to learn to recognize the common radicals (just their meanings, not their various pronunciations)
The blue lines represent the Creation cycle (e.g. "Water creates Wood" - i.e. Water energy has a tendency to transform into Wood), and the black lines represent the Control cycle (e.g. "Water controls Fire" - i.e. Water energy, if present in any quantity, has a moderating effect on Fire).
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Important for Chinese Medicine, Astrology, Feng shui

http://chinese.astrology.com/
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Water

水

- Solitude, privacy, introspection, philosophy, mystery, truth, honesty, anxiety, nervousness, insecurity.
- Images: Black, Night, Winter
- Some characters: 冰、涼、汽
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Wood

木

- Leadership, assertiveness, creativity, planning, decision-making, competitiveness, conflict, anger, frustration.
- Images: Green, Morning, Spring
- Some characters: 本、村、松
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Fire

火

- Self-expression, emotional extremes, empathy, extrovert, attention-seeking, sociable, talkative.
- Images: Red, Mid-day, Midsummer
- Some characters: 灯、炎、焼、煮
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Earth

土

- Caring, supportive, nourishing, family-oriented, stability, grounding, "mother hen", worrier.
- Images: Yellow, Afternoon, Late summer
- Some characters: 去、地、売
Common Radicals

- The 5 elements
- Metal

金

- Precise, meticulous, logical, analytical, moderation, self-control, morality, tendency to pessimism.
- Images: White, Evening, Autumn
- Some characters: 銀、銅、鉄
Common Radicals

- People
- Person

人 - Some characters: 仁 (ren)、令、他
Common Radicals

- People
- Woman

女

- Some characters: 好、姐、妹
Common Radicals

- People
- Child

子

- Some characters: 学、孕、孫
Common Phonetic Elements

▶ White 白

http://www.cjvlang.com/Writing/writchin/writchin3.html
Word formation

- Character compounds
  - One character = one morpheme
  - Characters can be combined to make new words
Word formation

- Character compounds
  - One character = one morpheme
  - Characters can be combined to make new words

人人 (人々)

- What morphological process is shown here?
- Reduplication
- This word means: people, everybody, each person
Word formation

- Character compounds
  - One character = one morpheme
  - Characters can be combined to make new words

人 + 力 (power)
- human power, human strength
Logographic System

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a logographic writing system?

Advantages

- Eliminate ambiguity
  - differentiates homophonous morphemes
- Can use across times and dialects
  - Mandarin and Cantonese
  - Ancient and Modern Chinese
Logographic System

Disadvantages

- Difficulty of learning
  - Characters average 11 strokes per character
  - 30% of total class time in primary and secondary education
- Literacy
  - Before 1950s – approximately 10%
  - 1980s – 70%
  - Total population: 90.9% (according to CIA factbook)
    - Male: 95.1%
    - Female: 86.5% (2000 census)
適應
Logographic System

- **Disadvantages**
  - Difficulty of use
    - dictionary
    - word processing
  - Contribution to discrepancy between writing and speech
    - characters have different phonetic values in different dialects
    - does not encourage the promotion of a spoken lingua franca
Influence of Chinese writing

- The Chinese writing system was used to record Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- Characters could be used for phonetic or semantic values.
- The writing system was used consistently when used to record foreign (i.e., non-Chinese) languages.
- This gives us insight as to how words were pronounced in ancient times in Chinese and the borrowing language.
Writing as an Art

Calligraphy

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKNn8yIY_Zc
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7dCdQMugDg
Writing Systems

What types of writing systems are there?
- Alphabetic
- Syllabic
- Logographic

What do you find in Japanese?
- All 3:
  - alphabetic = Romaji
  - syllabic = kana (hiragana and katakana)
  - logographic = kanji (Chinese characters)
Introduction of Writing Systems

When was writing introduced to Japan?

Some say 4th c. CE, some say 5th c.

Introduced to Japan via Korea

Japanese words were recorded in Chinese in the 3rd c. CE in the Wei zhi ("Chronicles of Wei"), which is a history of the Wei state (220-265 CE).

In the 5th c. Japanese writings are found on artifacts, such as swords and mirrors

In the 8th c. the first Japanese texts were written: Kojiki (712); Nihon shoki (720); Man'yōshū (759?)
Introduction of Writing Systems

How was Chinese writing borrowed?

What kinds of problems would speakers of Japanese (and Korean) have using Chinese writing?

Linguistic differences

phonetics/phonology
morphology
syntax
Introduction of Writing Systems

Syntax

What word order is found in CJK languages?

C: SVO
JK: SOV

Would this cause problems when trying to write JK with Chinese characters?

It didn't really – there are some examples in Japanese and Korean texts which were written in Chinese (i.e., not the native languages) where syntactic structures of both languages are used.
Introduction of Writing Systems

Morphology

What morphological systems did/do CJK languages have?

C: isolating
JK: agglutinative

Would this make it hard to write Japanese and Korean with Chinese characters?

To account for differences, there are Chinese characters borrowed for meaning (semantograms) and characters borrowed for their phonetic values (phonograms)
Introduction of Writing Systems

Morphology

Example: semantogram phonogram

有等
ARE Ntə
AR–E–Ntə
exist–EVD–CONC

Although [it] exists

(MYS I: 2)
Introduction of Writing Systems

Phonetics/Phonology

Did Japanese and Korean have the same phonemes that Chinese had?

How were characters chosen to record Japanese and Korean sounds?

similar to word borrowings: the closest sound is chosen to approximate the correct sound

different pronunciations are found for the same characters used in the Kojiki and the Nihon shoki

this is because the government changed in China

the result is that in Modern Japanese, there can be many Chinese readings for characters
Introduction of Writing Systems

Phonetics/Phonology

Example:
阿布知乃波那波 知利奴倍斯
aputi-nə pana pa tir-i-n-uNpəy-si
aputi-GEN flower TOP fall-INF-PERF-DEB-FIN
The flowers of the aputi tree have probably fallen. (MYS V: 798)
Development of Writing Systems

Kana

- Over time the phonograms simplified
- *Onnade* ("woman's hand"; often translated as "women's writing") develops during the Heian period
  - based on the phonograms found in the earlier texts
  - several characters could be used to write any syllable, but fewer possible characters per syllable than in the Nara period
  - women's literature was popular during this time; women could use this phonetic script while men wrote in Chinese.
Development of Writing Systems

Kana

Modern Hiragana developed from onnade, but it wasn't standardized until 1946; now only one symbol is used to record each syllable

next slide from: http://www.omniglot.com/writing/japanese_hiragana.htm
Development of Writing Systems

Kana

- Katakana was originally developed by Buddhist monks
- It was well established by the 14th c., and was one kana per syllable by this time
- Hiragana developed from cursive forms of phonograms; katakana developed from taking a piece of a character
- Hiragana are more rounded; katakana more straight
片仮名（カタカナ）
katakana

ア 阿 a
カ 加 ka
サ 散 sa
タ 多 ta
ナ 奈 na
ハ 八 ha
マ 万 ma
ヤ 也 ya
ラ 良 ra
ワ 和 wa
イ 伊 i
キ 幾 ki
シ 之 shi
チ 千 chi
ニ 二 ni
ヌ 奴 nu
フ 不 fu
ミ み mi
ユ ユ yu
リ 利 ri
リ 利 ri
ウ ウ u
エ エ e
オ オ o
カ カ ka
キ 幾 ki
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Development of Writing Systems

Kana

- In modern Japanese, you can find a mix of Chinese characters, hiragana, and katakana:

私の名前はキム・サムスンです。
watashi no namae wa Kim Sam-Soon desu.
My name is Kim Sam-Soon.
Development of Writing Systems

Kanji

- Characters have Chinese readings (on yomi) and Japanese readings (kun yomi)
- In compounds, typically the Chinese readings are used
- For names, typically the Japanese readings are used
- If used as a verb, typically the Japanese readings are used
Development of Writing Systems

Kanji

生 can be read a number of ways:

学生 gakusei
生きる ikiru
生む umu
一生 isshō /is:ho:/
etc.
Writing Systems

What kind of writing system(s) are used to write Korean?
- alphabetic: Hankul or cosmosenkul (狐月山)
- logographic: Chinese characters
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

When were Chinese characters first used?

- Oldest attested writing is a stone inscription from 414 CE
- Xylography was invented by the 8th century
  - xylography is a fancy way to say “woodblock printing”
  - oldest sample is from 751, which makes it the first printing in the world
- The Koreans invented metal movable type
  - metal movable type was used to print books by 1234 CE
  - compare this to Guttenberg's “invention” of 1440 CE
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

- What kinds of problems did Koreans encounter when writing their language with Chinese characters?
  - linguistic differences
    - phonetics/phonology
    - morphology ← most important
    - syntax
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

How were Chinese characters used?

- used to write hanmun, the Korean version of classical Chinese (similar to kanbun, the Japanese version of classical Chinese)
  - official documents were written in hanmun until the 20th century
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

How were Chinese characters used?

- hyangchal system
  - similar to man'yōgana, the Japanese phonetic system of the Nara period
  - found in Hyanga, the oldest texts
  - ancient poems of the Silla and Koryo eras, 25 remain
  - probably written between 600-879 and 963-967
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

- Hyanga sample
  - 去隱春皆理米
  - go-conceal-spring-all-reason-rice ???

- mix of:
  - semantograms
    - 去隱春皆理米
  - phonograms
    - 去隱春皆理米
  - rebus writing
    - 去隱春皆理米
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

- Hyanga sample
  - semantograms
    - go (ka?) spring (pom?)
  - phonograms
    - i n  rimʌi
  - rebus writing
    - moto
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

Hangul

- King Sejong invented Hankul during the 12th month of the 25th year of his reign
  - this is either in 1443 or 1444; the discrepancy caused by lunar calendar dating
- We know he created it because:
  - the event is recorded in official documents
  - Hwunmin cengum hayley ("Explanations and examples of the correct sounds for the instruction of the people")
  - "they say so" (but hankul was probably created by a committee)
Origins of the Korean Writing Systems

- Hankul
- very scient

![Chart showing Korean consonant sounds with diagrams and symbols]
Letters are grouped together as syllables. The direction the vowel points determines the shape for a CV syllable: if the vowel points left, right, or is vertical, then consonant goes to the left of the vowel.
Rules for Writing with Hankul

- Letters are grouped together as syllables
- the direction the vowel points determines the shape
  - for a CV syllable: if the vowel points left, right, or is vertical, then consonant goes to the left of the vowel
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\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{שים} \\
& \text{חוה} \\
& \text{בוש} \\
& \text{בּוּשֹ} \\
& \text{בּוּשָ} \\
& \text{בּוּשַ} \\
& \text{בּוּשֶ} \\
\end{align*}
\]
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    - For CVC syllables: the initial consonant goes to the left or above the vowel, following the rules above, the final consonant of the syllable goes below the vowel.
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ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ

ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ
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    - For CVC syllables: the initial consonant goes to the left or above the vowel, following the rules above, the final consonant of the syllable goes below the vowel.
    - For syllables beginning with a vowel (V or VC): a Ⓞ is placed to the left or above the vowel.

아 악 오 응
Rules for Writing with Hankul

Try these:

ㅏ | ㅓ | ㅏ | na mu
ㅏ | ㅓ | ㅏ | po li
ㅏ | ㅓ | ㅏ | ㅓ | ㅓ | ㅏ | ㅣ | min tìl ㅣɛ
Rules for Writing with Hankul

- Try these:
  - 엄ustomer > 엄customer 'tree'
  - 하로래 | > 하로래 | 'barley'
  - 놀 | 놀 | 놀 | 놀 | 'dandelion'
Rules for Writing with Hankul

- Try these:
  - ᵇ | ⲝ kil
  - ᵊ | ⲓ Ⰷ pi yu
  - ᵃ | ⲍ mot
  - ᵃ | ⲍ ⲍ ⲇ ⲝ han gul
Rules for Writing with Hankul

- Try these:

- ㄱ | ㄹ kil
- ㅂ | ㅗ pi yu
- ㅁ | ㅗ mot
- ㅇ | ㄴ han gul

- ㅅ | ㄹ
- ㅂ | ㅗ
- ㅁ | ㅗ
- ㅇ | ㄴ