

1. Record Nr.	EJ21018149
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Titolo	The Role of kunten Materials in the Process of Sino-Japanese Hybridization [Articolo]
Editore	Firenze University Press, 2015-09-15
ISSN	2421-7220
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Articoli digitali
Livello bibliografico	Seriale
Note	In relazione con: https://oaj.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-qulso/article/view/1865/1865 Sorgente: Quaderni di Linguistica e Studi Orientali; Vol. 1 (2015); 233-258 Sorgente: Quaderni di Linguistica e Studi Orientali; V. 1 (2015); 233-258 Sorgente: 2421-7220
Sommario	The history of the Japanese written language can be seen as a main frame of different registers of the native language – buntai – intersecting at various levels with a foreign one, namely classical Chinese. Although these diatypes are different, they are all part of the same lexico-syntactic repertoire shared by the community and whose use is determined by context. Hence, the type of code in use depends on the field and purpose of the message. In recent years the field has been enriched by a number of thought-provoking theories. However, buntai studies still constitute a complex and intricate discipline within which numerous questions remain to be answered. This paper will a) provide a review of existing scholarship on the role played by kunten materials in defining the formation process of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing – wakan konkun; b) outline, for the first time, the main differences between the two most controversial forms of written language, Japanized written Chinese – waka kanbun – and Sino-Japanese hybrid writing, and redefine their role within the history of the Japanese written language; c) survey

textual evidence to show how an embryonic form of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing existed before the twelfth century, proving that the evolution of wakan konkun is not directly linked to the formation of middle Japanese.

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