

# The Ubiquity of the Gloss

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*This paper argues that glossing is an essential stage in the borrowing of writing systems. I use the term “glossing” in a somewhat extended sense to refer to a process where a text in one language is prepared (annotated, marked) to be read in another. I argue that this process of “vernacular reading” – reading a text written in the script, orthography, lexicon and grammar of a more prestigious “cosmopolitan” language out loud in the vernacular language – has been a standard and widespread process throughout the history of written languages. The fact that reading, throughout its history, has generally been an oral practice plays an important role in this argument. I suggest that many cases where a cosmopolitan language seems to supplant a vernacular written language are of exactly this type: the cosmopolitan text is in fact read in the vernacular; glossing is evidence for this. I discuss kugyŏl glossing in Korea and kunten glossing in Japan and the historical relationship between them. I introduce examples of glossing from medieval Europe to show that this type of glossing practice is by no means unique to East Asia.*

**Keywords:** *classical Chinese, cosmopolitan, gloss, glossing, Korean language, kugyŏl, kunten, vernacular, Sinosphere*

## 1. Background

This paper examines the relationship between foreign and vernacular writing from the standpoint of the history of glossed texts. Much of the subject matter in the middle part of the paper will be familiar to specialists in the field of glossed texts in Korea and Japan. However I would like to look at the status and uses of glossed materials from a more broadly comparative perspective than one normally finds in the specialized literature in those countries or in scholarship on similar materials in

Europe. In Japan and Korea, it is well understood that modern reading and writing practices descend in large part from medieval practices for glossing classical Chinese. Furthermore, premodern glossing practices tell us a great deal about how written Chinese was used in the regions of the Sinosphere (those places where Chinese was the language of writing, but not of native speaking). My argument will be that what we learn from East Asian glossing and reading practice changes our understanding of the status and use of what have come to be called cosmopolitan written languages, and their relation to the spoken vernacular.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the problem of the persistence of Chinese writing in Korea. Section 3 recasts this problem from the standpoint of the prevalence of oral reading in the premodern world. Section 4 discusses glossing practice in Korea and Japan in more detail, and looks at the possibility that some part of this practice might have been borrowed from Korea to Japan. Section 5 makes a brief introduction of glossing practice in the medieval West, focusing on similarities with East Asian practice. Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2. The cosmopolitan and the vernacular in Korea

Most writing systems, of course, are borrowed. A very common account of the borrowing goes something like this:

- (1) a. Bilingual speakers of languages A and B become readers of language A.
- b. Bilingual speakers use the graphs of A to write B.
- c. Monolingual (or imperfect bilingual) speakers of B further adapt the graphs of A to write B.

A scenario like (1) appears in standard accounts of the development of writing in Korea as well, prior to the brilliant indigenous invention of the *hangŭl* writing system in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. First, probably before the formation of the protohistorical Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla polities on the Korean peninsula, speakers of Korean were exposed to Chinese writing (Stage 1a). Next, speakers borrowed sinographs to write Korean (Stage 1b). This is the technique known as *ch'aja pyokipŏp* 借字表記法 'loan character

orthography' in Korea. Korean scholars usually distinguish two subtypes of loan character orthography: *koyumyōngsa pyogipōp* 固有名詞表記法 'proper noun orthography' and *hyangch'al* 鄉札 'local letters.' The former refers to the use of phonographic sinographs to write vernacular personal names or place names. The second refers to the mix of phonographic and logographic writing found in the *Hyangka* 鄉札 vernacular songs. Stage (1c) corresponds to the development of *idu* 吏讀 "clerk readings" orthography, whose systematization is commonly (but perhaps apocryphally) attributed to Sōl Ch'ong (薛聰) in the late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century.

The scenario in (1) is attractive because of its neat progression toward the vernacular, but there are facts that it does not explain. One is why writing in the donor language, classical Chinese, persists, indeed dominates in Korea after stages (1b) and (1c), ultimately suppressing or replacing the vernacular writing systems introduced in (1b-c). Korean writing reveals a repeated pattern of de-emphasis or abandonment of vernacular writing for written Chinese. *Hyangch'al* 鄉札 writing is not attested after the early Koryō period, even in verse. *Idu* 吏讀 writing is used in official documents alongside Chinese versions through the Chosŏn period, but it is never used for the purposes of literary production.

We now know that the expectation that stages (1b-c) should lead to the development of a stable vernacular writing habitus, eventually replacing use of the imported foreign system, is a product of an earlier, simplistic understanding of the way written language crosses linguistic and political boundaries.

This is a major point of the American scholar Sheldon Pollock in his work on the creation of South Asian written culture, and more broadly on "cosmopolitan" and "vernacular" written culture in general. Pollock observes that "For its first 400 years, inscriptional culture in South Asia is almost exclusively non-Sanskrit (the languages used were instead the Middle-Indic dialects called Prakrit), but this situation changed dramatically at the beginning of the common era when we first begin to find expressive texts eulogizing royal elites composed in Sanskrit and inscribed on rock-faces, pillars, monuments, or copper-plates" (Pollock 1998: 10). In other words, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE until the beginning of the common era, public inscriptions in South Asia correspond to stage (1c): writing in a local vernacular using a Brāhmī script ultimately derived from a foreign source. At the start of the common era, however, the written

vernacular is replaced by what Pollock calls the cosmopolitan variety, in this case Sanskrit. In other words a progression similar to (1a-c) is ultimately supplanted by a cosmopolitan writing regime. The South Asian example is not exactly congruent to the situation in Korea, because scripts for the Prakrits and other vernaculars in South Asia are not derived from Sanskrit writing (as Sanskrit at that stage was not written down at all); Brāhmī scripts were used to write Prakrits before they were used to write Sanskrit. In contrast, Korean systems such as *hyangchal* and *idu* developed from Chinese writing, only to be supplanted (in the case of *hyangchal*) or overshadowed by it (in the case of *idu*). Nevertheless, both Korean and South Asian examples show that fully developed vernacular writing is not an endpoint. Writing in the cosmopolitan language (Chinese, Sanskrit) may supplant vernacular writing.

In Korea, we find this tendency for the cosmopolitan to replace the vernacular in various specific registers, including the glossing of Chinese texts. The history of *kugyŏl* 口訣 writing in Korea presents just this pattern. *Kugyŏl* is a system for glossing Chinese texts similar to Japanese *kunten* 訓点. Like *kunten*, *kugyŏl* uses character glosses, called *cath'o* 字吐 (字吐), in the form of abbreviated phonographs, formally and functionally similar to Japanese *katakana*. It also uses morphosyntactic glosses, including inversion glosses (*yŏkt'o* 逆吐) that indicate the word order in the Korean rendition of the text, and morphosyntactic or point glosses (*cŏmtho* 點吐) that designate Korean functional morphemes. These correspond to Japanese *hendokuten* 返読点 and *okototen* ヲコト点 respectively. I give a more detailed description of Korean and Japanese Buddhist glossing practice in section 4.

Early Koryŏ period *kugyŏl* is of the variety referred to by Korean scholars as *sŏkdok kugyŏl* 釋讀口訣, interpretive or translation *kugyŏl*. *Sŏkdok kugyŏl* glosses the text so that it can be read in Korean, not dissimilar to the mixed hangŭl/sinographic texts of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, or the Japanese reading of a *kunten* annotated text. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, however, *sŏkdok kugyŏl* begins to be replaced by so-called *sundok* 順讀 'consecutive' *kugyŏl*, referred to by some scholars as *ŭmdok* 音讀 'Sino-Korean' *kugyŏl*.<sup>1</sup> In *sundok kugyŏl*, a whole sentence or clause is read as written in Chinese, with Sino-Korean pronunciations. Clauses are concluded or connected by

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<sup>1</sup> The translation 'consecutive *kugyŏl*' for *sundok kugyŏl* 順讀口訣 is due to Ross King (2007).

Korean functional morphemes, usually forms of the copula or the light verb *hA* (ㄹ아/어) /say.’ The practice would be similar to inserting English ‘do’ and ‘be’ in strategic places to string together phrases of the Latin Bible. In English *sundok kugyŏl*, the first two sentences of *Genesis* might read, “In principio **did** creavit Deus cælum, et terram. Terra autem **was** erat inanis et vacua.” If *sŏkdok kugyŏl* represents a vernacular reading of the Chinese text, *sundok kugyŏl* represents a reading closer to the cosmopolitan original. Even within the narrow world of glossing practice, over the course of time a cosmopolitan habitus supplanted the vernacular.

We can give many explanations for this. In Korea, the pressure of the cosmopolitan, the prestige of Chinese writing, is elevated beyond anywhere else in the Sinosphere except perhaps Vietnam. Scholars also point to the relatively high level of Chinese literacy in Korea. In the case of *sundok kugyŏl*, a shift toward formulaic reading of Buddhist texts may have contributed to the abandonment of interpretive/translational glossing. However Korean scholars should not find this trend to re-establish the cosmopolitan at the apparent expense of the vernacular strange or somehow anti-Korean. As we have seen, Pollock documents exactly the same type of development in South Asia and elsewhere. From the standpoint of our discussion so far, Korean fits into a broader picture: constant re-assertion of the dominant status of the cosmopolitan in written language.

Korea is not alone in this picture in East Asia. Although Japanese lacks a counterpart of Korean *sundok kugyŏl* glossing, in that country so-called *sŏrŏbun* 候文 played a similar role in re-establishing the cosmopolitan in Late Middle Japanese and Early Modern Japanese epistolary and documentary registers. In *sŏrŏbun*, like *sundok kugyŏl*, strings of Chinese characters are connected by inserting a native functional element, in this case the humble verb *sŏro(f)u* 候ふ, used as a humble suppletive verb meaning ‘be’ or ‘go/come’ and ultimately simply as a polite ending. *Sŏrŏbun* differed from *sundok kugyŏl* in that it involved original Japanese texts, written in Chinese characters in Japanese word order. But *sŏrŏbun* is similar to *sundok kugyŏl* in that it imparts a cosmopolitan (Chinese) veneer to linguistic material written to be read aloud in the vernacular. The matter of the oral production of such texts is the subject of the next section.

### 3. Cosmopolitan form, Vernacular Practice

So far we have seen that reversion to the cosmopolitan (Chinese) in Korean writing before the 15<sup>th</sup> century fits into Pollock's overall picture of the dynamic between cosmopolitan and vernacular written language (perhaps somewhat surprisingly, since as we see in section 6, Pollock in his writings seems to be unaware of the various forms of vernacular Korean writing developed during the long period of sinographic dominance). I would like to suggest, however, that another factor must be kept in mind when considering the basic question: why (and how) do people base their written culture on the written form of a language nonnative to them, even after they have developed ways of writing their native language? Is it a matter of power alone, a strategy for elite dominance? Religious conservatism? A byproduct of the tiny size of the literate class? A result of the group will to be part of a larger cosmopolitan whole?

All of these ways of putting the question assume that in choosing to write in a cosmopolitan language, local writers adopt the linguistic habitus — what Japanese linguists call the *genko seikatsu* 言語生活 “language lifestyle” — of the cosmopolitan. This assumption is an anachronism. It is a product of the modern conceit that reading involves a direct relationship between the individual reader and text. There has been a longstanding debate over the past half century over to what extent silent, individual reading existed at all in the ancient and medieval West. Proponents of the idea that reading was primarily an oral, communal activity often point to a famous passage in Augustine's *Confessions* describing St. Ambrose's silent reading:

When [Ambrose] read, his eyes scanned the page and his heart sought out the meaning, but his voice was silent and his tongue was still. Anyone could approach him freely and guests were not commonly announced, so that often, when we came to visit him, we found him reading like this in silence, for he never read aloud.

Augustine, *Confessions*, Book Six, Chapter Three.

That Augustine wonders at Ambrose's silent reading has been widely taken in Western scholarship to show that reading out loud was the norm. Silent reading was in fact known in Western antiquity. But the occasional

precocious existence of silent reading says little about the main purposes for which premodern texts were created, copied, and annotated. Oral reading was, first of all, a consequence of economic and social factors. Manuscripts were expensive, rare, and difficult to produce. Experts (slaves in antiquity, later specialized clerics) were trained in the skills of reading aloud, as well as of copying and annotating texts. It is almost certain that the main objective of the production of written manuscripts was for oral delivery to a group audience (Green 1990, Grotans 2006), not for individual silent reading. The same conclusion appears to hold for reading culture in East Asia; for example Nagamine (2004) argues that individual silent reading did not arise in Japan until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

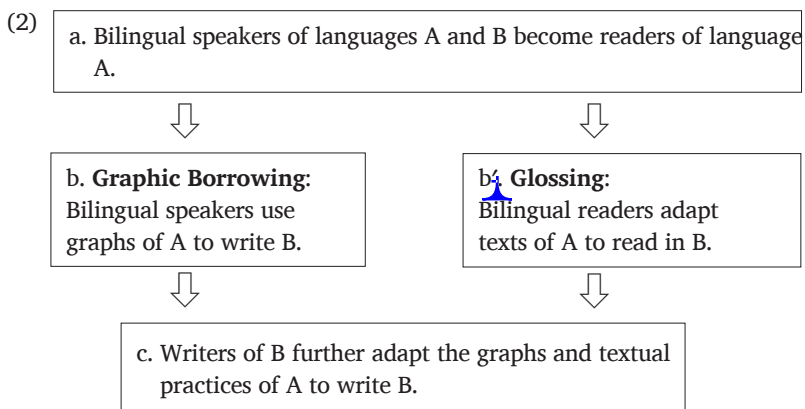
The fact of oral reading calls into question any absolute distinction between cosmopolitan and vernacular texts based on their written form alone. Texts composed or copied in cosmopolitan form could be read in the vernacular. This is exactly what Korean *kugyŏl* and Japanese *kunten* glossed materials represent: conversion of cosmopolitan written texts for reading in the vernacular. In other words, when we confront the problem of reversion to the cosmopolitan, we must distinguish material production (writing) from what we might call performance (delivery as an oral text) and consumption (as a heard text). In the case of Korea and Japan, texts produced in the cosmopolitan written form (Chinese) were performed and consumed in the vernacular. The evidence for this is the widespread appearance and nature of the glossing techniques developed in both countries to read Chinese texts, as well as what contemporary sources tell us about reading practice. Glossing techniques tell us that Chinese texts were glossed to be read in the vernacular, just as they are to this day in Japanese schools and Buddhist temples in both countries. This is a basic fact of written culture in Japan and Korea, so basic that few specialists have attempted to point out its importance for broader theories of the cosmopolitan and the vernacular in reading and writing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Two recent publications do highlight the broader significance of *xundu/hundok/kundoku* 訓讀 “vernacular reading” of Chinese texts. Robert (2006) cites this example among many others in defining his notion of “heiroglossia”, based on the relation between the *hierogloss*, “a language perceived as a central of founding element in a given culture area”, and the *laogloss* “a language or languages that are perceived as being dependent, not historically or linguistically, on that heirogloss” (2006: 26). Robert cites Pollock (2000, 2006) in his references but does not comment on the relation between the *hierogloss*: *laogloss* and cosmopolitan: vernacular oppositions; among his examples classical

It is true that in Korea and Japan certain texts were (and are) orally read not in the vernacular but in the local version of the cosmopolitan variety, Sino-Korean or Sino-Japanese. The *sundok kugyŏl* glossing style mentioned above is an approach toward such a cosmopolitan reading. But such cases are a minority of glossed texts, generally confined to ritual contexts. Outside of ritual recitation, people read Chinese texts in the vernacular.

The centrality of vernacular reading of cosmopolitan writing calls for a modification of the scheme in (1). In (2) I have shown this, giving what some might consider an exalted status to the role of glossing and the glossed text.



(2) has two contemporaneous stages between initial contact with the donor language (2a) and development of vernacular writing (2c). In addition to the conventional stage of graphic borrowing (2b), the stage called “glossing” (2b’), refers to the adaptation of a donor language text to be read in the borrowing (vernacular) language. I use “adaptation” broadly, to include forms of literal annotation (glossing in the narrow sense), pedagogical practices which teach students how to read a cosmopolitan text in the vernacular, or simply, at the hands of a virtuoso reader or in the case of a simpler text, oral reading in the vernacular on the fly. Most often a

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Armenian would be a case of a hierogloss that is not cosmopolitan. Kin 2010 emphasizes the universality of vernacular reading of Chinese texts in the Sinosphere, but does touch on the implications for premodern reading and writing outside of East Asia.



combination of such techniques must have been used, but I will refer to the entire process of adaptation as glossing. The main argument of this paper is that glossing, in this very broad sense, plays as important a role in the development of a written vernacular as the much better known process of graphic borrowing.

#### 4. Glossing practice in Korea and Japan

It is well known that the adaptation of sinography in Korea and Japan involved a series of stages like (1a-c), as I sketched in section 2 for Korean. Written material on wooden slips (木簡 *mokkan*) uncovered in both Korea and Japan tell us that by the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century, modified forms of sinographs were used for phonographic writing. Graphic modifications consisted both of cursive forms and abbreviated forms (略体字 *yakcheja/ryakutaiji*). In both cases most of the forms have Chinese precedents, but by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> century the particular sets of phonographs favored in the archipelago and in the Three Kingdoms of Korea seem to have emerged. Around this time (earlier in Korea) we have attestations of syntactically modified sinography: Korean *idu* and Japanese *hentai kanbun* 変体漢文. Thus the elements of vernacular adaptation (1c) are in place.

The origins of glossing practice are harder to trace in Japan, but in Korea, Nam (2006) provides a narrative of the development of *kugyōl* glossing. According to Professor Nam's account, the first attestation of *kugyōl* glossing is in the third fascicle of the *Sōk hwaōm kyobungi* 釋華嚴教分記, a commentary on 法藏 Fazang's *Huayan jiaofenji* 華嚴教分記 composed by Kyunnyō 均如 (923-973), the Koryō period clerical scholar and author of 11 of the surviving *hyangga* songs. The data consist of two lines, first studied by Ahn Pyong-hi (1987), cited here from Professor Nam's 2006 article:

(3) 或<sup>有</sup>如<sup>佛</sup>性<sup>關</sup>提<sup>人</sup> 有<sup>豆</sup>亦<sup>善</sup>根<sup>人</sup>無<sup>如</sup>好<sup>尸</sup>丁  
或<sup>有</sup>如<sup>佛</sup>性<sup>關</sup>善<sup>根</sup>人 有<sup>豆</sup>亦<sup>關</sup>提<sup>人</sup>無<sup>如</sup>好<sup>尸</sup>丁

The boxed characters in (3) make no sense from the standpoint of the Chinese text. The lines are a quotation from the Mahayana Nirvana sutra (*Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*; *Da banneipan jing* 大般涅槃經). The

Chinese text reads:

(4) 或有佛性，一闍提有善根人無。或有佛性，善根人有一闍提無。

The original text (4) is the same as (3) without the boxed characters. Professors Ahn and Nam point out that the boxed characters are unabbreviated forms of *kugyŏl* characters, indicating postnominal particles, verb suffixes, and verbs in Korean. The *kugyŏl* characters were restored to their unabbreviated shape by later redactors of Kyunnyŏ's manuscript. The Korean text reads word-for-word as follows according to Professor Nam's interpretation:

(5) 或有<sup>有</sup>佛性<sup>隱</sup> 闍提人<sup>隱有</sup>善根人<sup>無</sup> 善根人無<sup>如好</sup>  
 ?-ta is-ta 佛性<sup>隱</sup> 闍提人<sup>隱有</sup> is-tu-yə 善根人 əp(s)-ta ho-r t.yə  
 -DEC exist-DEC Buddha-nature TOP depraved TOP exist-fact?-and virtuous not.exist-DEC  
 say-ADNOM fact.and

或有<sup>有</sup>佛性<sup>隱</sup> 善根人<sup>隱有</sup> 闍提人無<sup>如好</sup>  
 ?-ta is-ta 佛性<sup>隱</sup> 善根人<sup>隱有</sup> is-tu-yə 闍提人 əp(s)-ta ho-r t.yə  
 -DEC exist-DEC Buddha-nature TOP virtuous TOP exist-fact?-and depraved not.exist-DEC  
 say-ADNOM fact.and

In order to produce a complete Korean rendition, the reader would transpose the shaded existential verb 有<sup>有</sup> *is-ta* 'exist-DEC' with its theme argument 'Buddha-nature':

(6) 或有<sup>有</sup>佛性<sup>隱</sup> 闍提人<sup>隱有</sup> 善根人無<sup>如好</sup>  
 ?-ta 佛性<sup>隱</sup> 闍提人<sup>隱有</sup> is-ta 善根人 əp(s)-ta ho-r t.yə  
 -DEC Buddha-nature TOP exist-DEC depraved TOP exist-fact?-and virtuous not.exist-DEC  
 say-ADNOM fact.and

或有<sup>有</sup>佛性<sup>隱</sup> 善根人<sup>隱有</sup> 闍提人無<sup>如好</sup>  
 ?-ta 佛性<sup>隱</sup> 善根人<sup>隱有</sup> is-ta 闍提人 əp(s)-ta ho-r t.yə  
 -DEC Buddha-nature TOP exist-DEC virtuous TOP exist-fact?-and depraved not.exist-DEC  
 say-ADNOM fact.and

'Either is said that there exists a Buddha-nature and *icchantika* (depraved people or unbelievers) have it and virtuous people do not, or it is said that there exists a Buddha-nature and the virtuous have it and *icchantika* do not.'

This example shows that *kugyōl* glossing was practiced in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but two additional types of evidence show us that the origins of the practice probably go back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. First, Professor Nam (2006) provides documentary evidence that the teachings of Ŭisang 義湘, the founder of the Huayan sect in Korea, were recording using glossing techniques similar to *kugyōl* upon his return to Silla from Tang China around 670. Professor Nam points out that in the accounts of Ŭisang's teachings, it is reported that they were recorded "mixed in with the vernacular" 雜以方言. The second type of evidence for early Korean *kugyōl* glossing is from glossed texts discovered in Japan, which either because of their known provenance or linguistic properties, seem likely to be glosses or copies of glosses added in Korea (specifically, Silla). Such texts date to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The matter is controversial, but the best candidates for such material are Huayan-related texts held in such repositories as the library of Todaiji 東大寺 in Nara and identified as texts or copies of texts from Silla (新羅写經).

The nature of this early material is relevant for considering the origins of glossing in both Japan and Korea. First, the earliest surviving material involves character glosses (Korean *chat'o* 字豆, Japanese *kana ten* 仮名点). Kasuga (1956: 266) proposes a rough chronology of what he considers the oldest glossed texts known in Japan at the time of his research. The glosses in these texts, all added in white ink, are undated, but Kasuga places the oldest of them in the late 8 century. The four oldest of these texts, as judged by Kasuga, contain only character glosses (*kana ten* 仮名点), in unabbreviated form (*magana* 真仮名), inversion glosses, and punctuation marks. These four oldest texts are:

- (7) a. The Keiun (768) ms. of the *Konponsetsu issai ubu binaya* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶 (Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya vibhaṅga)
- b. The Keiun ms. (768) of the *Konponsetsu issai ubu hisshunibinaya* 根本說一切有部苾芻毘奈耶 (Mūlasarvāstivāda bhikṣuṇī vinaya vibhaṅga)
- c. The Keiun ms. (768) of the *Jinin bosatsu kyō* 持人菩薩經 (Lokadharapariṣcchā-sūtra)
- b. The Keiun ms. (768) of the *Ōkutsumara kyō* 央掘魔羅經 (Aṅgulimāliya sūtra)

The first two of these texts (7a-b), are *vinaya* texts, that is, texts laying out the rules and regulations of monastic discipline for monks and nuns

respectively. It makes sense that such texts should be glossed for vernacular reading, since they are of practical use.<sup>3</sup> The last text, the *Āṅgulimāliya-sūtra*, differs from the first three in that it is glossed entirely in Sino-Japanese, and was clearly meant to be read in that form (音読 *ondoku/ūmdok*). It therefore contains no inversion glosses, but only Sino-Japanese phonological glosses and linking glosses (*gōhu* 合符), showing which sequences of characters are to be read together as compound-like units. Kasuga draws two conclusions from these characteristics of the earliest glossed data:

- (8) a. In reading Chinese texts in the vernacular (漢文訓讀), morphosyntactic glosses (*okoto ten* 乎已止點) developed later than readings indicated by phonograms (假名附訓).
- b. The “symbolicization” of vernacular glossing (訓點法の符號化) begins with punctuation marks (句點) and inversion glosses (反讀符).  
(Kasuga 1956: 267)

The corpus of potential 8<sup>th</sup> century glossed texts in Japan has increased since the time of Kasuga’s writing, particularly due to the identification of drypoint or stylus-glossed (角筆 *kakuhitsu/kakphil*) texts (Kobayashi 2004). Like the material cited by Kasuga, the 8<sup>th</sup> century drypoint glosses are undated, but Kasuga’s generalization that phonogram glosses, punctuation, and inversion glosses are older than morphosyntactic glosses appears to hold true for drypoint gloss material as well.

This generalization matches Professor Nam’s characterization of early Korean *kugyōl* texts, including (3). These too involve phonogram glosses. Professor Nam lists the following 6 such texts, dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

- (9) Translation *kugyōl* 稊讀口訣 with phonogram glosses 字吐, following Nam 2006
  - a. 釋華嚴教分記 (mid-10<sup>th</sup> century)

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<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that the two texts represent the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* tradition, as the dominant *vinaya* tradition in China, Japan, and Korea is the *Dharmagupta* (*Shifen lu* 四分律) *vinaya*. It is possible that the relatively recent date of translation made these *vinaya* texts of interest to 8<sup>th</sup> century monastics. According to Vogel (1970), the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya vibhaṅga* was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese between 703 and 710.

- b. 華嚴疏卷第 35 (est. late 11<sup>th</sup>~early 12<sup>th</sup> century)
- c. 華嚴經卷第 14 (est. first half of 12<sup>th</sup> century)
- d. 合部金光經卷第 3 (est. beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century)
- e. 舊釋仁王經上卷 (5 leaves attested; est. beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century)
- f. 瑜伽師地論卷第 3 (mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, after 1246)

We must be cautious in drawing conclusions from the Korean data, as it involves only 6 texts over 3 centuries. However Nam and Kasuga concur that the early stage in the development of glossing technology involves phonological (phonogram) glosses and devices for marking syntactic inversion. Let us look at an example of this kind of combination of phonological and syntactic glossing. The example in (10) is taken from Chung (2006: 153-4; see also Nam & Chung 1997). (10) presents Chung’s analysis of the first line and a portion of the second in the second leaf in source (9e) above, the Humane King Sutra (*Kuyōk Inwang-gyōng* 舊釋仁王經 *Renwang jing*), held by the Dongguk University library.<sup>4</sup>

(10)

A: [...信行し具足ンニ分復ンヲ有セナク五道セ一切衆生ニ、復ンヲ有セナク他方セ不<sup>ス</sup>ルモセ可<sup>シ</sup>クシテ量ノカ、衆、

B: [...信行し 具足ンニ分 復ンヲ 五道セ 一切 衆生ニ 有セナク 復ンヲ 他方セ 量ノカ 可センヲ 不<sup>ス</sup>ルモセ 衆有セナク <舊仁02:01-2>

C: [...信行을 具足히시며 또한 五道入 일체 중생이 잇거며 또한 他方入 量함(헤아림) 짓흔 안디아낫 무리 잇거며

D: [...]信行△(≡)h△-si-mjə 復(stoh^n)五動s 一切衆生 i 有(i)s-kjə-mjə  
 faith.practice ACC complete do-HON-CONJ again 5.destinies-GEN all sentient.beings NOM be-ASP-CONJ

復(stoh^n)他方s 量 h△-o-m 可(ci)s h△-n 不(an)ti i-n△-s 衆有(i)s.kjə-mjə  
 again other.side-GEN measure do-MOD-ing can(act) do-ADN not-ADV be?-GEN multitude be-ASP-CONJ

‘Completing faith and practice, again there were all the living things

<sup>4</sup> The *Renwang jing* 仁王經 is an apocryphal Mahayana sutra, supposedly translated from a Sanskrit original but in fact originally composed in Chinese. The version referred to in the Korean tradition as the *Kuyōk Inwang-gyōng* 舊釋仁王經 ‘Old translation Humane King Sutra’ is the 仁王般若波羅蜜經 *Renwang banruo boluomi jing* ‘Humane King Perfection of Wisdom Sutra,’ apocryphally attributed to Kumārajīva. The text discusses the virtues a humane ruler should practice for the protection of the nation, and is thus important in the development of state Buddhism in East Asia.

of the five destinies, and again on the opposite side were countless multitudes.’

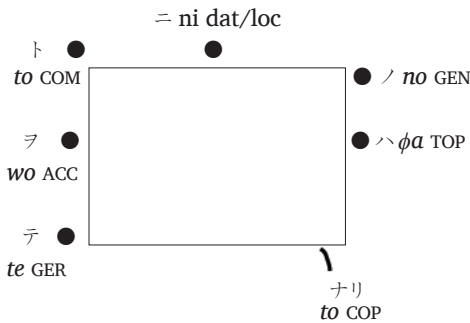
Lines (10A-C) are presented directly from Professor Chung’s 2006 article. Line (10A) is a horizontal transposition of the original glossed text. The smaller characters are *kugyōl* graphs, phonographs derived by abbreviating a Chinese character read for its sound. In the original text, *kugyōl* graphs may appear either to the right or the left of the Chinese lemma. In the transposition in (10A), *kugyōl* graphs directly following Chinese characters are on the right of the lemma in the original text; superscripted *kugyōl* graphs are on the left in the original text. Placement of *kugyōl* graphs to the right or the left of the lemma was a device for indicating inversion of word order when the text was read in Korean. The reader follows the text in the original Chinese order, supplying Korean functional items from the *kugyōl* graphs to the right of the lemma. When the reader encounters *kugyōl* glosses to the left of the lemma, the reader inverts the glossed material with what follows it, placing the glossed item where indicated by the dot ‘.’ Line B performs this inversion. Thus in line B, the existential verb with its Korean suffixes 有セナク (i)ṣ-kjə-mjə ‘be-asp-conj’ is inverted with its theme argument 五動一切衆生 ṣ i ‘five destinies gen all living things nom’ as it would be read following Korean word order. Line C supplies Middle Korean values for the *kugyōl* graphs. Line D is my transcription of line C, with gloss and translation.

This technique for marking syntactic inversion (syntactic glossing) is not found in Japanese *kunten* materials. However many of the other devices for syntactic glossing, such as marking changes in word order by numerals, or by dedicated inversion glosses, are shared by both traditions. As we see in the next section, some are shared by medieval Western glossing traditions as well.

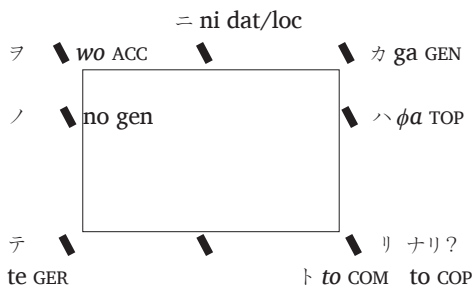
After the four phonogramatically glossed texts in (7), the next oldest Japanese *kunten* text ranked according to Kasuga (1956) is a little-studied text called the *Ramaka-kyō* 羅摩伽經. This original text in this manuscript, like the four in (7), was copied in response to the imperial command issued in Keiun 2 (768). However the glossing in this manuscript is radically different from the previous four texts. The glosses include a primitive version of the technique of morphosyntactic glossing known in the Japanese *kunten* tradition as *wokototen*. This technique uses dots or lines

placed around the periphery (and occasionally the center) of the glossed Chinese character to represent vernacular suffixes, particles, or auxiliaries. Over the period between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, Japanese *kunten* glossing practice developed over 8 distinctive morphosyntactic point or *wokototen* traditions, with many subvarieties. But Kasuga observes that the *Ramaka-kyō* system is unlike any other subsequently attested in Japan. In his article, Kasuga also comments on a second late 8<sup>th</sup> century or early 9<sup>th</sup> century text, the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* 佐藤本華嚴文儀要決 studied by Nakata Norio (1969). Kasuga (1956: 267) comments that this text contains only punctuation and reversal marks. But in fact, as noted by Nakata, the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* also contains rudimentary morphosyntactic glosses or *wokototen*. An inspection of the wokototen system in the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu*, as analyzed by Kobayashi (2002, 2004) and Kim (2002, 2006) shows that the two systems are almost identical (Whitman 2009). (11) below shows the two systems.

(11) a. The Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* 佐藤本華嚴文儀要 glosses as analyzed by Kobayashi (2002, 2004)



b. The *Ramaka-kyō* 羅摩伽經 glosses as analyzed by Kasuga 1956: 268) and Tsukishima (1996: 417)



Kobayashi, 2002, 2004 points out that the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* morphosyntactic gloss system is virtually identical to the drypoint glosses (*cath'o* 點豆) found in two partial versions of the *Hwaōm-gyōng* (Avatamsaka sūtra; *Huayan-jing* 華嚴經), held by the Sōngam Museum in Seoul. These are Chu-bon *Hwaōm-gyōng* 周本華嚴經 fascicles 6, 22, 36, and 57, estimated to date from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the Chin-bon *Hwaōm-gyōng* 晉本華嚴經 fascicle 20, estimated to date from the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century. Kobayashi (2002) concludes that the Korean drypoint glossing system was the source for the scheme in the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* (11a), while Kim (2002, 2006) argues that the glosses in the Satō-bon *Kegon mongi yōketsu* were intended to be read in Korean. Kim's argument is not implausible, because we know that the author of the original text, the *Kegon mongi yōketsu mondō* 華嚴文儀要決問答, was a Silla cleric, and Kobayashi shows that the text was brought to Japan from Silla. However certain details of the linguistic usage revealed in the glosses is inconsistent with later *kugyōl* practice, in particular the use of the gloss in the lower right-hand corner to represent the copula rather than a declarative ending (Whitman 2009). Given the consensus among most scholars that this text represents a link between the Korean and Japanese glossing traditions, and that the glossing was applied (or at least copied) in Japan, it would make sense to assume that the glossator had some familiarity with both languages. The morphosyntactic similarity between the two languages would make the glosses useful for reading the text in both.

Above I have sketched a scenario for which we have no exact parallel in the West, as far as I know: the possibility that in addition to the borrowing of graphs (2b above), some part of the process in (2b'), that is, the borrowing of glossing techniques, may also have been mediated by contacts from the Korean peninsula. I will close this section by addressing two related issues.

The first is the possibility that the direction of borrowing morphosyntactic glosses is the opposite of that suggested by Kobayashi. The basis for such an argument would be that, so far, the oldest texts found in Korea with morphosyntactic glosses (*cath'o* 字豆) date from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, while the oldest Japanese morphosyntactic glosses (*wokototen* ヲコト点) are slightly older, from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century. The history of glossing in Japan and Korea, however, argues against this reverse scenario. The earliest glossed texts in both countries are associated with Huayan (華嚴 *Kegon/*



*Hwaom-gyōng*) Buddhism. As we saw in at the beginning of this section, Huayan Buddhism reached Korea from Tang China around 670. It reached Japan about a half century later, and when it did, both liturgical texts (sutras and commentaries) and clerics from Silla played a crucial role. A thorough review of the importation of Huayan texts and practice into Japan exceeds the scope of this paper, but a brief chronology of relevant events is in (12).

- (12) **The importation of Huayan Buddhism into Japan** (Girard 1980, Horiike 1980-82, Inoue 1978)
- 718 Dōji 道慈 brings the 80 volume Avataṃsaka sūtra from China.
  - 727 Bureau 写経所 established for the purpose of copying sutras.
  - 734 Genbō 玄昉 brings the Buddhist canon, including the 80 volume Avataṃsaka sūtra back from China.
  - 739 A new office for copying sutras is established (Girard, Horiike I:19).
  - 740 The “Silla student” (新羅学生) cleric Shinjō 審祥 gives the first lecture on the 60 volume Avataṃsaka sūtra at Konshuji 金鐘寺 (later Tōdaiji) with the help of Fazang’s *Huayan-jing tanxuanji* 華嚴經探玄記.
  - 743 First copy made in Japan of the *Huayan-jing tanxuanji*.

Aside from the central event of Shinjō’s lectures in 740, we have records of a steady importation of Huayan sutras and exegetical texts from Silla to Nara in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. There is no record of the importation of such materials in the opposite direction.

The second related issue is the question of the source of Japanese abbreviated character glosses, the source of the *katakana* syllabary. Discussion of Silla sources for Japanese *kunten* glossing in the popular media inevitably jumps to this topic — yet more evidence on the fixation on (2b) — the borrowing of graphs — in the popular and scholarly conception of the borrowing of writing. While there is good evidence that many of many of the techniques of glossing in Japan may have been

<sup>5</sup> The role of Huayan Buddhism in the development of Korean and Japanese glossing practices may be seen as an early step in development of Korean and Japanese vernacular writing through the mediation of Buddhist textual practice, a mediation outlined by Mair (1994).

<sup>6</sup> Lee (2006) gives another clear example of Korean *kugyōl*-style glosses used to indicate readings in Japanese in a Kegon (Huayan) text glossed in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century.

influenced by Korean precursors, there is less evidence that the abbreviated characters that went on to become *katakana* were borrowed in a direct way. As many have noticed, some *kugyōl* graphs and *katakana* graphs show a formal resemblance. Some also show the same sound value:

(13)	<i>Kugyōl</i>	sound value	<i>Katakana</i>	sound value
a.	力加	ka	カ	ka
b.	可可	ka	可	ka
c.	口古	ko	古	ko <sub>1</sub>
d.	夕多	ta	夕	ta
e.	那那	na	那	na

However, of the 147 source characters for Koryō period *kugyōl* graphs listed by Paek (2005: 23-27), only 20 show this match in form and function: 阿才(於)伊巳力可古夕尹刀矢川(利)里馬麻米毛也与乎. (Note that both scripts used multiple alternate phonographs for the same syllable.) All 20 are commonly used phonograms not just in Korea and Japan but in the entire Sinosphere. In the case of other phonograms, for example *kugyōl* ヒ尼 /ni/ and *katakana* 尔, 仁 /ni/, the two scripts make different choices for the same syllable, even though 尼 is a fairly widely attested *ongana* (Sino-Japanese) phonogram in Japanese 8<sup>th</sup> century materials as well.<sup>7</sup> If *kugyōl* graphs were directly borrowed to form the basis for *katakana*, we would expect to find exact matches in every case where Japanese and Korean had homophonous syllables, but we do not. The set of phonograms used in Japan in the 8th century formed a well established syllabary (Case 2000). *Katakana* were selected from this syllabary. Here again, focusing on the direct borrowing of graphs is an example of graphic fixation. It is possible that the **technique** of abbreviated phonogram glossing in Japan was influenced by models from the Korean peninsula, without it being the case that each individual gloss was borrowed.

## 5. Glossing in the medieval West

Glossing in medieval Europe is a vast subject, intensively studied over the past century and a half. Of course glossing did not originate in medieval

<sup>7</sup> 尼 occurs in the *Nihon shoki* and the *Man'yōshū*.

Europe, any more than it did in East Asia. But there are certain parallels between the technique and function of glossing in the medieval West and the Sinosphere. In both places, glossing emerged in response to the dominance of a cosmopolitan written language (Latin, Chinese) whose social dominance rested on religious texts, but which was supported by a massive classical literature as well. In both places monastic communities played a central role in the development of glossing technology. In both places oral reading was a major impetus for glossing.

The focus of Western scholarship on medieval glossed texts has largely been on lexical glosses, (usually) vernacular equivalents provided for lemmata in the form of words or phrases. Vernacular glosses on Latin texts is one of the earliest sources of lexical information, particularly for non-Romance languages. Glosses appear beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Old High German (Steinmeyer & Sievers 1879-1922; see also Bergmann & Stricker 2009), Old Irish (Stokes 1877), and Anglo-Saxon (Sweet 1885). It is no accident that vernacular glosses appear first in these languages: Latin written language presented a challenge for non-Romance speakers comparable to the challenge presented by Chinese to speakers of Korean, Japanese, or Vietnamese.

However glosses on Latin texts also appear in Latin. Broadly speaking, Latin glosses may be divided into two types. The first are glosses for speakers of non-Romance languages, such as Anglo-Saxon. Wieland (1983, 1985) argues that such glosses were for pedagogical purposes. According to this view, instructors added the glosses to assist themselves in class; for Wieland, then, such glossed texts were “classbooks.” The second type of Latin glossing formed an extended commentary on a Latin text. The best known example of this type are the glosses of Italian jurist Accursius on Justinian’s codification of Roman law. The second type of annotation, traditionally labeled glossing, is a type of commentary. Pedagogical glossing as studied by Wieland, however, has properties in common with Korean and Japanese glossing practice. Wieland makes a useful division of glosses by function, which may be applied to glossing traditions West and East:

**(14) Wieland’s (1983) classification of glosses by function**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| (a) Prosodic glosses | Mark metrical information: accent or syllable length. |
|----------------------|---|

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| (b) Lexical glosses     | Give lexical equivalents for a word or phrase.               |
| (c) Grammatical glosses | Give morphosyntactic information: case, part of speech, etc. |
| (d) Syntactical glosses | Give syntactic information (mainly word order).              |
| (e) Commentary glosses  | Summarize content, give etymologies, etc.                    |

(14b and d) have direct counterparts in the Korean *kugyŏl* and Japanese *kunten* traditions. Prosodic glosses are partial counterparts of phonological glosses giving character readings, although the former are limited to poetic texts, and the latter are a feature of logographic writing. Grammatical glosses, according to Wieland's interpretation, give pedagogical information such as the case of a noun or the tense of a verb. They are not direct counterparts of the morphosyntactic glosses found in *kugyŏl* and *kunten*, which are aids for vernacular reading.

As noted above, the focus of glossing scholarship in the West has been on lexical glosses. Robinson (1973), however, makes an argument for the importance of syntactic glosses in Latin manuscripts glossed by Anglo-Saxon speakers.<sup>8</sup> Robinson points to a number of different glossing systems used to re-arrange the word order of a Latin text into Anglo-Saxon word order. These systems use the letters of the Roman alphabet (a, b, c...), systems of dots, combinations of dots and strokes, and brackets and enclosures to show that words function together as a phrase. Below is one of Robinson's examples, the first line of Psalm 100 in the Lambeth Psalter (11<sup>th</sup> century). The Anglo-Saxon word order is specified by the number of dots in increasing order. The original text includes both the dots indicating word order, under the text, and Anglo-Saxon glosses above the text, shown below in italics.

(15) Dot glosses in the Lambeth Psalter (Robinson 1973: 454)

<i>freamdremað drihtne</i>	<i>eala</i>	<i>eorð</i>	<i>ƿeowiað drihtne</i>	<i>on blisse</i>		
Iubilate	domino	omnis	terra	seruite domino/	in laetitia	
...	...	.	..	.	..	...

(16) below rearranges provides the Anglo-Saxon word order following

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to Ross King for bringing Roberts' paper to my attention.

Robinson's analysis.

(16) **First line of Psalm 100 in Anglo-Saxon order** (Robinson 1973: 454)

Eala	eorð	freamdremað	drihtne;	Deowiað	drihtne	on	blisse
Every	land	make a noise	unto God,	serve	God	in	gladness

Robinson comments on the hypothesis that syntactic glossing was intended for pedagogical purposes, and affirms that this may have been the origin of glossing in the West. But he notes that glossing systems like those in the Lambeth psalter, containing both lexical and syntactic glosses and extending throughout the entire text, are too elaborate to have been mere classroom cribs. Robinson's conclusion is that the glosses in such case were intended as a kind of learned syntactic commentary. But this conclusion raises the question: why would the 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm, one of the most familiar texts in Christendom, require a scholarly analysis of Latin syntax? Unlike classical texts used in the medieval West to teach Latin, such as Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* or Prudentius' *Psychomachia* (both texts which appear with glosses from the Old English period) the Psalms are not models of Latin prose. They are texts of religious significance, in Latin for ritual meaning, and in the vernacular for the understanding of believers. A word-for-word lexical gloss does not provide the reader — and her audience — with a version intelligible in the vernacular. But the combination of a lexical and syntactic gloss, as with Korean *kugyöl* and Japanese *kunten*, makes a complete vernacular version accessible to a skilled oral reader.

From this standpoint, the kind of glossing found in the Lambeth Psalter may be understood as a kind of score, or what we might call a performance gloss. It enables even the imperfectly trained cleric to perform, to orally read the glossed text in the vernacular. This is exactly the same function we have identified for Korean *kugyöl* and Japanese *kunten*.

One can go only so far with the analogy between medieval European and East Asian glossing practice that I have developed in this section. There are obvious differences. Texts as thoroughly glossed as the Lambeth Psalter, for syntax as well as lexicon, appear to be far rarer in the medieval West than in East Asia. The preponderance of glosses found in medieval European materials are lexical glosses. "Performance glossing" as I have defined it above appears to have been a larger part of the East Asian

tradition.

However in the scheme for adaptation of written language in (2), I interpreted “glossing” in a broader way, to include any method for preparing a text written in a cosmopolitan language to be read in the vernacular. In research on medieval European, particularly Romance vernaculars, there is a tradition that claims that vernacular reading was practiced prior to the Carolingian orthographic reforms in a manner remarkably similar to *xundu* 訓讀 vernacular reading of Chinese texts in East Asia. This tradition centers around the work of Roger Wright (1982).<sup>9</sup> Wright argues that prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, speakers of Romance felt no need to distinguish the spelling of “Latin” from the spelling of their spoken variety, because readers of what we today would call Latin texts (such as the Vulgate) simply read them according to their native phonology (and in some cases, lexicon and syntax). Wright also emphasizes the central role of oral reading in this picture (2005). His interpretation of glosses on materials from the Iberian peninsula (Wright 1986) is similar to what I have suggested for Korean *kugyŏl* and Japanese *kunten* glossing: the glosses were aids for oral interpretation in the local vernacular. In both the Romance and Sinoxenic situations literacy meant being able to read a text that looks to modern readers like “Latin” or “Chinese” out loud in the local language.

Of course attainment of literacy in this sense was an easier task in the medieval Romance speaking world than in Korea or Japan. In the Romance case, the linguistic varieties involved were all cognate, and the orthography was alphabetic. But oral production of the vernacular from a text that looks to the modern reader cosmopolitan or “classical” involved a similar set of procedures; the difference was one of degree.

## 6. Conclusion

Vernacular glossing of Chinese texts was a linguistic habitus practiced throughout the non-Chinese speaking Sinosphere. In this paper I have made a very brief comparison of glossing in Korea and Japan with similar practices in the medieval West. I suggested at the end of the last section that

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<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Martin Maiden for introducing me to Wright’s work.

at least some glossed texts in the West also served as aids to oral reading in the vernacular. I also introduced a place for “glossing” in a broad sense as adaptation of a non-vernacular text for oral production in the vernacular, and suggested that this is an important step in the adaptation of writing systems. We have seen that the argument for this step in Korea and Japan is so strong as to be taken for granted: glossed texts tell us that in these countries it was common to read an entire Chinese text, typically a sutra or sutra commentary, in the vernacular, and in some cases to gloss most of the text for this purpose. We understand from this that reading was an oral performance, as in the ancient and medieval world generally. I have suggested that we call the extensive glossing found in Japanese *kunten* and Korean *kugyŏl* texts “performance glossing”, specifically designed for oral reading in the vernacular. The fact of performance glossing tells that vernacularization in East Asia proceeded to some degree independently of the visual form of the graphic text. This stands in contrast to Pollock’s argument that vernacularization in East Asia, unlike South Asia, was delayed or in some cases never accomplished:

“In Vietnam... vernacularization was consummated only under the vastly changed circumstances of colonialism. The same holds true for almost the entire periphery of the Middle Kingdom, Japan excepted. In China itself, vernacularization in the full sense of the term used here never occurred ...” (Pollock 2006: 259-260).

In South Asia vernacular scripts replace cosmopolitan scripts in the monumental record. But epigraphic artifacts tell us about reading practice only indirectly. Performance glossing in Japan and Korea teach us that the visual form of writing gives only part of the story of how writing is used.

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