

# ASPECTS OF TWO CONTRASTING IDEAS IN THE GENBUN ITCHI MOVEMENT AND MEIJI EDUCATION

—A gap between written and spoken Japanese—

Kazukiyo SHIGA

## INTRODUCTION

From the point of view of Japanese language education, it is apparent that there are two different modes of expression, "Bungo" (classical Japanese) and "Kōgo" (modern Japanese).

Though Japanese language has been divided into categories of Bungo and Kōgo, there is some difficulty in deliniating the differences between these two modes of expression. Within the category called Kōgo there is classical-originated written Japanese (Kakikotoba) and spoken Japanese (Hanashikotoba). In conversational Japanese we do not use Kakikotoba Japanese and Hanashikotoba Japanese at the same time except in very exceptional cases. If we should use Kakikotoba Japanese in our conversation we are very conscious of the fact. The existance of these two kinds of expression itself tells us the meaning of the difference. Even though the modern language is assumed to be Kōgo, in reality ten to twenty percent of the modern language consists of classical expressions. Therefore it is very difficult to make a distinction between the modern and classical language. If we consider the style of Japanese used in printed materials such as essays, critics, novels and so on, then we find that the amount of classical expressions increases appreciably.

It should be meaningful to ask: why so much classical Japanese finds its way into modern Japanese, and what this phenomenon indicates. All such questions can be boiled down to the relation between the two sets of values and ideals that appear in Kōgo and Bungo.

No studies on this theme have been made until now. Through a detailed analysis this thesis attempts to investagate the relation between Bungo and Kōgo giving special attention to the Genbun Itchi (unification of the written and spoken language) Movement and it's influence on the educational ideals of those days.

## Chapter I

## 1

Historically speaking, many attempts to write in the style or mode of the spoken language were made by Buddhist priests in writing their lectures<sup>1)</sup>, by teachers of practical ethics (Shingaku 心学) and by Maejima Hisoka (1835-1919)<sup>2)</sup> and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901) in their writings and public pronouncements.

In his book *Kindai Buntai Hassei no Shiteki Kenkyū*<sup>3)</sup> Yamamoto Masahide studied in detail and collected considerable material about the movement toward the unification of the written and spoken language in the Meiji period. I am indebted to him for most of the materials which I use in this thesis. Yamamoto stands in favour of this movement<sup>4)</sup> and he focusses on the successes of this movement. He gives very little attention to the strong influence of Bungo which was deeply rooted in the society.

That from time to time Yamamoto pointed out the difficulties the movement confronted atests to the strength of Bungo in society. The change from Bungo to Kōgo was for the people much the same as a change in their way of thinking. we cannot say that the Genbun Itchi Movement won great support for the use of Kōgo within literary circles.

It is worth considering the assessment of the influential Bungo group which was opposed to the Genbun Itchi Movement. Maeda Ai referred to those Bungo groups in his book *Bakumatsu Ishin Ki no Bungaku*<sup>5)</sup>. According to him there was

- 1) The *Mainichi* newspaper, evening ed., 22 July, 1975 reports that notes of a zen priest's lectures which were taken down from 1471 in the Muromachi period were found by Murakami Shigeyoshi, and are believed to be the oldest spoken Japanese materials in eastern Japan except for the Azumauta recorded in the Manyōshū.
- 2) Maejima Hisoka presented Tokugawa Yoshinobu his written memorial, the *Kanji Gohai-shi no Gi* (To abandon Chinese characters) in 1866.
- 3) Yamamoto Masahide, *Kindai Buntai Hassei no Shiteki Kenkyū* (A historical study of the growth of modern sentence style), (hereafter as *KBHSK*), Iwanami Tokyo, 1965.
- 4) For example, in *KBHSK* (p. 31) Yamamoto says of Kōgo:  
 Taking Chinese sentence and translation style into modern sentences, our colloquial sentences become undemocratized uneasy and unfamiliar.  
 and he further states (pp. 100-1):  
 The laissez-faire principle in the policy of national characters adopted by government leaders obstructed the development of a democratic national culture, suffocated by the Chinese characters and compounds....I cannot help deploring the obstinacy and thoughtlessness of the Meiji political circles.
- 5) Maeda Ai, *Bakumatsu Ishin Ki no Bungaku* (Literature in the later Tokugawa regime and the early Meiji Retoration period), Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, Tokyo, 1972, pp. 246-52.

much resistance to this movement within the group of Japanese who wrote Chinese poetry. According to Maeda, three of the resistance groups were famous. They gathered around Ōnuma Chinzan (大沼沈山 1818-1891), the leader of the three groups, and confronted the spreading of Yōgaku (Western studies) which was led by Fukuzawa Yukichi. Also a cross section of Bungo writers, novelists and poets was organized and named "Kyūusha" (旧雨社) under the guidance of Tōno Kainan (藤野海南). In support of the Bungo group a poet of Chinese poetry, Mori Shuntō (森春濤 1819-1889) published a poetry magazine *Shinbunshi* (新文詩). The *Chōya* newspaper provided a column for poems in Chinese style, and in another column, Ōtsuki Bankei (大槻磐溪 1801-1878) wrote regular essays on poetry. Maeda Ai also introduces in the same book the names of those who wrote poems for the poetry magazine, the *Shinbunshi*, most of them were the high-ranking bureaucrats in the Meiji government. He lists famous names as examples of how powerful the people were who took part in the field of the Bungo poetry: Itō Hirobumi (伊藤博文 1841-1909), Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋 1838-1922), Gotō Shōjirō (後藤象二郎 1838-1897), Tani Tateki (谷干城 1837-1911) and other names found among the members of the group.

## 2

The fact that in the same period of history and society we find two different groups with opposing views on language leads us to look at the nature and characteristics of Bungo as well as Kōgo.

Yamamoto Masahide points out seven characteristics of modern sentence style written in Kōgo.<sup>1)</sup> These are: 1. simplicity, 2. precision and detailedness, 3. use of popular expressions, 4. introduction of punctuation, 5. realistic description, 6. modern realistic expression, 7. individuality. As for these items, we are able to consent to items 1 and 3, but item 2, precision and detailedness, can be observed in Bungo as well and we cannot say this is the sole characteristic of Kōgo sentences. As for item 4, the introduction of punctuation, we are not able to deny the possibility that Bungo too, could introduce it. Items 5, 6 and 7 are also observable even in Bungo sentences and expressions. Therefore, we have to select items 1 and 3 as the only unique characteristics of the modern colloquial sentence.

Two questions can be asked:

1. What was the contemporary perception of Bungo and Kōgo?
2. In what kind of fields could Kōgo and Bungo survive?

---

1) *KBHSK*, Introduction, pp. 5-10.

In order to answer question 1, let us consider:

- 1 (a) The main thoughts on Bungo produced by members of the "Anti-Bungo" groups - the *Genbun Itchi* people.
- 1 (b) The main thoughts on Kōgo and Genbun Itchi emanating from the "Anti-Genbun Itchi" groups - the *Bungo* people.

In order to answer 2, I would like to consider the following:

- 2 (a) The amount of Bungo used in the editorial columns of the main newspapers.
- 2 (b) Sentence style of the essays on Genbun Itchi written by the people in the Kōgo group.

### 3

- 1 (a) The main thoughts on Bungo as described from the side of the "Anti-Bungo" groups - the *Genbun Itchi* people.

Some examples of the main proponents and their thoughts are as follows:

1. Sugita Genpaku  
...because Chinese studies mainly stand upon decorated sentences and clauses...<sup>1)</sup>
2. Maejima Hisoka  
...complicated and inconvenient, difficult to understand and easy to misunderstand.<sup>2)</sup>
3. Fukuzawa Yukichi  
Chinese characters are difficult...Bungo uses Chinese words to make sentences exact and noble...<sup>3)</sup>
4. Ōtsuki Fumihiko  
Classic sentences are brilliantly arranged in order, and it is easy to find rules of composition.<sup>4)</sup>
5. Miyake Yonekichi  
Bungo looks beautiful on the mere face of it.  
...plenty of elements for ornamentation.<sup>5)</sup>
6. Mozume Takami

---

1) *KBHSK*, p. 62, cited from *Rangaku Kotohajime*.

2) *Ibid.*, p. 92, cited from "Kaisōdan" in the *Yomiuri* newspaper, on 8 January, 1875.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 105, cited from the *Fukuzawa Zenshū Chogen*.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 139, cited from "Nihon Bunten Henshū Sōron," in the *Chōya* newspaper, 16 January, 1877.

5) *Ibid.*, p. 262, p. 270, cited from *Kana no Manabi* No. 6, published on 20 February, 1884.

Bungo is concise.<sup>1)</sup>

7. Taguchi Ukichi

Bungo is to be respected for being apart from the hustle of ordinary life...  
Bungo has classic grace and is noble.<sup>2)</sup>

To summarize the above: Bungo is difficult; it ornaments sentences; it is concise, graceful, noble and systematic. And this can also be shown in the following figure:

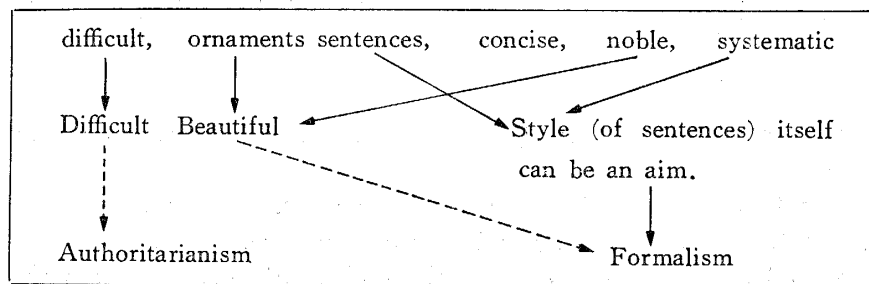


Figure 1.

Thus, it was no accident at all that difficulty invites authoritarianism and connects with formalism.

1 (b) **The main thoughts on Kōgo and Genbun Itchi, emanating from “Anti-Genbun Itchi” groups, – the Bungo people.**

The leaders and their opinions of the movement are as follows:

1. Yano Fumio

The human mouth has the tendency to shorten the number of words expressed. Therefore it is understandable that a language evolves along the lines of convenience. European history certifies it. People should not abandon Chinese words which make a sentence shorter and more convenient.

It is very inconvenient to use only Kōgo in the world of books which are read by our eyes, because each sentence becomes too long to read...Different from spoken English, Japanese Kōgo has various honorific forms and choosing one of them may cause impoliteness to other people...When using spoken language, the speaker has to use gestures and intonation very often in order to make the listener understand. Because of that, sentences cannot be written exactly the same as colloquial speech...Kōgo is diffuse, has too many honorific forms, and has many dialects.<sup>3)</sup>

2. Tatsumi Kojirō

Kōgo is private, local, momentary, sensual and popular.

1) *KBHSK*, p. 295, cited from a record of a lecture at the Kokugakuin school in 1901.

2) *Ibid.*, pp. 308-10, cited from the “Nihon kaika no seishitsu yōyaku aratamezaru bekarazu,” *Tokyo keizai Zasshi* published in August, 1885.

3) *Ibid.*, pp. 346-8, cited from *Nihon Buntai Moji Shinron* published by Hōchisha in March, 1886.

Kōgo differs with the the age of the speaker - childhood to senescence. Uncivilized people have only a spoken language but civilized people have both spoken and written language. Civilization means human affairs grow complex and require efficient arrangement. Therefore, at the first stage, we have only spoken language, and at the next stage we have spoken language and sign language. This sign language is the written language...the spoken language and written language go their own ways as the society evolves. Thus, we should not expect the unification of the spoken and written languages.<sup>1)</sup>

3. Nishimura Shigeki

If the spoken and written languages were unified, literature in Japan would be disadvantaged.

Spoken language is vulgar, having no control. But, on the contrary, the written language grows nobly by its own nature.

I demand to expel, not to insert, the colloquial language from the national language textbooks when textbooks contain elegant written language.

It is of no use for writers to take great pains if they don't write in literary style but in colloquial language because even ignorant people in the slum can teach colloquial sentences.<sup>2)</sup>

4. Kojima Kenkichi

The unification of the spoken and written language, the Genbun Itchi is a custom of a savage country. And the separation of the spoken and written languages is a normal state in a civilized country.

The reason of existence for the kōgo is only two-fold: easy to learn and easy to understand....

Kōgo is vulgar, feeble, also diffuse, roundabout, complicated and incoherent. Scholars of Western studies advocate the Genbun Itchi, some scholars of Japanese studies want to accept the movement and ignorant people rejoice at its convenience.<sup>3)</sup>

5. Yoshimi Keirin

A sentence in literary style is a flower of colloquial speech. It was selected from natural speaking and was fully ornamented. The Kōgo, on the contrary, aims only at pragmatic convenience. And because of that, the taste of the sentences dies.<sup>4)</sup>

6. Ozaki Kōyō

Kōgo is convenient, but from the point of view of a rhetorical flourish, it is nothing.

---

1) *KBHSK*, pp. 662-5, cited from "Baku Genbun Itchi Ron" published in *Gakkai no Shishin*, Nos. 2-4, in 1887.

2) *Ibid.*, pp. 689-91, cited from "Nihon Bungakuron" published in the *Bun*, No. 10, vol, I, in September 1888.

3) *Ibid.*, pp. 705-7, cited from "Bunshōron" published in the *Bun*, No. 8, vol, II, in March 1889.

4) *Ibid* p. 709, cited from "Bun ni tsukite," in *Bun* cited above.

1. Kōgo has conveniently developed since a person poor in composition can cover himself by using it.
2. One can write anything he wishes, and this has much the same effect as an incantation to cure brain disease.
3. One can save labor and time.
4. One can earn money taking no pains, wasting many sheets of paper by describing the same topic long-windedly.
5. Fools in the world rejoice at it saying that they can read the so-called "realism" when one writes as if one is splitting hairs.<sup>1)</sup>

All these opinions may be summarized: Kōgo is a discretionary, concrete, complex and substantial language.

Thus we can see a clear difference in attitude between the two even towards writing. With Kōgo, writing is made accessible to all individuals. It favours a utilitarian pragmatism. With Bungo, writing is not treated discretionally. It favours traditional formalism.

4

2 (a) The amount of Bungo used in the editorial columns of the main newspapers.

For purposes of clarification, I would like to explore how prevalent Bungo was in the fields of criticism and essays. We do not deny that Kōgo was influential to some extent, but we would like to look at the balance of the two. What sort of proportion existed? *Kindai Buntai Hassei no Shiteki Kenkyū*, Part II., Chap. 1, pp.239-59., Chap. 9, pp.194-211, presents materials to estimate balance of figures which appeared in the major newspapers of the day.

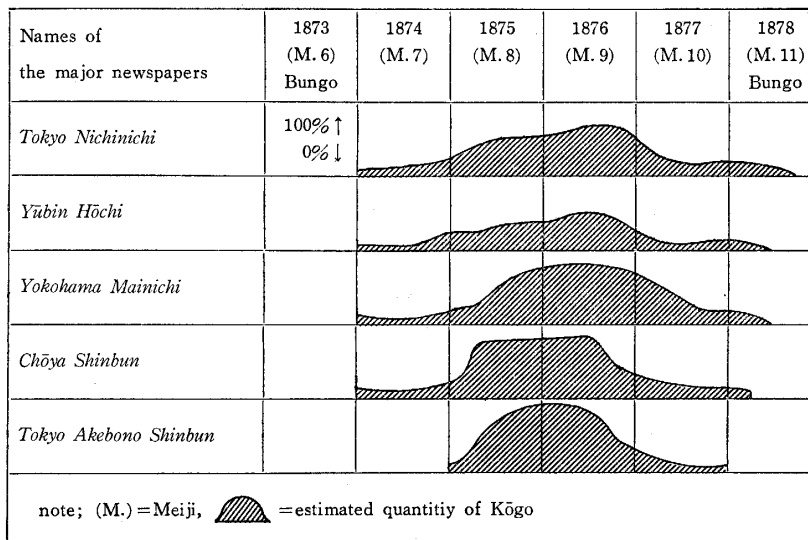


Figure 2.

1) *KBHSK*, p. 734, cited from the "Dokusha Hyōban ki" published in *Momochidori*, No. 4, 20 October, 1889.

The articles written in Bungo style in the minor newspapers increased from around 1879, and in 1884 almost all articles were written in Bungo. This tendency lasted until 1921. Thus written language sentences appeared in this way;

Major newspapers	Bungo → Kōgo → Bungo (1875—1876)	→ Kōgo (1921 — )
Minor newspapers	Kōgo → Bungo (1879—1884)	→ Kōgo (1921 — )

Figure 3.

The aim of the newspapers is to transmit (a) thoughts, or (b) news, to the reader. The major newspapers mainly aimed at (a); which included criticism, editorials essays, comments and leading articles. The aim of the minor newspapers was to provide news of society, serial novels, and human interest stories. But both needed readers. It was obvious that the editors or directors of the newspaper company desired to increase circulation for financial reasons. To the reader of those days, news or essays written in easy sentences might have been more acceptable, but, even so, the editors chose Bungo. As to the reasons for this decrease of Kōgo, Yamamoto says nothing except that the editors of the minor papers did not have any sufficient reason to reform the old style of writing.<sup>1)</sup>

I myself would like to point to the following as reasons:

1. The very nature of Bungo lent itself naturally to the field of essays and criticism for it gave the reader a feeling of authority and dignity. Specially, governmental organizations were the most appropriate places for Bungo.

2. "Shinbunshi Jōrei" (Newspaper Regulations) and "Zanbōritsu" (Libel Regulations) were promulgated in June, 1874, as a counterplan for the anti-government movement, the "Jiyū Minken Undō" (movement for the democratic rights). These two regulations gave people a double reaction.

Maeda Ai points out that at the beginning of the Bunmei Kaika (Civilization and Enlightenment) the European countries were expected to be thoughtful teachers and the the people dreamed happy dreams for the future. The fear or worry of invasion by the European countries which was felt by the Edo Government was put aside

1) *KBHSK*, Chap. 9, p. 210.

2) Maeda Ai, *Bakumatsu Ishin Ki no Bungaku*, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, Tokyo, 1972, pp. 326-8.

3) *KBHSK*, p. 347.

4) The research was made by studying expressions appearing in newspapers and printed materials. The report was titled "Nihongo Bunshō no Hyōgen" (Written Japanese Expressions) and was printed by the Jesuit Kamakura School of Japanese Language in 1968.

for the optimistic belief in progress and civilization, brought about by an under-estimation of the force of power politics in the Western world. This happy dream had to be broken. Fukuzawa Yukichi was the person who, at first, praised and introduced the Western civilizations. But, on the other hand, he was the first person to give warning about the power politics of the Western world. The time when his warning was heeded among intellectuals in the society was around the year 1877.<sup>21</sup> The recognition of Western power politics made leading people choose between two ways: either to take the government side, or the anti-government side. But both ways had the same aim, which was to strengthen Japan. Only their means differed. One tried from the governmental side - from the exterior - the other worked from within, from the people's side. The change of the sentence style in newspapers tells us most of the leading people agreed with the governmental side.

To conclude, the major newspaper used Kōgo only for ten months between 1875 and 1876. Even in this period, two of the five major papers used Bungo for 50 per cent of their articles, that is, for essays. As for the minor papers, after 1884 articles written in Kōgo were very rare. Thus, the Bungo was influential throughout the Meiji period when people intended to write essays or similar articles such as attempts at socio-political comments.

## 2 (b) Sentence style of the essays on Genbun Itchi written by the people in the Genbun Itchi (Kōgo) group.

As Yano Fumio has mentioned already in his *Nihon Buntai Moji Shinron*,<sup>19</sup> even the essays promoting the use of Kōgo in social life were, with a few exceptions, written in Bungo. This fact tells exactly what happened in their minds when they tried to write something formally - their sentences jumped into the enemy camp. This tells us that it is a rather normal thing to use Bungo which has the characteristics required for this formal writing.

As we saw before, the reason why the Genbun Itchi supporters adopted Kōgo was that it was simple, easy and pragmatic.

On the other hand, Kōgo had the weak point that it was not suitable for solemn, magnificent and dignified expressions. Therefore, in the field of poetry, some other examples of literature, official notes and letters of government and public offices, in the field of law, and in the society of the military forces, in all these fields and societies, Bungo was adopted until the end of the World War II. After the War, between 1946 and 1948, Bungo was taken over by Kōgo in every field of society including the above. However, according to my research<sup>22</sup> on classical expressions in modern Japanese sentences in 1965-68, more than 10 per cent of the Bungo-originated expressions were still being used.

## Chapter II

The spirit of the Education Code itself recognised the importance of learning from the national necessity for pragmatism, utilitarianism and realism. However, actual primary education was carried out in the traditional spirit of formalism and spiritual values which had overwhelmed the Edo higher education. What did the Genbun Itchi people think about this educational point when their basic philosophy was based upon utilitarianism? How could it be possible to relate Genbun Itchi with formalism or spiritual values in the field of primary education? To study this, the following viewpoints are to be taken into consideration:

- (a) To look at the opinions of the leading figures in the Genbun Itchi camp to find what was then said about education and their movement.
- (b) The national language textbooks compiled by the state were gradually changed into Kōgo from Bungo since the middle of the Meiji period. This change continued through the Taishō period up to the Shōwa period. Now, how and in what terms was it possible for the educational aim of the textbooks to co-exist with Kōgo? The former is based on formalism and spiritual values; whereas the latter is based on utilitarianism, pragmatism and realism.

### 1

- (a) **Ideas and opinions which made reference to the school education and the movement presented by the Genbun Itchi people.**

1. Maejima Hisoka, 1866, 1869, 1873 (years opinion expressed)  
 Japanese, who have a lively intellect, will be impoverished through their use of inconvenient and complicated Chinese characters. And it is an obstacle to the development of national power and learning.  
 In Japan education must be carried out by phonetic symbols (Japanese alphabet).<sup>1)</sup>
2. Fukuzawa Yukichi, 1873.  
 It is not necessary to force children to memorize difficult Chinese characters. It is of no use to force them to read Chinese texts by rote.<sup>2)</sup>
3. Nishi Amane, 1874.  
 If we write Japanese in Roman letters, even children and women can read.

---

1) *KBHSK*, pp. 92-3.

2) *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Even the common people can read books written by true gentlemen and are able to describe their own opinion.<sup>1)</sup>

4. Watanabe Shūjirō, 1875.

The reason why our education does not spread and the literary arts have declined is that the characters are so complicated and hard to study. This is a great obstacle. Therefore, we have to establish the grammar of the Tokyo language and then adopt the Japanese alphabet (Kana) and abandon the Chinese characters (Kanji). School textbooks also should adopt this method.<sup>2)</sup>

5. Tōkai Bunbukusai, 1882.

When difficult sentences are written with Chinese words mixed in, children will never understand them, even though the government builds many primary schools throughout Japan.<sup>3)</sup>

6. Katayama Atsuyoshi, 1885.

If the primary school textbooks and also agricultural and engineering books are written in language close to the Kōgo, the same as the European countries are doing, it is quite easy to understand the meaning of a sentence immediately after one reads it. Then primary school children can read happily and can memorize well. Naturally their minds become active and their bodies grow strong. There is no doubt of this. We'll have no ignorant people to be seen in the society from that time and the "enrichment and strengthening of the country" will take place.<sup>4)</sup>

7. Nakagawa Kojūrō and Masaki Masaki Masakichi, 1888.

The educational situations at present in our society are such that even in middle schools the teachers make the students use Japanese sentences mixed with Chinese words. Their aim seems to be Chinese sentences. Their method of teaching is subject to the idea that the Chinese sentence is the best. Therefore, from now on: 1. Provide teaching time for composition adopting Genbun Itchi. 2. Adopt Genbun Itchi in conversation classes. 3. Compile textbooks in Genbun Itchi.<sup>5)</sup>

To summarize the above, they thought that it was essential to cultivate individuality and to release the pragmatic and natural use of expressions from conservative Bungo in the primary school education in order to promote culture and civilization.

---

1) *KBHSK*, pp. 124-5.  
 2) *Ibid.*, 131.  
 3) *Ibid.*, p. 144.  
 4) *Ibid.*, pp. 267-8.  
 5) *Ibid.*, p. 406.

(b) **How and in what terms was it possible for the educational aim of the textbooks to co-exist with Kōgo?**

In other words, how could pragmatic and realistic ideas affect or be affected by spiritual values and formalism? To answer this, I have to look at the effects of the Genbun Itchi movement. The movement caused the formation of the "Genbun Itchi Kai" (society for Genbun Itchi) in the "Teikoku Kyōiku Kai" (imperial educational association) with voluntary members, such as teachers and intellectuals, who strongly wished to realize the aims of Genbun Itchi. This "Genbun Itchi" filed a petition with the Lower and Upper House - "Petition for Genbun Itchi Practice" (Genbun Itchi no jikkō ni tsuite no seigan) in February and March, 1901, and it was approved.<sup>1)</sup>

This Genbun Itchi Kai also presented a subject for discussion titled "Writings in primary school lessons are to be written in Genbun Itchi method" (Shōgakkō no kyōka no bunshō wa Genbun Itchi no hōshin ni yoru koto) to the "Zenkoku Rengō kyōiku Kai" (national united educational assembly) and was approved unanimously in 1901.<sup>2)</sup>

With the efforts of the Genbun Itchi Kai and the efforts which had been made inside the Ministry of Education since 1871,<sup>3)</sup> the national language textbooks were brought into a new stage.

The first state compiled textbooks (dai ikki kokutei kyōkasho) published in 1903, took in a great number of Kōgo sentences.<sup>4)</sup>

Thus the assertion of the Genbun Itchi Kai in the imperial educational association (Teikoku Kyōiku Kai) influenced the field of primary education. Why could the Genbun Itchi Movement be so influential even upon primary education? To answer, I point out these two things. Firstly there was the Education Code ideal of child-centred teaching and secondly there was a need for national unification.

As for the first, the Gakusei (Education Code) held that education aims at benefiting the people. From this point of view, education was recognized as a means to

1) *KBHSK*, p. 49. and on this point *Nihon no Gengo Seisaku no Kenkyū* (A study on language policy of Japan) written by Shioda Narikazu, published by Kuroshio shuppan, Tokyo, 1973, p. 45 states that in 1900, the Teikoku Kyōiku Kai filed a petition with the Upper House, Lower House, the Cabinet and each Ministry, "Petition for national language, letters and descriptive method improvement" (Kokuji kokugo kokubun no kairyō ni kansuru seigansho). In this petition it was requested to "decrease or abandon" Chinese characters.

2) *Ibid.*, p.49.

3) See *Ibid.* pp. 117-23, pp. 163-8, pp. 172-4. And also see *Nihon no Gengo Seisaku no Kenkyū*, Shioda Narikazu, pp. 123-7.

4) Refer to my M. A. thesis "Continuity in Edo and Early Meiji Education" tables of ratio between Bungo and Kōgo, Appendix 1, Australian National University, April, 1976.

obtain individual profit, based upon pragmatic and realistic thoughts. This reinforced the introduction of Western educational thoughts as well as skills. One of the most important events in the Meiji period is that children came to be regarded as an object or aim of education. Even though the educational materials and curriculum did not fit the children at the first stage of the Meiji period, the thought that the aim or object of education was not for others but for children became fixed in society. Education was given a role as a "means" for children and society, not the "aim" of children and society. It is no wonder that the Genbun Itchi people looked forward to their success in education which stood on the above-mentioned ground. Whether they realized it or not, the adoption of Kōgo in the textbooks and the thoughts on education could mean a change of values. The idea that education is to be adapted to children developed from the time when the first state-compiled textbooks were published. In the *Kokutei Kyōkasho Hensan Shuisho Shūsei*<sup>1)</sup> (Collection of prospectus for the state-compiled textbooks) we can see clear evidence of the development of the idea of "child first." I have selected some evidence as follows:

The presentation of the two types of Kana (48 letters)...made children's brains confused and unable to master the Kana....<sup>2)</sup>

As for teaching materials, we chose common items in each district of our country whenever possible. We selected items which are common to boys and girls. We chose the items which fit their mental development according to their grade levels...<sup>3)</sup>

We found that children mastered easily twenty simple Chinese characters while they are studying Kana (48 letters) in the first grade. To learn two types of Kana at the same time had given children trouble as we saw in the previous compilation, but as for Chinese character learning, children showed no trouble in learning Chinese characters. They rather seemed to be pleased with it. Therefore we believe it is not good to give children only Kana learning in the first grade.<sup>4)</sup>

Thus, thoughts of the "child first" or the "child-centredness" were found residing in the core of the educational ideas.

As for the second thing I want to point out the need for national unification, one of the criticisms levelled against Genbun Itchi group by the Bungo advocates, concerned the problem of dialect. It was the task of the Meiji Government to solve

---

1) *Kokutei Kyōkasho Hensan Shuisho Shūsei*, (hereafter as *KKHSS*) Teito Kyōiku Kenkyū Kai (ed.), Kyōiku Shoin, Tokyo, 20 June, 1933.

2) *KKHSS*, p. 5, Chap. 1, Part 3, contents of edition for the first compilation, "National Language," June 1900.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 3, "Main point of editing for the second compilation," November, 1910.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 20, Chap. 1, "Letters and symbols," the second compilation.

the problem of dialect.<sup>1)</sup>

As the Genbun Itchi people asserted the enrichment and strengthening of a country is advanced through the use of Kōgo, and to the government it must have been a tempting prospect.

These two factors – the “child-centredness” and national need for unification – had a major influence on education. As seen from the children’s point of view, this educational decision to use Kōgo in the textbooks brought children two kinds of possibilities: one was a widening of children’s latitude of expression, and another was the children’s increased subjective participation in education.

As seen from the government point of view, this decision brought the shift of Japan from a spiritual and formistic world to a pragmatic, rational and realistic world.

## 2

Now, how could the Kōgo live together with spiritualism or formalism? To answer this, I would like to look at these statements.

1. In the prospectus of the first compilation of the Shūshin (moral) textbooks (1902-1903), we read this:

In the ordinary primary school we adopted the Kōgo style in the sentences of the moral textbooks according to the grade level of the school children. We tried to arrange the sentences for the purpose of easy reading and understanding and also tried to keep the text sentences simpler than or at the same standard as the national language texts. Because of this children should not have any trouble reading difficult characters and sentences...<sup>2)</sup>

2. In the prospectus for the first compilation (1902-1903) of national language textbooks, we read:

Sentences (of the textbooks) were mainly written in Kōgo and the vocabulary was mainly chosen from the speech of the middle class of Tokyo so that they would know the standard of the national language. And we also tried to promote the unification of the national language....Bungo is included only for the purpose of improving reading ability and comprehension...<sup>3)</sup>

3. In the same prospectus, I found the following description:

Kōgo was adopted in all texts from Book One to Book Five up to the first semester of the 3rd grade. According to the children’s grade level at their school, we adopted polite expressions in all articles until Lesson 8, Book Five.... Because children have opportunities of seeing their seniors much more than their classmates, from Lesson 9 ordinary Kōgo was introduced as preparation for

---

1) See Shioda Narikazu’s *Nihon no Gengo Seisaku no Kenkyū*, p. 46, p. 86, pp. 128-30.

2) *KKHSS*, p. 11, Chap. 5, moral textbooks, for the first compilation.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 5, Chap. 1, Part 3, contents of the first compilation.

the use of Bungo....<sup>1)</sup>

4. In the prospectus for the second compilation (1904-1909) of the national language textbooks we find the following:

The old textbooks aimed at analysing sentences logically and grammatically in order to make children master those simple sentence so that they could approach more complicated sentences....But this method sacrificed literary taste....

Children of school age can talk and write more complex Kōgo than infants can speak. This is obvious from our experiences. As we realize it is better to adopt a more natural language, we took up a method of arranging articles from simple to complex and we expected to give expressions drawn as close as possible from natural colloquial language.<sup>2)</sup>

5. In the prospectus for the third compilation (1916-1923), the following is described.

In the previous compilation, new words were presented beginning with nouns, adjectives and verbs, and it proceeded to phrases and sentences. Then on page nineteen of the first volume, complete sentences were first introduced. But in many cases these words and phrases were used in the style of sentences when they talk in question-and-answer style for teaching. Because of this, we introduced those sentences as early as possible...also this method will avoid trouble caused by neglecting practical exercise of the words and sentences....

In the first volume we chose domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, horses, cows, and so on in order to respond to children's interests....

Volume two contains various kinds and lengths of sentences. The purpose of it is to let children begin learning Kōgo sentences....Chinese characters are expected to be taught to children over a long period of time. It is important for teachers to study the application of words and expressions rather than to teach only the Chinese characters....

In volume three, the lengths of lessons are not equal. The longest one goes up to nine pages and the shortest one is less than one page. This happened because we tried to give variation to the descriptions according to the teaching materials. As for the descriptions, we decided to respect children's words and their own observations, and because of that several articles were introduced which described mainly home life.<sup>3)</sup>

In summary:

1. Easy sentences and Chinese characters (Kanji) were selected in order to make children understand the contents more deeply and quickly.
2. The reason for the Kōgo style was to let them know the standard of the national language and to promote the unification of the language.
3. Polite expressions were adopted in the articles according to the children's grade level. The children's daily life was the focus of the Kōgo presentation.

---

1) *KKHSS*, p. 11.

2) *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9.

3) *Ibid.*, pp. 54-8.

4. Kōgo was brought more in line with children's real expressions.
5. (1) The presentation of the Kōgo sentences came early, in order to relate it to children's real life.
- (2) practice in the use of words and phrases is necessary.
- (3) Animal names, which children will be interested in, are chosen from children's daily life. In other words, to include things which children are interested in or which are closer to them was the aim.
- (4) The contents of the articles decided the length of the sentences; that is, to employ natural sentences fitting the contents.
- (5) Kanji learning is less important than understanding of the contents.
- (6) Children's own expressions and observations are to be respected.

According to this summary, the following figured analysis is possible.

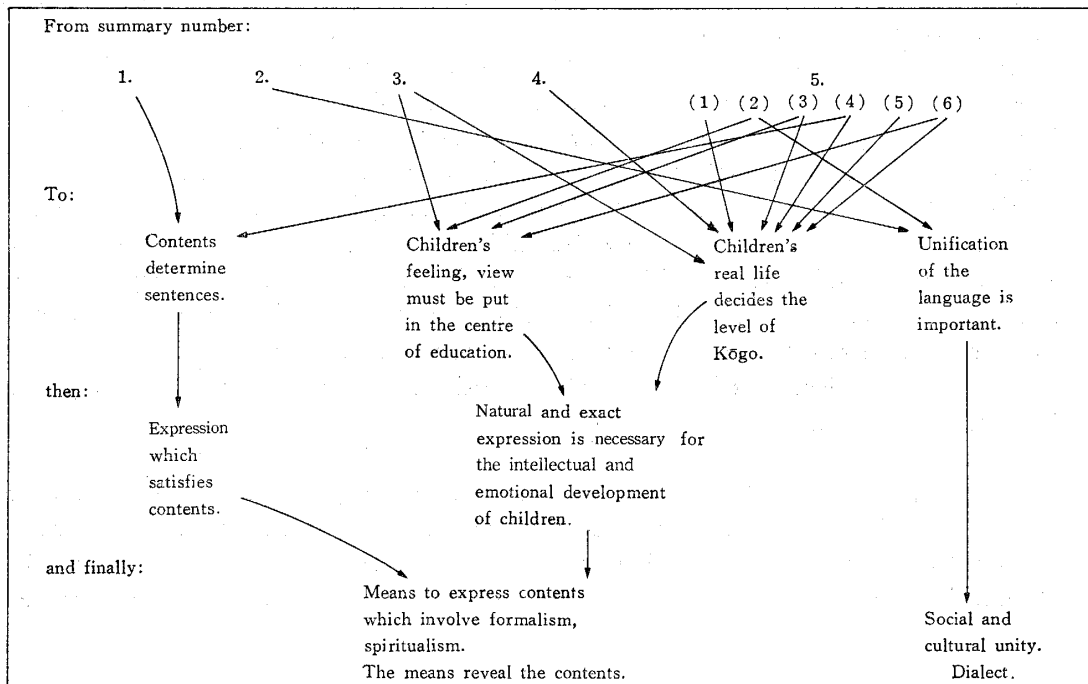


Figure 4.

Thus, Kōgo existed as an effective and powerful means to describe contents. The contents of the articles are now able to be transmitted directly into the children's heart, whether formalistic spiritualism or not. Before, the contents wore the decorative clothes of Bungo, and now, the contents put on the transparent clothing of Kōgo.

As we have seen, the Kōgo is not an aim but a means and the contents which are taken from children's real life became very important in education. Now then, have all problems been solved since that time? No. The above-mentioned thought on education which aimed at children's natural development conflicts with the governmental aim on education which aimed to cultivate the moral person. Then why? it

would not be an overestimation to say that to solve the "why" and "how" is to find the master key to Japanese education.

3

As I have stated in the previous section, "child-centredness" - "child first" thoughts and "contents-centredness" are the two essential factors in the late Meiji period.

These factors resulted in two kinds of attitudes in the children:

- A. It cultivates their individual thoughts.
- B. It brings them a sense of respect towards teaching contents, a sense of "object as absolute."

I will follow the argument from A:

Their independent, subjective thinking ability is supported by a spirit of doubt or the positive spirit. One hundred per cent of *ego* is required by this kind of spirit. Now, the ability to think independently allows children to doubt and criticise the current aims of education. This is the terminal goal of attitude A.

To turn to B, the thoughts of "object as absolute," this attitude is supported by two factors:

- (i) a factor which we can recognize as the traditional way of comprehending an object. The traditional way of comprehension is that one should abandon one's *ego* so that the object can come into one's heart directly. In order to admit an object one must make space for it; one has to make oneself nothing.

And by another factor, which is:

- (ii) an influence from surviving Bungo which was nearly 30 per cent in the final stage of every national language textbook. This factor (Bungo) is also supported by a kind of Kōgo (Kakikotoba Japanese) which refuses to live together with colloquial Japanese and dialect. I have to make a short comment on this. As I showed in the analysis graph in the previous section, the unification of the language was aimed at the dialect problem and at the goal of social and cultural unity. To dialect speakers, Kōgo (as a standard spoken language) learning was as much trouble as Bungo learning.

The *Prospectus for the second compilation* (1904-1909) tells this:

...but at this time our colloquial language (Kōgo) does not have any solid and firm standard yet. There are different (colloquial) languages among social groups and sexes...

It was sometimes difficult to copy purely natural languages contained in the school reader. Teachers are required to study how to make the

children practice their own language using the reading textbooks.<sup>1)</sup> Thus, learning of the Tokyo dialect sometimes was hard for those living in the provinces.

Thus, (i) and (ii) support B, the thought of the "object as absolute." Then this thought forces the children to make a self-sacrifice.

It may be argued that self-sacrifice and devotion were encouraged by the Japanese grammar system.<sup>2)</sup>

The characteristics of Japanese grammar can assist in development of devotion and self-sacrifice in children. Then, this devotion or self-sacrifice brings the attitude of faith or belief in "object as absolute." This is the terminal goal of attitude B.

Now, let us compare the goal of A and B. The goal of A is "doubt" and the goal of B is "belief." This is the reason why the *Gap* occurs. The following graph is a visual demonstration of the above analysis.

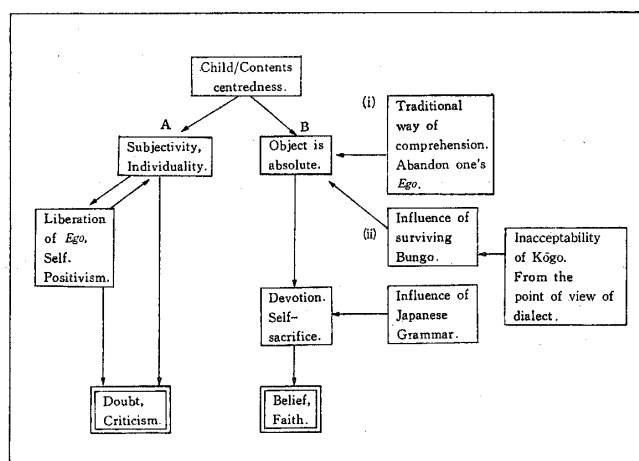


Figure 5.

1) *KKHSS*, p. 29.

2) The following are some relevant grammatical characteristics.

1. Omission of the subject when it is a first person.
2. Use of "yes" and "no." When one agrees to a speaker's question of what the speaker is asking, one uses "yes." And if one doesn't agree with the speaker's question, one uses "no." On the contrary, in English, one uses "yes" whenever one thinks it is right, and if one thinks it is wrong, uses "no." In short, in Japanese, "yes" and "no" are used when thinking about the other person's intention while in English "yes" and "no" are used from the point of view of what oneself thinks.
3. Verbs come at the end of the sentence. Sentences are finally determined by a verb which is put at the end of the sentence.
4. Sentence expression of the time and location. Generally the Japanese thought progresses from general to particular. For example, an address is written from prefecture, city, district to house number. These 3 and 4 mean that some external superior factor focuses and limits a point. A point cannot determine the external factor

### Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing discussion, two opposing ideas have come out. These two opposing ideas, formalism and pragmatism, can be seen as the basis of the Genbun Itchi Movement.

Realism, utilitarianism and pragmatism called for colloquial or popular expressions, while spiritualism, formalism and authoritarianism preferred written or traditional expressions.

The two groups have in common the fact that they are following the same values - the truth.

The traditional way of approaching the truth, which people called *Michi* or *Dō* (the way), was, after all, to adjust oneself to the objective existence or to become selfless. This method had now to be adapted to the pragmatic, utilitarian *Kōgo*. One of the aims of education is to transmit to younger generations values which people obtained from the truth. *Kōgo* was effective in transmitting the values. But *Kōgo* met a conflict with the traditional method of obtaining the truth. Thus, the ultimate gap which I have studied in this thesis still tragically exists. It is a gap between the two means: the means of obtaining the truth and the means of transmitting it.

The educational gap between the daily lives of school children and the governmental ideal remained unbridged while *Bungo* was used in the textbooks. Even after the textbooks were written in *Kōgo*, the gap between higher education and primary education, and the gap between rationalism and spiritualism remained. Although formalism lost the assistance of *Bungo*, it was still supported by the Japanese language itself and by the strong influence of its grammatical system.

For this reason, the gap between the two ideas is ascribable to the duality of the written and colloquial languages. This written language, the ground of the traditional Japanese spirit, was not completely altered by the Genbun Itchi Movement.

This fact suggests that the problem of the educational gap between pragmatism and spiritualism will continue as long as the Japanese people use the Japanese language.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ishii Takashi (eds.), *Bakumatsu Ishin ki no Kenkyū*. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, Tokyo, 1978.
- Kaneko Terumoto, *Meiji zenki Kyōtu Gyōseishi Kenkyū*. Kazama Shobō, Tokyo, 1968.
- Kindaigo Gakkai (ed.), *Kindaigo Kenkyū (2)*. Musashino Shoin, Tokyo, 1968.
- Kurasawa Gō, *Gakusei no Kenkyū*. Kōdansha, Tokyo, 1973.
- Kyōikushi Hensankai (ed.), *Meiji Ikō Kyōikuseido Hattatsushi (vols. 1-5)*. Ryūginsha, Tokyo, 1938-1939.
- Maeda Ai, *Bakumatsu Ishin Ki no Bungaku*. Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, Tokyo, 1972.
- Nihon Kindai Kyōikushi Kankōkai (ed.), *Nihon Kindai Kyōikushi*. Kōdansha, Tokyo, 1973.
- Sakata Yoshio, *Meiji Ishinshi* Miraisha, Tokyo, 1965.
- Shioda Narikazu, *Nihon no Gengo Seisaku no Kenkyū*. Kuroshio shuppan, Tokyo, 1973.
- Takahashi Bin, *Nihon Minshū Kyōikushi Kenkyū*. Miraisha, Tokyo, 1978.
- Teito Kyōiku Kenkyū Kai (ed.), *Kokutei Kyōkasho Hensan Shuisho Shūsei*. Kyōiku Shoin, Tokyo, 1933.
- Yamamoto Masahide,  
*Kindai Buntai Hassei no Shiteki Kenkyū*. Iwanami, Tokyo, 1965.  
*Kindai Buntai Keisei Shiryō Shūsei (Hasssi Hen, Seiritsu Hen)*. Ōfūsha, Tokyo, 1978-1979.