

The Significance and Academic Importance of Establishing the Sacred Resonance Research Division

Advanced Civilizational Heritage Research & Analysis Group

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1. Definition and Scope

The Sacred Resonance Research Division is a research department dedicated to the reinterpretation of material preserved in artefacts, ancient documents, and inscriptions — not merely as characters and symbols, but in terms of the relationship between those characters and sound. As exemplified by the ancient Egyptian incantatory hymns (*heka*¹), and by the Shinto ritual prayers (*norito*²), sacred music (*kagura-uta*³), and solemn proclamations (*kotodage*⁴) of Japan, in a great many civilisations "sound and language" have functioned as an inseparable whole. These are not mere recitations: they are phonic structures, deliberately designed to act upon the mental, cognitive, and psychological states of those who encounter them.

The Division's objective is to elucidate how this "triangular relationship among sound, meaning, and mental influence" has been encoded within the written records of antiquity.

A foundational concept for this inquiry is kotodama¹² (言霊), the ancient Japanese belief that mystical power — literally "word spirit" (言 koto: word; 霊 tama: spirit or soul) — dwells within words and names. The notion of kotodama presupposes that sounds can affect objects, and that ritual utterance can influence the environment, body, mind, and soul. One of the classical names of Japan is kototama no sakiwau kuni (言霊の幸わう国, "the land where the mysterious workings of language bring bliss"), a phrase originating in the Man'yōshū, Japan's oldest poetry anthology. This concept is not an isolated folk belief: it forms the philosophical substratum of *norito*², *kagura-uta*³, and *kotodage*⁴ alike, and provides the conceptual bridge between the spoken word and its intended effect upon consciousness that the Division seeks to investigate systematically.

2. Why is This Field Necessary Now?

Throughout the recorded history of humankind, writing and sound have been inseparable. Yet the academic frameworks that have prevailed since the modern era have placed the "analysis of visual and material records" in a position of primacy, consistently treating the dimension of sound as secondary. As a consequence, the following questions have long been absent from the scholarly mainstream:

- Are Shinto ritual prayers (*norito*²) texts meant to be "read silently," or texts designed to be "sounded aloud"?
- What purpose governed the word order, repetition, and phonological structure of ancient Egyptian spell texts?
- Can the melodic patterns in *kagura-uta*³ be deciphered as a symbolic system in their own right?
- To what degree have the "vocalisational notation symbols" inscribed in ancient documents been accurately reconstructed in the scholarship of today?

These are questions that cannot be resolved by archaeology, palaeography, or musicology working in isolation. The Sacred Resonance Research Division stands at precisely that intersection.

3. Blind Spots Overlooked by Archaeology and Palaeography

3-1. The Fallacy of the Assumption that Sound "Leaves No Trace"

Archaeology concerns itself with material traces. Pottery, architecture, skeletal remains, inscriptions — all of these are things that "survive in physical form." Sound does not survive in physical form. This self-evident fact has, over many generations, generated an implicit assumption that "the study of sound lies outside the remit of archaeology."

It is not, however, that sound leaves nothing behind. The blueprint of sound persists. Within ancient documents, inscriptions, and ritual texts, structural information sufficient to reconstruct sound has been embedded all along. What has been absent is the very conception of "reading these materials as sound."

3-2. The "Visual Bias" in Palaeography

Palaeography has developed principally through the study of the forms, historical evolution, and scribal techniques of written characters. Its achievements are incalculable; yet simultaneously it has harboured the following systematic biases:

- Texts are described as objects to be "read," rather than analysed as utterances to be "voiced."
- Phonological patterns, rhythmic structures, and repetitions are processed as "stylistic rhetoric," rather than examined as acoustic intention.
- There is a conspicuous lack of perspective that interrogates the "efficacy" of ritual texts — that is, the question of why a particular arrangement of words was chosen.

As a result, whilst the question "what is written?" in manuscripts of spells, ritual prayers, and sacred songs has been progressively illuminated, the question "how did it function?" has been met, generation after generation, with silence.

3-3. "Modern Score-Centrism" in Musicology

Ethnomusicology and archaeomusicology have endeavoured to reconstruct the sounds of antiquity. However, the preponderance of such efforts has been oriented towards "estimating pitches from the physical form of instruments" or "deciphering notational symbols," and the perspective that interrogates the intentional design by which sound was meant to influence mental and cognitive states remains conspicuously underdeveloped.

The "music" of antiquity was neither entertainment nor art in the modern sense. In the great majority of cases, it was a system of techniques whose purpose was the transformation of consciousness, communion with the divine, and the integration of collective states. This perspective proves refractory within the conceptual framework of modern musicology.

4. The Distinctive Approach of the Sacred Resonance Research Division

The Sacred Resonance Research Division addresses the blind spots of the three disciplines described above through the following distinctive approaches:

① Re-reading Ancient Documents as Phonosemiotics

Written symbols are reinterpreted as "instructions for vocalisation," and the acoustic design embedded within texts is extracted accordingly. The Division treats the arrangement of characters not merely as sequences of meaning, but as scores prescribing phonetic performance.

② Structural Analysis of Mental Influence

In Shinto ritual prayers (*norito*²), incantatory hymns, and *kagura-uta*³, the Division investigates what mental states are induced — and by what design — through the deployment of repetition, pitch variation, interval (*ma*⁵), and rhythmic pattern. Compositions produced by the Division extend from devotional hymns to adversarial incantations: this breadth is itself a methodological requirement of approach ②, enabling cross-cultural comparative analysis of whether a given structure is designed to induce, guide, or resist particular states of consciousness.

③ Integration with Structural Script Analysis

ACHRAG's accumulated expertise in structural script analysis is integrated with acoustic analysis, with the aim of elucidating the correspondences between the "visual structure of symbols" and their "phonetic function." This integration enables the Division to approach written records as simultaneously visual and sonic artefacts.

④ Original Musical Composition

The collection of extant primary sonic materials is an undertaking of considerable time and cost. Furthermore, even where such materials can be assembled, the question of whether they may legitimately serve as analytical benchmarks must itself be adjudicated before any comparative analysis can proceed. Given these constraints, the Division has resolved to produce its own benchmark compositions using SUNO⁶, thereby establishing a controlled corpus against which hypotheses may be tested.

5. Illustrative Examples of Target Domains

Region / Culture	Primary Sources	Acoustic Elements of Interest
Ancient Egypt	Book of the Dead; Incantation Texts	Word order; repetition; phonological structure; vocalisation instructions
Japan	Norito ² ; Kagura-uta ³ ; Senmyo ⁷	Pillow words (makura-kotoba ⁸); pitch; interval (ma ⁵); respiratory structure
Mesopotamia	Sumerian hymns; Laments	Tonal classification; ritual antiphonal structure
India	Rigveda ⁹	Svara ¹⁰ (pitch markers); syllabic quantity
Celtic	Ogham ¹¹ -related materials	Sound-script correspondence; poetic metre

6. Conclusion

Sound and language were the first technologies that humankind possessed. Writing came afterwards.

Modern scholarship has inverted that order, treating "what survives in written form" as primary source material and "what functioned as sound" as secondary or derivative. The Sacred Resonance Research Division is an endeavour to correct this inversion. By re-reading ancient records as "blueprints for resonance," the Division takes as its mission the casting of new light upon the relationship between sound and consciousness throughout the history of civilisation.

Glossary of Technical and Non-English Terms

1. heka へカ・ヘカ

Ancient Egyptian term (Hieroglyphic: hkA) denoting the primordial force of magic and spoken incantation. In Egyptian cosmology, heka was regarded not merely as ritual speech but as the creative power underlying all language and divine utterance.

2. norito 祝詞

Formal ritual prayers or liturgical addresses recited by Shinto priests during ceremonies. Characterised by archaic grammatical forms, deliberate rhythmic patterning, and pillow-word sequences designed to invoke divine presence.

3. kagura-uta 神楽歌

Sacred songs performed as part of Shinto kagura ritual dance and music. The repertoire encompasses both court kagura (mi-kagura) and regional shrine traditions, and is among the oldest continuously performed vocal music in Japan.

4. kotodage 言挙げ

Literally "raising of words." A solemn verbal declaration in ancient Japanese practice, believed to carry binding force by virtue of the act of utterance itself, reflecting an indigenous belief in the power of spoken words (kotodama 言霊).

5. ma 間

A concept in Japanese aesthetics and music theory denoting the meaningful use of interval, pause, or negative space. In musical contexts, ma refers to the structurally significant silence between sounds, treated as an active compositional element.

6. SUNO

An AI-based music generation platform (suno.com) capable of producing original compositions from text prompts across a wide range of styles and instruments. Used by the Division to generate controlled benchmark compositions for comparative acoustic analysis.

7. Senmyo 宣命

Imperial edicts issued in the early Japanese court, written in a hybrid script mixing Chinese characters for their phonetic values with native Japanese syntax. Significant as primary sources for the study of early Japanese phonology and ceremonial language.

8. makura-kotoba 枕詞

Literally "pillow words." Fixed epithets or conventional modifying phrases in classical Japanese poetry (waka) that precede specific words through sound association or conventional pairing. Their acoustic and semantic function remains a subject of scholarly debate.

Glossary (continued)

9. Rigveda リグ・ヴェーダ

The oldest of the four Vedas; a collection of Sanskrit hymns (approx. 1500–900 BCE) addressed to the Vedic pantheon. Of particular interest as a primary source for the study of ancient phonological structure and the codification of pitch accents (svara).

10. svara スヴァラ

Sanskrit term for the tonal accent system used in Vedic recitation, comprising three primary pitch levels: udatta (raised), anudatta (lowered), and svarita (falling). One of the earliest documented forms of phonological notation in any written tradition.

11. Ogham オガム文字

An alphabetic script used primarily to write Old Irish (4th–7th centuries CE), consisting of strokes and notches carved along a central stemline on standing stones. Its possible correspondence to oral bardic tradition makes it significant for sound-script correspondence research.

12. kotodama 言霊

The ancient Japanese belief that mystical power — literally "word spirit" (言 koto: word/speech; 霊 tama: spirit/soul) — dwells within words and names. Kotodama holds that sounds can affect objects, and that ritual utterance can influence the environment, body, mind, and soul. One of the classical names of Japan is kototama no sakiwau kuni (言霊の幸わう国, "the land where the mysterious workings of language bring bliss"), a phrase originating in the Man'yōshū, Japan's oldest poetry anthology. Kotodama forms the philosophical substratum of norito, kagura-uta, and kotodage alike, providing the conceptual bridge between the spoken word and its intended effect upon consciousness. Cross-cultural parallels include Sanskrit mantra, Egyptian heka, and Greek logos.
