

The Stanford University-J. F. Oberlin University Commemorative Lecture Series 13TH LECTURE

グローバル・コミュニケーション学群・大学院言語教育研究科・大学院国際学研究科 共催



Benjamin Smith Lyman and *Rendaku*: The Discovery of a Law

Speaker: Timothy J. Vance
**Professor, National Institute for Japanese
Language and Linguistics**

Benjamin Smith Lyman (1835–1920), an American geologist and mining engineer, worked in Meiji-era Japan for eight years as a foreign technical expert. He later became famous among linguists because of an 1894 pamphlet in which he stated a generalization now known as Lyman's Law. Lyman's Law pertains to a familiar phenomenon referred to in Japanese linguistics by the technical term *rendaku* 連濁. A typical example of *rendaku* appears in the word *Nihon-zaru* 日本猿 'Japanese macaque'. The element (morpheme) meaning 'monkey' begins with the voiceless obstruent *s* in *saru* 猿 'monkey' and in *saru-mane* 猿真似 'monkey-like imitation', but it begins with the voiced obstruent *z* in *Nihon-zaru*. In Japanese, voiceless obstruents are the consonants represented in Hepburn romanization as *f*, *h*, *t*, *k*, *ts*, *s*, *ch*, and *sh*, and voiced obstruents are those represented as *b*, *d*, *g*, *z*, and *j* (i.e., a consonant that in kana spelling would require a letter accompanied by the dakuten 濁点 diacritic, ˘). When a morpheme exhibits this kind of alternation in form, the alternant beginning with a voiced obstruent never appears word-initially. Notice in the examples above involving the morpheme meaning 'monkey' that *z* appears only in *Nihon-zaru*. Lyman's Law is a putative constraint on *rendaku* that prohibits it from affecting elements that already contain a voiced obstruent. For example, *rendaku* applies in *ao-zame* 青鯨 'blue shark' (cf. same 'shark') but not in *ao-sagi* 青鷺 'blue heron' (cf. *sagi* 'heron', which contains the voiced obstruent romanized as *g* and is spelled さぎ in hiragana). The idea is that the voiced obstruent *g* in *sagi* prevents *rendaku* from turning it into *zagi*. Since Lyman was not a linguist, there has been an understandable suspicion that he did not actually discover the law that bears his name. The main goal of my presentation is to clear up this mystery.



Timothy J. Vance

Language: English (Q&A may be in Japanese)
Date and time: January 12, 2017 (Thursday), 16:10–17:40
Place: Sūteikan, Room 6H

Professor Vance attended the IUC during the 1976–77 academic year and completed his Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of Chicago in 1979. His areas of specialization are phonetics, phonology, and writing systems. He taught the University of Florida, the University of Hawaii, Connecticut College, and the University of Arizona before moving to the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics in Tokyo in 2010. His publications include *An Introduction to Japanese Phonology* (State University of New York Press, 1987) and *The Sounds of Japanese* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), and he served as coordinating editor of *Japanese Language and Literature* (the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese) for ten years (2000–09).