

Dangerously Convenient:

Suppressing Esperanto and the Latin Script in China and Japan during the 1920s and 1930s

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This paper deals ultimately with the question of language rights, specifically the rights of people in China and Japan to have access to information, to be able to participate in society through full literacy. Scholars have only just begun to write the history of the Esperanto movement and the movement to use the Roman alphabet as an alternative script in China and Japan. Democracy was a major concern of both movements and since advocates in these movements envisioned a completely new culture, they inevitably faced an “uphill battle.” Below is presented a preliminary discussion of the sociopolitical dimensions of these two movements and their inter-connections, resurrecting a once-popular vision of a path toward a modernity that was never taken, to understand what obstacles those advocates faced and still face.

1. Introduction

It is widely agreed in industrialized societies today that all children have the right to gain basic literacy skills, and that they have the right to use their native language to acquire an education even if the main language that is used or taught at school is their second language. Article 2 of the

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights reads:

This declaration considers that, whenever various language communities and groups share the same territory, the rights formulated in this Declaration must be exercised on a basis of mutual respect and in such a way that democracy may be guaranteed to the greatest possible extent... In the quest for a satisfactory sociolinguistic balance, that is, in order to establish the appropriate articulation between the respective rights of such language communities and groups and the persons belonging to them, various factors, besides their respective historical antecedents in the territory and their democratically expressed will, must be taken into account. Such factors, which may call for compensatory treatment aimed at restoring a balance, include the coercive nature of the migrations which have led to the coexistence of the different communities and groups, and their degree of political, socioeconomic and cultural vulnerability.

The “vulnerable,” the disadvantaged, people born into a relatively weak position in the social hierarchy—it is for them that the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was instituted. In this sense, one can say that one of the aims of the Declaration is inclusivity. This paper focuses on two language reform movements in China and Japan that aimed at inclusivity: the Esperanto movement, which aimed to establish an easy-to-learn artificial language, and the Romanization movement, which aimed to use the Latin script instead of the traditional orthographies of China and Japan.

2. Esperanto

Following the views of some Japanese sociologists, I have characterized Esperanto as “inclusive design.” In this paper, the term has the same essential meaning as “universal design,” but aiming to underline the ease of use of Esperanto and its inclusivity, I rely mainly on the term “inclusive design.”

When writing about the 1920s and 1930s in Japan and China, one must be aware of the linguistic imperialism of the Empire of Japan, when colonizers from Japan forced people of various ethnicities living in Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, and other countries to use Japanese instead of their native language. Even speakers of other varieties of Japanese, such as those from the Ryukyu Islands, were often forbidden from using their native language or native dialect in school. This type of symbolic violence against the peoples of the Ryukyu Islands, the Ainu, and Koreans, has sometimes been referred to as “cultural genocide.”¹ For many Chinese and Japanese people, Esperanto offered a way out of this cycle of violence, i.e., of nationalism, militarism, statism, racism, etc. The very word “Esperanto” means “hope.”

In the 1920s but especially in the 1930s in Japan, government and non-government ideologues promoted a myth of *kotodama*. (The word denotes the so-called “spirit of language” and for many people, it also carries the sense of “the miraculous power of language”). Despite the difficulty of acquiring literacy in Japanese, with its many Chinese characters, and the ease of learning phonetic scripts, many Chinese and Japanese elites insisted on maintaining the traditional script, i.e., Chinese characters, in some form or another. In the case of Japan, the “Showa Emperor” (i.e., Hirohito) was head of state during a period when monarchies were being overthrown one after another, and the political system was so rigid and conservative that it was illegal to “alter” the Japanese “national polity” (or *kokutai* in Japanese). Even the foreign, democratizing script, the Roman alphabet, was itself suspect in the eyes of government officials. Esperanto employed the Roman alphabet, so it is not difficult to imagine why it, too, would be suspect. For better or worse, the Roman alphabet and Esperanto were linked ideologically.

Esperanto relied on this democratizing script and opened up communication between the peoples of Japan and other countries. Thus it could, in a sense, be viewed as obstructing the smooth operation of Japan’s “emperor system” and even “altering” it. The emperor was the father of the

nation, and the people were defined as his loyal subjects. With peoples of various languages and cultures dispersed throughout a vast territory, coerced into an empire where language was highly contested, it was only natural that intellectuals seeking peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, etc. for Japanese and others would seek alternative languages, going beyond the National Language (Kokugo) that was based on the middle-to-upper-class dialect of Tokyo and that required the mastery of several thousand Chinese characters.

One of the most prominent historians of the Esperanto movement, Ōshima Yoshio, once placed Esperanto enthusiasts in Japan into five categories: researchers in the natural sciences; free thinkers (*jiyūshugisha*), humanitarians, and socialists; ultranationalists; people who studied Esperanto purely out of an interest in the language; and stamp collectors.² The free thinkers, humanitarians, and socialists generally saw themselves, and were also viewed as, proponents of a movement referred to as “Proletarian Esperanto.”

3. The Latin Script

Parallel with “Esperantism” (or “Esperanto movement”) was the movement to use the Latin script (or “Roman alphabet.”) In China the characters were often referred to as *Latinxua Sin Wenz* 拉丁化新文字 (“Latinized New Script”), and in English-language studies of China, researchers speak of the “Latin script movement.”

This movement to adopt the Latin script naturally faced resistance. The Chinese characters have been used for thousands of years in China and over one thousand years in Japan. In continuous circulation since the oracle bone scripts of the Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1046 BC), there are arguably no scripts in the world that can compete with the Chinese characters in terms of possessing a long, weighty tradition conserving the script’s basic elements.

In terms of the geographical area in which the Chinese characters have been used, too, the tradition is impressive. In the part of the world referred

to as the “Sinosphere” (i.e., China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, as well as Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Okinawa), characters were once the dominant orthography, or still are the dominant orthography in some cases. In the case of Japan, the Chinese characters have been used since before the Nara Period (710 to 794 CE).

Thus while there is a fascinating history and a beautiful tradition behind this deeply-embedded cultural practice, that cultural practice is questioned and challenged because, as one historian identified the problem, the Chinese script is “not a brilliant ideographic script; it is a poor phonetic script.”³ The script has strong phonetic elements, and throughout the ages people in the Sinosphere who achieved basic literacy in written Chinese, or in another local or national language that employed Chinese characters, have taken advantage of those phonetic elements to master the language. With such phonetic clues, the script is not, strictly speaking, an ideographic script. While not fully rationalized or systematic, the strong phonetic elements of Chinese characters have proven useful for learners. Coming into contact with Western written works in the Latin script, many people over the course of the last century and a half in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam have sought to adopt fully phonetic scripts, feeling that phonetic scripts would be more efficient and convenient.

4. Phonetic Scripts Are Potentially for everyone

Social reformers in countries of the Sinosphere have taken varied approaches to making reforms that move in the direction of efficient, convenient, “inclusive-design,” phonetic scripts. Vietnam and Korea overcame the problems of the Chinese script by adopting phonetic scripts. Vietnam adopted the Latin script and Korea adopted the Hangul script. While the very definition of literacy in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan was once the ability to read and write in literary Chinese, the trend during the last century has been toward phonetic scripts on the whole. (The terms “literary Chinese” and “classical Chinese” are used interchangeably here. This is the written language known as *kanbun* 漢文 in Japan).

The written languages of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC, the Macao Special Administrative Region of the PRC, and Japan (including Okinawa of course) heavily rely on Chinese characters. The PRC government recognized the traditional characters as an impediment to literacy to such an extent that they simplified them. While this would not count as phoneticization, it does indicate that some kind of simplification of characters has been viewed as necessary within the PRC. Taiwan and Japan stand out as linguistically conservative parts of the Sinosphere as they use the traditional Chinese characters and did not adopt the PRC's reforms.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Republic of Korea have all switched to phonetic scripts. The People's Republic of China and the Republic of Singapore use the simplified Chinese characters (简体字 *jiǎntǐzì* in Chinese or *kantaji* in Japanese). That script was instituted by the PRC government under Mao Zedong (1893-1976). All in all, the long-term trend in the Sinosphere seems to be toward simplification—phonetic orthography, fewer characters, fewer strokes per character, etc.—and the simplification trend in turn seems to be toward greater reliance on phonetic characters, such as the Latin script and the Hangul of Korea.

Most literate Vietnamese and Koreans today read and write the standard, national language of their country in a phonetic script, and children have the option of attaining full literacy without studying thousands of Chinese characters. The switch to the Latin script in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, as well as the switch to the Hangul script in the two Koreas (i.e., the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea) have produced an increase in the literacy rate among the general population in their respective countries, in spite of much poverty.⁴ In this sense, one can say that those three countries have followed the path of inclusive design: “inclusive design considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference

and how to serve the diverse individuals that will be using the product or service.”⁵ In this case, the “product” or “service” is a tool; it is the script with which people put their utterances into written form. In terms of script reform, Vietnam and Korea have taken what could be termed the “inclusive-design” path.⁶ They chose the tool for their national communities that was the easiest, the most efficient, or the most convenient.

5. Simplification of Script and Access to Literacy

Let us consider the case of postwar Japan. It is known that there were attempts on the part of radical language reformers to adopt phonetic orthography as alternative scripts—Romanization and a script in which everything would be written in kana were the two strongest such attempts. Both these attempts failed. In the end, much milder reforms were made, including instituting limitations on the number of Chinese characters to 1,850 and adopting a standard, rationalized set of kana, which represents essentially a streamlining of Japan’s phonetic script. What was achieved was not a complete phoneticization or a radical simplification, as the Romanization and kana movements had hoped for, but the script was rationalized and simplified to a significant extent. The reformers who made it possible shared similar goals, especially democratization and economic growth.⁷ According to Unger, the reforms implemented between 1946 and 1959, taken as a whole, did contribute to the dramatic improvements in literacy in postwar Japan, but the major factor in the improvements in literacy were the improvements made in the educational system and not the improvements made in the writing system.⁸ Partly due to the big improvements in the standard of living, the number of years of education increased, women’s educational opportunities improved, parents became more involved in education through PTAs, and university admissions were liberalized, he explains. Nevertheless, if even the mild reforms contributed to an improvement in literacy levels, then this would make one wonder what effect more drastic reforms, such as complete

phoneticization, would have had. Considering this one example in Japan can help one imagine how simplification of orthography through phoneticization has the potential to improve literacy levels in China and Japan.

For many reformers in China and Japan, their social reform goals have included the spread of scientific knowledge and democracy. (One of the best examples of such reformers in Japan was Saitō Hidekatsu [1908-40], as I discuss below). In both countries, modernizing reformers favored vernacular styles of writing over classical styles; rather than traditional Chinese characters, they advocated scripts or orthography that would be easy for the millions to learn, such as rationalized kana (in the case of Japan), simplified Chinese characters (in the case of China), and the Latin script in the case of both China and Japan; and at a time when the violence and greed of Western states—the Opium Wars and Mathew Perry’s black ships are two obvious examples—made it clear to everyone that study and rapid absorption of Western science and technology would be necessary, they sought to streamline the process of learning foreign languages. It should not be surprising to us that many advanced thinkers in both China and Japan, living in countries that had a sliver of hope of holding back Western state violence and preventing their enslavement at the hands of Western colonizers, took an interest in Esperanto, a rationalized and democratized artificial language. Zamenhof himself proclaimed Esperantists “citizens of an ideal democracy.”⁹ They were a “para-people, a quasi-nation, under its own green flag,” in the words of Esther Schor.

In China in 1907, the journal *Xin shiji* (New century) was launched by Chinese anarchists.¹⁰ (“Anarchism” here refers to political philosophies or movements that minimize domination, reject involuntary forms of hierarchy, and call for the abolition of the nation-state). Esperanto was gaining in popularity in France, where there were many Chinese students, and in other parts of Europe. In the pages of *Xin shiji*, Chinese intellectuals compared the pluses and minuses of Esperanto and Chinese. Li Shizeng and Chu Minyi argued in separate articles that Chinese characters were an

obstacle to communication and by definition elitist, since ordinary people lacked the money and time needed to master them. When many students lacked the resources necessary to become fully literate in written Chinese with the traditional Chinese script, illiteracy and a lack of dissemination of knowledge naturally resulted, in their view. “A phonetic script would require the elimination of dialects, so it might be better to replace written Chinese with an international language like Esperanto.”¹¹

Later, “around 1915, reform-minded scholars in China itself started to assert a new role for themselves as critics of Confucianism and champions of new-style values, including science and democracy.”¹² (The term “democratization” will be used here in a broad sense, to include not only the right to vote in parliamentary elections but also economic and class power).¹³ One of the first intellectuals to recognize the importance of written language reform in China was Lu Xun, the celebrated novelist.¹⁴ In the case of Japan, intellectuals active in the Meiji Period (1868-1912) such as Taguchi Ukichi (1855-1905), editor of the *Tokyo keizai zasshi*, and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), who was one of the first to tap into the new mass reading market with his popular book *Gakumon no susume* (1872-76), were aware of the need for a written language accessible to non-elite, ordinary people.

Already in ancient Rome there was the idea that the “common people,” the “plebeians” as they were called then, should have the right to participate in the decision-making processes that will rule their lives, that they should be included. Again, this is the sense in which I draw on the concept of “inclusive design.” (This term carries the same basic denotation as the term “universal design”). As in other countries, the disadvantaged social groups of Japan and China have long included working-class people, women, children, the disabled, immigrants, and the Burakumin (in the case of Japan) and other stigmatized groups. Full literacy, including the ability to read and write Chinese characters has been limited to the ruling class, the upper class, the empowered, the privileged, etc.

Chinese characters have empowered men of status and wealth in China

and Japan, and they have opened the door to rich knowledge to them. This phenomenon was perhaps best explained by Hirai Masao (1908-1996), the author of the book *Kokugo Kokuji mondai no rekishi* (A History of National Language Issues, 1948). He was an advocate of the Latin script himself as well as a historian of sociopolitical struggles over script and style reform, and he explained how Chinese characters gave birth to a certain type of class injustice.¹⁵

The standard written language of Japan had been literary Chinese for centuries, but in the Meiji Period Japanese were forced to quickly establish a modern nation-state, one that might save Japan from the hell of colonization by violent and continually-expanding Western empires. With full literacy requiring the mastery of perhaps 10,000 Chinese characters, literary Chinese was not only a foreign language with a different grammar and special pronunciation, it also was a writing system that required a great amount of time and energy to master. The status of Chinese in Japan was not unlike the status of Latin in European countries. In a country such as pre-modern and early-modern Japan, only a tiny percentage of the population could be expected to acquire the rare skill of full literacy in Chinese. The vast majority of the people were illiterate or semi-literate.

When the power-holders of Japan in Meiji committed the nation to industrialization, it was believed by many who were knowledgeable about conditions in the West that writing had to change and that modernization of Japan would require an expansion in the number of literate people. This was not unrelated to the expansion of the franchise then.

Hirai's research stands out for its emphasis on the fact that in the Edo period (1603-1868) people of the lower classes resorted to *kana bun* (i.e., writing in the native Japanese phonetic orthography) for its usefulness in everyday life, while people of the ruling classes used a style that was a mixture of literary Japanese and literary Chinese (*wakan majiri bun*, literally the "Japanese-Chinese mixed style"). According to Hirai, at least by the time of the Edo period, these two styles of writing had already been placed in opposition to each other: one a script for commoners and the

other a script for aristocrats. In other words, Japan had two separate scripts for two separate classes.

Japanese Marxists and others on the Left pointed to “feudalism” as the source of this inequality. The linguist and Esperantist Ōshima Yoshio (1905-1992) expressed this notion in the following way: “Feudalism continued for a long time in our country and influenced those aspects of our lives that related to language in various ways. One example that is often mentioned is how the ruling class built up thick walls between themselves and the common people that they dominated through Chinese characters and classical Chinese.”¹⁶

The views of Hirai and Ōshima accord with the views of Richard Rubinger, who wrote the “first book-length study of Japanese literacy in historical perspective in any language,” i.e., *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan* (U of Hawai‘i P, 2007).¹⁷ He writes of the “two cultures” of early Tokugawa villages where the reading/writing skill of farmers were “minimal or totally absent,” while elites had high literacy rates.¹⁸

In attempting to modernize China, a number of leading intellectuals there encountered this problem, too, of course. Literacy was a major issue for Leftist Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century as well as in later periods. The most famous intellectual/literati who advocated use of the Latin script in order to overcome China’s illiteracy problem was probably Lu Xun. John DeFrancis (1911-2009), who thoroughly and insightfully researched the history of the Romanization movement in China, emphasizes the importance of Lu Xun’s thought. He quotes Lu Xun: “The gentry deliberately kept the writing system difficult, fearing that if writing became easy the masses would no longer venerate it and would also no longer hold the gentry in respect. Characters were a fatal disease; China’s very life depended on getting rid of them.”¹⁹ These were strong words for a novelist, whose very artistic medium was a language that had been transcribed for thousands of years by those characters.

DeFrancis also writes that even on his sickbed in the summer of 1936, Lu Xun “repeated his warning that ‘if the ideographs are not destroyed, China

is sure to die,' and he added, 'The movement for Sin Wenz should merge and go forward with the present national liberation movement, and promotion of the New Writing should be taken on as a duty by every progressive person of culture.'"²⁰

Saitō Hidekatsu, the Japanese linguist, respected Lu Xun and was one of the first Japanese to write a eulogy for him after his death, even in the midst of the anti-Chinese hysteria during the Second Sino-Japanese War.²¹ He wrote the following (and I quote in full because it sums up so clearly what was at stake in these struggles over language reform in China and Japan):

The main purpose of the Romanization movement is to make acquisition of knowledge and the presentation of knowledge easier and to disseminate it. In order to broadly disseminate knowledge among the people, there is no way forward except to use kana or the Roman alphabet, rather than Chinese characters. As long as the Japanese language is written with a mix of Chinese characters and *kana*, the people, who do not have the time or money to sufficiently learn that style, will not be able to acquire knowledge, and knowledge will be monopolized by the ruling class, which is only one section of society as a whole. The role that the Roman alphabet performs domestically will be performed by Esperanto internationally. Language, too, as a means of production, is created by human beings, and when you think about the fact that it has been developed by human beings, you can recognize the possibility of improving and reforming language to suit our needs. The fact that Esperanto has overcome such opposition and indifference, and that it has spread so widely, demonstrates the possibility of constructing a language artificially and intentionally. The Roman alphabet serves the important function of popularizing Japanese, so what function does Esperanto serve? It serves two functions: introducing dialectic language theories and providing people with experience when imagining the creation of Esperanto. And it helps with the

popularization of Japanese. The popularization of Japanese will accelerate the development of Esperanto. The linguistic liberation of the colonies (Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria) is necessary. We should not force people in the colonies to use Japanese but should promote the movement to Romanize the local languages [*minzokugo*] of the colonies in order to let those local languages develop freely. And we should use Esperanto for communication between the colonies and Japan.²²

Many, in both China and Japan, viewed the Chinese script as an impediment to literacy and proposed using the Latin script as an auxiliary script, but the discussion of alternative or auxiliary scripts often becomes emotional. İlker Aytürk wrote, “Whenever people in countries like Japan and China, which have a long tradition of writing in their own script, discuss reforming the script, they become very emotional.”²³

In the words of John DeFrancis, “In the case of writing familiarity breeds such an intense emotional attachment that people adopt a defensive attitude toward their system of writing regardless of its imperfections. To some extent this stance is due to the reluctance of those already literate to give up their favored position or to take on the chore of learning a new system whatever its possible advantages to society as a whole. It is also due to the feeling that the writing system is the very essence of their culture. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that Chinese characters not only have a utilitarian function but also serve, in scrolls and other displays of calligraphy, as a medium of artistic expression. The role of characters in this and other spheres of life has made their psychological impact unique and uniquely strong among the writing systems of the world.”²⁴ Lu Xun simply wrote that talk of real reform “throws some reformers into a panic.”²⁵

Some observers of China and Japan object to the use of the Latin script for writing Chinese and Japanese with the argument that the use of this script would be obvious imperialism. Even Karatani Kojin, the respected Marxist philosopher and literary critic wrote of an “ideology of phonetic

speech.” Tsuchiya Reiko, on the contrary, views the style written by bureaucrats in Meiji (with its heavy reliance on Chinese characters and literary styles) and later as the “Imperial classical style.” In both China and Japan, the Romanization/Latinization movement was associated with movements for democracy, human rights, peace, etc.

The Turkic republics of the Soviet Union adopted the Latin script. Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), who was president of the Republic of Turkey from 1923 until 1938, abolished use of the Arabic script and replaced it with a new Turkish alphabet based on the Latin script, and Chinese were aware of this development.²⁶ Many Chinese saw Turkey as their model for script reform rather than Japan, but felt that they needed a “strongman” like Atatürk who would have the power to force everyone to adopt the Latin script.

In August 1934 a group of Shanghai Esperantists set up the first organization for the promotion of Latinxua, and published their first pamphlet, “The Latinization of Chinese Writing.”²⁷ Lenin said that “Latinization is the great revolution of the East,”²⁸ while Mao that China needed a “new social culture in which the masses fully participate.”²⁹ Qu Qiubai’s system of Romanization was the starting point of the orthography reform movement in China, which Mao supported in his *New Theory of Democracy* 『新民主主義論』. Thus Karatani and others who have viewed Romanization as the imposition of Western culture, as an imperialistic move, neglect the specificity of that movement in China, where it was promoted by the Left.

One could even argue that the combination of the Latin script and Esperanto held great potential to resist the colonialism of the Empire of Japan, to stop the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), and unite Chinese and Japanese against their overlords, whether they be capitalists or members of the new authoritarian government of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The linguist Saitō Hidekatsu, the Japanese antiwar Esperantist in China Hasegawa Teru (1912-1947), Chinese thinkers such as Lu Xun, Qu Qiubai, and others all worked to build a democratic and

antiwar culture for speakers of Chinese and Japanese languages.³⁰ It is not surprising that it was the Esperantists and Esperanto researchers who rediscovered the work of Hidekatsu. The history of these progressive thinkers is only beginning to be written, especially the history of the Chinese advocates of the Latin script.

Although the Romanization movement had a significant following in both China and Japan, it was considered politically dangerous, for some of the same reasons that Esperanto was considered dangerous. Rationalization of language tends to result in higher literacy levels. The Latin script and Esperanto both held out the promise of uniting the downtrodden and disadvantaged working class of China and Japan together against their overlords.

Romanizing languages in China, whether they be the Mandarin of Beijing, or Cantonese, variants of those major languages, or other languages native to China was considered dangerous because it would put the power of written communication into the hands of more people. Perhaps that is one reason why many of the formerly-famous leaders of the Romanization movement in China are hardly remembered today. Tao Xingzhi (1891-1946) once wrote, "...the new mass education aims at a real education of the mass, by the mass, and for the mass."³¹ He was a "renowned Chinese educator and reformer in the Republic of China mainland era. He studied at Teachers College, Columbia University and returned to China to champion progressive education").

The research of DeFrancis, Lins, and Müller has demonstrated that undemocratic governments have been hostile to language reform that would improve literacy. Stalin's famous "Marxism and Problems of Linguistics" article in 1950 argued that if you want a nation, a national language must be established, with all other languages or dialects in a subordinate position with respect to that language.³² That is probably why the idea of Esperanto was rejected even in countries dominated by a communist party.

6. Romanization Linked with Esperanto

Theoretically at least, it is not hard to understand why these two movements were linked. Their social aims overlapped. Futabatei Shimei [1864-1909], the author of Japan's first modern novel, *Ukigumo* [Floating Clouds, 1887] openly identified with some strand of socialism. According to Sho Konishi, Futabatei's socialism was the "humanistic socialism of Russian Populism rather than Marxism's materialistic view of human life."³³ By 1900 Futabatei often talked about *sōgo fujo*, the mutual aid of cooperatist anarchism. He also was the first one to introduce Esperanto in Japan, and his novel *Ukigumo* represented the first in the *genbun itchi* style. (The *genbun itchi* style was the new colloquial style of Meiji that was adopted when Japanese switched from literary styles to spoken language, ending the centuries long tradition of diglossia).

The other famous pioneering *genbun itchi* writer, Yamada Bimyō (1868–1910) was an advocate of some kind of democracy, too. His first *genbun itchi* novel was published around the same time. (A minority of scholars argue that Bimyō was the first *genbun itchi* writer and Futabatei was second, but in any case, they were both pioneers). Bimyō was actually far more passionate about *genbun itchi* than Futabatei.

He explained that the problem with *genbun itchi* was that people were not used to seeing the colloquial in print,³⁴ and he believed that a kind of prejudice in Japan blocked people from accepting colloquial writing. He wrote that within people's hearts "lives" the idea that the "highest" form of writing is that which has a good tone [i.e., a poetic, literary tone], and so colloquial writing has the sound of the "lowest" form of writing. He proposes that while colloquial writing may necessarily sound "low" or vulgar at first, the feeling of a writer expressing one's ideas freely through the colloquial is one kind of beauty. In his words, "beauty naturally appears," with colloquial writing. Just as the hero of a story does not need to be a beautiful person, he writes, the "sea water of social progress" does not stop at the "seashore" of ancient times. Even if we say that art in the day of Pericles (495-429 B.C.) was superb, to say that "we" [Japanese of the Meiji period] cannot do what

people did in Pericles' day, i.e., produce great art in a democratic society and bring about a golden age, is to misunderstand the historical changes of the world. This "sea water of social progress" may have referred to the phenomenon of non-aristocratic people building an industrial revolution through practical efforts and bringing an end to the habit of favoring what he termed "ancient prejudices." It would not be difficult to draw a direct line of democratic thought, a kind of intellectual history, from the Meiji-period *genbun itchi* movement to these two movements, the Esperanto movement and Latin script movements, in both Japan and China. Many Japanese and Chinese people were endeavoring to overcome ancient prejudices and build a modern, democratic culture.

As Hirai Masao explained, there were sometimes Japanese intellectuals lacking in common sense who said that if one is going to use the Latin script, one might as well use Esperanto.³⁵ This shows that on some level, the Latin script movement and the Esperanto movement were linked in the minds of some people.³⁶

It should be made clear, however, that Saitō Hidekatsu, who opposed all forms of linguistic imperialism, did not advocate tossing out the Japanese language for a foreign language. There were linguists and others like Hidekatsu, who underlined the importance of retaining one's native language. His most famous research, in fact, may be his work on dialect.³⁷ He was against abandoning languages or dialects in order to favor dominant groups. He envisioned a plethora of Japanese dialects all co-existing.

According to Müller and Benton, in the 1920s and 1930s, "because of Esperanto's internationalist character, its procommunist supporters in China hoped by publishing propaganda in the language to harness foreign support to the anti-Japanese cause. The Kuomintang opposed the campaign, not just politically but from the point of view of language policy, since it opposed romanising the Chinese script."³⁸ Communists were originally pro-Esperanto while the Guomindang (i.e., the Chinese Nationalist Party or "KMT," usually Romanized as either Kuomintang or Guomindang) were

always anti-Esperanto.

The first organization for the promotion of Latinxua was set up by a group of Shanghai Esperantists.³⁹ That was in August 1934. Their first pamphlet was entitled “The Latinization of Chinese Writing,” and it was very popular. Again, this demonstrates the links between the Latin script and Esperanto. Esperanto had to be written in the Latin script, and so from the perspective of Chinese Esperantists, learning the Roman alphabet was a first hurdle for students. Müller and Benton explain, “In the 1930s, Chinese Esperantists became more active in general language issues, particularly the latinisation movement, which received support from Soviet Esperantists. The Chinese Esperantists proposed the adoption in China of the system of romanisation (Latinxua Sin Wenz) created by the Soviets for their own Chinese minority, and thus paved the way for Hanyu Pinyin, developed in China in the 1950s.”⁴⁰ DeFrancis puts it this way: “Thereafter the Shanghai organs of the Chinese Esperantists dealt with the subject of Latinization in almost every one of their issues.”⁴¹ Latinization was a major topic for Chinese Esperantists, and in some sense, they were ahead of Japanese in terms of their struggle against linguistic imperialism.

The history of the progressive Chinese who supported Esperanto in its early days is only now beginning to be told, and one aspect of that story is that of the Chinese anarchists who supported Esperanto. The research by Müller and Benton stands out. They explain, in fact, that the Esperanto movement received support early on from Chinese anarchists in Japan and France, and only later gained some support among communists.⁴² Unlike Western anarchists, East Asian anarchists were very interested in language issues. Modernizing reformists in East Asia around 1915 were critics of Confucianism and supporters of science and democracy. They attacked the Chinese writing system and the use of classical Chinese and called for a literary revolution and the promotion of the vernacular, known as *baihua*. Baihua (白話) is the word in Chinese for written vernacular/colloquial Chinese (白話文), the standard written form for Mandarin that is placed in opposition to literary Chinese.

Hidekatsu was probably a Marxist, but was a true internationalist and thoroughly rejected imperialism. He linked the two movements together, conceived of them as *with* the movement against colonialism, for self-determination and democracy.⁴³ Kobayashi Tsukasa (1929-2010), who researched Sherlock Holmes mysteries and started writing about Hidekatsu several decades ago, explained that like Hasegawa Teru, Hidekatsu was an “outsider” with respect to the Esperanto movement, but Hidekatsu had a vision of liberating colonized peoples, the victims of Japanese aggression.⁴⁴ As explained above, Hidekatsu’s aim was the liberation of the people of both Japan and China, and he opposed linguistic imperialism. If he were alive today he would be viewed as a supporter of the cultural richness and value of “linguistic diversity.”

Hidekatsu’s viewpoint, Kobayashi explains, can be understood by contrasting it with the government’s view at the time. This shows us the intellectual milieu in which Hidekatsu was writing. The following is a sample of what the government was saying in those days:

Since the National Language is a way to directly express the spirit of the people, the fundamental thing that people should do to maintain and enhance national spirit is to respect, and love and protect the National Language. It is hoped that methods will be taught in government, in K-12 schools, and in [public, adult] education about how to lessen the use of useless foreign languages and rash and frivolously fashionable words, disorder in respect language [*keigo*], inappropriate use of horizontally written languages [i.e., Western languages], the disorder in the National Language that we hear and read every day, and lessen the influence of such problems in society.⁴⁵

This is the kind of chauvinistic propaganda with which Hidekatsu had to cope. His vision was largely based on internationalism and anti-linguistic imperialism, so he was a rare figure not only in the chauvinistic intellectual field of Japan at the time, he was also a remarkably advanced thinker among Esperantists, even in the world of what was termed then

“proletarian Esperanto.”

Ulrich Lins, a historian who has researched the Esperanto movement in Germany, Japan, and other countries, brings out a realistic view of solidarity in those days: “At the same time, we cannot claim that JEI’s profile reflected solidarity with the Asian Esperanto movement. It gave little attention to the question of language equality in the Japanese colonies of the time, namely Korea and Taiwan, where the Esperantists adopted a quite different approach to Esperanto.”⁴⁶ JEI (Japana Esperanto-Instituto) was and is a major Esperanto organization in Japan.⁴⁷ This confirms what has been thoroughly demonstrated by historians, i.e., that very few Japanese cared so deeply about the linguistic imperialism of the Empire of Japan to the extent that they would actually speak out against it. The government of the Empire of Japan engaged in linguistic imperialism against people of the “interior” as well, in Okinawa and in Northeastern Japan, and that was a blind spot for many or most progressive intellectuals. Many did fight for their vision of the working class, but often that vision did not include internally colonized peoples. Protecting language diversity only became a major goal for Japanese progressives many decades later.

Even as an auxiliary language, the spread of Esperanto in the 1920s was dangerous from the perspective of members of the ruling class. This was because theoretically at least, it could eventually lead to “international democracy,” one of its openly stated goals. In September 1921, Nitobe Inazo envisioned the enthusiastic participation of working people. He wrote, “While the rich and the cultured enjoy belles lettres, and scientific treatises in the original, the poor and the humble make of Esperanto a lingua franca for their exchange of views. Esperanto is thus becoming an engine of international democracy...”⁴⁸

7. Leftist support for Esperanto in China and Japan

Müller and Benton state that “the history of Esperanto in early twentieth century China has been strongly—though not exclusively—linked with

anarchism,”⁴⁹ and that the “beginnings of Esperanto in China were almost inseparably linked with the revolutionary struggle.”⁵⁰

In Japan, first there was Futabatei Shimei, the socialist (mentioned above). In 1907 and 1908, we see Ōsugi Sakae, the leading anarchist of the day, and his attraction to Esperanto. He taught Esperanto to Chinese students in Japan, and some of those students took Esperanto with them to China. One Chinese student who had studied in Japan (probably not from Ōsugi Sakae), Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) founded the magazine *Xin qingnian* (New Youth 新青年) in the summer of 1915. (In 1921 he co-founded the Chinese Communist Party). *Xin qingnian* was very popular among the intelligentsia of the Republic of China. The journal promoted human rights, democracy, science, and vernacular writing.

Müller and Benton write, “As a result of the sudden popularity of anarchism in China itself, the anarchist interest in Esperanto was quickly imported into the New Culture Movement and became a topic of intense debate in *Xin qingnian* (New youth), the movement’s most influential forum. However, the Esperanto debate in *Xin qingnian* ended in February 1919, when Chinese disappointment at the detrimental outcome of the Versailles peace treaty for China’s national interest led to a cooling of internationalist sentiment and a rising tide of political revolution.”⁵¹

“The topics raised in New Culture discourse—Esperanto, female equality, the dignity of labour, the importance of science, internationalism, and China’s role in the world revolution—had all been promoted, and often pioneered, by the anarchists.” The New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong*) originated out of disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture after the failure of the Republic of China (1912-49) to address China’s problems. Chen wrote that “we must import the foundation of a Western-style society and country, that is to say, the new faith in equality and human rights... Unless [Confucianism] is suppressed, [the new Way] will not prevail.”⁵²

By June 1935, people were panicking so much about the growing popularity of Latinxua Sin Wenz that Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白, 1899-1935), one of

the primary inventors of it, was “seized and put to death by a Kuomintang firing squad,” and “throughout the country the new script was interdicted and publications dealing with the system were confiscated and suppressed.”⁵³

Qu Qiubai was one of those rare people who experienced life both as a pauper and a prince, according to Fu Xiuhai.⁵⁴ Qu Qiubai was an advocate of Romanization of Chinese, a Russian language translator, a Soviet expert, the leader of the Left-Wing Writer’s League, a close friend of Lu Xun, and a major leader of the CCP in the late 1920s. The Guomindang executed him in June 1935 at the time of the Long March. “Qu’s brand of nationalism called for the invention of a national language, especially with regard to the issue of the ‘unification’ of Chinese characters and their phonetic meaning.” His “writings became a taboo and did not receive adequate evaluation by his followers.” He was the translator of the official Chinese version of the “Internationale” from its Russian translation.

In general, the year 1935 seems to have been a decisive moment in the movements for the Roman alphabet in both Japan and China. Two years before the full-scale invasion of China marked by the Empire of Japan’s attack on Shanghai, 1935 is when, from the perspective of advocates of the Latin script, all hell breaks loose. Between 1935 and 1936 there are mass arrests of anarchists,⁵⁵ the Japan Communist Party (JCP) collapses, and the Emperor-Organ Incident occurs. This is when the established Minobe Tatsukichi (1873-1948), professor of constitutional law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Tokyo, is basically de-established and Emperor-system [*kokutai*]ideology becomes completely dominant.⁵⁶ From that time forward, all ethnic groups in Manchuria are required to use Japanese as the common language of public communication.

Esperanto had been popular, but 1936 was not a good year for the Japanese Esperantists either.⁵⁷ In November and December 1936, many members of the small, remaining progressive Esperanto groups such as Marûsha in Kobe, Frato in Osaka, and the Pro-Es Kenkyūkai (Research Group) in Kyoto, and Popooro are arrested. The JEI membership falls to a

low of only 1000, after a peak of 2700 in 1924. By 1937, the militarism of the Empire of Japan is in high gear, and there is a quick downward spiral into war and imperialism, including blood-red linguistic imperialism.

In May of 1937, *Kokutai no hongri* is published and copies are sent to all schools, including all universities.⁵⁸ In June Nakagaki Kojirō (1894-1971) and his Chinese associates are arrested. Ye Laishi 葉籟士 (1911-94), the advocate of the Roman alphabet and Esperantist, and the editor of the Esperanto magazine *La mondo*, praised Nakagaki's work, along with that of the famous antiwar activist in China Hasegawa Teru (1912-1947), the work of Saitō Hidekatsu, and the work of the lawyer and antiwar activist Yui Chūnoshin (由比忠之進, 1894-1967).⁵⁹

In July, Japanese attack Manchuria in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. During this year, Chinese is no longer allowed in newspapers in Taiwan; progressive Esperantists continue to be arrested, and the Proletarian Esperanto movement is finally crushed.⁶⁰ And yet, even in 1937, some continue to resist. Hasegawa Teru accompanies her Chinese husband to China.⁶¹ Hidekatsu continues his struggle. And in China, Lu Jianbo (盧劍波, 1904-91) works to spread anarchism through Esperanto and through his concept of proletarian culture.⁶²

8. Many Communists Oppose Esperanto

According to Ulrich Lins, two elite French educators, Leon Berard and Julien Luchaire, demonstrated an “arrogant neglect of the need for international communication on the part of the lower levels of society.”⁶³ Even Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), known for Marxist praxis and for progressive ideas about sociolinguistics, “questions whether there is even a need for international communication at the lower levels,” Lins writes. He cites Gramsci's own words in “A Single Language and Esperanto” that “the majority of citizens carry out their activity stably in a fixed place and do not need to correspond too often by letter with other countries.”⁶⁴ Hidekatsu, by comparison, probably placed far more faith in working class people than Gramsci.⁶⁵

As Kobayashi writes, “Internationalism and a concern for the people run all through Hidekatsu’s thought. He lived his beliefs.”⁶⁶ Hidekatsu would have agreed with the fourteen aims of Esperantism as listed in *Geming zhoubao* (Revolutionary Weekly) around the time of Chiang Kai-shek’s bloody purge of his communist “allies” and fellow countrymen in 1927: “for an anarcho-communist society, for a culture and science based on philanthropy, for an education in the same spirit, for human liberation, for permanent peace, for a morality based on philanthropy rather than on law, for the free association of peoples, for individual freedom, for an aesthetic life, for free love, against nationalism and militarism, against the need to struggle for existence, against every form of dictatorship, and against class dictatorship.”⁶⁷

Democratic, grassroots internationalism declined and that hurt Esperanto. Lins explains that “in the course of the 1920s, internationalism in general lost its attractiveness.”⁶⁸ Germany, France, and the United States signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact on 27 August 1928 promising not to use war to resolve “disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them,” but such international cooperation ended soon after Black Tuesday (29 October 1929). The Guomindang’s reign of terror against communists also forced *Geming zhoubao* to close shop.

Many or most Leninists and Marxists did not envision linguistic diversity and cultural pluralism as progressive goals, so they did not make lasting commitments to supporting the spread of Esperanto. Lins painfully points this out over and over again, e.g., “The principal problem surrounding the Marxist theory of a world language lies in the fact that it not only ignores linguistic pluralism but even goes so far as to proclaim the marginalization and rejection of smaller languages as an inevitable result of economic progress. This was a radical position with which most Esperantists had nothing in common, because their language aimed to function next to, not instead of, the national languages,” while in the view of intellectuals of the USSR, the goals of Zamenhof and the “Esperantist propagandists” were

“aids to imperialism.”⁶⁹

9. Conclusion

While some people did hold onto the dream of Esperanto (again, meaning “hope”), and did succeed in building it up to the stage where it is now a living language, to the point where one can now read *Le Monde Diplomatique* in Esperanto, and while both Esperanto and the Latin script are thriving in the PRC,⁷⁰ let us look at who opposed the advances of Esperanto and the Latin alphabet in China and Japan.

First, there are the blood-red imperialists, i.e., those who signed the Treaty of Versailles in June of 1919. The Treaty of Versailles led to great resentment in Germany and China. The Chinese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference refused to sign it. The “Treaty” rewarded the government of the Empire of Japan for their imperialistic violence. In fact, the Treaty of Versailles should be called a “war treaty” rather than a “peace treaty” because it sowed the seeds of World War II by violating the rights of Germans and Chinese and by enabling the greed of the leading imperialist states.

The Guomindang, supported by liberal countries, opposed Esperanto even in the 1930s when the Chinese Communist Party was using Esperanto to gain support internationally for their struggle against the Empire of Japan. They opposed Esperanto because they “opposed the campaign, not just politically but from the point of view of language policy, since [they] opposed romanising the Chinese script.”⁷¹ Esperanto got nowhere in Taiwan under the Guomindang.

Former governments of Germany, Japan, and the U.S. are directly or indirectly responsible for state violence against Esperanto and Latin script enthusiasts. Nazis killed members of L. L. Zamenhof’s (1859-1917) family, the creator of Esperanto and an ophthalmologist who lived for most of his life in Warsaw. The government of the Empire of Japan promoted state Shinto and *kokutai*, and kicked Vasili Eroshenko (1890-1952) out of the country. Eroshenko was the famous blind Esperantist of Russia, who was

very popular among Japanese.

After the Empire of Japan invaded Shanghai in 1937, the Shanghai Sin Wenz Study Society helped the many people who were in refugee camps by providing literacy classes in the “New Writing” (Sin Wenz). But after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, Japanese “dissolved the Shanghai Sin Wenz Study Society and suppressed the journal Newspaper of the Masses and other publications in the new script,” and arrested Ni Haishu (倪海曙, 1918-88), the “leading historian of the Sin Wenz movement,” according to John DeFrancis.⁷²

The following was the view of the Government of the Empire of Japan during the War: “Since the National Language is a way to directly express the spirit of the people, the fundamental thing that people should do to maintain and enhance national spirit... to respect, and love and protect the National Language. It is hoped that methods will be taught in government, in K-12 schools, and in education how to lessen the use of useless foreign languages and rash and frivolous fashionable words, disorder in respect language [*keigo*], misappropriate use of horizontally written languages, the disorder in the National Language that we hear and read everyday, and lessen the influence of such problems in society.”⁷³

Mao and Stalin both backstabbed the workers and changed their positions. Stalin changed his position on Esperanto and violently suppressed it. Mao changed his position on abolishing the Chinese characters and abandoned the idea of adopting the Roman alphabet for the writing of Chinese language(s). Mao’s original position is clear in the following quote: “In 1936, Mao told the American journalist Edgar Snow, ‘In order to hasten the liquidation of illiteracy here we have begun experimenting with Hsin Wen Tzu—Latinized Chinese. It is now used in our Party school, in the Red Academy, in the Red Army, and in a special section of the Red China Daily News. We believe Latinization is a good instrument with which to overcome illiteracy. Chinese characters are so difficult to learn that even the best system of rudimentary characters, or simplified teaching, does not equip the people with a really rich and

efficient vocabulary. Sooner or later, we believe, we will have to abandon characters altogether if we are to create a new social culture in which the masses fully participate. We are now widely using Latinization and if we stay here for three years the problem will be solved’.”⁷⁴

But in June 1950, less than a year after he proclaimed the founding of the People’s Republic of China at Tiananmen Square, Chairman Mao “dropped a bombshell when he informed Wu Yuzhang, a strong supporter of the New Writing who was head of the Association for Chinese Writing Reform, that the reform ‘should not be divorced from reality or make a break with the past’.” So much for the masses “fully” participating. Mao did not follow his teacher, Qian Xuantong (1887-1939), the linguist and writer who promoted the abolition of literary Chinese and the adoption of Esperanto.

“When the communists came to power, the role previously played by Esperantists in language reform was recognised and rewarded. Hu Yuzhi and Ye Laishi were appointed vice-presidents of the script reform committee. In the event, however, reform was confined to the simplification of Chinese characters. In the early 1950s, China’s Esperanto movement was suppressed, following the Soviet example...”⁷⁵ (Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之 [1896-1986] was an intellectual, publisher, Esperantist, and politician in the Chinese Communist Party).

Stalin changed his position on the Esperantists and he advised against the use of Latin script for Chinese, even when some Soviets and Chinese who were living in the Soviet Union had contributed to the creation of a popular Latin script for Chinese.

And finally, we must not forget the role of intellectuals. While John DeFrancis may have been the first historian to bring out this side of the issue in the English language, Hirai Masao wrote about the issue in the Japanese language a few decades before him. (Future research should explore Hirai’s Postwar work on the education of the disabled, such as the blind). DeFrancis writes that Zhou Enlai later told a former French education minister, “All those who had received an education, and whose services we absolutely needed to expand education, were firmly attached to

the ideograms [sic]. They were already so numerous, and we had so many things to upset, that we have put off the reform until later.”⁷⁶

Wang Li, the “PRC’s foremost linguist,” who supported the basic reform of the Chinese writing system, and was a member of the elite group he criticized, said that opposition “comes primarily from intellectuals, especially from high level intellectuals.”⁷⁷ And about government officials, DeFrancis concluded that “intellectuals who are part of officialdom are the decisive power blocking writing reform.”⁷⁸

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¹ “During Japan 's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, the Kominka (Imperialization) political strategy was enforced. During Germany's occupation of Poland (1939-1945) and Japan's occupation of Korea (1910-1945), the prohibition of use of the native tongue, the renaming of people and places, the removal of indigenous people from institutions of higher education, the destruction of cultural facilities, the denial of freedom of religious faith, and the changing of cultural education all took place.” Conference announcement of Comparative Genocide Studies, “CGS 1st Workshop: ‘Cultural Genocide’ and the Japanese Occupation of Korea,” Chair: Professor Ishida Yuji (University of Tokyo), Matsumura Yuko (University of Tokyo), 23 February 2004 https://web.archive.org/web/20070307095928/http://www.cgs.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/workshops_e/w_2004_02_23_e.html

² Yasuda Toshiaki, 『漢字廃止の思想史』 247.

³ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chinese_Language:_Fact_and_Fantasy

⁴ Vietnamese adopted a system based on the Latin script termed “Quoc-ngu.” (See “Quoc-ngu Vietnamese Writing System,” Encyclopaedia Britannica at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Quoc-ngu>). The Korean Hangul have mostly replaced the Chinese characters in both Koreas. See “Hangul: The Korean Alphabet” <https://orthographiesoftheworld.wordpress.com/2014/05/28/hangul-the-korean-alphabet/>

and Heidi Corbett, “The Evolution of Hangeul and its Impact on Literacy in Korea,” 27 October 2013

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/etec540sept13/2013/10/27/hangeul-and-literacy-in-korea/>.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusive_design

⁶ Forcing everyone in Japan to learn the national standard language has caused great suffering to people of Okinawa, who speak a minority dialect of Japanese, or a separate Japanese “language,” depending on how one defines the words “dialect” and “language.” This violation of the right of self-determination and the right of people to use their own language and pass it on to their children is what is sometimes termed “linguistic imperialism.” So whether the adoption of the “inclusive-design” phonetic script has resulted in an expansion in the number of literate persons in the entire country is a question beyond the scope of this paper, but for native speakers of the standard national language, who are numerous in these Sinosphere countries, the benefits of phonetic script should be obvious. Furthermore, if all dialects and languages of these countries were written in phonetic scripts, and there were no privileging or stigmatization or hierarchization of any dialects and language, theoretically almost everyone could soon learn to read and write in their native dialect or language, and also learn to read and write in the standard national language.

⁷ Nanette Gottlieb [Twine], “Language and Politics: The Reversal of Postwar Script Policy in Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 53.4 (1994): 1176-77.

⁸ J. Marshall Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan: Reading Between the Lines* (New York: Oxford UP, 1996) 123.

⁹ Esther Schor, *Bridge of Words: Esperanto and the Dream of a Universal Language* (New York: Metropolitan Books Henry Holt and Company, 2016) 93.

¹⁰ Gotelind Müller and Gregor Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese

anarchism 1907-1920: The translation from diaspora to homeland,” *Language Problems & Language Planning* 30:1 (2006) 48-49.

¹¹ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism 1907-1920: The translation from diaspora to homeland” 49.

¹² Gotelind Müller and Gregor Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Language Problems & Language Planning* 30:2 (August 2006) 2.

¹³ For example, it is in this sense that an Esperantist has written that Esperanto can “unite the working class of the world through teaching and advocating Esperanto as an easy-to-learn gateway to international communication.” “Esperanto” (Better Worlds, Brighter Futures: Ecology, Humanity, Idealism, 2007).

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¹⁴ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* (U of Hawai'i Press, 1984) 221, 225, 249-51, and 266.

¹⁵ Hirai Masao, *Kokugo kokujū mondai no rekishi*, trans. Yasuda Toshiaki, reprint (Tokyo: Sangensha, 1998).

¹⁶ Ōshima Yoshio, *Minzoku to kotoba* (Otsuki Shoten, 1956) 52.

¹⁷ Jonathan Zwicker, “Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan (review),” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 34:2 (Summer 2008) 488. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.0.0024>

¹⁸ Quoted in Zwicker, “Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan (review)” 489.

¹⁹ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* (U of Hawai'i Press, 1984) 249.

²⁰ John de Francis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950) 117.

²¹ In March 1937 at the age of 29, Hidekatsu wrote “Rojin wo tomurau” (「魯迅を弔う」 or “Holding a Memorial Service for Lu Xun”) five months after Lu Xun’s death. This appeared in Hidekatsu’s academic journal *Moji to gengo* (文字と言語) 11. I

learned of Hidekatsu's great respect for Lu Xun in a conversation with Ohara Hotaru, a Yamagata researcher who was one of the first Japanese to write about the life and thought of Hidekatsu. See the Japanese Wikipedia page for Hidekatsu:

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²² Asahiga Noboru, *Esperanto undō no tenbō* エスペラント運動の展望 [Perspektivo sur la Esperanto-Movado] (Sekai bunka kenkyū kai: Tokyo, 1978) 126-27.

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²⁴ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* 200.

²⁵ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* 69, 81- 82, 221.

²⁶ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*.

²⁷ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* 114.

²⁸ DeFrancis wrote, "Among the first to become involved in this cultural innovation, which was inspired by Lenin's pronouncement that "Latinization is the great revolution of the East," was the young Qu Qiubai, a special correspondent for one of China's leading newspapers who later became a prominent Communist intellectual and Party functionary." This quote is from John DeFrancis, "The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform," *Sino-Platonic Papers* (U of Pennsylvania) 171 (June 2006). <http://www.sino-platonic.org/>

²⁹ In 1936, Mao said to the American journalist Edgar Snow, "In order to hasten the liquidation of illiteracy here we have begun experimenting with Hsin Wen Tzu—Latinized Chinese. It is now used in our Party school, in the Red Academy, in the Red Army, and in a special section of the Red China Daily News. We believe Latinization is a good instrument with which to overcome illiteracy. Chinese characters are so difficult to learn that even the best

system of rudimentary characters, or simplified teaching, does not equip the people with a really rich and efficient vocabulary. Sooner or later, we believe, we will have to abandon characters altogether if we are to create a new social culture in which the masses fully participate. We are now widely using Latinization and if we stay here for three years the problem will be solved.” John DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform,” *Sino-Platonic Papers*.

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Esperantists proposed the adoption in China of the system of romanisation (Latinxua Sin Wenz) created by the Soviets for their own Chinese minority, and thus paved the way for Hanyu Pinyin, developed in China in the 1950s.” Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 8.

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⁴⁸ Ulrich Lins, Chapter Two “War and Its Aftermath,” *Dangerous Language: Esperanto under Hitler and Stalin*, Humphrey Tonkin, trans. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁴⁹ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese Anarchism, 1907-1920” 45.

⁵⁰ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese Anarchism, 1907-1920” 56.

⁵¹ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 2.

⁵² Kiri Paramore, “Liberalism, Cultural Pluralism, and the Rule of Law in Modern East Asia: The Anti-Confucian Essentialisms of Chen Duxiu and Fukuzawa Yukichi Compared,” *Modern Intellectual History* (6 July 2018).

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-intellectual-history/article/liberalism-cultural-particularism-and-the-rule-of-law-in-modern-east-asia-the-anticonfucian-essentialisms-of-chen-duxiu-and-fukuzawa-yukichi-compared/C43E187B6651F979CD3DEE98D3C5EFF6>

⁵³ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* 115.

⁵⁴ Fu Xiuhai 傅修海, “Profusion and Pain of Ferrying to New Epoch – on Qu Qiubai’s Literary Thought,” *A Library of Doctoral Dissertations in Social Sciences in China* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press 中國社會科學出版社, 2011), Harvard-Yenching Institute webpage.

<https://www.harvard-yenching.org/research/qu-qiubai-literary-thought/>.

There is also a new book on Qu Qiubai by Fu Xiuhai. The subtitle of the book about Qu Qiubai is “profusion of painful sentiment.” One of the chapters about him is entitled “the popularization and revolutionizing of literature.”

⁵⁵ “Japanese dissidence in 20th-century Imperial Japan” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_dissidence_in_20th-century_Imperial_Japan.

⁵⁶ Richard Minear, “The Aftermath of the Emperor-Organ Incident: the Tōdai Faculty of Law,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 11:9:1 (Article ID 3904, 27 February 2013).

⁵⁷ Ian Rapley, *Green Star Japan: Internationalism and Language in the Japanese Esperanto Movement, 1906-1944* (University of Oxford dissertation, 2013) 211.

⁵⁸ English translations of selections of “Fundamentals of Our National Polity” 国体の本義 are available at “Selections from the Kokutai no Hongi (Fundamentals of Our National Polity), 1937.” <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/kokutai.pdf>

These are from Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur L. Tiedemann, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia UP, 2005) 968-969, 975.

⁵⁹ Ye Laishi wrote *Latinxua gailun* 拉丁化概論 (1935). See Shibata Iwao and Mine Yoshitaka, eds., *Nihon Esperanto undō jinmei jiten* [Who was who in the Esperanto movement in Japan, Biografia leksikono de la Esperanto-movado en Japanio] (Hitsuji shobō, 2013) 537. Like many Esperantists, Yui has been largely forgotten, but his suicide was reported at the time by newspapers in Japan. He “self-immolated in front of the Prime Minister’s residence, condemning Prime Minister Sato Eisaku’s support of the U.S. war in Vietnam and demanding that Sato negotiate harder with the United States for return of Okinawa and Ogasawara islands.” Satoko Norimatsu, “Suicide as Protest – Two Self-immolations under the Abe Regime,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 10:54:196 (31 December 2012). Article ID 4810. <https://apjjf.org/-Satoko-Norimatsu/4810/article.html>

⁶⁰ *Nihon Esperanto undō jinmei jiten* 574.

⁶¹ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 8.

⁶² *Nihon Esperanto undō jinmei jiten.*

⁶³ Lins, *Dangerous Language: Esperanto under Hitler and Stalin.*

⁶⁴ Lins, the beginning of chapter 7, *Dangerous Language: Esperanto under Hitler and Stalin.*

⁶⁵ Kokubun Ichitarō (国分 一太郎, 1911-85) wrote that “Ito Shinichi” (i.e., Hidekatsu) always told his pupils in the small village where he taught, “Humankind must cooperate, as we are all fellow human beings who call this planet home. Especially workers and peasants, who are more numerous than any other [groups], must above all else make efforts to build a peaceful world.” Hidekatsu taught impoverished children in Northeastern Japan. Kokubun wrote a biographical short story about Hidekatsu for children. The fictional story matches various existing recollections of Hidekatsu and his writings in sociolinguistics quite well. The story is entitled “Otori no Jisho.” Kokubun Ichitaro, “Otori no Jisho,” *Kokubun Ichitarō jidō bungaku shū 1: sukoshi mukashi no hanashi*, (Komine shoten, 1967) [「おとりの辞書」『国分一太郎児童文学集1：すこし昔の話』、国分一太郎児童文学集1（小峰書店）] 217-27.

⁶⁶ Kobayashi, “Gengo sabetsu to tatakatta Saitō Hidekatsu.”

⁶⁷ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 7. Müller and Benton quote Xianmin, “Shijieyu zhuyi de yuanli” (The principles of Esperantism), *Geming zhoubao* 14 (31 July 1927): 111-113.

⁶⁸ Lins, Chapter Two “War and Its Aftermath,” *Dangerous Language: Esperanto under Hitler and Stalin.*

⁶⁹ Lins, Chapter 7, *Dangerous Language: Esperanto under Hitler and Stalin.*

⁷⁰ DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 20. “China is close to achieving the success in

promoting Putonghua that Zhou Enlai advanced as the prerequisite for the transition to alphabetic writing.”

⁷¹ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 8.

⁷² John DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform,” *Sino-Platonic Papers*.

⁷³ This government view of language was published on 13 April 1938, according to Kobayashi Tsukasa’s *Esperanto Undou no tenbou I* 127.

⁷⁴ DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 2.

⁷⁵ Müller and Benton, “Esperanto and Chinese anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s” 9.

⁷⁶ John DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 4.

⁷⁷ John DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 6.

⁷⁸ John DeFrancis, “The Prospects for Chinese Writing Reform” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 8.