Title: Comments on N3528
Date: 2008-10-14
Source: Nozomu Katō (Individual Contribution)
References: N3528, N3388

Comments on N3528

The Japanese national body expressed some concerns in N3528 about the proposed Katakana character which I proposed in N3388. Firstly, they said, "During the dates, distinction of hiragana and katakana was unclear," and "We see no reason we need set of hiragana and katakana for the purpose of the sound distinction." However, whether the body needs or not, the proposed character is already used and found in modern scholarly books as a Katakana character. I think it is the most important fact on this subject.

The examples below are from Ogura (2001). The proposed Katakana character is also found here.

Example 1 The proposed KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E, along with エ.	なお，築島裕（1969）で取り上げられた ○ 950-015　妙法蓮華経玄賛 　「取ゥ(ヨ)」：「聞ェ」「肥(コ)ェ壮なり」 ○ 951-1　石山寺本蘇悉地羯羅経略疏天暦五年点 　「補桃菓ゥヒノ大（キナ）ルソ」「求メ得ゥ」：「見ェは」「超ェて」 などの平安中期（天暦年間）におけるア行「衣」とヤ行「江」が区別されている
Example 2 (right side) It says here that E and YE had merged in the 10th~11th century, so the E letter was lined up with YA, YO, YU letters in some syllabary chart.	を得たなりれはならないと考える。[14] る。10世紀末ないし11世紀初頭の成 音図には「イヨヤ ゥ ユ」とあって， あったとは認められないからである

This thesis can also be read at http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110002533669/, by clicking [CiNii (PDF)] logo at the top-right of the page. In other words, the proposed Katakana character is found even on the web.

Secondly, regarding the intended use, I feel there are some misunderstandings. My proposal (N3388) is never a challenge to the modern Japanese orthography. It is not my intention that the two proposed **obsolete** characters are used in modern Japanese. I expect that they are used mainly in scholarly text, and those who actually need and use them along with the already encoded Kana え (U+3048, HIRAGANA LETTER E) and エ (U+30A8, KATAKANA LETTER E) are those who understand what sounds these characters represented in the past.

The names of the proposed characters might have caused some confusion. Obsolete Kana ヰ (U+30F0) has been encoded in the BMP of UCS as KATAKANA LETTER WI. However, in spite of the name, this character is not pronounced as [wi] in modern Japanese but pronounced as [i] the same as イ (U+30A4, KATAKANA LETTER I), reflecting the fact that the phoneme /wi/ had once merged into /i/ by the 13th century. When the [wi] sound in a foreign word is described in Kana, the sequence ウィ or ウイ is usually used in modern Japanese. KATAKANA LETTER WI is not used for this purpose (see Example 3.)
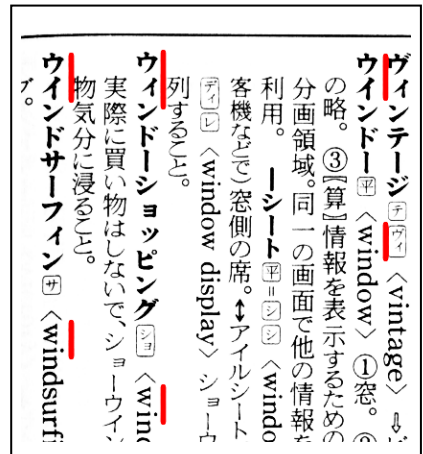
I think that the name of the character, KATAKANA LETTER WI, means "KATAKANA LETTER that was pronounced as WI in the past." I followed this precedent when I named the proposed characters. The name HIRAGANA LETTER YE means that "HIRAGANA LETTER that was pronounced as YE in the past," and the name KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E means that "KATAKANA LETTER that was pronounced as E from the beginning." Thus, the names of these obsolete Kana characters are merely indicating their original phonemes, and they are not representing their sounds that should be pronounced in our time. HIRAGANA LETTER E (え), KATAKANA LETTER E (エ) and the two proposed characters, all would be pronounced as [e] in modern Japanese. I do not think that confusion is caused by using KATAKANA LETTER E for representing its original phoneme /je/ in scholarly books.

By the way, Example 4 is from Ootsubo (2005). In this book, he used the pair of the proposed Katakana character and え for /e/; and the pair of エ and the proposed Hiragana one for /je/. This use is completely the same as shown in my proposal document N3388. As the Japanese national body said, this "intended use" may not be widely accepted, but it is surely used.

Thirdly, the Japanese national body said, "the shape Okumura proposed in his book for the letter is different from the one proposed in N3388." He surely used a different glyph from the proposed one. As Professor Norio Nakada (中田祝夫) commented at the end of *Kogen E-Ye-ben* (古言衣延辨) printed version issued in 1977, materials on which Okumura researched were not so many; and the proposed glyph came from the one of a character used mainly in old sutras owned by old temples, which scholars who lived in the Edo period like him did not have any chances to view. From these factors, I infer that he did not know the existence of the suitable glyph, so could not help creating his own Katakana character that represents /e/. To my knowledge, his glyph was and is not used by others than him (see also Appendix.)

Example 3

From *Shūeisha Japanese dictionary*, printed in 1993. (集英社国語辞典)

Example 4

At the end, regarding the attachments in N3528, I would like to say two things. The author of attachment number 5 in N3528, Professor Katsuaki Numoto (沼本克明) , used エ for /e/ and 江 for /je/ in that book, however, as I informed the Japanese national body on May 31, I already received approval from him for my proposal, so I expect that he will use both the proposed Kana characters once they become available on computers.

In addition, please note that the author's name of attachment 1 and 4 in N3528, Professor Hiroshi Tsukishima (築島裕), appears in Example 1 shown at the top of this document. In the part, the author of Example 1 in this document quoted from a book written by Professor Tsukishima. Id est, the proposed KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E is also found in his at least one book, along with the proposed HIRAGANA LETTER YE (see Examples 5 below.)

Examples 5

From Tsukishima (1969)

Conclusion

In my view, the Japanese national body seems to oppose using KATAKANA LETTER E (エ) as a letter for representing the [je] sound, rather than encoding KATAKANA LETTER ORIGINAL E itself. However, as I explained above, encoding this letter is not intended to change a sound that KATAKANA LETTER E represents in modern Japanese.

Reading N3528, I also felt that the Japanese national body did not mind substituting Ideograph 江 (U+6C5F) for a Kana character to represent /je/ or [je]. Then I think that the body can promote pairing the proposed Kana character with Ideograph 江 instead of KATAKANA LETTER E (エ) which I intended. It would be decided by users which way is more appropriate.

I hope both the proposed Kana characters to be accepted at the meeting.

Bibliography

1. Ogura, Hajime. (2001). *The Process of the Merger of 衣([e]) and 江([je]) in Old Japanese,* Kokugogaku Vol. 52, No.1. Tōkyō: The Society for Japanese Linguistics.
   小倉肇 (2001) 「『衣』と『江』の合流過程」『国語学』第 52 巻 1 号, 国語学会（現・日本語学会）
2. Ootsubo, Heiji. (2005). *Ishiyamaderabon Daichidoron Koten no Kokugogakuteki Kenkyū* Vol.1. Tōkyō: Kazama Shobō.
   大坪併治 (2005) 『石山寺本大智度論古點の國語學的研究 上』風間書房
3. Tsukishima, Hiroshi. (1969). *Heian Jidaigo Shinron*. Tōkyō: University of Tōkyō Press.
   築島裕 (1969) 『平安時代語新論』東京大学出版会

Appendix

While the glyph of the proposed Katakana character came from the first three strokes of U+8863, Ideograph 衣 (blue parts of the character shown below); the one Okumura created came from the last three strokes of the same character (red parts.)

衣