

## Re: Universal iconic language – (was – Sanskrit as computer programming language)?

*Source:* <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2004-07/0767.html>

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*From:* Matthias Blume (*find\_at\_my.address.elsewhere*)

*Date:* 07/09/04

Date: 09 Jul 2004 11:04:25 -0500

Steve Schafer <see@reply.to.header> writes:

- > *On Fri, 09 Jul 2004 11:00:14 +0900, Alex Shinn <foof@synthcode.com>*
- > *wrote:*
- >
- > *> Usually they will know, and if not at least have an idea, much like you*
- > *> would expect asking an American how to pronounce an obscure English*
- > *> word.*
- >
- > *Again, my experience runs counter to this. The people I talked to*
- > *wouldn't even hazard a guess as to the pronunciation of unfamiliar*
- > *kanji--the necessary context just wasn't there.*

Usually this only happens with place names — because they are old and many of the Kanji involved are not used anymore in other contexts.

- > *At train and subway stations throughout Japan, the signs that display*
- > *the names of the stops are always in kanji, kana and romaji.*

Seems like you never left Tokyo. This statement is, in this absoluteness, not true. In Kyoto, for example, the subway has station names in Kanji and Romaji but not in Kana — which (together with the fact that many names there fall into the "ancient" category) has the interesting effect that some Japanese tourists (especially elderly ones without good working knowledge of romaji) have a harder time finding their way around than foreigners. In most rural parts of the country, on the other hand, you will be hard pressed to find station names in romaji (although they often are listed in both kanji and kana — usually on routes frequented by school children who have not yet had the chance to learn all the kanji).

- > *It's obvious that the romaji is there for the benefit of us gaijin,*
- > *but if kanji-literacy is so high, then why the kana?*

For children.

comp.programming: Re: Universal iconic language – (was – Sanskrit as computer programming language)?

Matthias