

On how Japan wrote its language before the invention of its own syllabary (pre mid-9th c.)

There were **two main script strategies** used to record the *Japanese language* on paper that borrowed Chinese characters. (This is different, of course, from using Chinese characters simply to write the Chinese language—also a common practice at the time.) According to Konishi Jin'ichi, quoting Ono Susumu, these practices both first developed in Korea for the Korean script and then the techniques were imported to Japan. (*A History of Japanese Literature: Volume I*, Princeton UP, 1984, pp. 334-335.)

1. One type of script use is called "**correct reading**." Japanese pronunciation follows the original meaning of the Chinese character. For example, the Chinese character 山 means "mountain" and is therefore pronounced "yama" while the character 風 means "wind" and is pronounced "kaze."

2. The other main type of script in the *Man'yōshū*, called "**one character, one sound**," is where each Chinese character is pronounced in a way similar to its original Chinese sound; the original meaning of the character may or may not be ignored but either way the most important function is to represent a sound thus constructing a type of complicated alphabet using Chinese characters.

	Type 2	Type 1
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from 『国語国文学手帳』小学館、1990.