Analysis and Value of *Hentai Kambun* as Japanese

This paper proposes an analysis of word order in the premodern Japanese writing system *hentai kambun* and also endeavors to show that *hentai kambun* is a systematic method of recording Japanese and is not an error-filled imitation of Chinese.

On the surface, *hentai kambun* texts resemble Classical Chinese, due to the lack of Japanese syllabic symbols for functional categories and the tendency for VPs and PPs to be head-initial. (1) shows SVO word order, which is a consistent feature of Chinese from classical to modern times. Japanese, on the other hand, has been an SOV language throughout its attested history. When the sentence is read (indicated by '=>'), the word order is translated into head-final Japanese word order.

(1) 吾　　欲　　　　　　取　　其　　猪。　　　　　　　　(*Kojiki*, Ohojin)
　　 I　 [VP **want**　[CP ... [VP **take**　Dem　 boar]]]
=> Ware　[VP [CP ... [VP sono　winosisi=wo　**tora**]-mu　to]　**omopu**].
　　 I　　　　　　　　 Dem　 boar=Acc　　 take-Mod　C　 want
　　 'I want to get that boar.'

However, *hentai kambun* is not pure Chinese, as is clear from numerous examples which exhibit word order types not found in classical or contemporary Middle Chinese. In ditransitive clauses like (2), in which both objects are overtly expressed, the verb appears between the two objects. Examples like this, in which the direct object surfaces in preverbal position, have led to the general assessment that *hentai kambun* is an imperfect imitation of Chinese, which contains numerous errors due to native language transfer on the part of the Japanese authors (Tsukishima 1963, Miller 1967, Minegishi 1986, Rabinovitch 1996, and others). In (2), it is the appearance of the direct object in preverbal position which is assumed to be the result of native language transfer.

(2)　　名　　　賜　　曙立　　王　　　　　　　　　　(*Kojiki*, Suinin)
　　 [VP name　[V' **give**　Aketatsu　prince]]
=> [VP na=wo　[V' [Aketatu=no　Opokimi]=ni　**tamapi**-te
　　 name=Acc　　 Aketatsu=Gen　prince=Dat　 give-Conj
　　 '(He) gave a name to Prince Aketatsu, and….'

However, I argue in this paper that aberrant word orders like that in (2) are not mistakes in an attempt to write Chinese. Rather, I show that they are in fact rule governed and derived in systematic fashion from underlying Japanese word order. Examples like (1) and (2) can be derived by simply reversing the order of head and complement within VP. This is obvious for (1), in which both the matrix and embedded VPs consist of a single complement. (2) can be accounted for in the same way, if the accusative object is merged in the specifer of VP. Reordering of the verb and its complement would then place the dative argument after the verb.

This paper, then, agrees with Aldridge (2001) that *hentai kambun* is a method of writing Japanese and is not Chinese. However, I do not accept Aldridge's proposal that the word order of *hentai kambun* is a direct reflection of underlying head-initial word order in Japanese. Evidence that this cannot be the case comes from examples like (3), in which an adposition appears inside of its complement DP. On standard Minimalist assumptions, when a head is merged with the complement it selects, a new syntactic object is created. Given the Extension Condition, we would not expect the selecting head to appear inside of the complement it selects.

(3)　　是　　於　　河　　下　　　　　　　　　　　　(*Kojiki*, Suinin)
　　 [PP [DP Dem　**on**　[D' river　bank]]]

=> kono   kapa   simwo=**ni**
this   river   bank   Loc
'on this river bank'

I propose a uniform analysis to account for the word order exhibited in (1)-(2), on the one hand, and in (3), on the other. Assuming that lexical verbs universally move to *v* in the course of a derivation, the orders in (1) and (2) would actually involve a slightly more complex process. In addition to word order reversal within VP, the V+*v* complex would have to lower (in the sense of Marantz 1988) back to V. This second step may seem extraneous. However, (3) provides crucial evidence for the role of lowering. Clearly, this cannot be a simple case of word order reversal inside the PP. It also is a clear counterexample to the claim that aberrant words orders in *hentai kambun* are merely lapses into the author's native Japanese, since this type of word order would be very strange in both Japanese and Chinese. However, (3) can be derived by lowering of the P to D and then reversing the order of D and its NP complement.

The analysis proposed above for examples found in the *Kojiki* receives additional support from the 10th century text *Shomonki*. VPs with both dative and accusative internal arguments generally take the form of V-DP-PP, as in (4a). The object can appear in preverbal position only under certain circumstances, for example when it is definite, as in (4b). If we analyze (4b) as a case of scrambling, then we can apply a uniform analysis to both examples in (4). All that takes place is reordering of the V-*v* complex around the complement VP. In (4b), the direct object has scrambled to the edge of *v*P, so the verb will precede only the indirect object. The difference, then, between the *Kojiki* and the *Shomonki* is that the former employs lowering, while the latter does not.

(4) a. 大分   貞盛   等、   奉   命   於   公   (*Shomonki*)
Ohomune   Sadamori   Pl   [VP **offer**   life   to   public]
=> Ohomune Sadamori   ra   [VP inoti=wo   ohoyake=ni   **houjite**]
Ohomune Sadamori   Pl   life=Acc   public=Dat   offer
'Ohomune Sadamori offered his life in public service....'
   b. 具   由   聞   於   京都。   (*Shomonki*)
all   *news*   **hear**   in   Kyoto
=> Tubusani   yosi=wo   Kyoto=ni   kiku.
all   news=Acc   Kyoto=Dat   hear
'(He) heard all the news in Kyoto.'

Thus, there are two contributions offered by this paper. The first is a systematic analysis of *hentai kambun* word order, which is substantiated by two distinct texts separated chronologically by three centuries. The second is the demonstration that *hentai kambun* texts are in fact Japanese and accordingly can be used in an analysis of premodern Japanese syntax.

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