

4 Loanwords

The etymological study of the lexicon of OJ, the question of its provenance, and the sorting of inherited from borrowed wordstock are part of the issue of the genetic affiliation of Japanese: OJ words which are similar to, or take part in sets of sound correspondences with, words from another language may be cognate with these words; they may be borrowings from the other language; they may themselves be the source of borrowings into the other language; or the similarities may simply be due to chance. We are more fortunate for the later historical stages of Japanese, but for the OJ language as it presents itself to us, we simply very often do not know and many attempts to identify old loanwords within OJ are highly speculative.

It is beyond doubt that OJ includes old loanwords from the languages around Japan – especially words relating to agriculture, seafaring, warfare, spiritual and religious life, government, and administration – but that we will not be able to identify many of them as loanwords on other than extra-linguistic grounds. It is for example a strong hypothesis that OJ *iraka* ‘roof, roof tile’ is a loanword, but we do not know from where. In other cases we believe that a word must be borrowed and can come up with several likely sources but cannot choose between them. It is, for example, very likely that the Japanese word for ‘horse’, OJ *uma*, is borrowed and there are indeed words in surrounding languages which mean ‘horse’ and which are similar to *uma*, e.g. EMC **mai*’, MK *mol*, Mongolian *morin*. Mongolian and Korean may be genetically related to each other and/or to Japanese, so the MK and Mongolian forms may be cognate, but one language may also have borrowed the word from the other. And is the Chinese word the source of borrowing, or, perhaps more likely, itself borrowed?

On the other hand, note should be taken of the recent work of Unger (2001, 2003) which provides a linguistic basis for identifying candidates for loanwords. Unger brings attention to a number of cases in which a word in Korean (e.g. MK *pal* ‘leg, foot’) corresponds phonologically to a Japanese word with a narrower meaning (*pagi* ‘shin’), whereas the Japanese word (*asi* ‘leg, foot’) which is synonymous with the Korean word is unrelated to it, that is:

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------------|
| (1) | OJ
<i>pagi</i> ‘shin’
<i>asi</i> ‘leg, foot’ | MK
<i>pal</i> ‘leg, foot’ |
|-----|--|------------------------------|

Unger argues that in such cases it is likely that the *pagi* type word is inherited, but was displaced, and became semantically specialized, by the *asi* type word which may either be from a substratum or a super- or ad-stratum, much like the displacement and specialization in English of Anglo-Saxon *tell* and *loft* by *count* and *air* borrowed from French. On the other hand, it is of course quite possible that displacement or replacement of the *asi* type word was entirely internal and not motivated by borrowing.

Linguistic borrowing presupposes some degree of bilingualism. It can be difficult to draw a line between loanwords and foreign words. Foreign words are not infrequently used by bilingual speakers. This is known as *code mixing* and takes place for various reasons including prestige, novelty, or clarity. A foreign word used in this way can gain currency and eventually be accepted by members of a speech community as part of their language. In the transitional phase the word will be foreign to some speakers but native to others. It may be pronounced with the phonology of the foreign language, with an adapted native phonology, or totally phonologically (and morphologically) assimilated to the native language. It is only in the latter situation we shall talk about loanwords as an established part of OJ. This point is particularly relevant when considering loanwords from Chinese.

It is traditional to distinguish between ‘loanwords’ and ‘Sino-Japanese’ vocabulary, the former usually designating loanwords from other languages than Chinese. Here the distinction will be made between fully assimilated nativized loanwords, including those of Chinese origin, and the Sino-Japanese vocabulary which has been used through the history of Japanese. The two are different and only the former will be discussed here. Sino-Japanese will be discussed in Chapter 9, but it should be said here that Chinese served not only as a source of Chinese vocabulary but also as a medium for the introduction of much Buddhist vocabulary originally from Sanskrit. Sacred names and terms were usually not translated into Chinese, but adapted phonologically and in writing transcribed phonographically (1.1.2.4).

4.1 Ainu

It is difficult to identify loanwords in OJ from Ainu, perhaps with one notable and remarkable exception: OJ *kamwi* ~ *kamu*- ‘spirit, deity’ may well be borrowed from an ancestor of Ainu *kamuy* ‘bear, deity’ (although the opposite direction of borrowing has also been proposed). Recently it has also been

suggested by Vovin (2009) that some OJ words (including place names) attested only in EOJ (see Chapter 5), e.g. *sida* ‘time’, in fact reflect prehistoric borrowings from Ainu. Though not lexical borrowing as such, it should be mentioned that Ainu words are also preserved in some place names in Japan. Best known are those ending in *-betu*, Ainu *pet* ‘river’, or *-nai*, Ainu *nay* ‘stream, valley, river’. It is likely that many other place names reflect now unrecognizable Ainu words.

4.2 Continental loanwords: Korean, Chinese, Sanskrit

We do not know what languages other than the ancestor of Japanese were spoken in the Japanese archipelago in pre- and proto-historic times. The time depths involved make it hazardous to attempt to identify borrowed (or sub-stratum) vocabulary from Austronesian or Austro-asiatic, although some languages belonging to those families may have been spoken in Japan at the same time as Japanese. For example, OJ has a word *tape* ‘bark-cloth; cloth made from the bark of the mulberry tree’ which must somehow be related to the Austronesian word *tapa* which means exactly the same, but we can say nothing about the direction or route of transmission. However, it is possible to point out a number of OJ words which in all likelihood are loans and for which we can plausibly identify a source, from Korean, Chinese or Sanskrit.

In proto-historic times, many Japanese speakers would have had some facility in one or more foreign languages, ranging from fishermen and traders communicating with their continental colleagues to highly learned clergy. Different continental languages, especially Korean languages and varieties of Chinese, would have been used at different times and particularly within limited social or professional circles. Most continental culture was in pre- and proto-historic times transmitted to Japan via the Korean peninsula. Today Korean is one language with dialects which all descend from Middle Korean, which in turn continues the linguistic tradition of the Kingdom of Shilla. Until unification under Shilla in 668 there were, however, three main kingdoms on the Korean peninsula: Koguryo, Paekche, and Shilla. From the early fifth century contact with and immigrants from the kingdom of Paekche seem to have played a particularly significant part in the transmission of continental material and intellectual culture, including Chinese language, writing, learning, and also later, Buddhism which seems to have been introduced from around the middle of the sixth century. With this came new vocabulary. In addition to loanwords from Korean languages, much borrowed vocabulary of ultimately further origins must be thought to have entered Japanese through some Korean language, or through Korean speakers, but in most cases details remain obscure.

4.2.1 *Korean*

The following words have been thought to have been borrowed from a Korean language. Usually we do not know which, but must simply assume an earlier cognate form of an attested Middle Korean word as the source, (2a) below, but in a few cases we can tentatively identify Paekche as the source language (reconstruction of Paekche forms follows Bentley 2000), see (2b). If Japanese and Korean are genetically related, some of these words may in fact be cognate rather than borrowings, for example *kudira*, *para*, or *uri*.

- (2) a. *karamusi* ‘ramie (fabric, cloth), Chinese silk plant’, MK *mwosi* ‘ramie fabric, cloth’; cf. OJ *kara-* ‘China, Korea, foreign’
kasa ‘bamboo hat, umbrella’, MK *kas* ‘id.’
kudira ‘whale’, MK *kworoy* ‘id.’
mori ‘woods’, MK *mwoyh* ‘mountain’, pK **mwo lih*
para ‘field, plain’, MK *pel* ‘id.’
patake ‘field’, MK *path* ‘id.’
pyera ‘spatula, pallet’, MK *pyet* ‘moldboard’
sarapi ‘spade’ (EMJ), MK *salp* ‘id.’, possibly further from OC **tshrap*; cf. OJ *sapi*, *sapye* ‘spade’ (see (3a) below)
sitogi (EMJ) ‘rice cake for ceremonial purposes’, MK *stek* ‘rice cake’
uri ‘melon’, MK *woy* ‘cucumber’, pK **wo li*
- b. *kopori* ‘district’, Paekche **kəpəri*, MK *kwo wolh*
kuti ‘hawk’, Paekche **kutl* ‘falcon’
kwi ‘fortress, walled city’, Paekche **ki* ‘id.’
sasi ‘walled city’, Paekche **casl*, MK *cas* ‘id.’

4.2.2 *Chinese*

The following may be thought to be early loans from Chinese. At least some of the words in (3a) are quite old and represent direct borrowings. Those in (3b) are transparent and probably not very old borrowings from Chinese, but they are not usually thought of as SJ vocabulary; two (*gakwi* and *zemi*) have initial media, which were not allowed in the native vocabulary (2.7.1.2). In Chinese historical phonology EMC and LMC are fairly securely reconstructed and more recently our understanding of OC phonology, too, is improving. We are therefore sometimes able to determine which stage of Chinese a borrowing originates in. (Reconstructions of EMC and LMC are from Pulleyblank (1991); the reconstructed OC forms follow Miyake (1997 and p.c.).)

- (3) a. *kama* ‘pot’, 罏 OC *khaam
kama ‘sickle’, 鎌 OC *gryam
ke ‘spirit’ 氣 EMC *k^hij^h, OC *khiys
kinu ‘silk’, 絹 OC *kwyans (EMC *k^hwian^h)
kuni ‘country’, 郡 OC *guns (EMC *gun^h)
saga ‘characteristic; good omen’, 性 OC *saŋ (EMC *siajŋ^h) 祥
EMC *ziaŋ
sapi, sapye ‘spade’, 鍬 EMC *t^həip/t^hɛ:p, OC *tshrap. Cf. *sarapi*
(see (2a) above). It is possible that OJ *sapi/sapye* was borrowed
from EMC while the ancestor of MK *salp* was borrowed from
OC, further being borrowed into EMJ in the shape *sarapi*
sugu-roku no saye ‘pair-six-Gen-game’ (name of a game of dice),
written 双六乃佐叡 in *MYS* 16.3827. *Sugu* is the traditional
reading of 双 OC *sroŋ, EMC *saiwŋ/ʃœiŋ, *saye* which is spelt
out phonographically reflects 賽 LMC *saj` ‘game (of dice)’.
From EMJ this word became *sai*
ume ‘plum’, 梅 OC *hmay
- b. *gakwi* 餓鬼 EMC *ŋa^h kuj` ‘glutton, hungry ghost’
pakase 博士 EMC *pak dzi` ‘expert, authority’. This word is not
phonographically attested in OJ, but was surely used as it was an
important official title in the *ritsuryō* system. The regular SJ
character readings were used in coining the SJ word cNJ *hakushi*
‘(academic) doctor, PhD’
puse 布施 EMC *pɔ^h ɕi^h ‘temple offering, charity’ (Chinese loan
translation of Skt. *dāna* ‘offering, alms’)
saka 尺 EMC *t^hɕiajk ‘unit of measure; *shaku*’
we 画 EMC *ɣwaij^h ‘picture, drawing’
zeni (EMJ) 錢 EMC *dzian ‘money’

4.2.3 Sanskrit

The words in (4) below can be traced back to Sanskrit (or, in one case, Pali). Almost all ultimately derive from Buddhist contexts but became everyday words and most remain in use today. A few words are included which are not attested until EMJ but which were probably in use in OJ. In a few famous examples we can trace the route of transmission and find both Chinese and Korean related forms (4b), but for several of the oldest and most naturalized loanwords that is not possible (4a). It is worth noting that in addition to Buddhist inspired vocabulary, a word for ‘rice’, which surely must be old, is

of Sanskrit origin. It is also worth noting that most of these words survive into the modern language.

- (4) a. *ama* (EMJ) ‘nun’, Pali *ammā* ‘mother’
kapara (EMJ) ‘ceramic roof tile’, Skt. *kapāla* ‘cup, jar, dish; cover’
kasa ‘scab, the pox’, Skt. *khasa* ‘itch, scab’
mara ‘penis’, Skt. *māra* ‘death; the evil one, the tempter; god/passion of love’
pata ‘banner, standard’, Skt. *patākā* ‘id.’
sara ‘plate’, Skt. *śarāva* ‘shallow cup, dish, plate’
uru- (EMJ) in e.g. *urusine* ‘nonglutinous rice’, Skt. *vṛīhi* ‘rice’ (OJ *-sine* (~ *ine~ina-*) ‘riceplant’)
- b. *potoke* ‘Buddha, Buddha image’, MK *pwuthye* ‘Buddha’, 仏陀 EMC *but t^ha 浮屠 OC *buu daa, Skt. *buddha* ‘Buddha’
pati ‘bowl’, MK *pali*, 鉢 OC *pat, Skt. *pātra* ‘vessel’
tera ‘temple’, MK *tyel* ‘temple’, 刹 EMC *tṣ^hait < OC *tshraat/ksraat, Skt. *kṣetra* ‘place’
kyesa ‘priest’s robe’ 袈裟, EMC *kai ṣai, LMC *kja: ṣa:, Skt. *kaṣāya* ‘the (yellow) robe of Buddhist clergy’. In addition to preserving *kesa* in the original meaning, NJ also reflects this word in *oogesa-na* ‘pompous’ (*oo-* ‘big’).

The words in (5) are some examples from the EMJ period of common Buddhist names and terms ultimately deriving from Sanskrit, but which were taken in via Chinese renditions.

- (5) *aka* ‘Buddhist water offering; container for this; wine (priests’ secret language)’ 闍伽, EMC *ʔat gia, Skt. *argha*, ‘value’, *arghya* ‘water offered to a guest at a respectful reception’
amida ‘Amitabha Buddha’ 阿弥陀, EMC *ʔa mji t^ha, Skt. *amitābha*
bosatu ‘Bodhisatva’ 菩薩, EMC *bo sat, Skt. *bodhisattva*
butu ‘Buddha, Buddhism’ 仏(陀), EMC *but (t^ha), Skt. *buddha*
daruma ‘Bodhidharma’ 達磨, EMC *dat ma, Skt. *bodhidharma*
naraku ‘hell’ 奈落, EMC *na^h lak, Skt. *naraka* ‘id.’
setuna ‘instant’ 刹那, EMC *tṣ^hait na^h, Skt. *kṣaṇa* ‘instant, moment’

4.3 Phonological adaptation

In most cases we do not know the exact shape of the proximate source of loanwords in OJ and it is therefore difficult to say much about the phonological adaptations that took place in the course of the borrowing. Some forms appear shortened or otherwise simplified in comparison with the distal source, e.g. OJ *uru-* from Skt. *vṛīhi*, but it is not possible to know where in the course of transmission of this word the abbreviation took place. In particular, if a word passed through Chinese it would have been made to conform to its largely monosyllabic morpheme structure, cf. Skt. *pātra-* giving OC *pat.

It is easy, however, to see that some adaptation to the simple CV syllable structure of OJ took place, most conspicuously in the insertion of epenthetic vowels to avoid syllable final consonants. The addition of *-i* or *-u* to loanwords is well known from NJ, and OJ *kinu* and *kumi* are examples of that, as is perhaps also *pati* (although the MK shape *pali* makes us suspect that the *-i* may predate the arrival of the word in Japan). However, this seems to have become more common from EMJ onwards. A more widely used strategy in the older loanwords was the insertion of a post-consonantal echo vowel to echo the preceding vowel, e.g. OJ *kasa* (cf. MK *kas*), *kama* (OC *khaam), *pakase* (EMC *pak dʒi'), *para* (MK *pel*) are straightforward examples of this, but others include *pyera* < pre-OJ *pyara (MK *pyet*), *tera* < *tyara (MK *tyel*).

REFERENCES

- General: Miller 1967, K. Satō 1982, T. Satō 1982, Umegaki 1978, Unger 2001, 2003.
 Korean: Bentley 2000, Kanno 1978. Chinese: Miyake 1997. Sanskrit: Suzuki 1978.