

Old Korean Writing on Wooden Tablets and its Implications for Old Japanese Writing*

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The texts inscribed on wooden tablets¹ (*mokgan* 木簡) contain many examples of Korean *hanja* 漢字, unique characters developed and used in Korea. The fact that a few examples of these Korean *hanja* from Silla 新羅 resemble *gugyeolja* 口訣字 in shape enables us to hypothesize that *gugyeolja* attested in later periods might find their origins in these Korean *hanja* used on *mokgan*. In addition, some Korean *hanja* may also be observed in ancient Japanese texts, which supports the notion that Japanese writing practice was influenced by the notational conventions of the peninsula. In Japan, the origin of the use of both phonetic and semantic readings of Chinese characters can be traced to Baekje, and the use of what is now known as *okuri-gana* 送り假名 may be closely related to Silla's conventions of *hunju eumjong* 訓主音從 and *mareum cheomgi* 末音添記. The historical change from an *on-gana* 音假名-based writing system to a *kun-gana* 訓假名-based practice in ancient Japan can be understood as the shift from following the notational conventions of Baekje to following those of Silla.

Keywords: wooden tablet, *mokgan*, Chinese character, Korean *hanja*, *gugyeol*, *idu*, Japanese *kana*

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1. Decipherments discussed in this paper are based on the author's independent analysis.

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