

Diagram, Inscription, Sensation¹

The Heian court arose on the Japanese archipelago in the ninth century — a local precipitation from a larger nexus of states, commandaries, and courts that coalesced, fragmented, and dispersed across East Asia in the wake of the Han empire.² Prior to the Heian court, the idea of empire gathered various clans, by force and by alliance. Sometimes tentatively, sometimes violently, one clan, the Yamato clan, strived to organize the court around consistent genealogies, bureaucracies, and myths, yet the court's centre remained mobile. Across two to three centuries, the imperial centre continued its semi-nomadic movements, migrating from site to site at uneven intervals, for various reasons (genealogical conflicts, unpacified spirits, troubled ghosts or lands). With each successive removal, the structure of court — a grid-like city with avenues laid out in accordance with auspicious lines of force — emerged with greater precision and extension, ever closer to the dynastic ideal. The Heian court, in a sense, marked the culmination of the mobile series, for the court left off its nomadic style. It also marked the start of a new series of flows in and around the capital, the contours of which continued to waver.

PAPERSCAPES

The surface for inscription is not neutral. The papers used for Heian calligraphy begin with vegetal fibres of various types. Types of fibre result in papers that differ greatly in texture, that absorb ink differently, that affect the style and allure of brushwork. The fibres, teased from husks, barks, or other sources, are swollen and pulped, then water is removed in order to mat the fibres into a sheet. The result is a surface without horizontal or vertical orientations: fibres overlap

1 I would like to thank Ian Buchanan, who hosted the Deleuze Symposium at which an earlier version of this paper was presented; and Brian Massumi for his suggestions and insights. I would also like to thank the Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche and Social Science and Humanities Research Council.

2 Dean and Massumi provide a useful model for thinking about the ways in which the first dynasty of the Qin emperor attempted to reconcile antagonisms between smooth and striated space by evoking modes of warfare, exchange, and social hierarchy which accelerated and blurred the two tendencies (like the spokes of a wheel) within a state that could only implode and explode. This dynamics of imperial formation and dispersion informs subsequent dynasties, courts, commandaries, albeit in a muted, tempered form.

any which way, twining and meshing wherever attractions spring up between teased-up microfibrils. The sheet of paper may be square or rectangular, but there is no way to determine an up or down, a right or left, amid the entwined, matted fibres. This is a decidedly "smooth space."

There are a number of ways in which orientations are introduced to this smooth space. Often sheets join to form long scrolls of paper. In the absence of any marks or traces on the paper, however, this remains a rather vague orientation, with only an anticipation of horizontal and vertical movements of inscription. In general, paper formats do not so much introduce orientations to smooth space — they are contingent borders, not frames. To these smooth spaces, Heian art commonly introduces colours, patterns, or figures. At this level, two poles start to emerge. Some applications of colour and pattern tend to bring as much orientation or striation as possible to the smooth surface. At this extreme are those papers that bear vertical lines to create columns for characters. Many "canonical texts" (such as Buddhist and Taoist sutra) adopt such measures to assure in advance that writing follows and imparts a strict orientation. At the other extreme are those papers that amplify the random variations of smooth space. Flecks of gold or silver scatter, dyes seep and swirl, or papers of various colour, are pieced together like a crazy quilt with fluid-edged patches.

The papers used at the Heian court for poetic inscription — particularly for important occasions like contests, banquets, and ceremonies — typically deploy such techniques, and frequently deploy all of them at once, in order to amplify the smoothness of paper. The result is the fantastical "paperscapes" that underlie Heian calligraphic poetics: trails of dark ink run over lavenders, greens, yellows, and reds that pool and stream, dotted with showers of gold and silver — all of which seems to anticipate or prefigure poems that sing of celestial and terrestrial movements: petals flutter, rivers flow, autumn leaves scatter, bugs chirp and susurrate, lovers meet and part, moons wax and wane.³ But this resonance

between the poetic "naturescape" and the paperscape would not belong to the realm of representation: those scattered flecks of colour are only like petals, leaves, snowflakes in so far as they betray an analogous motility and play of variation. Likewise with the currents and eddies of dyes, or the layers and patches of papers: this is a manner of mimicry, not pictography or illustration. Consequently, it becomes difficult to determine whether paperscapes mimic naturescapes or the reverse; or maybe both emerge together, arising from some common source.

At the level of paper, there arise innumerable admixtures of smooth and striated space. Some papers apply patterns that replicate embroidered silk, imparting a sense of vertical-horizontal orientation, with emblems and motifs that echo the woof and warp of textile. There are also papers rubbed with distinctly oriented designs or painted with grasses, trees, bugs, birds. Such figures are not as strictly striated as the vertical columns of, say, a sutra. And yet, they introduce less random variation than the swirling, fluctuating colours and lines of the paperscapes. In practice, there emerges a range of intersections of smooth and striated space. Nevertheless, it is the aesthetic will to smooth that comes to the fore in the almost delirious paperscapes of the renowned poetic anthologies of the Heian court.

Next come the movements of the brush as it unfurls a series of signs (characters) down the page. Typically, the onset of writing, whether pen or brush, has a particular hold on the modern imagination: the moment when brush or pen encounters the blank page is the moment of ultimate, originary creation — out of the void emerges order; on a field of possibilities arrives the mark, the sign, the word. Calligraphic papers — especially the fantastical paperscapes — defy the notion of an originary mark. Nuance and texture are central to calligraphic expression, and calligraphy and poetry together constitute a kind of crazy-quilt economy of the palimpsest: the inscriptions on previous papers could be partially erased by soaking away the inks, then covering them over with dyes; or the unused margins or scraps could be pieced together; or entire sheets could be shredded, repulped, and matted with other fibres. All of these practical ways to reuse paper continually return texts into texture and the art of text emerges from an art of patchwork.

Patchwork also affords an excellent analogy for the art of poetic composition and compilation. The art of composition pieces together a song from various bits of other songs and poems. The art of compilation of poem anthologies adds another layer of composition, piecing together songs from various sources. Heian

3 These "paperscapes" can be seen in any number of Heian texts. In this instance, I have before me the examples from the volume *Heian Kamakura no sho: sampitsu sanseki: the Kumogami-bon Wakarōeishū* (46), the *Gen eibon Kokinwakashū* (49), the *Oshikishi* (53), and the *Ishiyama-gire* (55). See also the Heian and Kamakura volumes of *Shodō zenshū*, which give not only a series of plates but a number of articles and commentaries as well. In this context, the article on paper ("Sōshōshi ni tsuite" 14: 28-34) is of particular interest because it gives the details of the production of papers and paper designs. As for the poetry, my point of reference is first and foremost the *Kokinwakashū*, compiled around the year 905; because in many ways this poetic anthology stabilizes and standardizes the poetic styles that characterize the Heian period (roughly, 794-1183). There are two available translations of this anthology, as well as a good deal of secondary literature in English, not to mention the extensive commentaries and interpretations in Japanese. If I do not cite much of this literature directly in this paper (though it is implicit in all the descriptions), it is because I wish to shift the ground of poetic analysis away from the now standard emphasis on ethnic and linguistic closure (to wit, Heian courtiers used poetry to establish a Japanese language and identity distinct from China,

somehow replicating the orientalism and nationalism of modern Japan one thousand years earlier). Those who are interested in further references and these other debates around Heian culture might consult the bibliography and text of my book, *The Order of the Senses: Poetry, Calligraphy, and Cosmology in Heian Japan*.

poetics is an art of patching together (composing or compiling) bits and pieces with skill and style. As with the aesthetic will to smooth at the level of paper, skill in Heian poetics could be said to entail the ability to detect and enhance the texture of bits and pieces by way of juxtapositions, overlays, inlays, complications, alternations that create new resonances. The emphasis falls not on creation or expression as a form of origination, but expression as a style of synthesis — of disjunctive synthesis that follows patterns of dissonance or diffraction that arise between, and cross through, striations.

HEIAN, BAROQUE, AND THE CRISIS OF EUROPE

There are certain traits that would account for the specificity of the Heian, and for the possibility of stretching it beyond its historical limits — in the manner of Deleuze with the Baroque (1988, 48/1993b, 34). The quest for historical specificity then would not be an attempt to reconstruct, surround, and imprison the Heian, but to stretch its styles into other Heians, into our contemporary Heian. After all, Deleuze closes his Baroque on the note, "Nous restons leibniziens" ("We are all still Leibnizian") (1988, 189/1993b, 199). Similarly, is it not possible that we are all still Heian? Yet it is impossible to deny a moment of reaction to this historical extension: who exactly is "we"?

Alain Badiou is surely correct to fill in "we moderns" (51), and from the standpoint of modernity, it may be possible for "us" to reply "what does it matter who is speaking?" Such is modernity. Yet, if a certain trouble persists around Deleuze's "nous restons leibniziens" it is because the moment of historical specificity for the Baroque sets the boundaries of Western Europe, while the moment of historical stretching potentially extends across the globe. The possibility of stretching the Baroque beyond its historical limits is also the possibility of stretching Europe beyond its geopolitical limits. Deleuze is not unaware of this trouble, and in his repairs on Leibniz, one of his gestures is to shatter God and the best of all possible worlds. The modern world becomes the site of junctures of impossibles.

Deleuze thus presents two ways of dealing with the "Orient." (Note that his Orient is largely consonant with the Anglo-American Orient of the postwar era: East Asia as *l'Extrême Orient*, usually centred on China and Japan.) One way involves historical delineation by way of the usual lines of filiation. In this respect, Deleuze's evocation and isolation of the Orient is entirely conventional: the Baroque line, for instance, differs from the Oriental line, in a manner at once spurious and ingenious. By way of Simon Hantai, Deleuze says of the Oriental line,

Le peint et le non-peint ne se distribuent pas comme la forme et le fond, mais comme le plein et le vide dans un devenir réciproque.... En un et zéro Leibniz reconnaît le plein et le vide à la manière chinoise; mais Leibniz baroque ne croit pas au vide.... Les plis sont toujours pleins dans le Baroque et chez Leibniz. (1988, 51)

Painted and non painted surfaces are not divided as are form and content, but as the full and the void in a reciprocal becoming ... in one and zero, Leibniz acknowledges the full and the void in Chinese fashion; but the Baroque Leibniz does not believe in the void.... For Leibniz, and in the Baroque, folds are always full. (1993b, 36)

This is ingenious because it tells us a great deal about Leibniz; spurious because it presents little other than a yin-yang formula for the range of Chinese art, which then stands in for all of the Orient, undifferentiated all the way to Hantai. All the familiar Eurocentric genealogies and ethnicities are brought to bear.

Deleuze's second way operates on those same boundaries and genealogies as sites of multiplicity, as fractal edges at once finite and infinite — in contrast to the organic approach to the limit that characterizes a Hegelian notion of differentiation grounded in historical synthesis or sublation. Deleuze (especially with Guattari) adopts a style of conceptual exemplification that picks up Japanese and Chinese poems, states, and war machines, somewhat randomly and reductively, yet nonetheless with clear intent to practice a disjunctive synthesis that does not rely on sublation at their borders (and with the caveat that it is not the example so much as the concept that is in play). Thus, at the same that he enables an instrumental usage of the Orient, Deleuze enjoins an openness to the tool that would transform the one who picks it up, profoundly. "Peut-être appartiendrait-il profondément au Baroque de se confronter à l'Orient" ("It may be that the Baroque will have to confront the Orient profoundly") (1988, 51/1993b, 36). It may be that the Baroque must profoundly confront the Orient — not as an afterthought but as part of its very constitution.

The Heian would implicate two folds for us. First, the Heian hovers in an uncertain site in the aesthetic and conceptual realms of modern Japan: folded between exotic and classic, foreign and native. This vacillation follows from the Heian's uncertain and unfamiliar position with respect to ethnic, linguistic, and historical boundaries between Japan and China in particular, and among East Asian nations in general. This fold follows along the creases of another fold — with another relation of point, line, and space — one which implicates the actual history and geopolitics of the Heian court. One could characterize this second fold with the Heian court's emphasis on two styles, two courts, two capitals: Kara and Yamato; the Tang court at Chang-an and the Yamato court at Heian-kyō. Today these are often translated into China and Japan in a belated violence on the fold; an attempt to cut it into isolated fragments, to sever geopolitical implications and complications. What remains troubling and fascinating about the Heian is that it operates between poles (like Kara and Yamato) that function as attractors for the fields and currents of modern poles — such as Japan and China, Occident and Orient.

Make no mistake about the era or event. It implies a series of crises of Europe and the West. It purposely evokes the anxieties of thinkers like Husserl, Claudel, and Blanchot — that Europe is just a peninsula of Asia and a point of inflection

of the so-called New World. Deleuze tries to reconfigure such crises in the affirmative, partly with poles like smooth and striated, that complicate easy binarisms and entrenched divides. There is no either/or, no full or void, no Europe or Asia. There is a nuance or texture that folds, unfolds, refolds in between at different intervals and junctures. It is like the Baroque fold — or the Heian paperscapes — which do not introduce relations of full and void between coloured and uncoloured, marked and unmarked, inscribed or uninscribed; always a depth that rises to the surface; an impossible universe of values.

DIAGRAMS

The moment of the brush brings with it imbricated registers of expression. Its signs are at once visual and vocal; its art is intensely manual and gestural. Commentators and translators typically overlook these registers, dismiss them as unimportant to the project of their linguistic science, in which the major task is the extraction of verbal expression. Without some account of the interaction of vocal, visual, and manual registers, however, it is impossible to account for how anyone enters into these texts. It is not exactly a question of production and reception, for these notions ultimately relate to a closed economy of communication (sender, message, receiver) that does not exactly obtain at the level of brushwork. With brushwork, it is a question of sensory interpellation — or rather, embodiment.

Brushwork conjoins the visual/vocal matrix of the sign or character with the manual machine of the brush. (Note that, at this level of analysis, "vocal" is preferable to "verbal," for the sounds associated with signs may or may not be articulated as words; and even when they are articulated as words, poetic and calligraphic treatises situate them close to natural sounds — sighs, chirps, cries, etc. Poetry is as much vocal or musical art as it is verbal; an art of vocal modulations.)

When the tip of the brush moves down the page, it traces a series of characters; vertical columns of characters unwind across the page from right to left. In this respect, writing always constitutes a striation of smooth space, for it introduces distinct orientations. Striation need not always proceed vertically; there are environments in which characters are written horizontally from right to left (such as temple gates). Still, regardless of right-left or horizontal-vertical variations, inscription tends to striate. In some instances, Heian poetics attempts even to smooth the striation of writing. Sometimes the characters of a poem "hide" or are dispersed into a pictorial matrix — three birds on the wing are read as "green" (three *mi* + bird *tori* = green *mitori*) — in which case writing and reading scrambles the striations of vertical columns or linear sequences (Mostow 338-39). Sometimes the characters sprout leaves, spread wings, or stretch legs, entwining with pictures that underlie the written columns — in which case the eyes move freely between lines of characters and traits of images in the zone

where the brush blurs the edges of striated inscription. These examples serve to recall that Heian poetics, at some level, always introduces traits that undermine the striation of space. On the one hand, the brush traces a series of characters that winds down the page in columns, imparting an orientation; as if ineluctably, inscription tends to striation — whence the mythic status of writing as a bearer of order. On the other hand, the Heian brush introduces a great deal of nuance between the lines of inscription and the textures and figures of its environment, creating semi-autonomous zones of disruption, disorientation, departure.

Characters themselves seem to sustain a certain degree of organization and orientation. This is not due to properties inherent in characters, however. If there are specific operations that attend characters, it is because various usages have sedimented a characteristic constellation of operations around them. First, characters impart a sense of right-left and up-down, but this orientation is no more decisive than the format of the page (square, rectangular, scrolling, etc.). Even with such an orientation, one could read from character to character in any direction; only conventions limit one's direction — conventions that constitute a striation or organization of the reader's body and its world. Second, in addition to right-left and up-down, characters conjoin visual and vocal elements. This conjunction of "seeing" and "sounding" is also subject to convention. The important and difficult question is that of how to imagine this conjunction of seeing and sounding; and then, how to get at its conventionality as well as its zones of autonomy?

Around the time of the Eastern Han, scholars began to classify characters in accordance to six scripts. Hsu Shen, in the "Postface" to *Shuo wen ch'ieh tzu*, presents the formulations and examples of the six scripts that became the basis for subsequent theories of writing. First among his formulations for characters are those that "indicate things." These are characters that visually diagram their intent (one, two, three, up, down). Second are characters that "model shape," characters like sun, moon, mountain, tree, river. These verge on pictography. Third come the characters that combine "shape and sound," in which one half of the character classifies it by "shape," and the other half presents its sound. Characters for birds — dove, quail, chicken, etc. — use the bird "shape" alongside its sound — and in many instances the sound mimics the call of the bird. Fourth are characters that "join intents," in which the intents of two forms are combined: two trees make a forest, the sun behind a tree makes east. Fifth are characters with "interchangeable glosses," in which two different characters derive similar shape and intent from a precursor. Sixth are those characters derived from "loan and borrow," in which a character like that for "wheat" is used for "to come" because the two have the same sound (Wang 1-10; Billeter 6-20).

This classification evokes various intersections of shapes and sounds, and suddenly, other, more recent conceptions — pictography, logography, phono-

graphy, ideography — seem to be subsumed and of distinctly limited use. Another question emerges: how arbitrary are the relations between sound and shape? How are visual and vocal elements linked? On the one hand, Hsu Shen seems to allow for arbitrary links. In his third instance, characters combine a sound with a kind of classificatory shape in a seemingly arbitrary manner. But then, on the other hand, the classificatory shapes do not seem entirely arbitrary: key examples link sound with shape by way of mimicry. In fact, for the most part, his categories and examples evoke various modes of natural mimicry: shapes of things (sun, moon, tree), shapes of operations (one, two, up, down), combinatory shapes (east is sun behind a tree), combinatory operations (forest is two trees), and shapes of things with their "natural" sounds. Overall, this theory of signs tends to relate sounds and shapes in a non-arbitrary fashion to natural forms.⁴ And so, if we detect a certain degree of combinatory arbitrariness between sounds and shapes, that arbitrariness occurs at the level of representation: shapes do not show what the sounds voice.

In sum, the shapes and sounds of characters are fundamentally arbitrary at the level of representation, illustration, or narration; but there is a level at which their conjunction is not entirely arbitrary — a level that we could only describe

4 It is important to differentiate this notion of mimicry (via Deleuze and Benjamin) from pictography and from Pound and Fenellosa. For Foucault, in *This Is Not a Pipe* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), the calligram is effectively an expanded version of the pictogram, and he relates Chinese writing — "le vieil idéogramme" ("the old ideogram") — to this pictographic mode of combining verbal signs and images (1973, 23/1983, 22). More explicitly, in *Les mots et les choses* (*The Order of Things*), he suggests that, in our traditional imagery of China, "son écriture même ne reproduit pas en lignes horizontales le vol fuyant de la voix; elle dresse en colonnes l'image immobile et encore reconnaissable des choses elle-mêmes" ("even its writing does not reproduce the fugitive flight of the voice in horizontal lines; it erects the motionless and still-recognizable images of things themselves in vertical columns") (1966, 10/1970, xix). It is important that Foucault recognizes, even in chimerical form, that there could be a Chinese order of things — in contrast to Barthes who discovered in Japan and China an exhilarating lack of the Western emphasis of signification — and yet, for Foucault as well, this order of things is, in the end, devoid of Europe's modernity; it is completely other. Foucault's association of pictograms and ideograms thus is ultimately not of much use in the analysis of characters or calligraphy. On the topic of visual qualities of characters, the legacy of Fenellosa as transcribed and elaborated by Pound is of greater interest insofar as their theory of ideogram allied it both with pictogram and with processes and energies — with mimicry as much as pictography (Fenellosa). Of course, if Pound and Fenellosa were able to decentre the two directions: by way of Leibniz and Emerson, and by way of Fenellosa's Japanese informant, Mori Kainan. Nevertheless, in Fenellosa and Pound as in Foucault, figural qualities of characters remain inordinately tied to a pictographic imagination. Deleuze's notion of modulation, in the chapter on analogy in the book on Bacon, presents a more persuasive way to think about the effects of mimicry in poetic language. Moreover, in its concern with senses and bodies, Deleuze's logic of sensation often resonates eerily with many of the traditional Japanese and Chinese treatises on calligraphy and poetry.

as prior to or beneath representation — that of the figural. At this level, the shapes and sounds of characters are to echo, mimic, or figure traits of the phenomenal world. Chinese legend, for instance, places the source of characters in the tracks of birds on the sands. Tracks and traces, signs and signatures arise in the world, and humans follow, striving to trace a path among them. Naturally, a variety of ways (or Ways) arise, codifying and overcoding natural traces to different degrees, in various directions. From one perspective, the tracks of the brush lend themselves to such overcodings. Deleuze and Guattari for instance write of different major types of imperial line that rend the abstract line from smooth space, convert it and accord it values — the Chinese imperial line entails a supraphenomenal encompassing: "la ligne englobante chinoise, supra-phénoménale" (1980, 620-21/1987, 497). From another perspective, the assemblage of the brush — inks, papers, animal hairs, liquefied hands, characters, etc. — brings into play a mediator that traverses codes, stages, ways, and Ways, in which instances writing entails diagrams of sensation rather than codes of inscription and signification.

Now, the simplest way to open these diagrams of sensation is to consider that the brush, profoundly manual, passes over and through characters, conjoining visual and vocal elements. It is as if the movements of the hand/brush could stitch together or clump different registers or potentials. Unfortunately, this aleatory aggregation of registers rarely enters into the scholarly imagination of the art of writing. Usually, the conclusion tends to be that the constellation of elements within characters amounts to an endless game of combinations. Jean-François Billeter, for instance, concludes, "fundamentally, then, Chinese writing is a combinatory art permitting a virtually unlimited number of compounds to be drawn from a limited number of elements" (20). From this position, it is only possible to imagine the finite nature of Chinese writing in terms of codes and conventions — the dead hand of tradition establishes the laws and limits for combination and interpenetration of elements; and the players, oblivious or benighted (only finite), never question the rules (ever infinite).

There may be a way at once simpler and subtler to think about characters, hands, and brushes. Visual, vocal, and manual registers gather around the hand/brush assemblage, and yet because no one register is finally reducible to another, a gap or aperture passes through their midst. To borrow the terminology of traditional Chinese commentaries: this aperture is "heart/mind" (*hsin*). This is how infinite possibilities and permutations fold into finite expressions (and vice versa). This is how the virtual is actualised — a mediator that somehow clumps percepts into sensory aggregates.

So it is that the logic of sensation allows insight into the actualization of the virtual, by addressing a common impasse of empirical analysis. It is possible to classify elements (or rather, subsets), but how do they hold together — and transform? How to explain the new properties that arise at other levels of organization? How to pass from one level of consistency to another? The question can only be understood locally and empirically, in actualization.

THE SPATIAL HYPOTHESIS

Regardless of the style, the hand/brush imparts some manner of balance to each character. Style would always imply some manner of balance, and calligraphy abounds in corporeal qualities of expression. There is even an athletic potential about the brush (recall the photos of Chinese calligraphers' hands among Leni Riefenstahl's Olympic series; or the warrior's equivocation of sword and brush). The athleticism of the Heian brush, however, is not that of the athlete but that of the mime: a careful slip or precarious control that swoons, collapses, or tumbles artfully.

Initially, the idea of calligraphic balance conjures up an almost Cartesian grid: one often learns characters on papers folded or ruled to produce the outlines of a square bisected horizontally and vertically, and the character is to be centred around the centre of this square. Balance at this level is a question of weight: the top should not look heavier than the bottom or *vice versa*. Likewise with right and left: they should not be disproportionate nor should they drift too far apart or squeeze too closely together. Such considerations of weight comprise a sense of the thickness and density of traits as well as of the shape derived from components (that is, a pronounced triangular shape above should be met with an inverted triangle below). On this level, characters seem to do little more than surround a centre in accordance with a simple geometry of proportions and balance.

The actual centre of the character, however, is not its geometrical "coordinate" centre, nor even its centre of gravity. As the hand/brush centres the character, it induces a centre of motion. Not only must the character cohere and balance, but it must also avoid any impression that it sags or descends. It must float and hover. The dynamics of the hand/brush move the centre of the character upward, and in a sense, outward on the page. Thus arises a tension between the coordinate centre (dictated by the geometrical sense of proportion) and the centre of motion. The centre of motion and its tension with coordinate space offer a convenient way to differentiate calligraphy from other modes of inscription. This is why calligraphed characters frequently evoke a sense of animate motion: every animate creature has its signature; we recognize different people by their gait on the basis of the distinctive pattern of tensions around centre of motion and centre of gravity.

In contrast, modern typography tends to produce signs that lope along the horizontal, feet planted firmly, without differentiating the centre of motion from the centre of gravity or from the coordinate centre.

Now, the typographic effect is often associated with the alphabet — oddly, since moveable type enters Europe from China and Korea, and Europeans changed little but the number of characters, which quantitative diminishment often suggested a qualitative loss, a diminishment of visual and conceptual possibilities (Étiemble). Thus Leibniz's Theophilus suggests that Europeans could

introduce a Universal Symbolism, a popular one, and better than that of Chinese, "if in place of words we used little diagrams which represented visible things pictorially and invisible things by means of visible ones which go with them, also bringing in certain marks suitable for conveying inflections and particles" (399). Theophilus concludes that "this way of writing would be of great service in enriching our imagination and giving us thoughts which were less blind and less verbal than our presents ones" (399).

It is possible to construe Leibniz's project of Universal Symbolism as part and parcel of a mathematical or philosophical neutralization of signs. When modern typography takes up its "little diagrams" (characters, letters, whatever), it renders them immobile in a neutral white space, a void that diminishes any sense of forces, movements, or textures prior to inscription. It is possible, of course, to print handwritten characters, to mask the advent of arbitrary space. In fact, Tokugawa Japan resisted moveable type, holding firmly to wood-block prints of handwritten texts (not to mention non-arbitrary spaces of neo-Confucian thought). With the type associated with modernity, however, whether the characters move horizontally or vertically, the printed page assures that the relations between ink and paper are not of consequence, nor are the sensible or mobile qualities of, and linkages between, signs. Everything now concerns the production of intelligibility within an arbitrary space. This is one way to approach Derrida's critique of Leibniz's Chinese prejudice. Derrida writes, "Ce qui à ses yeux libère l'écriture chinoise de la voix est aussi ce qui, par arbitraire et artifice d'invention, l'arrache à l'histoire et la rend propre à la philosophie" ("For him what liberates Chinese script from the voice is also that which, arbitrarily and by the artifice of invention, wrenches it from history and gives it to philosophy") (1967, 113/1974, 76).

Yet Deleuze reminds us that there is no void for Leibniz; that seemingly neutral and arbitrary space is not void but full. One might then think of its historical nuance and texture in terms of a "graphic unconscious," like that which Tom Conley finds operative beneath the typographies of early modern poems. Or, later, poets like Mallarmé and Claudel strived to transform the modern typographic relations of point, line and space. Of course, it is not for nothing that they evoke fans, folds, textures, signs of their "Orient" — Claudel most obviously with his poems handwritten on paper-scapes with character calligraphy to attend and support them, as in *Les cent phrases pour éventail*. Above and beyond these modern insinuations of a graphic unconscious, the movements of Heian brushwork engage a possibility that typographic poetics could only gesture at with its gradual deconstruction of books, lines, phrases, words, and finally, the letter — a smoothing of space within the sign itself.

As the brush "falls" down the page, it oscillates through characters in a way that makes each sign resist or forget its coordinates and its gravity. It flutters, wavers, hovers, flickers, turns around a centre of motion. The page then appears

not as a neutral coordinate space but as a space shot through with forces. The sign emerges at the intersection of forces, and its actualised coherence comes of the nuances of specific intersections (Massumi 33; Smith 34). Such intersections of forces are not unconscious constellations; they are to some extent unpredictable, mysterious, even spiritual (in the manner of vague material essences); yet external, and to some extent, amenable to art's intervention. Brushwork — at least of the kind described here — has the potential to come close to the virtual; it strives toward that moment of inclusive disjunction. No longer is it a question of geometry but of geomancy — that is, of a geometry of forces.

The tension between the coordinate centre and the centre of motion not only reprises the poles of the striated and the smooth, but it also brings into play two modes of cartography or geography. The one would involve an act of centring based on measures and proportions — a Middle Kingdom of paddies, taxes, and tributary states that report to the centre in accordance with their weight and overall balance. The other would involve a strategies of centring based on celestial and terrestrial configurations of forces, a Middle Kingdom of diviners, of wanderers, like warriors or the "recipe men" (*Jeng shih*, or analogously *onyôji*) who peddled their magic techniques from court to court.

Likewise, there would be two stylistic poles. The one would minimize the effects of the centre of motion by appealing to the proportions of characters. It would take care that the sizes and columns of characters do not vary, in this way assuring that the centre of motion does not wander too much or undermine the striation, proportion, or coordination. The other would seek to maximize the centres of motion and the resonance between them and the lines of the brush would summon a kind of nomadic line. The lines of brushwork would not be lines that follow the distance between two points. The centre of motion — a point — would be that which arises between so many lines, among strokes, slashes, daubs, and dashes of the hand/brush. The centre of motion would become a point of inflection.

Suddenly, at the nomadic pole, things become complicated because the calligraphic smoothing of space crosses and coagulates various registers that striations and proportions strive to separate and organize. It calls attention to qualities of paper in relation to qualities of ink, to the speeds and intervals of traits, and to the differentiation and coordination of different centres of motion. Thus the disposition of point, line, and space in these mobile styles leads to "le caractère irréductiblement synthétique de la sensation" ("the irreducibly synthetic character of sensation") (Deleuze 1981, 29/1993a, 189).

THE SENSORIAL/MOTORIAL HYPOTHESIS

Gestures can conjoin sounds and sights. Take the infant as it learns to reach for a noise or a colour and then to associate the two qualities of an object, using the gesture as confirmation: what is seen and heard can be located with the hands.

Other gestures conjoin sights and sounds, too. A noise from behind, the head turns to look. This gesture also must be learned; initially, a child does not much worry about sounds behind it. Are the gestures of the hand in brushwork not similar? They stitch together sounds and sights, albeit at a greater level of abstraction: phonemes and icons. Still, is it not possible to think of them in terms of intersensory development?

Theories of intersensory development carry with them certain debates about priority. For instance, the debate often continues over whether the senses are initially coordinated or differentiated: is subsequent development a process of coordination or differentiation? This transforms into a question about the one and the multiple: are the senses initially one or many? The answer seems easy enough — development is a process of both differentiation and coordination (Bushnell 6) — but the implications are potentially profound, in so far as we cannot situate a prior site of sensory unity within the human body.

In structural terms, Richard Cytowic writes persuasively of synesthesia — "union of the senses" — which takes place in the limbic system, which arises on a level prior to "higher" cognitive functions (representation, reflection, cognition, correlation), and which therefore can never be codified. Nor can it emerge with the predictable intersections. Pointy blue, loud green, round warmth, brittle F#, and so forth are already individuated; there is no one language of associations (43-45). This manner of synesthetic intentionality (so to speak) effectively collapses hierarchical models of the brain (if any more evidence were needed): true synesthetes demonstrate the prior composition or coagulation on which cognition operates — prior agglutination, contraction, or withdrawal. Research on intersensory development can add another twist to this scenario, one that differs from arguments centred on structures, forms, and development, for the question arises of whether this structural synesthesia is actually a true union of the senses, the site of oneness (or even a common sense). That is, the question of the one and the multiple invariably returns, and as one reaches for the site of the one, the unified senses, one discovers that structural, formal synesthesia is a loose, disjointed affair, already differentiated and coordinated. That is, connections and conjunctions occur around an almost primordial "inclusive disjunction" (primordial to the human, that is). To adopt a morphic analogy: one inevitably reaches outside the human body for the site of oneness, and yet that oneness disperses into multiplicity, as if sublimating, proliferating — and one arrives at Deleuze and Guattari's plane of consistency, where "le problème n'est plus celui de l'Un et du Multiple, mais celui de la multiplicité de fusion qui déborde effectivement toute opposition de l'un et du multiple" ("it is a problem not of the One and Multiple but of a fusional multiplicity that effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple") (1980, 191/1987, 154).

Deleuze and Guattari propose two planes, or two ways of conceptualising the plane. The one is the plane of organization or development. It is not given but hidden; it can only be inferred.

Un tel plan, en effet, est aussi bien d'organisation que de développement: il est structural ou génétique, et les deux à la fois, structure et genèse, plan structural des organisations formées avec leurs développements, plan génétique des développements évolutifs avec leurs organisations. (1980, 325)

It is as much a plan(e) of organization as of development: it is structural or genetic, and both at once, structure and genesis, the structural plan(e) of formed organisations with their developments, the genetic plan(e) of evolutionary developments with their organizations. (1987, 265)

The other is the plan(e) of consistency or composition, a plane of immanence and univocity —

Nous l'appelons donc plan de Nature, bien que la nature n'ai rien à voir là-dedans, puisque ce plan ne fait aucune différence entre le naturel et l'artificiel ... un plan de prolifération, de peuplement, de contagion. (1980, 326)

We therefore call it the plane of Nature, although nature has nothing to do with it, since on this plane there is no distinction between the natural and the artificial ... a plane of proliferation, peopling, contagion. (1987, 266-67)

With respect to calligraphic assemblage (hand, brush, posture, ink, paper, characters, etc.), there would then be two ways of following the sensory inter-sections mobilized around the human body — i.e., the tactile qualities of the hand/brush in conjunction with textures and viscosities; proprioceptive qualities of posture, respiration, articulation of joints; visual qualities of characters, papers, inks; and tonal, vocal, verbal resonances. One learns the art of the brush in specific ways, performing the gesture, uttering the sound, recalling the centres and balances — in accordance to specific lineages, masters, and schools that overcode the body with specific styles. The discipline of calligraphy acts on the sensory qualities associated with corporeal potentials; it induces a structure, a development, and an organization. It cuts continuities and traces over discontinuities; it inscribes a body and a subject (but not an individual or interior). It constitutes a radical mutilation and mutation of the body. In particular, there is an amputation of the hand in favour of a new prosthetic hand/brush that transforms modes of touching, feeling, grasping. "People feel, grasp brushes," writes one renowned calligrapher of the early Heian (Kūkai 5).

Heian tales like *The Tale of Genji* push this structure of feeling to its limits: countless moments of crisis in which the brush leaps into the hand as fast as a tear to the eye and the sleeve to the face. This is a novel assemblage of feeling in the way it picks up hands, eyes and mouth: on the one hand, the prosthetic hand/brush; on the other hand, the tear-drenched sleeve that covers the face. Yet the two are linked: the prosthetic hand/brush feels its way down the page, stumbling over sounds and figures, while the drenched sleeve over the face

reassembles the face into patterns at once visual and verbal — a patchwork of eyes and mouth; one has only to imagine how tears make the colours of sleeve seep and run in order to understand how the textures of paper and the patterns of textiles become the connective tissue of the Heian body — how its vocal, visual, and manual articulations verge on proprioceptive articulations around Heian structures of feeling.

This is also at the limits of the plane of development, at the limits of the discipline that structures, organizes, mutilates, and constructs the body and the subject. The body is falling to pieces, and the subject is dispersing, while the plane of consistency is in the offing. That is, individuality and interiority are on the point of emergence. There is a liquefaction of the senses that discovers a singularity and autonomy not of the body or subject.

Heian tales often turn around disappearing women. Above all, it is the body of the court woman that is most intensely overcoded with the structure of feeling. Hobbled almost to immobility with layers of robes, she inhabits the cavernous dark under low eaves, behind screens, blinds, curtains — relations of alliance take her nearly out of circulation. There are but a couple of nodes of mobility: fabrication and distribution of silks that links her across Asia, and the rounds of poem-exchanges that stitch other circuits and paths through the capital. It is not surprising that the smoothing of space in calligraphy, poetry, textiles, scents, and so forth is associated with this feminine space. Feminine space is organized and distributed to the point that the only line of flight is on liquefied hands. When she disappears (as she often does), in her wake trails a series of scattered poems, brushed in her hand — singular traces of an autonomous style. If we have the impression in Heian tales that the feminine world is a zone of autonomy, singularity, and interiority — despite the physical imposition of such limited circulation — it is not simply that women have a lot of time to brood and worry and write, it is largely because their crises result in disappearances through which a singular style emerges. A line is drawn to the vanishing point, a nomadic line that turns around a point of inflection on an invisible horizon.

Nonetheless, it is important to insist: all the felicity of Heian tales — the singular and autonomous style of the feminine zone — hangs on barbarism. It is important to insist on this because, when we read about the body without organs, the allusions to Taoism — "great Japanese compilation of Chinese Taoist treatises made in A.D. 982-84" (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 194/1987, 157) (presumably Tanba no Yasuyori's *Ishinpō*) — tend to pass over the violent possibilities of deformation and transformation in the Heian. Violence remains associated with the schizo body, the paranoid body, the masochist body, or even courtly love. There is but a brief glimpse of horror at large:

Le Tao est-il masochiste? Le courtois est-il tao? Ces questions n'ont guère de sens. Le champ d'immanence ou plan de consistance doit être construit; or il peut l'être dans des formations sociales très différentes, et par des agencements très différents ... qui n'ont pas le même type de corps sans organes. (1980, 195)

Is the Tao masochistic? Is courtly love Taoist? These questions are largely meaningless. The field of immanence or plane of consistency must be constructed. This can take place in very different social formations through very different assemblages ... with different types of bodies without organs. (1987, 157)

Although their evocation of the *Ishinpō* greatly reduces its specificity (equally dubious are the binary filiations of Japan and China), nevertheless, even if haphazardly, Deleuze and Guattari's shift of analysis to the plane of consistency zeros in on otherwise inexplicable intersections. For instance, the author of *The Tale of Genji* probably consulted the *Ishinpō* to write her scenes of spirit possession and feminine vengeance. Courtly romance intersects "Taoist" medical treatises, and corporeal flows intersect fluid brushwork. It is all a problem of making a body without organs, of constructing a plane of consistency. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, it would be meaningless to parse medicine from romance from brushwork. Yet, it is important to underscore the violence and terror, if only to keep us from exoticizing the Tao or the Heian, from botching our own body without organs.

In sum, the two stylistic poles of calligraphy could be seen to recapitulate a plane of sensorial and motorial development and a plane of consistency. One style, associated in the Heian imaginary with the masculine, pacifies centres of motion, making them uniform from character to character, balancing the contractions and dilations of the heart aperture (the point of inclusive disjunction of the senses). In effect, the aperture is restrained from pulsing too violently; and yet, in terms of sensorial development, this pole proves most violent and barbaric in its institution. The other style seems to consist of a relaxation of the confines of the first; by shifts in speed of the brush, it allows each character's centre of motion the autonomy to wobble with respect to others. It seems to enable a kind of cursification and abbreviation of the first. It does not simply come after the first, however. Its hasty traits could be seen as a recuperation of the child's awkwardness with the unwieldy brush, or her impatience with complex characters. Ultimately, it neither follows from the first nor precedes it, even as it announces both the former and latter: the becoming-child and becoming-woman of masculine style afford singularity and interiority, but only outside the body and subject, in a synesthetic disjunction that disrupts their organization.

THE COSMOLOGICAL HYPOTHESIS

Rhythm borders on the abyss, catastrophe, chaos. It is through the diagram — "l'ensemble opératoire des lignes et des zones, des traits et des taches, assignifiants et non représentatifs" ("the operative set of lines and areas, of assignifying and nonrepresentative brushstrokes and daubs of color") (1981, 66/1993a, 194) — that the modern painter confronts the abyss. Deleuze writes of two poles, two ways of dealing with the catastrophe in modern art (1981, 67-

68/1993a, 195). On the one hand, abstraction (Mondrian, Kandinsky) tends to an optical, cerebral mode that reduces the abyss to a minimum (a code). On the other hand, abstract expressionism (Pollack) tends to a manual mode in which the diagram merges with the whole, toward the maximum of chaos (a scrambling). Heian calligraphy can be said to operate between two analogous poles, already discussed at various intervals.

On the one hand, the "stiff" or "regular" style (*k'ai-shū*) presents symmetrical, even geometrical characters of fairly uniform size, with even application of ink and measured rhythms. In effect, in its classic form, this style operates at three levels at least. Traits, strokes, or elements of characters follow precise styles of brush attack and closure, with a codification of angles and inflections. Characters show distinct symmetry, geometry, and balance. Their centres of motion and their distribution on the page present even, harmonious series. The "current" or "running" style (*tsing-shū*) should be seen as the companion to the stiff or regular style. Although it presents greater cursivity and celerity with respect to strokes, it balances, abstracts, and harmonizes in the same manner. Because the resultant works are easy to read, this style could be considered to tend toward greater intelligibility. This is true to some extent, and yet, on its own, the criterion of intelligibility might miss the essential: this is as much code as information, and it presents a machine for striation (even its papers are carefully ruled or oriented). As a code, this style uses abstraction in order to maximize the optical at the expense of the manual; it offers an asceticism, a spiritual salvation. It is not surprising then that it characterises Buddhist sutra in the era that precedes the Heian, when the emphasis fell on translation and dissemination of various Buddhisms in and around the mobile court (Hirayama 26).

On the other hand, the "grass" or "cursive" style (*ts'ao-shū*) unfurls lines that the eye often can barely follow. Traits or elements are amplified or diminished, elongated or foreshortened; sizes of characters become variable, as is the relations between centres of motion. These are the "gothic" or "nomadic" lines that pass between points. Sometimes, the reader's hand must retrace the brush's contractions and accelerations in order to make the strokes of the character legible. In addition, characters entwine with figures and designs, spread into textures. Finally, paper-scapes contribute the smoothing of space, and to the ability to pass across registers of expression. This style, characteristic of court anthologies and many tales, becomes ever more prevalent in the late Heian period, a period often characterized by a sense of imminent catastrophe, mobilised by the notion that the world was entering the "latter days of the law" (*mappō*) when even the teachings of the Buddha would be of no avail.

This second pole, however, does not go as far as the frenetic dance of Pollack, in which "le diagramme exprime en une fois toute la peinture, c'est-à-dire la catastrophe optique et le rythme manuel" ("the entire painting is expressed all at once by the diagram, that is, the optical catastrophe and the manual

The first turn, the original structure of turning (which later slackens in a back and forth linear movement) is poetry. Hölderlin said (according to Saint Clair and Bettina): "*Everything is rhythm: the entire destiny of man is a single celestial rhythm, just as the work of art is a unique rhythm.*" (1993, 3).

If Blanchot is so much like Heian poetics, it is because the modern attempt to construct the body without organs always involves an "attachement archaïsant" ("archaizing attachment") — to use Guattari's expression (1992, 14/1995, 4). Is it even possible to differentiate the cosmologies intertwined within the archaizing attachment: Buddhisms, Taoisms, Confucianisms of the Heian, and the Christianities, medieval knights errants (and of Blanchot?). It would be essential at least to become more programmatic than fantastic. If historical specificity will only go so far in such instances, it still serves in the capacity of program, in the sense Deleuze and Guattari attribute to program in the construction of the masochistic body (1980, 188/1987, 151) — like the art of dosages that sustains experiment without overdose. If Blanchot himself botches the body without organs, it is not because of its constitution via the celestial rhythm of the first turn, but because of what passes and does not pass over it — he ends up with Europe cringing in terror, the cultural cringe of the West in crisis. It all happens around the work of art, making art into the secular religion, investing aura in the work, yet all the while looking at it in terms of oracles, divinations, signs, and rhythms. The contemporary evocation of the Heian or the Baroque runs the same risk, whence the need for caution with dosages and experimentation, whence the necessity of the program in the form of historical or cultural specificity (that in its turn runs the risk of becoming an ethnic and linguistic schema for national development, forsaking the plane of consistency all together).

What is the Heian but a cosmological rhythm? The hand brushes a series of characters in rhythms that are not precisely those of vocal rhythms — there are interpenetrations of twos and threes with fives and sevens; and the eyes follow the resonance of centres of motion that traverse the smooth textures of paper-scapes. Verbal rhythms put words in motion making them pivot and weave; while verbal images hover within and between poems. There are then rhythms of compilation that reprise and extend alternations and resonances of hand/brush, voice, and eyes: cycles of seasons, congratulations, loves, departures, sorrows, names, styles. It becomes a tremendous counterpoint that summons a single celestial rhythm in its wake — not unlike Baroque music but a very different sense of (micro)tones, (pentatonic) scales, and dissonance. Thus the point of inflection — the first turn — sets up rhythms that slacken into linear movements, that support human movements, that allows poetics to conjure up diaries, travels, stories.

This recalls Deleuze's "phenomenological" hypothesis for Francis Bacon, in a way related to the previous sensorial/motorial hypothesis: every level or domain would have a way to refer to the others; there would an existential

communication between colour, texture, viscosity, tone, gesture, verb, image — akin to a communication of each of the senses with the others. This kind of originary unity (of the senses) would be in direct contact with a vital power, a power that is Rhythm, one more profound than seeing, feeling, hearing, and so forth (1981, 31/1993a, 192). Yet, different concerns crop up around community and cosmology. For instance, whereas one might say that the modern painter makes Rhythm visible, that the modern composer makes Rhythm audible, the Heian artist not only seems to work in several media at once, but she or he also enters into a vast signature. The Heian work of art does not invoke a meta-physical or practical separation of the senses; nor does it isolate the individual subject as signified. A poetry anthology conjoins a series of compilers, a series of poets, a series of calligraphers — not to mention the attention paid to papers and scroll spindles — and even though each imparts a style, there are no individual signatures. It is impossible to evoke an individual subjective expression apart from this conjunction of expressions — which does not mean there is no individuation. Likewise, it is impossible to speak of certain divisions of labour around the senses — painting is read and heard, writing is viewed and touched; speaking is felt and seen — which does not mean there is no differentiation. In terms of the relationship of rhythm and sensation, one might say that Heian art makes Rhythm legible, whether legibility derives from drawing, singing, writing, dyeing, etc. A multisensible Figure appears legibly in the serve of an eccentric, disjunctive cosmology.

"Even though eras shift and deeds pass, and delights and sorrows come and go, the written patterns (*moji*) of songs continue," writes Ki no Tsurayuki, renowned poet, calligrapher, and compiler of the Heian.

Should they be retained as changeless as bird tracks and transmitted as long as rampant vines, just as the evergreen needles never scatter and vanish, just as the threads of green willow always trail, then people who know the designs of songs and obtain the heart of words will surely look up to the high ages and yearn for this day, just as we look to the moon in the great heavens. (*Kokinwakashū* 56)

McGill University

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Image 1: Poems from "The Collection of Thirty-Six Poets," *Ishiyama-gire*

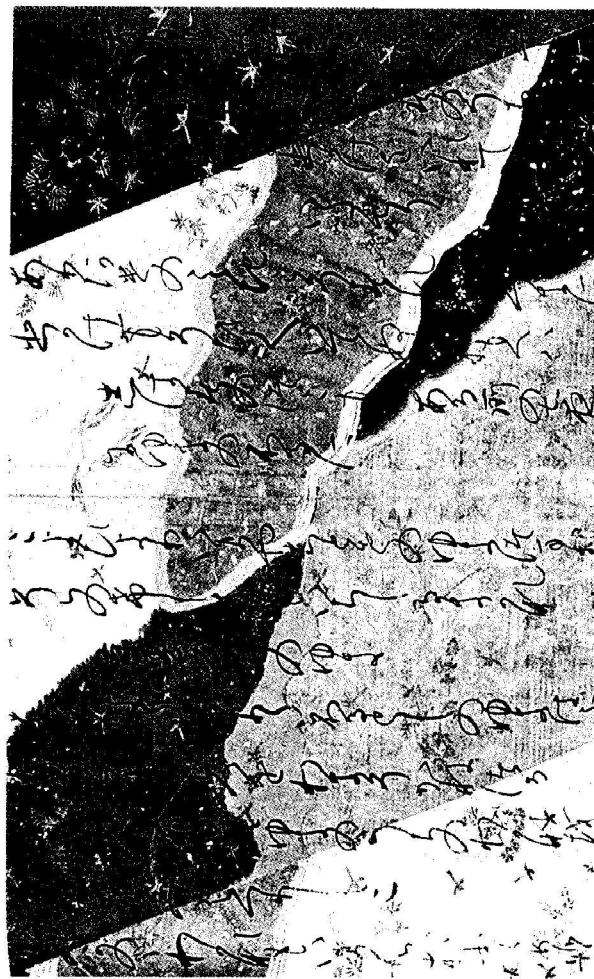


Image 2: Selections from the "Yoshinobu Collection" in the Nishihonganji edition of the "The Collection of Thirty-Six Poets"

Sound Ideas

Perfect Sound Forever.
Sony advertising slogan at the
introduction of the compact disk

THE ABSOLUTE SOUND

*The Absolute Sound*¹ — whose name refers to an aesthetics as well as an editorial style² — makes it doctrinal: the only goal of reproduced music is to sound as much as possible like live music. Accuracy in reproduction, fidelity to the original sound, is the sole standard in judging recordings and the equipment used to play them. One hopes that the recordings are made as accurately as possible and then, in playback, "the philosophic assumption in the listening sessions is that components, ideally, should duplicate exactly the signals they are fed. The only correct goal of high fidelity sound reproduction, in our estimation, is a perfect re-creation of the musical experience" (Pearson).

Sound perceived is a contraction. A perceptive body experiences variations in pressure and contracts this "air wave" into sound. The wave, a variation in pressure over time, has discrete characteristics, including frequency, amplitude, phase, shape. Each of these is a motion, a change over time. But in perception the wave is contracted and the corresponding characteristics of the sound are a durational, independent of time. Pitch, loudness, location, and timbre, though associated with an enduring sound, are in themselves independent of this endurance. Time is contracted into the quality, the character of the perceived sound. For example, the pitch of a sound is mostly a contraction of the frequency of the corresponding wave:³ the speed at which pressure moves up and down over time is heard as the timeless character of pitch, how high or low a note is.

- 1 A journal for the critique and promotion of high-fidelity music reproduction and its associated equipment.
- 2 For example, "We try to discourage our staff of reviewers from paying much (if any) heed to other publications since their work, lacking an absolute or any other editorial 'philosophy,' cannot be worth a close study" (Pearson).
- 3 Other characteristics of the wave also contribute, to a lesser degree, to the perception of pitch.

Image 3: Calligraphy by Fujiwara no Sadanobu from the *Ishiyama-gire*

