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JAPANESE ONOMATOPEs and the ORIGIN of LANGUAGE. By
W. G. ASTON, C.M.G.

THIS paper was suggested by the following passage in Dr. Tylor's "Primitive Culture":—

"The time has now come for a substantial basis to be laid for Generative Philology. A classified collection of words with any strong claim to be self-expressive should be brought together out of the thousand or so of recognised languages and dialects of the world. In such a Dictionary of Sound-words, half the cases cited might very likely be worthless, but it would show on a large scale what particular sounds have manifested their fitness to convey particular ideas by having been repeatedly chosen among different races to convey them."

CHAPTER I.

Phonetic System of Japanese.

The phonetic system of the Japanese language is by no means well adapted for onomatopœia. The older language adheres strictly to the rule that every syllable must consist of a vowel or of a consonant followed by a vowel, as E-no-shi-ma, thus excluding all final consonants, all double consonants, and all combinations of consonants.

Onomatopoetic effects such as we have in scrunch, shock, slap, clap, snap, &c., were therefore impossible. The sounds *p*, *x*, *ng*, *th*, and *l* are wanting in the older Japanese, and there are only five vowel sounds, viz., *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*.¹ Certain combinations of consonants and vowels are avoided. *f* is only found before *u*, and *h* before the other vowels. For *si* a Japanese says *shi*; for *ti*, *chi*; for *di* or *zi*, *ji*; for *tu*, *tsu*; and for *du*, *dzu*. *Tsu* and *dzu* are merely the Japanese way of saying *tu* and *du*, and the combination of consonants is therefore more apparent than real. The phonetic resources of the modern language are somewhat more extensive. It admits of double, but not of combined consonants, and it has one final consonant, viz., *n*. The letter *p* has also been revived (the prehistoric language probably had it), partly in imitation of the Chinese, and partly because it was

¹ The Royal Geographical Society's spelling has been followed. Pronounce vowels as in Italian, consonants as in English. As a rule avoid the shut sounds of vowels.

found suitable for onomatopoes, to which its use in Japanese words is almost exclusively confined. This is an instance of onomatopoeia providing a corrective to the general tendency of phonetic decay.

The modern language supplies most of the examples in the following lists. A good number are taken from a collection kindly lent me by Professor Chamberlain.

Notwithstanding the poverty of its phonetic system, the Japanese language is rich in onomatopoes. The popular literature abounds with them, and the speech of the people has many more which rarely find their way into books.

CHAPTER II.

Words Representing Significant Inarticulate Vocal Sounds.

An onomatopoe may be defined as the artistic representation of an inarticulate sound or noise by means of an articulate sound.¹ But it will be convenient first to consider a small but important class of onomatopoes, if they should be called so, to which this description is not quite applicable, viz., the articulate sounds which represent inarticulate significant human vocal sounds. The English words Oh ! no ! hush ! (in Japanese *O*, *ina*, *na* or *nu*, and *woshi*) may be taken as types of this class of words, for which it could be wished that there were some better general term than Interjection. They come before ordinary onomatopoes in the development of human speech, and differ from them, firstly, in being formed from sounds which are already significant, and secondly, because they are not so much imitations as modifications of these sounds by a gradual process. It will be readily seen that they occupy quite a different position in the history of language from onomatopoes like bow-wow, cock-a-doodle-doo, rat-tat, &c. The latter, as is obvious from their very nature as articulate and artistic imitations of inarticulate sounds, belong necessarily to a period when a system of articulate sounds had been already established, and considerable progress therefore made in the acquirement of the art of speech. Indeed most of them are of quite recent origin, and bear upon them the distinctive marks, not merely of the language to which they belong, but not infrequently of its most modern form. Whether any were originally inarticulate imitations of non-human sounds, which subsequently received a more articulate character, may be

¹ There is a kindred art, viz., that of the *exact* imitation of animal cries and other sounds, successfully practised by some of our undergraduates and other young people, as well as by tame ravens and parrots. It probably played some part in the development of language, but I can only mention it here.

left an open question. The analogy of the lower animals leads us to infer that mankind occupied themselves for a long time with their own natural cries before taking the trouble to imitate for purposes of expression sounds not of their own making. It is true that the parrot in captivity and under human tuition learns to imitate other cries and sounds than its own, and even occasionally to attach some sort of meaning to them. But a natural progress even as far as this very limited degree of development is quite another thing, and marks a much more advanced condition of intelligence.

It would appear, therefore, that while onomatopœia in the ordinary sense of the word may and does explain the origin of a vast number of individual words, it can throw little or no light on the problem of the origin of the art of speech. How did mankind from expressing a few simple ideas only by a few inarticulate sounds become able to express many and complicated ideas by a variety of articulate sounds? Put in this way, the question suggests its own answer, viz., that it must have been by the simultaneous differentiation of the ideas on the one hand and of the sounds on the other. But such general formulæ have little value, when unaccompanied by some evidence of the manner in which this development took place. Before enquiring, however, whether any traces of such a process are to be found in the Japanese language, which from its more transparent nature as an agglutinative tongue may be presumed to afford greater facilities for such an examination, let me draw attention for a moment to the significant natural cries which form as it were the raw material of this process. We have them still with us, as certain merits of their own have prevented them from being altogether superseded by more conventional modes of expression. Proof is afforded of their primitive character by the fact that they are everywhere almost¹ identical.

The natural cry should not be confounded, as is sometimes done, with the articulate word which is its outcome. The cry *oh!* extorted from us by pain or fright differs sensibly from the *oh!* of polite conversation. The latter may seem the simplest of sounds, and it may be difficult to conceive of a time when it formed no part of the human vocabulary. Many would affirm that it is a mere natural utterance with nothing conventional or artificial about it. Yet we shall find that in order to say *oh!* we must, firstly, compress the lungs by means of the muscles of the abdominal wall and the internal intercostals and triangularis sterni in the chest—secondly, the vocal chords must be rendered tense by the crico-thyroid muscles, thirdly—— But I will spare

¹ The bifurcation of human language may be traced even in these non-articulate utterances. Cocks of different breeds do not crow alike.

this Institute the enumeration of the muscles required to bring the vocal chords into the proper position for vibration, to lower the jaw, to draw down the tongue into the floor of the mouth where it will be out of the way, to part and protrude the lips, and to close the passage of the nose. Suffice it to say, on the authority of one of our most eminent anatomists, that this simple-seeming oh! requires for its production the combined action in an instant of time of about forty muscles. The steps in this complicated process as far as lowering the jaw (inclusive) are necessary to produce even an inarticulate oh! To the pre-articulate man the others must have been unknown or practised by him in a meaningless hap-hazard fashion. He had not learnt to differentiate his utterances so elaborately. Even the civilised man from negligence or under excitement readily omits some or all of these precautions and reverts in a greater or less degree to the natural unsophisticated cry. But for the civilised articulate oh! of ordinary speech they are all indispensable. It is obvious that no one person could have invented all these contrivances and imposed them on his fellow men. They must have been introduced one after another at various times and in many independent quarters. Mankind in general adopted them gradually by a process which must have extended over hundreds of generations, and is not quite complete at the present day. This is a totally different thing from the formation of a word like cock-a-doodle-doo, which is as much a work of individual genius as Hamlet or the Laocoön. The result, however, is the same, viz., the substitution of an articulate for an inarticulate sound.

These natural cries were perhaps originally not significant. But it is unnecessary here to carry further back an examination which may better be left to the enquirer who will continue the work begun by Darwin in his "Expression of the Emotions."

Natural cries may be classified as follows:—1st, Shouts and shrieks; 2nd, Grunts; and 3rd, Hisses. This division corresponds in a general way to the vowels, nasals, and aspirates of more articulate speech.

Shouts comprise all inarticulate sounds made with the mouth freely open; in grunts, the sound comes through the nose, the mouth being closed or nearly so; in hisses, the aid of the vocal chords is dispensed with, and the passage of the mouth much contracted.

Shouts and Shrieks.

In Japanese, shouts are represented chiefly by the interjections *a* and *o* as in so many other languages; shrieks by *i*. Shouts differ from grunts and hisses in being audible to a much

greater distance, a circumstance which greatly enhances their importance.

The first differentiation of the shout was by means of variations of tone, which are still essential in this class of words. It matters little whether you say oh! ah! or aw! if you only give the right intonation.

The principal words of this kind in Japanese are—

- A* or *ā* An exclamation of pain, grief, or admiration, corresponding to our Ah! It is the base of the interjections *ana*, of surprise or grief, *aware*, of pity, *appare*, of admiration, and *aita*, of pain. The last, however, is a combination of *a* with the root of the conventional word *itaki*, painful.
- Aara* In a modern poem this word occurs as an onomatopoe for a dying groan.
- Wa* After a word *A* becomes *Wa*, in order to avoid a hiatus, which is as objectionable in Japanese as in other languages. It has a purely exclamatory force in *Ara!* for *Are wa*, that, *Kora*, for *Kore wa*, this, taunting phrases something like “there you go!” Its more usual force, however, is that described by a native grammarian as follows, “*Wa* has somewhat of an exclamatory force and is a particle which possesses the meaning as it were of choosing out and separating a thing or an action from among a number.” As a distinctive or separating particle it is very frequently used to mark out the subject of a sentence, and has therefore been taken by some writers for the sign of the nominative case. It is not really so, however, as it is joined to other cases as well. It would be more correct to describe it as an imperfectly developed case sign.
- After verbs *Wa* usually assumes the form *ba*, and it then becomes the sign of the conditional mood.
- Wā* or *wā-wā*¹ ... A clamorous shout. Hence *wameku* (°O.L.), to clamour, to shout. Cf. French brouhaha.
- Ya* This word varies in meaning from an exclamatory to an interrogative particle. In the latter capacity it takes a place in the grammatical system of the language. *Ya* is sometimes a mark of the vocative case, and it also

¹ The functions of reduplication are very restricted in Japanese grammar. It has been stated that the plural of nouns is formed in this way. But this is not quite correct. It is true that the pronoun *ware* has such a plural and a very few nouns are reduplicated with the same meaning as is given by our prefixing the word “every,” or “some,” in English, as *Kuni-guni*, every country; *hitobito*, everybody; *toki-doki*, sometimes. Some verbs have their roots reduplicated, as *tataku*, to beat; *sosogu*, to rinse; *mamoru*, to watch; *tattobu*, to honour; *tsutsuku*, to tap; probably with the original intention of indicating repetition, continuance, or intensity. As a general rule in Japanese, there is reason to suspect onomatopoeia wherever we find reduplication, which is itself an onomatopoeic procedure.

² O.L. These initials mark words which have been received into the ordinary language, and are no longer regarded as mere onomatopoes.

forms, along with the *ba* of the conditional mood above referred to, an optative termination. Thus *tori-kaye ba-ya* means "oh that I could exchange!"

The Korean¹ language has also an interrogative *ya*.

From *ya* are derived *aya*, *iya*, *uya*, and *oya*.

- Aya* An exclamation of wonder. Hence *aya-shiki* (O.L.), strange, wonderful, *ayashimu*, to despise.
- Iya* An exclamation of regret or (usually unpleasant) surprise.
Yā, *yai*, an exclamation of horror, should probably be placed here.
- Uya-uya* Respectfully, generally met with in the derivative adjective form, *uya-uyashiki*, respectful, reverential, and the verb *uyamāu*, to respect, to venerate.
- Oya* or *oya-oya* An exclamation of mild surprise like our "dear me!", commonly used by women at the present day.
- O* or *wo* An exclamation of surprise or admiration, like our oh! It is *o* before and *wo* after a word, in obedience to the necessities of the Japanese phonetic system.
 From the *O!* of admiration comes *oho*, root of *ohoki*, great, and from the latter the honorific particle *o*. There is a curious example of a similar transition of ideas in the Chinese character 大, great, which is said to be the representation of a man, 人, holding up his hands in an admiring posture. Our own honorific Mr. is also traceable to a word meaning great.
 A long *ō* having the meaning great, a short *ō* came to mean small, as in Obama, "little shore," the name of a place.
 The Japanese verb has no grammatical forms to mark person. But as *o* and the other honorifics are almost always associated with the second, rarely with the third, and never with the first person, they afford a useful indication of the person of the verb, and may be regarded as the germs of what in a later stage of development might become true grammatical forms.
- Wo* (After a noun). Originally a mere exclamation, *wo* becomes first a particle slightly emphasizing the word which precedes, and secondly, the sign of the objective case.² It is also used with verbs as an adversative particle having somewhat the same force as our "but," "whereas."
- Yo* An exclamation of entreaty something like "do, please." After a noun it forms a sort of vocative case and with verbs of the second and third conjugations, it is the sign of the imperative mood.

¹ Korean is a distant relation of Japanese. The grammatical structure of the two languages is almost identical, but there is proportionately a strange paucity of common roots. Some deny that there are any.

² See my grammar of the Japanese written language, page 124.

There are in Japanese numerous exclamations indicating assent or, like the sailor's "Aye, aye, sir," comprehension or obedience to an order. These fluctuate between different vowels. Thus we have *oi*, *ai*, and *aihi* (familiar), and *he* and *hai*,¹ which are more respectful. *O*, *e*, and *a* are also used for the same purpose. In short the only vowel not used as an affirmation is *i*.

Oi A shout, calling to a person at a distance, like our "halloa !" Cf. Greek *ἄω*, to shout.
Nō-nō Ditto.

The history of the vowel *i* presents greater difficulties. It does not stand by itself as an exclamation, nor is there the same consensus of other languages in regard to it which is so conspicuous in the case of *a* and *o*. But it may perhaps be recognised in combination with other elements in the initial vowels of the words *ina*, "no," *iza*, "no," *iya*, an exclamation of surprise (generally unpleasant), *iya-iya*, a mother's cry of warning to her baby, and *imu* (O.L.), to avoid. From *iya* are derived *iyana*, nasty, *iyagaru* (O.L.), to dislike, *iyashiki* (O.L.), base, mean, and *iyashimeru* (O.L.), to despise. The natural cry to which this *i* corresponds seems to be the shrill note of warning observable in many gregarious animals and not extinct even in man. There is a marked preference in several languages for the vowel *i* in the onomatopoeic representation of shrieks and other high-pitched sounds. In English we have shriek, screech, scream, squeal, squeak, shrill, chirp, creak, peewit; in Greek there is *λῆγος* shrill, and in Japanese *ki-ki*, for a shriek, *kishi-meku* (O.L.), for to creak, *kiri-kiri*, a creaking sound, *kirigirisu* (O.L.), the name of a kind of grasshopper, *pin*, the sound of a slender (treble) string, *pon*, being given as the sound of the thick (or bass) string, *piu*, the sound of a railway whistle, and *chiu*, the chirping of sparrows, or the squeaking of rats.

The fact that the exclamation *ya* passes into an interrogative particle lends some faint colour of probability to the suggestion that it may be the same *i* which pervades the interrogative words *itsu*, when; *idzure*, which; *iku*, how many; *ikaga*, how; and *ikahodo*, how much.

¹ *Hai*, *hai*, *hai*, repeated at intervals of a second or two, is also the Japanese horse boy's cry of warning to his beast. The right tone is essential here. It may be mentioned that the Korean muleteer's, pack horse man's or bullock driver's call to his animal, which sounds to the stranger like a prolonged articulate *Yaw* ! is in reality *iri oō*, i.e., come hither. *Oō* is a polite form of the imperative, as we say "sir" to a dog.

- E* or *Ē*.¹ An exclamation of grief, repentance, anger, dislike, etc., also, though in a different tone, a query like our *Eh*? This exclamation is perhaps a variant of the *i* just described.
- Hē* (Rising accent.) An exclamation of surprise and admiration.

Grunts.

The grunt is the easiest of all vocal utterances. It is the sound made by the vibration of the vocal chords in the normal condition of the organs of speech, *i.e.*, with the passage of the nose open (as it usually is to allow of breathing), and the mouth shut or the lips only slightly parted. It is no doubt this ease and simplicity of pronunciation which has made the grunt so tenacious of life throughout the long ages of human history. When a man says "h'm," instead of "yes," the reason is simply an indolent reluctance to take the trouble of opening his mouth, closing the nostrils and making the necessary movements of his tongue and lips.

The first attempt to differentiate this sound was not in the direction of making it articulate, *i.e.*, by converting it into *n*, *m*, or *ng*. Variety was produced by differences of tone and emphasis and by reduplication. In this way several distinct sounds arose each with its appropriate meaning. I shall confine myself here to two of these—the grunt of assent, in a low note, and the grunt of dissent on a higher key. The first of these we render in English by "h'm," often doubled for greater emphasis. It may be traced to an earlier stage of development in the low murmur of animal satisfaction which some human beings and dogs, and, with a difference, all cats utter when caressed. The "hum" by which our ancestors showed their approval of a good sermon, is obviously a near relation of this sound. The grunt of dissent, on the other hand, had probably its origin in the snort or growl of displeasure common to man with some of the lower animals.

The grunt of assent is represented in Japanese by *u* or *un*. From this, according to a native etymologist, are formed the words *u-be* (O.L.), "Right! good!" and *ubenai* (O.L.), a regularly inflected verb meaning "to give assent."

I have elsewhere² attempted to show that the Japanese language had once a verb *nu* (root *n*), "to be" (the copula, not the substantive verb), now superseded by its derivative *naru*, but not without leaving traces in the Japanese grammatical system. *No*, the partitive or genitive particle is simply another form of this *nu*, the Japanese language affording frequent

¹ The vowel *e* I take to be a more recent development than *a*, *o*, or *i*.

² In my grammar of the Japanese written language, 2nd Ed.

examples of the exchange of *no* for *nu*. *Ni*, the locative particle, is also derived from it. I now suggest that this verb *nu* is the grunt of assent become articulate, and that it is very possibly the same element which in the form *u* is the characteristic termination of the indicative or affirmative form of the verb. The vocalization of *n* into *u* is a familiar feature of Japanese etymology.

The grunt of dissent is the parent of words of negation in a large number of languages.¹ In Japanese we have *ina*, no, and *inamu*, to refuse, which form a parallel to the *ube*, right, and *ubenai*, to assent, quoted above. The negative adjective is *naki*, not being, and the negative termination of verbs *nu* or *anu*. Thus *naku* is to weep; *nakanu*, not to weep; *taberu*, to eat; *tabenu*, not to eat. *Na* is the negative imperative particle prefixed or suffixed to verbs.

The modern Japanese word for no is *īye*, but as this has little apparent expressive quality, the English word no, generally reduplicated, has become a great favourite with the Japanese. Along with "Hear! hear!" it is frequently heard in the Japanese Diet. The Korean word for no, not, is *ani*.

There is a negative future or potential termination *majiki* (*mai* in the modern colloquial), of which *ma* is the essential part. This I am inclined to regard as a variant of the above. Cf. Korean *mot*, "cannot, may not"; *malta*, "to be unable to do," "to be prevented," "not to do." This word is often used in the Imperative, viz., *mallā*, "don't." Cf. also the Greek *μή*.

There is a modern colloquial interjection *mā*, which is sometimes a cry of remonstrance or deprecation, but is used in so many different ways that it is impossible to say what its proper meaning is.

I may note here, though, as ordinary onomatopoes, they properly belong to the next chapter, the verb *naru*, "to sound," the noun *ne*, "a sound" (especially a musical sound), *naku*, "to sing" (of a bird), or "to weep" (of human beings), *unaru*, "to groan," "to moan," "to make a long reverberating murmur like a bell when struck"; and *udaku*, "to roar" (of a wild boar).

Hisses.

The hiss is produced by sending the breath forcibly through the mouth, which is greatly contracted at some part. The vocal chords are silent, and there is therefore no differentiation by means of tone as in the case of the shout, shriek, and grunt.

The hiss is usually represented in articulate language by *s* or *sh*, although instances are not wanting of the use of other

¹ See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," 3rd Ed., vol. i, page 123.

aspirates for this purpose. The original inarticulate sound is employed for "hissing" on a dog (in French, *Kss*), or for driving off fowls (for which Tennyson gives the curious provincial variant "*Pluksh*"). It is also used for ordering silence, being in this case at first perhaps a mere noise to drown the voice of an unwelcome speaker.

To the first of these cries we should probably refer the Japanese interjection *sa*, *sā*, or *iza*, used like our "Come! get on!" in urging one to do something. From this are derived *izanāu*, "to invite," *sasōu*, "to incite," and also perhaps *susumeru*, "to encourage," and *shiuru*, "to compel." The Corean interjection corresponding to *sa* is *ōsō*. The Greek *σέω* had no doubt its origin in a cry of this kind.

I would now suggest, with some diffidence, that the verb *suru* (root *s* or *sh*), "to do," and the distinctive terminations of Causative and Transitive verbs which contain this element, are to be referred to the same source. As examples of these verbs I may instance *miseru*, "to show," from *miru*, "to see," *kasu*, "to lend," from *karu*, "to borrow," *korosaseru*, "to cause to kill," from *korosu*, "to kill."

I may here relate a personal anecdote which illustrates the change of an inarticulate hissing sound into an articulate *f*, and other onomatopoeic matters. Some years ago it was my fortune to fall under the dominion of a domestic tyrant, aged two, for whom it became my task to provide amusement. I one day took her up under the arms and swung her round me, making as I did so, almost unconsciously to myself, a hissing sound which had no doubt been familiar to me in my childhood, and which was probably meant to convey the idea of something whizzing through the air at a great rate. The little thing was mightily pleased and when put down, said promptly, "Do it again." "Do what again?" replied I. She at once answered, "Do *f-f-f* again," the sound here represented by *f-f-f* being neither the hissing sound I had made, nor an articulate *f*, but something between the two. The next time, however, it developed into a wholly articulate "*iff*," which after a few minutes became obsolete, my liege lady having chosen to discontinue it in favour of a new acquisition, the more conventional word "swing."

The sibilant sound enjoining silence, from which comes our English "hush," is rendered in Japanese by *woshi*, *oshi*, or *shidzu*, with the last of which may be compared the French "chut" and the Greek *σιζω*. From *shidzu* are derived *shidzu-shidzu*, quietly, *shidzukan* (O.L.), do., *shidzumar*, to become quiet, to settle down, and *shidzumu*, to sink. The same *shidzu*, by an easy transition, signifies respect. Thus I find in a narrative of

the Christian rebellion of Amakusa in the seventeenth century that the Christians honoured one of their leaders by bowing their heads and uttering the sound *shidzu-shidzu*.

The modern Japanese onomatopoeic rendering of a hiss is *shiu*.

This is perhaps the place to mention the interjection *sha!* of contemptuous surprise—like our *Pshaw!*

CHAPTER III.

Imitations of Non-Significant Human Vocal Sounds.

It seems probable that this class of words comes next¹ in order of development after the representatives of significant inarticulate sounds, and that the invention of mute consonants was associated with this stage in the progress of the onomatopoeic art. They are absent from words of the preceding class, and it is unlikely that they were first used for the imitations of noises and non-human sounds where anything at all resembling a mute consonant is extremely rare, being only met with, and then but approximately, in the cries of a few birds. In the case of the non-significant human vocal sounds, however, such as blowing (for the labials), spitting (for the tip-of-tongue sounds), gulping (for the root-of-tongue sounds), and coughing (for the glottis mutes, and indirectly for the root-of-tongue sounds), the model was at hand, and I have little doubt that it was in the imitation of these and similar sounds that the mute consonants had their origin. As the Chinese Book of Odes has it:—

“In hewing an axe-hundle,
In hewing an axe-handle,
The pattern is not far off.”

It is probable, however, that these sounds were made in sport before they were applied to any practical purpose.

At this point we meet for the first time with a new element of onomatopœia, viz., the imitation of motions by motions of the organs of speech. Onomatopoes, like other words, have two aspects. They are not only sounds, but motions of the organs of speech. As sounds, they are cognizable by the sense of hearing both of the speaker and of the hearer; as motions they

¹ By the division of language into four stages, viz. (1), Natural Cries; (2) Interjections; (3) Imitations of non-significant human vocal sounds; and (4) Imitations of other sounds, it is not meant that all the words constituting each of these classes were formed in this order, only that *some* Interjections were the first words to come into use; next, *some* imitations of human non-significant vocal sounds of which the words in the list at the end of this chapter are modern representatives, rather than specimens, and next, *some* imitations of other sounds. The corresponding progress from vowels, nasals, and aspirates (in this order?) to mute consonants must be understood with a similar qualification.

are perceptible by the sense of touch (including the muscular sense) of the speaker in the first place, and, indirectly, of the hearer also, by means of the associations of touch excited by the impressions which come to him through the ear. In the case of labials, and to a less extent of other consonants, the sense of sight of the person addressed is also appealed to. This element of onomatopoeia has not received the attention which its great importance demands.

It may be useful to take here a short survey of the principal consonants in their aspect as motions of the organs of speech, and for greater convenience I append a table in which the letters of the Japanese language are distinguished by being put in italics.

	Labials.	Tip-of-tongue sounds. (Dentals.)	Flat-of-tongue sounds. (Palatals.)	Root-of-tongue sounds. (Gutturals.)	Glottis sounds.
Hard Mutes ..	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>k</i>	Sound of coughing.
Soft Mutes ..	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>g</i>	{ Sound of clearing the throat gently.
Hard Aspirates	{ <i>wh</i> , <i>fh</i> }	{ <i>s</i>	<i>sh</i>	<i>χ</i>	<i>h</i> .
Soft Aspirates	<i>w</i> , <i>v</i>	<i>z</i> {	{ <i>j</i> (French)	<i>g</i> , as in Ger- man lager	} Spiritus lenis.
Nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ñ</i>	<i>ng</i>	None.

The glottis mute is found in Arabic, but in no other language, in so far as I am aware.¹

R and *L* are tip-of-tongue letters, but they present peculiarities which make it proper to omit them from the above table.

¹ The terms dental, palatal and guttural are objectionable, as they refer to parts of the mouth which are wholly passive in the act of pronunciation, and their use therefore tends to divert the attention from the far more important functions of the active organs of speech.

The vowels have hardly any importance as expressive of motions, and the nasals almost as little. The aspirates with *r* and *l* may stand for motions as well as sounds, but the principal mode of expressing motion is by means of the mutes. Indeed, the latter are hardly ever used to represent sounds except for the imitation of certain animal cries in which we indulgently recognise an approach to articulate speech, and in some of the class of words described in the heading of this chapter.

The labials are naturally adapted for expressing motions in which the lips take part, such as blowing, spitting, pouting, spewing, or making a "moue." They are also fitted to represent such ideas as can be expressed by puffing out the lips and cheek, as bulge, burst, bubble, bulb, bulk, ball, &c.

The tip of the tongue is the smallest and most mobile of the organs of speech, and is therefore best adapted for representing nimble, agile, or delicate movements of small, easily moved objects. The tip is in this respect a contrast to the root of the tongue. But the lips are almost as mobile. Words expressive of pointed things or their motions often contain a tip-of-tongue sound.

The flat-of-tongue, *i.e.*, the forepart of the tongue pressed flat against the palate, is used in one or two Japanese onomatopoes to express closeness or stickiness. (See below.)

R and *l*, like the other tip-of-tongue sounds, are easy of pronunciation, but they have a special onomatopoeic character as indicating continued tremulous motion.

There is no *l* in Japanese, and no *r* in Chinese. Coreans pronounce the same letter *l* or *r* according to its place in the word. This would seem to indicate that the distinction between *r* and *l* is of recent origin.

The chief characteristic of the root of the tongue as an organ of speech is its comparatively greater bulkiness, as compared with the lips and tip-of-tongue. It is therefore associated with ideas of weight, bigness, power, &c., also of clumsiness or awkwardness. It is the dislike of the trouble of putting such a large mass of muscle in motion that has gained for gutturals their bad name as a dysphonious class of sounds. That this irksomeness has a very real influence on speech is shown by the phenomenon presented by languages wholly unconnected with each other, of the gradual working forward of root-of-tongue sounds till they become flat-of-tongue, or even tip-of-tongue, sounds. Cf. Latin, *carus*, French, *cher*, Latin, *Cicero*, English pronunciation *Sissero*, German *Karl*, English, *Charles*, French, *Charles*, Chinese Peking, modern mandarin dialect Peking, *Loochooan hachi-machi*, for Japanese *hachi-maki*. Even the English *k* and *g* have slipped forward somewhat from the deeper sounds of these letters still heard in Scotland.

The root-of-tongue onomatopes also express motions in which that organ or the adjoining parts are concerned.

The onomatopoeitic bearing of the classification into mutes, aspirates and nasals need not detain us long. In the hard mutes, the motion of the organs of speech begins or ends abruptly in a short, sharp shock, whereas in the soft mutes the beginning or end is slower, heavier, and less abrupt.

A final nasal is suitable for expressing motions which gradually die away, as swing, spring, &c. But these last named consonants greatly resemble vowels and are more often met with as onomatopes of sound.

The aspirates, in which the mouth is greatly contracted and which have not the vibration of the vocal chords to swell their sound as is the case with the nasals and vowels, require a comparatively greater effort to make them continuously audible. This sense of effort is utilized onomatopoeitically in such words as stout, strong, stiff, shove, push, strain, stress, stamp, stubborn, spring, smash, shock, shatter, thud, thrust, thump, &c., to express effort, violence, or force. Compare also the Greek *ἄσθμα*, panting for breath, from *ἄω*, to breathe.

When with the effort required for the aspirate there is combined that necessary to put the comparatively unwieldy root-of-tongue in motion, as is the case in pronouncing *χ*, most languages refuse altogether to admit such a sound to their phonetic repertory. The Latin tongues are notoriously averse to it, and it is also absent from Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Our own language, which had it not very long ago, eventually discarded it as quite too troublesome. But for the very reason of its difficulty its expressive force is undeniable, as we may see by comparing the German *ach!* and the Irish *och!* with our feeble and colourless *ah!* and *oh!* And the onomatopoeitic fitness of such words as the Greek *ἄχος*, grief, ache, and *μῶχος*, labour, a burden, will not be disputed.¹

It may contribute to a clearer apprehension of the nature of the mutual relations of the elements of sound and motion in onomatopes if we examine as closely as may be the familiar English words *rap*, *rat-tat* and *knock*. All are unmistakably expressive, and they have all a strong resemblance to each other. In what does their expressive quality consist? Mainly, I should say, in the quality and length of the vowel sounds. Substitute for *a* and *o* any other vowel sounds, and it will be found that most of the onomatopoeitic effect is lost. *Roop*, *root-toot*, and *knook* would

¹ It would take me too far from the present subject to show that much of the so-called euphony of language is in reality the convenience of motion of the organs of speech, and that melody of verse is largely a harmonious dance of the same organs with a charm quite independent of the accompanying sound.

not answer the same purpose, nor would *rip*, *rit-tit*, or *knick* do, though the last has an onomatopoetic value of its own, as may be seen by Goethe's lines—

“ Wir knicken und ersticken
Doch gleich, wenn einer sticht.”

Even the same vowels if lengthened out as in the French words *rdpe*, *rate*, or in *knaulk* for *knock*, will lose most of their expressive quality. On the other hand, the short, shut sound of *a* or *o* might be put alone unsupported by any final consonant without wholly marring the effect.

The Japanese language has to content itself with open syllables for similar onomatopoes as in *ta-ta-ku*, to rap, to knock.

So much for the vowels. The final consonants, it will be observed, are all hard mutes, one being a labial, one a tip-of-tongue sound, and one a root-of-tongue sound, the onomatopoetic effect being almost the same in each, thus showing that it depends more on the quality of the sounds as hard mutes than on the organs of speech with which they are produced. It appears to me that the function of the hard mutes is here two-fold. They make it easier to give the vowels the requisite short, sharp sounds, and the abruptly ending movement of the organs of speech in pronouncing them expresses the abrupt termination of the motion which produces the rap, rat-tat, or knock. They can hardly be expressive of sound, for there is no *p*, *t*, or *k* in the sound represented. If we try to imitate it exactly, a dull *u* sound will be the result, for which we substitute the more articulate *ǎ* or *ǧ*. For choice, I should say that the final *t* (in rat-tat) produced the best onomatopoetic effect, not on account of its sound, but because the motion of the tip of the tongue in pronouncing *t* is more like that of the knocker of a door than that of either the root of the tongue or the lips in pronouncing *k* or *p*.

The office of the initial consonants is not so clear. *R* may be intended to convey the idea of the continuous motion which precedes the final shock, while the initial *k* of knock, which we now reject in pronunciation, may be the remains of a reduplication.

Everybody has felt the onomatopoetic propriety of the words invented by Swift in “Gulliver's Travels” for his kingdoms of giants and pigmies. As sounds they have no more resemblance to the things indicated than the colour scarlet has to the sound of a trumpet, but if we consider them as onomatopoes of motion we shall find some clue to their expressive quality in the preponderance of root-of-tongue sounds and soft mutes in Brobdingnag and in the total exclusion of these elements from Lilliput, which is composed of tip-of-tongue sounds (with one

labial) and hard mutes. Perhaps Swift had also in view the remote resemblance to the words big and little—themselves not without onomatopoetic quality.

The onomatopoetic effect of the well known line,

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum,

is due, first to the number of dactyles, which are equally expressive of sound and motion, and secondly, to the large number of hard mutes adapted to express the motion of the numerous sharp blows of the horses' hoofs on the ground. There are here eleven hard mutes—the ordinary Virgilian line averaging half this number—and there are only two soft mutes. Tip-of-tongue letters are also in the majority. Thirdly, the sound is rendered by six nasals, the usual average of these sounds, in a line, being a little less than four. The choice of vowels has probably also contributed to the effect. The first two of these procedures are used by Tennyson in his "Northern Farmer,"

"Dosh't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs as they canters awaäy,
Proputtty-proputtty-proputtty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy."

Here the shut vowels express the sound.

Swinburne, on the other hand, characteristically gives prominence to the resonant quality of the nasals, combined with the cantering rhythm of the dactyle, in his "Hesperia,"

". the music, as eight hoofs trample and thunder,
Rings in the ear."

Although the Japanese language in its modern form is not unacquainted with such sounds as *mp*, *nd*, and *ng*, they are not used for onomatopoetic purposes, and the Japanese poet, if he would avoid the imputation of writing doggerel, must deny himself the use of all words containing combinations of consonants and adhere strictly to the rule that every syllable must have not more than one consonant and must end with a vowel. The result of this restriction is visible in the following lines of an ancient Japanese poet, where, to express the sound of a horse's hoofs, we find—

Uma no oto no
horse of sound

To-to tomo sureba—
onomatope even when it makes.

That is, "whenever there is the sound of a horse going 'trot-trot.'"

There is a wide difference between this naive repetition of the syllable *to* (*t* for motion and *o* for sound) and the highly elaborate and artistic workmanship of Virgil. *To-to* is clearly not the canter, but some other pace—perhaps a trot.

2 A 2

It is now possible to formulate the rule of letter-changes in the onomatopoeic elements of like words in the same or different languages. As already pointed out by Dr. Tylor, the principle of ordinary Philology which leads us to look for correspondences between sounds produced by the same organ rather than between sounds of the same quality is by no means universally applicable to them. On the contrary, the general rule for onomatopoes is that mutes correspond with mutes, aspirates with aspirates, and nasals with nasals, for the obvious reason that in so far as resemblances of sound and quality of motion go, *p*, *t*, and *k*, *f*, *s*, and *χ*, *m*, *n*, and *ng* are more alike than *p*, *f*, and *m*, *t*, *s*, and *n*, *k*, *χ*, and *ng*. Or we may put it in this way—the correspondences follow the upright and not the horizontal columns of the above table.

The only exception to this rule is where the onomatopœia consists in the imitation of, or is in some way connected with, the motion of a particular organ of speech. In this case the variations will naturally be within the limits of sounds produced by that organ, as may be seen by comparing the English spit with the Japanese *betsu-betsu*, both of which are imitations of the motions of the lips and tongue in spitting.

This sounds very simple, but in practice complications arise owing to the peculiarities of the phonetic systems of individual languages, the presence in onomatopoes of conventional elements, and, in the case of words which have been received into ordinary language, the action of the usual laws of letter-change.

EXAMPLES.

Labials.

Fū-fū The gesture and sound of blowing.

From this are derived the words of the ordinary language *fuku* "to blow," *fuye* "a flute," *fukureru* "to be puffed out," "swollen," *fufumu* "to swell," as a bud, *fukuro* "a bag," *fukumu* "to contain," *futoki* "big," "thick." Cf. Corean *puta* "to blow," *param* "wind," and words with initial labials for blowing and wind in many languages.

The onomatopoes for the sounds of wind instruments given below also belong to this group.

Fū The motion (and sound ?) of expelling from the mouth
an ill-smelling odour—equal to our Faugh, Bah,
Pah.

Peppē Ditto.

Hī (O.L.) Fire.

The words for fire have in many languages a labial, probably in imitation of the gesture of blowing a fire. It will be remembered that the Japanese *h* is a labial. The Corean for fire is *pul* (*puta* "to blow"), Malay *api*, Aino *abe*, Greek $\pi\upsilon\rho$, &c. The Latin *flare* and *flamma* are probably connected with each other, and the English blast and blaze.

<i>Hiru</i> (O.L.)	....	To sneeze, also = Latin <i>pedere</i> , with the noun <i>he</i> (Fr. <i>pet</i>) are also to be referred to this group of words.
<i>Apu-apu</i> ....	....	Gasping for breath, as of a drowning man.
<i>Butsü-butsü</i>	....	An angry murmur.
<i>Butsü-kusa</i>	....	Muttering, grumbling.
<i>Guzu-guzu</i>	....	Ditto.
<i>Muji-muji</i>	....	Mumbling.
<i>Bera-bera</i>	....	Mumbling as in a strange language. Cf. Barbarian.
<i>Becha-becha</i>	....	Chattering, gabbling.
<i>Domoru</i> (O.L.)	....	To stammer.
<i>Damaru</i> (O.L.)	....	To be silent.
<i>Shaberu</i> (O.L.)	....	To gabble.

Tip-of-tongue sounds.

<i>Betsü-betsü</i>	....	Motion (and sound ?) of spitting.
<i>Petsü-petsü</i>	....	Ditto.
<i>Atsü-atsü</i>	....	Ditto.
<i>Tsuba</i> (O.L.)	....	Spittle.

The first two of these words combine a labial with a tip-of-tongue sound like the English spit, and the Greek $\pi\tau\acute{\upsilon}\omega$. The *ü* in the Japanese words is almost inaudible.

<i>At-to</i>	....	Cry of pain. <i>To</i> is an adverbial suffix equal to the English "with a," as <i>pon-to</i> , "with a bang."
<i>Hot-to</i>	....	Cry of relief, of the same force as the French <i>Ouf</i> !
<i>Ot-to</i>	....	Ditto.
<i>Not-to</i>	....	A sigh (?)

It is however rather by their quality of hard mutes to indicate the quick catching of the breath, than of tip-of-tongue sounds that the *t*'s in the above four words are expressive.

Root-of-tongue sounds.

<i>Gubi-gubi</i>	....	Motion of swallowing, motion in the throat at the sight of something good to eat or drink.
<i>Gubi-tsuku</i> (O.L.)		To twitch (of the throat) from thirst. Compare with these words the English gobble, gulp, and the French <i>gober</i> .
<i>Kvü</i> , O.L. (<i>Kufu</i> )	....	To eat, to bite, should probably come in here.
<i>Kupu</i>)		
<i>Ka-ka</i>	....	Sound (?) of drinking water.
<i>Gatsü-gatsü</i>	....	Crunching sound while eating.
<i>Gari-gari</i>	....	Sound or motion of eating.
<i>Gori-gori</i>....	....	Eating something hard, hardness.
<i>Mugu-mugu</i>	....	Eating. Cf. Corean <i>mök-ta</i> , to eat.
<i>Gara-gara</i>	....	Loud, harsh laughter.

<i>Gukku</i> ....	....	} Suppressed laughter, giggling. The root-of-tongue sound is chosen as best fitted to represent the motion of suppressing laughter by closing the throat.
<i>Gutsū-gutsū</i> ....	....	
<i>Kutsū-kutsū</i> ....	....	
<i>Gera-gera</i> ....	....	
<i>Wera-wera</i> ....	....	Joyous laughter.
<i>Warai</i> (O.L.) ....	....	To laugh. Cf. Greek γέλω.
<i>Ge-e-i</i> ....	....	Yawning. Cf. German gähnen, English gape, gasp.

There is no actual *g* sound accompanying a yawn, but the mouth is thrown open in such a way that no other sound is possible.

<i>Kon-kon-kon</i> ....	....	Coughing. <i>K</i> represents both sound and motion.
<i>Haku</i> (O.L.) ....	....	To vomit. Cf. English puke.

The element of motion predominates in this word. Cf. Jap. *aki*, disgust, Greek κόρος, satiety, German ekel, disgust.

<i>Hakūsho</i> ....	....	Sneezing.
<i>Kushami</i> (O.L.) ....	....	A sneeze.
<i>Shakuri</i> (O.L.) ....	....	A hiccough.

Aspirates.

(*Sibilants.*)

<i>Uso</i> ....	....	Whistling.
<i>Koso-koso</i> ....	....	Whispering.
<i>Kossori</i> ....	....	Secretly, stealthily.
<i>Sasa-sasa</i> ....	....	Whispering.
<i>Sasa yaku</i> (O.L.)	....	To whisper. Cf. Latin susurrare, Fr. chuchoter.
<i>Suū</i> (O.L.) ....	....	To suck. Cf. Latin sugere.
<i>Suya-suya</i> ....	....	Gentle breathing.
<i>Sū-sū</i> ....	....	Breathing.
<i>Hā-sū</i> ....	....	Heavy breathing.
<i>Zei-zei</i> ....	....	} Wheezing.
<i>Zeri-zeri</i> ....	....	
<i>Un-su</i> ....	....	Groaning.

Nasals.

<i>Fum-pun</i> or <i>Pun-</i>	} Of strong odours, good or bad. The nasals seem here to indicate the part taken by the nose in snuffing up the odours.
<i>pun</i>	

Vowels.

In the following words the vowel sounds seem more important than the consonants.

<i>Hogyā-hogyā</i> ....	....	A child's squalling.
<i>Hogī-hogī</i> ....	....	Ditto.
<i>Kui-kui</i> ...	....	Crying or whining from pain.
<i>Ki-ki</i> ....	....	Sound of screaming.
<i>Gami-gami</i> ....	....	Scolding or yelping.
<i>A-ā</i> ....	....	Yawning.

The motion as well as the sound is appropriate to a wide open mouth.

<i>Gō-gō</i>	....	....	Snoring. Also a rumbling as of the bowels.
<i>Gū-gū</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Ha-ha</i>	....	....	Laughing.
<i>Ho-ho</i>	....	....	Ditto.

The *h* was evidently never *p* in these words.

CHAPTER IV.

Imitations of Animal Cries.

<i>Bekkakō</i>			The crowing of a cock. English <i>Cock-a-doodle-doo</i> , provincial <i>Cock-a-leary-low</i> , French <i>Coqu-erico</i> , German <i>Kikeriki</i> , Spanish <i>Quiquiriqui</i> , Yoruba <i>Koklo</i> , Zulu <i>Kuku</i> , Finnish <i>Kukko</i> , &c. ¹
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There is much in these words that is merely conventional. The number of syllables varies greatly and also the choice of vowels and consonants. The points of resemblance are the rhythm, the long open vowel at the close, and the predominance of a *k* sound. It may be questioned however, whether the crowing of a cock really contains this letter. It sounds in this, and other bird cries, more like the audible opening of the glottis for which our alphabet has no letter, though I believe there is one in Arabic, where we transliterate by *k*. In English we render the same sound by *c* in cough, and by *h* in ehem. The Japanese language also makes it a root-of-tongue sound in the onomatopoe for coughing, viz., *kon-kon-kon*. Is "crow" (Hebrew *iqara*) an abbreviated onomatopoe?

Bekkakō is also used as a derisive word accompanied by the gesture (not unknown to ourselves) of pressing down the lower eyelid with the fore-finger.

Kake (O.L.) The common fowl. Cf. English cock, cackle.

I take these words to be abbreviated imitations of the cry of the hen when she has laid an egg. It is the same cry which the cock utters in response, and is also the note of indignation of both sexes when there is no question of egg-laying. The *k* in this case seems to me to be a true root-of-tongue sound and not the glottis sound above described. The final *e* of *kake* is a phonetic necessity of the Japanese language which will not allow a word to end with any consonant but *n*. This word is now obsolete.

To-to-to This is the cry with which the Japanese call fowls to be fed.

¹ Vide Tylor's "Primitive Culture," 3rd Ed., vol. i, p. 207. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my numerous obligations to the chapters on language in this work.

It is obviously an imitation of the cry of a hen to her chickens, or of a cock to his dames for the same purpose. Cf. Engl. *chuck-chuck*, provincial *tyook-tyook*, with *tyooky*, a nursery word for fowl, Chinese *chu-chu*, Korean *ku-ku*. The Japanese word for bird, viz., *tori*, may perhaps be derived from this.

- Hiyo-ko* (O.L.) A very young chicken, a peeper. *H* in Japanese is a labial, and probably represents a prehistoric *p*. *Ko* means little one. Cf. French *piailler*.
Kako (O.L.) The cuckoo. There is no *k* in the cuckoo's note. As usual, it is a glottis sound which is thus represented.
*Hototogisu*¹ (O.L.) A species of cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*).

Blakiston and Pryer state that "the note is very different from that of the cuckoo, being the syllables *ho-tuk-tuk* constantly repeated as it flies from bush to bush." My own impression of its cry is, that it oftener runs to five or six syllables than three, and I would prefer to say that it has *some resemblance* to *ho-tuk-tuk*. The termination *su* also occurs in the onomatopoetic words *uguisu* "a nightingale," *karasu* "a crow," *kigisu* or *kigishi* "a pheasant," and *kirigirisu* "a grasshopper." It may be the *shi* or *su* of the verb *suru* (root *shi*) to do. *Hototogisu* would then mean the bird which makes the sound *hototogi*.

Poppo (Pronounce pope-poe.) The pigeon's cry.

The Latin *pipio* looks like this, but has probably a somewhat different origin.² The Japanese word for pigeon is *hato* (for *pato* ?) and the Korean *piteulki*, where *to* and *teulki* mean "bird."

Kā-kā Cry of the crow—our caw-caw.

The *kara-su* (obviously an onomatope) or *Corvus Japonensis* is a bird intermediate in size between the Carrion Crow and the Raven. I have observed that the word for black (in Japanese *kuroki*) in several Asiatic languages seems derived from the name of this bird. Note that the French *Croua*, for the crow's cry, also contains an *r*.

Kachi-garasu (O.L.) This is one Japanese name for the magpie, a rare bird in Japan. It is really the Korean word *kachhi*, magpie, prefixed to the Japanese *kara-su*, crow. *Kachhi* is obviously onomatopoetic.

Ga-ga The quacking of ducks.
Uguisu (O.L.) The Japanese nightingale (*Cettia cantans*).
Chiu-chiu Chirping of sparrows.
Gan (O.L.) A wild goose.

This word is of Chinese derivation. Cf. Greek $\chi\eta\nu$, Engl. *gander*, &c. The dictionaries derive $\chi\eta\nu$ from $\chiαίνω$ "to gape,"

¹ There are two other cuckoos in Japan, with names taken from their cries. See Blakiston and Pryer in "Japan Asiatic Society's Transactions."

² See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," vol. i, p. 207.

but both *gan* and $\chi\eta\nu$ are surely onomatopoeitic, the initial root-of-tongue motion being the only one consistent with the gaping position of the beak of the bird as he utters the cry, and the *an* or $\eta\nu$ representing the cry itself.

Nasals are not common in onomatopes of birds' cries, the reason probably being that a bird's nostrils are very small, and the nasality of their utterances therefore a negligible quantity. It is a certain metallic ring in the cries of some birds which we attempt to render by nasals. This quality in the cry of the wild goose was recognised by Homer, who speaks of the $\kappa\lambda\alpha\gamma\gamma\eta$ of wild geese and cranes, and by White of Selborne, who says the cry of the goose is "trumpet-like and clanking." Note that *gan* is also the Japanese onomatope for the sound made by a metal vessel falling to the ground.

Kin The cry of the pheasant (*Phasianus versicolor*).

Probably *kigisu* or *kigishi*, an old word for pheasant, may be derived from this. The Korean word for pheasant is *kiöng*. The crowing of the cock-pheasant is well represented by a Korean word *töl-köki* the syllable *kök* being made long and strongly accented.

<i>Mäma</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A horse. Cf. Chinese <i>ma</i> and Korean <i>mal</i> . A doubtful onomatope.
<i>Hin-hin</i>	....	....	The neighing of a horse. Cf. English <i>hinny</i> , <i>neigh</i> , French <i>hennir</i> .
<i>Kon-kon</i>	....	....	} The fox's cry.
<i>Ken-ken</i>	....	....	
<i>Kai-kai</i>	....	....	
<i>Wan-wan</i>	....	....	The barking of a dog. Cf. English <i>bow-wow</i> , Shakespearean <i>bowgh-wowgh</i> , French <i>Ouah-ouah</i> .

It is curious to observe the variety of ways in which the ending of so familiar a sound is rendered. *N* is a nasal tip-of-tongue sound, *w* an aspirate labial, *gh* an aspirate root-of-tongue sound, and *h* a glottis sound. The Japanese choice of *n* for this purpose is the choice of Hobson, there being no other final consonants in Japanese. It may be noted that whereas the Japanese reduplication is simple, the English reduplication, here and in other cases, is with a difference.

<i>Hoyeru</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To bark, may perhaps be compared with the French <i>aboyer</i> .
<i>Kiyan-kiyan</i>	....	....	A dog's whining or yelping.
<i>Niau</i>	....	....	} The mewling of a cat. Cf. Chinese <i>miao</i> , which stands both for the cry and for the animal.
<i>Nya</i>	....	....	
<i>Ne-ko</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A cat. Possibly the <i>ne</i> is the same as the <i>nya</i> just mentioned. <i>Ko</i> means a little one.
<i>Goro-goro</i>	....	....	The purring of a cat. Cf. French <i>ron-ron</i> .

The cat's mouth is shut when it purrs, and therefore the tremulous sound which we represent by *r* cannot proceed from the tongue.

<i>Chiu-chiu</i>	....	....	The squeaking of rats. Cf. the Korean word for rat, viz., <i>chiri</i> .
<i>Giu-giu</i>	....	....	The croaking of frogs.
<i>Gya-gya</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Bum-bum</i>	....	....	The buzzing of insects. Cf. Latin <i>bombitare</i> , Greek <i>βομβέω</i> , English <i>hum</i> , Scotch <i>bum</i> . If Grimm's Law had any application to these words, the last should be <i>pum</i> instead of <i>hum</i> or <i>bum</i> . <i>Bum</i> is Chinese and Sinico-Japanese for mosquito. Hence the facetious saying that his buzzing is meant as a polite self-introduction to his intended victim.
<i>Kirigirisu</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A grasshopper.

CHAPTER V.

Imitations of Musical Sounds.

The limitations of the Japanese phonetic system appear very distinctly in this class of words. There is no final *m* or *ng*, so that onomatopoes like *tom-tom* and *ding-dong* are impossible.

<i>Gö....ö....n....</i>	....	....	Sound of a large bell.
<i>Bon</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Gan</i>	....	....	} Sound of a small bell.
<i>Chon</i>	....	....	
<i>Chin</i>	....	....	
<i>Chan</i>	....	....	
<i>Shan-shan</i>	....	....	Sound of bells hung to a horse's neck (grelots).
<i>Don-don</i>	....	....	Sound of a drum. Cf. <i>tsutsumi</i> (O.L.), the name of a small drum struck with the finger-tips. Cf. also the English rub-a-dub.
<i>Den</i>	....	....	} Sound of a drum.
<i>Ten-ten</i>	....	....	
<i>Ten-kara</i>	....	....	
<i>Kan-kan</i>	....	....	Sound of the <i>tsutsumi</i> . See above.
<i>Pon</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Chin-chin-chin</i>	....	....	Striking of a clock.
<i>Chan-ten chan-ten</i>	....	....	Twanging a <i>samisen</i> (Japanese guitar).
<i>Pempera-pempera</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Tsutsu-ten</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Pon</i>	....	....	Sound made by a thickish (bass) string when struck.
<i>Pin</i>	....	....	Sound made by a thin (treble) string when struck.
<i>Piu</i>	....	....	Sound of a railway whistle.
<i>Bū-bū</i>	....	....	Blowing a horn or conch.
<i>Bu</i>	....	....	} Sound of a wind instrument. The initial consonant is for the gesture of blowing, the vowel for the sound.
<i>Bū</i>	....	....	
<i>Pi</i>	....	....	
<i>Pū</i>	....	....	

<i>Fu ye</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A flute.
<i>Hora</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A conch. Cf. <i>Hora-hora</i> , an onomatope for a hollow sound.

The following English onomatopes of musical sounds from Ralph Roister Doister are added for the sake of comparison:—

<i>Twangle dome twang</i>		Sound of a lute.
<i>Toodle loodle poope</i>		Sound of a recorder.
<i>Thrumple dum thrumple dum thrum</i>	}	Sound of a gittern.

CHAPTER VI.

Imitations of Noises and Motions (other than those of the organs of speech).

I have endeavoured in the following list to make a distinction between onomatopes in which the elements of sound-imitation and motion-imitation respectively predominate, but I do not pretend to think that I have done so very successfully. Nearly all contain both elements.

The general principle (subject to exceptions) is that the mutes represent motion, and the vowels and nasals sound, while the aspirates and *r* (Japanese has no *l*) may stand for either.

Noises.

<i>Ja-ja</i> ....	....	....	Plash of water.
<i>Shā-shā</i> ...	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Shu-shu</i> ....	....	....	Water trickling or running away.
<i>Shū-shū</i> ....	....	....	Hissing sound of water on something hot.
<i>Pyō to</i> ....	....	....	Whizzing of an arrow.
<i>Gan</i> ....	....	....	Sound of a metal vessel falling to the ground. The verb βομβέω is used for a similar sound in Homer.
<i>Kararin</i> ....	....	....	Sound of metal falling.
<i>Gatan</i> ....	....	....	Sound made by falling as on a wooden floor.
<i>Gara-gara-pin</i>	....	....	Noise of locking a door.
<i>Pon-pon</i> ....	....	....	Sound of firearms. English <i>bang-bang</i> , French <i>pan-pan</i> .
<i>Don-don-don</i> ....	....	....	A continual thumping noise.
<i>Dō to</i> ....	....	....	With a "thud." Cf. Greek δοῦπος, a sound made in falling to the ground.
<i>Domburi to</i> ....	....	}	Sound of falling into water with a "plump."
<i>Zambun to</i> ....	....		
<i>Zambu to</i> ....	....		
<i>Dobun to</i> ....	....		
<i>Pokan to</i> ....	....		
<i>Dzubu-dzubu</i> ....	....	....	Onomatope used of a ship sinking.
<i>Chin-chin</i> ....	....	....	Water simmering.
<i>Gō-gō</i> ....	....	....	Sound of a torrent.
<i>Gō-meku</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To make a loud creaking or rumbling noise.
<i>Goro-goro</i> ....	....	}	Rumbling as of a cart, the bowels.
<i>Koro-koro</i> ....	....		

Compare Burns' phrase "some curmurring in his guts" where, as usual in English onomatopoes, a letter is changed in reduplication. Motoōri, the most famous of Japanese scholars and grammarians, thinks that this onomatopoe is the origin of the word *Kokoro*, heart. *Kokoro* is not applied to the material anatomical heart, for which the Chinese word *shin* is used, and Motoōri believes that it first meant the bowels and inwards generally. The belly is at this day the seat of wisdom with the Chinese and Japanese (as it was of feeling with the ancient Jews).

What business have the root-of-tongue sounds in these words? They do not exist in the thing represented. We should be very much surprised indeed to hear *k*'s or *g*'s issuing from that part of our organization. Nor is there anything in the motions accompanying the sounds in question to suggest mute consonants. The reason for their presence must be sought elsewhere. As shown above, the pronunciation of *o* requires a number of well-defined movements of the organs of speech. But within the limits thus laid down, there is still room for variety, one kind of which depends on the precise position of the tongue and lower jaw. If we wish to produce a deep, resounding *o*, which shall recall the hollow, rumbling noises indicated, we lower the jaw a little more and retract the tongue (which for an ordinary *o* lies on the floor of the mouth, with its tip touching the lower gums or teeth), so as to leave the cavity of the mouth large and empty. The result of this is to thicken out the tongue at the base so as almost to close the passage of the throat—in other words, to bring it nearly into the position for pronouncing *k* or *g*.

<i>Todoroku</i> (O.L.)	....	To rumble as of thunder, carts, beating a hollow vessel, &c.
<i>Doyo</i>	....	Noise.
<i>Doyomu</i> (O.L.)	....	To make a noise.
<i>Hoku-hoku</i> or <i>Poku-</i>	....	Said of the sound of the hollow "fish-head" of wood used in temples for a drum.
<i>poku</i>	....	
<i>Saya-saya</i>	....	A rustling noise as of silk, leaves on a tree, &c. Cf. <i>sasa</i> , whispering.
<i>Soyo-soyo</i>	....	
<i>Su-su</i>	....	
<i>Soyoro</i>	....	
<i>Gasa-gasa</i>	....	
<i>Goso-goso</i>	....	Secretly, stealthily.
<i>Hiso-biso</i>	....	

The whirring sound made by a wheel in rapid revolution, as represented by *r* or *l*, enters into onomatopoeic words in many languages. In Japanese (which has no *l*) we have—

<i>Kuruma</i> (O.L.)	....	A wheel, a wheeled vehicle, a mill.
<i>Guru-guru</i>	....	Rolling or turning over.
<i>Guri-guri</i>	....	Expresses roundness.
<i>Gururi to</i>	....	In a circle. Cf. Greek <i>γῦρος</i> , a circle.

<i>Korori</i>....	....	....	} Of tumbling over.
<i>Koro-goro</i>	....	....	
<i>Korobu</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To tumble over.
<i>Meguru</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To take a circuitous route.
<i>Kiriri</i> ...	....	....	Twisting round.
<i>Jirori-jirori</i>	....	....	Rolling the eyes.
<i>Gioro-gioro</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Gorori-gorori</i>	....	....	Tumbling about when drunk.
<i>Maru</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A circle.
<i>Mari</i> (O.L.)	....	....	A ball.
<i>Maruki</i> (O.L.)...	....	....	Round.
<i>Marobu</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To roll over.
<i>Maromeru</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To make round.
<i>Yoro-yoro</i>	....	....	Rolling about unsteadily.
<i>Yoro böu</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To reel as a drunken man.
<i>Hioro-hioro</i>	....	....	Reeling about.
<i>Dzuka-dzuka</i>	....	....	A tramping noise.
<i>Doka-doka</i>	....	....	Noise of clogs on a wooden floor.
<i>Bata-kusa</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Doya-doya</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Bata-bata</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Pata-pata</i>	....	....	{ Sound of repeated flaps, slaps, claps, &c. The latter also conveys the idea of warmth according to Hepburn.
<i>Poka-poka</i>	....	....	
<i>Bachi-bachi</i>	....	....	Clapping of hands.
<i>Pachi-pachi</i>	....	....	Crackling of flames.
<i>Kachi-kachi</i>	....	....	{ Sound of striking something hard, as an arrow on a hard target, castanets, &c.
<i>Kachiri</i>	....	....	
<i>Kotsuri</i>	....	....	{ Rattling of hail.
<i>Tashi-dashi</i>	....	....	
<i>Gotsuri</i>	....	....	{ Hard things knocking against each other.
<i>Gokkiri</i>	....	....	
<i>Poki-poki</i>	....	....	Sound of cracking.
<i>Guza to</i>	....	....	(The <i>a</i> strongly accented.) Pricking, stabbing.
<i>Gussari</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Guzari</i>....	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Poro-poro</i>	....	....	{ Sound of falling drops, dripping.
<i>Boro-boro</i>	....	....	
<i>Poto-poto</i>	....	....	
<i>Pota-pota</i>	....	....	
<i>Bota-bota</i>	....	....	
<i>Pottari</i>	....	....	{ Just a drop, something tiny.
<i>Potchiri</i>	....	....	
<i>Pottari</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Pottsuri</i>	....	....	"Spitting" rain, mice nibbling.
<i>Potsu-potsu</i>	....	....	A little (drop) here and there.
<i>Para-para</i>	....	....	Sound of heavy rain
<i>Bara-bara</i>	....	....	Of a loud crashing or rattling noise.
<i>Sara-sara</i>	....	....	Noise of moving a bamboo screen.
<i>Kishi-meku</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To make a creaking noise (as a cart-wheel)
<i>Gata-gata</i>	....	....	A rattling noise.
<i>Zabu-zabu</i>	....	....	{ Sound of wading in shallow water.
<i>Sawa-sawa</i>	....	....	
<i>Zawa-zawa</i>	....	....	{ Noisily (of voices).
<i>Sawagu</i> (O L.)	....	....	
	....	....	To make an uproar.

<i>Gaya-gaya</i>	....	....	An uproar, din of many people talking at the same time.
<i>Wappa-sappa</i>	....	....	Sound of jollity.

Motions.

<i>Hoto-hoto</i>	....	....	Tapping at a door.
<i>Hata-to</i>	....	....	Striking.
<i>Pata-pata</i>	....	....	Of repeated blows.
<i>Bottari</i>	....	....	} Of coming down with a "flop."
<i>Battari</i>	....	....	
<i>Dossari</i>	....	....	
<i>Pattari</i>	....	....	
<i>Bassari</i>	....	....	
<i>Tata ku</i> (O.L.)	....	....	Of anything soft falling to the ground.
		....	To thwack, knock.
<i>Futa-futa</i>	....	....	Flapping of a fan.
<i>Poko-poko</i>	....	....	Jogging along.
<i>Dabu-dabu</i>	....	....	Of a horse jogging along.
<i>Kappa-to</i>	....	....	With a flop.
<i>Kat to</i> ....	....	....	Flaring up with anger.
<i>Pot-to</i> ....	....	....	Sudden flushing.
<i>Wat-to</i> ....	....	....	Bursting out crying.
<i>Mit-to</i> or <i>Pat-to</i>	....	....	Anything bursting out suddenly.
<i>Dot-to</i> ....	....	....	Of a sudden burst of noise.
<i>Piku-piku</i>	....	....	The beating of the pulse.
<i>Zuki-zuki</i>	....	....	Painful throbbing.
<i>Biku-biku</i>	....	....	Wincing.
<i>Bikkuri</i>	....	....	Starting in alarm.
<i>Gikkuri</i>	....	....	Ditto.
<i>Pokkuri</i>	....	....	Of a sudden motion.
<i>Puttsuri</i>	....	....	Of something snapping.
<i>Buru-buru</i>	....	....	Of trembling. Cf. French <i>Brrr</i> .
<i>Furuû</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To tremble.
<i>Wana-wana</i>	....	....	Of trembling.
<i>Wananaku</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To tremble.
<i>Dokkoi</i>....	....	....	Putting out one's strength as to lift a heavy weight.
<i>Gui to</i> ....	....	....	Ditto. Represents holding the breath previous to making an effort.
<i>Hishi-hishi to</i>	....	....	Of making an effort.
<i>Osu</i> (O.L.)	....	....	To push, shove. Cf. also Greek $\omega\theta\omega$, to push.
<i>Surari to</i>	....	....	Of any swift, sweeping, unobstructed motion, as of drawing a sword.
<i>Sura-sura to</i>	....	....	Smoothly, glibly.
<i>Soro-soro</i>	....	....	Gently, slowly.
<i>Shonara-shonara</i>	....	....	Of the gentle, easy walking of a woman.
<i>Mishiri-mishiri</i>	....	....	Of quiet treading.
<i>Jiri-jiri</i>	....	....	Of a gradual motion.

Note in the above six examples the absence of mutes which would convey an idea of abruptness.

Tatsu (O.L.) To stand up.

This verb is conjugated as follows :—Pres. Indic. *tatsu*, future *tatan*, perfect *tateri*, stem *tachi*, giving an irreducible element *tat*, which may be called the root. *Tsu* and *chi*, as already

pointed out, are merely the Japanese way of saying *tu* and *ti*. Is *tat* an onomatope? I believe it is. Now at any rate it has an onomatopoetic quality. There is no other motion of the organs of speech so well adapted to render the rising to an erect posture as the straightening out the tongue with its tip touching the teeth or gums, as is done in pronouncing *t*. In *tat* the motion is repeated, as is so frequently done in the case in onomatopes. Nor is the vowel sound quite a matter of indifference. If any sound is made in getting to one's feet, it is that of a stamp on the ground, to render which, *a* is obviously more suitable than *i*, *u*, *e*, or even *o*. Cf. Chinese *tah*, to put the feet on the ground, to tread. There is a Japanese onomatopoetic adverb *jidanda*, which prefixed to *fumu*, to tread, gives it the meaning of our "stamp." It is almost an exact equivalent of our "stand" when the phonetic differences of English and Japanese are allowed for.

An analysis of the English word "stand" yields similar results on the assumption that its primary meaning was "to get to one's feet." It is at any rate probable that it originally meant an action, and not a state. The initial *s*, indicative of effort, favours this view, and actions lend themselves more readily to onomatopoetic imitation than conditions of rest. Even if the action is not that of standing up, but of putting down one's foot firmly, and hence "staying," "stopping," the difference is not great. The *n* I take to be a mere euphonic ornament.

Neither French nor Japanese have any word for "stand." This idea is expressed in French by *se tenir debout*, and in Japanese by a similar phrase.

Utsu (O.L.) To strike.

The root is *ut*. It can hardly be owing to chance that the letter *t* is so prominent in words for striking and touching in many different languages. In Japanese we have, besides *utsu*, *ataru*, to hit or touch, *tsuku*, to thrust, *butsu*, to beat, and *tataku*, to rap, to thwack. Then there are the Latin *tundere*, to thump, *tangere*, to touch, *tax-tax*, an onomatope for beating, and *taxare*, to touch sharply. In Greek there is *τύπτω*, to strike, *τυγχάνω*, root *τυχ*, to hit the mark, and *τιτύσκομαι*, to aim at, to hit the mark. The Chinese for strike is *ta* or *t'ah*, and the Korean *chhi-ta*, where the aspirates, like the initial aspirate in strike, seem intended to convey the idea of force.

It may be admitted that the motion of the tongue in pronouncing *t* represents but feebly the acts of standing up or striking. But every art has its limitations. The materials at the command of the onomatope-maker are confessedly scanty, and he has got to make the best of them.

CHAPTER VII.

Unclassified Words.

THE words in the following list have no very obvious expressive quality. Some are doubtless sham onomatopoes—mere conventional words in disguise—but as they are nearly all words of recent origin for which no derivation can be assigned, it seems improbable that this can be the case with many. The Japanese themselves recognise them as distinct in kind from words of the ordinary language by printing them in different type, and in other ways.

It is also possible that in some cases the connection between the word and its meaning may have been owing to chance circumstances independent of derivation, and without the aid of any natural fitness in the word itself to convey the idea attached to it. But it does not seem probable that this can have been of frequent occurrence, or if it did happen, that the words so formed would often have permanent currency.

It is more probable that the majority are genuine onomatopoes. A change of sound or meaning may have obscured their original expressive quality, or, owing to differences of fashion in the matter, what sounds inexpressive to us may have a quite recognisable meaning to the Japanese. Our music gives them little pleasure, and *vice versâ*. It is also to be remembered that when first invented they would be accompanied by aids of gesture and vocal intonation, and would be used under circumstances calculated to make the most of whatever expressive quality they possessed. Opportuneness is a highly important factor in making such words intelligible. Even the best onomatopoes cannot afford to dispense with assistance of this kind. "Bang" is not a bad onomatope, but if you say it to a person ignorant of its signification, in a quiet tone of voice and apropos of nothing, he will not know what you mean. But if you raise your voice, and make the gesture of firing a gun, you will probably be understood, and he will certainly understand you if your imitation immediately follow the actual discharge of fire-arms.

<i>Bonyari</i>	....	....	Dulness.
<i>Bot-to</i>	....	....	Dim, mazed, dull.
<i>Pokan to</i>	....	....	In a vacant, absent manner.
<i>Shā-shā</i>	....	....	Brazen-facedly.
<i>Bisshori</i>	....	....	} Thoroughly drenched.
<i>Bisho-bisho</i>	....	....	
<i>Jiku-jiku</i>	....	....	Wet, moist, damp.
<i>Bichi-bichi</i>	....	....	A springing, jerking motion, as of a live fish thrown on the ground.

<i>Bottori</i>....	....	....	} In a soft, quiet, silent manner, or like anything soft and wet falling.
<i>Bottari</i>	....	....	
<i>Bottara</i>	....	....	
<i>Pocha-pocha</i>	....	....	Round and fat, as of the face.

The Japanese language has hundreds more of these words.

CHAPTER VIII.

Children's Words.

Onomatopes

<i>Wan-wan</i>	....	....	A dog.
<i>Nyā-nyā</i>	....	....	A cat.
<i>Chiu-chiu</i>	....	....	A rat.
<i>Shii</i>	....	....	<i>Mingere</i> —an imitation of the encouraging sound made by nurses.
<i>Un-ko</i>	....	....	<i>Fæces</i> . <i>Ko</i> means small, <i>un</i> is possibly onomatopoeic.
<i>Bū</i>	....	....	Hot water for drinking. Perhaps from the gesture of blowing to cool it.

Words altered from the ordinary language.

<i>Nenne</i>			To sleep, a baby, from <i>neru</i> , to sleep. &c., &c.
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Words of uncertain origin.

<i>Ototsu</i>			Father.	} Cf. English <i>dada</i> , Greek <i>ἄρρα</i> .
<i>To-to</i>			Ditto.	
<i>Te-te</i>	....	....	Ditto.	
<i>Chi-chi</i>	....	....	Ditto.	
<i>Okka</i>	....	....	Mother.	
<i>Ha-ha</i>	....	....	Ditto.	The last is probably for an older <i>papa</i> .

Chichi and *ha ha*, although originally children's words, now form part of the ordinary language. *Chi-chi* also means milk, the breast.

Some of the above words may have originated in the child's earliest articulate utterances being fitted on by his parents or nurses to his first wants or ideas very much at random, and without reference to expressive quality. The reduplication was perhaps meant to give them a false air of being onomatopes, and also to afford the hearer two chances instead of one of catching the word.

CHAPTER IX.

Recapitulation.

THE more important of the principles of language illustrated in this paper may be briefly recapitulated as follows:—

1. The first speech of mankind consisted of natural cries, which I have classified as shouts, grunts and hisses. These were developed into interjections (oh ! no ! hush !) by a two-fold process. The ideas became more distinct and definite, and the sounds, at first differentiated only by tone, became articulate.

2. From such interjections there have been derived a very considerable proportion of the grammatical forms and particles of the Japanese language, such as case signs, honorific and interrogative particles, the signs of the indicative (?), optative, conditional and imperative moods, and of the causative (?), and negative verbs. A good many words of the general vocabulary may be traced to the same origin.

3. A further stage in the development of language consists in the imitation of such non-significant vocal sounds and motions as blowing, spitting, gulping, and coughing.

4. It is here that mankind found a model for the mute consonants.

5. It was also at this stage that the imitations of motions by motions of the organs of speech began.

6. In onomatopoeia mute consonants are usually expressive of motion, vowels and nasals of sound, the aspirates occupying an intermediate position.

7. Ordinary onomatopoes such as rat-rat, bow-bow, &c., are of late origin, and can throw little light on the genesis of speech.

8. Letter correspondence in like onomatopoes of the same or different languages follows the classification into mutes, aspirates and nasals. It is only where there is some special reason for this that the variations occur between sounds made by the same organ of speech as in ordinary philology.

JANUARY 9TH, 1894.

Professor A. MACALISTER, F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and signed.

The following elections were announced :—

J. R. MORTIMER, Esq., of Driffeld, Yorkshire.

Dr. LENNOX BROWNE, F.R.C.S. Ed., Mansfield Street, W.

The presents that had been received were announced and thanks voted to the respective donors.