



**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CONF.79/INF/11  
18 August 1987

ENGLISH ONLY

---

Fifth United Nations Conference  
on the Standardization of  
Geographical Names  
Montreal, 18-31 August 1987  
Item 5(e) of the provisional agenda\*

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION  
TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR MAP AND OTHER EDITORS

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

Paper submitted by Japan

---

\* E/CONF.79/1.

## Toponymic Guidelines for Maps and Other Editors

( Item No.5e of the Provisional Agenda )

### 1.The National Language

Japan is a unilingual country, Japanese being the only official language spoken across the country. Some years ago there were Japanese in the northern island of Hokkaido who spoke a different language, but they did not have their own script. Today they no longer speak their original language. Ainu, their language, remains only in geographical names and in their epics called Yûkara, which have been handed down orally to the present generation.

### 2.The Script

The Japanese language is written in three ways; in "Kanji", or Chinese Han characters, and in the "Hiragana (or Hirakana)" and "Katakana" syllabaries. "Kanji" characters were introduced from China some 1,800 years ago. Over the years, their forms have been simplified and their number gradually reduced, so that today only 1,945 "Kanji" characters are officially in use, with other 166 "Kanji" recognized for personal names and a further 205 old-fashioned "Kanji" accepted also for personal names.

The "Kana" syllabaries were derived in Japan about 1,000 years ago, with their forms based on "Kanji" characters. There are two kinds of "Kana", the "Hiragana" and "Katakana". The "Hiragana" syllabary script is derived from extremely simplified "Kanji" characters but written in a flowing long-hand style.( See Annex 1 ) The "Katakana",

on the other hand, is formed from parts of "Kanji" characters. ( See Annex2 ) Both "Kana" syllabaries are derived from Chinese Han characters with the same pronunciation as the syllabaries. The syllabaly characters have no meaning in themselves. They merely serve as a kind of alphabet.

Annex-1. The origin of Hiragana

∨	和	良	也	末	波	奈	太	左	加	安
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ
	為	利		美	比	仁	知	之	幾	以
	ゐ	り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い
		留	由	武	不	奴	州	寸	久	宇
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う
	惠	礼		女	部	祢	天	世	計	衣
	ゑ	れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え
	遠	呂	与	毛	保	乃	止	曾	己	於
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お

- Remarks. 1. Odd lines ..... Kanzi  
2. Even lines ..... Hiragana

Annex-2. The origin of Katakana

∨	和	良	也	万 末	八	奈	多	敵	加	阿
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア
	井	利		三	比	二	千	之	幾	伊
	キ	リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ
		流	由	牟	不	奴	州	須	久	宇
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ
	惠	礼		女	部	祢	天	世	介	江
	エ	レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ
	乎	呂	与	毛	保	乃	止	曾	己	於
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ

- Remarks. 1. Odd lines ..... Kanzi  
2. Even lines ..... Katakana

In the past, official Japanese documents were written in a combination of "Kanji" and "Katakana". Today, a combination of "Kanji" and "Hirakana" is used in official documents, "Katakana" being used only for imported words or proper nouns such as personal names, commodity names and geographical names.

### 3. Pronunciation

"Kanji" characters are pronounced in two ways. One is the original pronunciation introduced from ancient China and called "On"; the other called "Kun" being the Japanese pronunciation. In general, "Kanji" characters have more than two pronunciations, and their pronunciation is decided depending on the combination in which they are used and their function in a sentence.

	"Kun" pronunciation	"On" pronunciation
Example 1.	朝 御 飯 asa go han (breakfast)	朝 食 tyō syoku (breakfast)
Example 2.	考 え る kanga e ru (think)	思 考 す る si kō su ru (think)
Example 3.	小 さ い ti sa i (little)	小 丘 syō kyū (small hill)
	小 刀 ko gatana (knife)	
	小 川 o gawa (small stream)	

The "Kana" character is not a character indicating a single sound, but a syllable having its own pronunciation. When it is necessary to write the voiced or half-voiced sound, the mark "ゝ" or "・" is added. (See Annex 3) In

case of a lengthened vowel, あ is added to the あ line, い to the い line, う to the う line, え to the え line, and お to the お line ( and not お ) as shown in Annex 3.

Example.	かあ	さん	にい	さん	くう	き
	kā	sa n	ni	sa n	kū	ki
	(mother)		(elder brother)		(air)	
	ねえ	さん	とう	さん		
	nē	sa n	tō	sa n		
	(elder sister)		(father)			

In case of the contracted sound, three characters や , ゆ , and よ are written to the right and slightly below the character to be contracted. ( See Annex 3 )

Example.	ちゃ	く	せ	き	きゅう	ゆう
	tya	ku	se	ki (sit down)	kyū	yū (classmate)
	ちゃ					
	tya (tea)					

In the case of the double consonant, or assimilated sound, the character っ is written to the right and slightly below the character to be assimilated.

Example.	がっこう
	gakkō (school)

"Kana" is a complete syllabary as explained above and the entire Japanese language may be written in the "Kana" syllabary without use of "Kanji" characters.

#### 4. Spelling Rules for Geographical Names

Japanese spelling rules for geographical names follow, in principle, Japanese official spelling rules. Geographical names, however, are somewhat peculiar, having historical backgrounds, and there are frequent instances of old-fashioned characters not used in official documents being

used in geographical names. Exceptional "Kanji" characters used in geographical names are believed to number some 8,500. In "Hiragana" two characters ゐ (i) and え (e) in the ゐ line, and in "Katakana", い (i) and え (e) in the ろ line are added. ( See Annex 3 )

Japanese geographical names are written in "Kanji" characters and in "Hiragana" and "Katakana" syllabaries, each name having its own script form. There are four ways of writing geographical names in Japanese.

1) Names written only in Kanji

Example. 東京都            京都市            富士山  
Tōkyō To            Kyōto Si            Huzi San

2) Names written only in katakana

Example. サマッカリ   ヌプリ   アトサ   ヌプリ   アネジ   グリ  
Samakkari   Nupuri   Atosa   Nupuri   Anezi   Guri

3) Names written in a mixture of Kanji and Hirakana

Example. 火 箭 の 辻            七 つ 岩            む つ み   村  
Hiya-no-Tuzi            Nanatu-Iwa            Mutumi   Mura

4) Names written in a mixture of Kanji and Katakana

Example. ハ   ケ   岳            孤   コモネ            鷲   ノ   崎  
Yatu-ga-Dake            Kitunekomone            U-no-Saki

Besides the above ways of writing geographical names, a very few geographical names are written only in "Hiragana".

Because "Kanji" with several different pronunciations and some old-fashioned characters are used for geographical names, readers are frequently confused regarding their correct pronunciation. To avoid these difficulties "Hirigana" in either the "Hiragana" or "Katakana" script are written alongside the difficult-to-read "Kanji" to guide the reader in pronouncing the "Kanji" correctly. In the

past, "Katakana" was used as "Hurigana", but today "Hiragana" is used more widely for this purpose. "Kana" is used as phonetic signs in this case.

	いづも へいや	おな がわ わん
Example.	出 雲 平 野	女 川 湾
	(Izumo Heiya)	(Ona-gawa Wan)

Without "Hurigana" the above geographical names may be erroneously read in the following ways.

	(Dekumo Heiya		(Me-Sen Wan
	(Degumo Heiya		(Zyo-Sen Wan
	(Izugumo Heiya		(Nyo-Sen Wan
出 雲 平 野	(Izukumo Heiya	女 川 湾	(Onna-Kawa Wan
	(Syutuun Heiya		(Onna-Gawa Wan
	(Idegumo Heiya		(Ona-Kawa Wan
	(Idekumo Heiya		

#### 5. Composition of geographical names

Almost all Japanese geographical names are compound nouns composed of a specific terms and a generic term. The specific term comes in the first part of the names and the generic term forms the after part of the name. The specific term gives the individual meaning and the generic term indicates the geographical feature. The generic term written in "Kanji" also has many pronunciations due to the complexities of "Kanji" pronunciation and differences in dialect. In the names for natural features, there are many names for natural features of the same category based on differences in shape, size and the surroundings in which the natural feature is located.



Annex-3. Table of Japanese Kana and Roman Script

ア あ a	イ い i	ウ う u	エ え e	オ お o				
カ か ka	キ き ki	ク く ku	ケ け ke	コ こ ko	キヤ きゃ kya	キユ きゅ kyu	キョ きょ kyo	
サ さ sa	シ し si (shi)	ス す su	セ せ se	ソ そ so	シャ しゃ sya (sha)	シュ しゅ syu (shu)	ショ しょ syo (sho)	
タ た ta	チ ち ti (chi)	ツ つ tu (tsu)	テ て te	ト と to	チャ ちゃ tya (cha)	チュ ちゅ tyu (chu)	チョ ちょ tyo (cho)	
ナ な na	ニ に ni	ヌ ぬ nu	ネ ね ne	ノ の no	ニヤ にゃ nya	ニユ にゅ nyu	ニョ にょ nyo	
ハ は ha	ヒ ひ hi	フ ふ fu (fu)	ヘ へ he	ホ ほ ho	ヒヤ ひゃ hya	ヒユ ひゅ hyu	ヒョ ひょ hyo	
マ ま ma	ミ み mi	ム む mu	メ め me	モ も mo	ミヤ みゃ mya	ミユ みゅ myu	ミョ みょ myo	
ヤ や ya		ユ ゆ yu		ヨ よ yo				
ラ ら ra	リ り ri	ル る ru	レ れ re	ロ ろ ro	リヤ りゃ rya	リュ りゅ ryu	リョ りょ ryo	
ワ わ wa	*キ ゐ i		*エ ゑ e	ヲ を o				
ン ん n								
ガ が ga	ギ ぎ gi	グ ぐ gu	ゲ げ ge	ゴ ご go	ギヤ ぎゃ gya	ギユ ぎゅ gyu	ギョ ぎょ gyo	
ザ ざ za	ジ じ zi (ji)	ズ ず zu	ゼ ぜ ze	ゾ ぞ zo	ジャ じゃ zya (ja)	ジュ じゅ zyu (ju)	ジョ じょ zyo (jo)	
バ ば ba	ビ び bi	ブ ぶ bu	ベ べ be	ボ ぼ bo	ビヤ びゃ bya	ビユ びゅ byu	ビョ びょ byo	
パ ぱ pa	ピ ぴ pi	プ ぷ pu	ペ ぺ pe	ポ ぽ po	ピヤ ぴゃ pya	ピユ ぴゅ pyu	ピョ ぴょ pyo	

Remarks. 1st line.....Katakana. 2nd line.....Hiragana.  
 3rd line.....Kunrei-siki. 4th line.....Modified Hebon (Hepburn) siki.  
 \*.....Used only for personal names and geographical names.

Table-1 Generic terms of the geographical name in Japan

Generic term			Meaning	Category
Japanese	Roman S.	English		
都	To	.....	Capital city. Only for Tokyo	Generic terms for primary admin. div.
道	Dō	.....	Primary administrative division. Only for Hokkaido	
府	Hu	.....	Primary admin. division. Only for Oosaka and Kyoto	
県	Ken	prefecture	Generic name for primary administrative division	
区	Ku	ward	Special admin. division of Tokyo	
郡	Gun	.....	Sub-division of primary administrative division	
市	Si	city	Secondary administrative div. with high population density	Generic terms for secondary admin. div.
町	Mati, Tyō	town	Secondary administrative div. with medium pop. density	
村	Mura, Son	village	Secondary administrative div. with low population density	
区	Ku	ward	Secial administrative divisions in large cities	
町	Mati, Tyō	.....	Division of Si, Mati or Mura with relatively high population	Generic terms for tertiary admin. div.
丁目	Tyōme	.....		
大字	Ōaza	.....	Sub-division of tertiary admin. div. with low population	
小字	Koaza	.....	Sub-division of Ōaza	
山地	Santi	mountains	Natural area where many mountains are concentrated	
山脈	Sanmyaku	mountain range	Natural area where many mountains are ranged	
高地	Kōti	high land	Natural area where high mountains are concentrated	
高原	Kōgen	Plateau	Low relief area in the highlands	
丘陵	Kyūryō	hills	Natural area where low mountains are concentrated	
平野	Heiya	plain	Low and flat natural area	
野	No	field	Traditional term for plain	
原	Hara (Bara)			
原野	Genya		Plain where original features still remain	
盆地	Bonti	basin	Low, flat area surrounded by mountains	
台地	Daiti	upland	Flat area at a higher elevation than surroundings	

Generic term			Meaning	Category
Japanese	Roman S.	English		
半島	Hantō	peninsula	Natural area pushing into the sea or lake	Generic terms of natural features
諸島	Syotō	islands	Natural area including some islands	
群島	Guntō		Natural area where many islands form a chain	
列島	Rettō			
山	Yama, San (Zan), Sen	mountain	Generic name for mountains	Mountains and Hills
岳	Take (Dake)		High and big mountain	
森	Mori		Mountain covered with thick forest	
峰	Mine		Mountain, originally meaning peak	
嶺	Mine, Rei Ryō		Mountain having a range of peaks	
原	Hara (Bara)		Mountain having a flat area at the top	
城	Zyō		Mountain like a strong castle	
富士	Huzi		Mountain like Mount Huzi	
ヌプリ	Nupuri		Mountain in Ainu language	
鼻	Hana (Bana)		Mountain with a peak resembling a nose	
頭	Kasira (Gasira)		Mountain with a peak resembling a head	
平	Taira, Dai		Mountain having a flat land at the top	
台	Dai		plateau	
岡	Oka	hill	Low mountain	
丘				
塚				
峠	Tōge, Tao (Dao)	pass	Pass in relatively high hill or mountain terrain	
峠	Tawa, Tō		Pass in lowlands	
越	Koe (Goe) Gosi		Pass originally meaning "go across"	
坂	Saka (Zaka)	slope	Slope near a pass	Pass

Generic term			Meaning	Category
Japanese	Roman S.	English		
川	Kawa (gawa)	river, stream	Generic term for river or stream	River and valley
瀬	Se		A rapid flowing, shallow-bottomed river	
沢	Sawa (Zawa)	valley	Wide valley in the mountains	
谷	Tani (Dani)		Generic term for valley	
溪谷	Keikoku		Narrow and long valley	
峡谷	Kyōkoku	canyon	Narrow valley whose banks are high and steep	
峡	Kyō			
運河	Unga	canal	Navigable, man-made waterway	Artificial waterways
水路	Suiro	waterway	Man-made waterway for irrigation	
放水路	Hōsuiro	.....	Artificial waterway for discharging flood waters	
疏水	Sosui	.....	Artificial waterway for water supply and irrigation	
堰	Hori	.....		
水道	Suidō	.....		
用水	Yōsui	.....		
砂丘	Sakyū	sand dune	Sand hill formed by winds	Coast
海岸	Kaigan	seacoast	Generic term for sea coast	
浜	Hama	coast	Coast of sea or lake	
磯	Iso	.....	Beach full of rebbles and stones	
浦	Ura	.....	Shore of sea or lake	
洲	Su	sand bar	Sandy land emerging above the water	
岬	Misaki	cape, point	Generic term for cape or point	
崎	Saki (Zaki)		Generic term for cape or point. In the past each term has a different meaning	
埼				
司				
鼻	Hana (Bana)		Cape or point resembling a nose	
首	Kubi		Cape of point resemailng a neck	

Generic term			Meaning	Category
Japanese	Roman S.	English		
島	Sima (Zima), Tō	island, islet	Generic term for island	Island, Islet
岩	Iwa		Islet, from image of rock	
離	Hanare, Banari		Islet, from image of detached land	
石	Isi, Iwa		Islet, from image of stone	
瀬	Se	islet, reef	Sea with fast running currents or islets in such seas	Islet, Sea
礁	Hae (Bae) Syō, Be		Islets originally meaning rock, sandbar or underwater reef. Also used in original meanings	Islet, Sandbar, Reef
碇	Hae (Bae)			
碇				
碇				
根	Ne			
湖	Ko	lake, pond	Generic term for lake or pond	Lake, Pond
沼	Numa, Tō		Shallow and muddy lake	
池	Ike, Ti		Pond originally meaning the standing water	
浦	Ura		Lake originally meaning the water standing land	
入江	Irie	lagoon	Bay separated from the sea by sand bars	
潟	Kata (Gata)		Generic term for lagoon	
海	Umi	sea	generic term for sea	sea
洋	Yō	ocean	Generic term for ocean	
瀬	Nada	.....	Seas close to shore where high waves occur	
内海	Naikai	inland sea	Generic term for inland sea	
灣	Wan	bay	generic term for bay	
入江	Irie		Small navigable bay	
海峡	Kaikyō	strait, channel	Generic term for straits or channel	
水道	Suidō			
瀬戸	Seto		Relatively narrow channel	

Generic term			Meaning	Category
Japanese	Roman S.	English		
海盆	Kaibon	basin	Generic term for sea basin	Sea bottom
海溝	Kaikō	trench	Generic term for sea trench	
海谷	Kaikoku	canyon, valley	Generic term for sea canyon or valley	
海淵	Kaien	deep	Generic term for deep	
海釜	Kaihu	caldron	Generic term for caldron	
海壕	Kaikyo	canyon	Sea canyon running parallel to continental shelf	
海膨	Kaihō	rise, arch, swell	Generic term for sea rise, arch or swell	
海嶺	Kairei	ridge	Generic term for sea ridge	
海台	Kaidai	plateau	Generic term for sea plateau	
海山	Kaizan	seamount	Generic term for sea mountain	
海丘	Kaikyō	hill, knoll	Generic term for sea hill or knoll	
平頂海山	Heityōkaizan	tablemount, guyot	Generic term for tablemount or guyot	
海山群	Kaizangun	seamount group	Generic term for seamount group	
深海平原	Sinkaiheigen	abyssal plain	Generic term for abyssal plain	
大陸棚	Tairikudana	continental shelf	Generic term for continental shelf	
断列帯	Danretutai	fracture zone	Generic term for fracture zone under the sea	
堆	Tai	bank	Generic term for sea bank	