

PROPOSAL TO ENCODE

NEW OKINAWAN KANA (新沖縄文字)

IN THE UCS

Fredrick R. Brennan

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	フレッド・ブレンナン	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>copypaste</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>kit-tens.ph</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5 September 2021

LAST REVISED ON

21 April 2023

とどてでるるく

ぐええすずゞゞ

ふわふいふねやゆよあ

あゑんいがえを

とどてでるるく

ぐええすずゞゞ

ふわふいふねやゆよあ

あゑんいがえを

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

in no particular order...

Daichi Shimabukuro (しまぶくろ だいち)

For providing several rare sources.

Deborah Anderson, UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative, Script Ad Hoc Chair
& Roozbeh Pournader, Script Ad Hoc Vice-Chair

For always seeing to timely scheduling of discussions about my proposals :-)

あうらだいすけ

Daisuke Miura (三浦 大介), World Special-Characters Wiki (世界の特殊文字 ウィキ)

For many helpful recommendations on standardized glyph names.

ふなつ よしあき

めいせいだいがく

Yoshiaki Funatsu (船津 好明), Meisei University (明星 大学), originator of these characters

In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, I didn't attempt to contact Dr. Funatsu before this submission. However, I do find it proper to acknowledge his careful online archival of many of the sources concerning his script, especially mentions in Japanese media. Without that I couldn't have come up with the requisite evidence.

Table of Contents

Quick summary	3
UnicodeData.txt	4
Chart	5
Overview	7
History	7
Potential technical issues	11
Atomicity of ッ and ツ	11
Infrequent disambiguation letters	11
Shima Shotai collision	11
Evidence	12
Attestations	12
Fonts	18
Bibliography	20

0.1 Quick summary

I propose the encoding of 18 new hiragana letters, to be added to a new block, Kana Extended-C. There are no katakana versions of these letters. I only have evidence of the proposed letters in use to write the Central Okinawan language (沖縄口, うちなあぐち, [?utɕina:gutɕi]), although they may be used to write other languages in the Ryukyuan language family.

Through adding U+3099 COMBINING KATAKANA-HIRAGANA VOICED SOUND MARK, these characters represent all 27 of the letters known collectively in Japanese as the “New Okinawan Kana” (新沖縄文字). 23 of them have existed since 1986, with the remaining four having been created c. 2004. They are the creation of Dr. Yoshiaki Funatsu (船津好明; born 1936), a professor of statistics, applied mathematics and economics; he later in life became a linguist.

Despite their novelty, these letters have seen quite wide use throughout Okinawa. I had no contact with Mr. Funatsu while writing this paper.

I propose that the block Kana Extended-C be two columns wide, beginning at U+1AFD0 and extending until U+1AEEF, at which point it meets Kana Extended-B, which starts at U+1AFF0.

0.1.1 UnicodeData.txt

1AFD0;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TU;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD1;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD2;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD3;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD4;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWE;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD5;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD6;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD7;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWE;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD8;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFD9;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YU;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDA;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YO;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDB;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDC;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDD;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WE;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDE;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN N;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFDF;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WU;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFE0;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN SI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1AFE1;HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TSI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;

0.1.2 Chart

	I AFD	I AFE
o	と 1AFD0	す 1AFE0
i	ゑ 1AFE1	ゑ 1AFE1
2	て 1AFD2	
3	く 1AFD3	
4	く 1AFD4	
5	く 1AFD5	
6	ふ 1AFD6	
7	ふ 1AFD7	
8	ふ 1AFD8	
9	ゆ 1AFD9	
A	ゆ 1AFDA	
B	よ 1AFDB	
C	ゑ 1AFEC	
D	ゑ 1AFED	
E	ん 1AFEE	
F	ゑ 1AFEF	

U+1AFD0	と	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TU ligature of とう may receive ^ ⇒ ど
U+1AFD1	て	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TI ligature of てい may receive ^ ⇒ テ
U+1AFD2	く	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWA ligature of くわ may receive ^ ⇒ ク
U+1AFD3	く	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWI ligature of くい may receive ^ ⇒ ク
U+1AFD4	く	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KWE ligature of くえ may receive ^ ⇒ ク
U+1AFD5	ふ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWA ligature of ふわ
U+1AFD6	ふ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWI ligature of ふい
U+1AFD7	ふ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN HWE ligature of ふえ
U+1AFD8	や	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YA → や
U+1AFD9	𢂔	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YU → 𢂔
U+1AFDA	よ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN YO → よ
U+1AFDB	ゐ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WA no relationship to ☒ hentaigana letter mi-5
U+1AFDC	ゑ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WI → ゑ no relationship to ☒ hentaigana letter u-3
U+1AFDD	ゑ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WE → ゑ
U+1AFDE	ん	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN N → ん
U+1AFDF	ゑ	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WU ligature of をう

U+1AFE0	𠂊	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN SI ligature of すい may receive [^] ⇒ 𠂊
U+1AFE1	𠂉	HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TSI ligature of つい may receive [^] ⇒ 𠂉
U+3044 U+3099	𢃀	N/A = 𢃀 + [^] = New Okinawan yi
U+3048 U+3099	𢃁	N/A = 𢃁 + [^] = New Okinawan ye

See § Atomicity of 𢃀 and 𢃁

0.2 Overview

Central Okinawan (hereon Okinawan) is the most widely spoken and studied language in the family of Ryukyuan languages, which are Japonic languages spoken in Okinawa and Kagoshima Prefectures (沖縄県と鹿児島県), which are the modern day territories consisting of the land which used to belong to the ancient independent Ryūkyū Kingdom (琉球國) (1429–1609). Despite being a vassal state of the Empire of Japan from 1609 onwards, the kingdom had a degree of independence and the Okinawan language continued to be the language of administration until the late 19th century, when Emperor Meiji decided to more thoroughly integrate the islands into the Japanese mainland. The Okinawan language was banned and was practically invisible in public life by 1945, but with the end of World War II, saw a resurgence, though declined in prominence by the end of the 21st century.

Language revitalization efforts are ongoing; a problem it faces is the ongoing language shift in the region and the dominant view among lay Japanese that Okinawan is a “dialect” (方言) of Japanese rather than a language proper. (Japanese linguists, on the other hand, know better.)

The characters proposed here are used by a minority of Okinawan writers. The majority use hiragana sequences, combined with outdated hiragana (to write Standard Japanese) such as ゐ and ゑ, to write the missing phonemes of Okinawan, or otherwise a Latin-based writing system based on linguistic transcription of Japanese; this system is used in most Okinawan dictionaries. Also extant is the University of the Ryukyus (琉球大学) system, which in my research, seems mostly limited to academic use.

It is difficult for me to account for why these characters are minority usage; it's quite likely that their unencoded status makes them less usable on computers, decreasing their use. Their utility is obvious and their derivation very easy to figure out, being based on existing norms for writing Okinawan in Japanese, as well as even ancient norms for writing Okinawan.

0.2.1 History

あらうちなーむ 潤

The New Okinawan Kana (新沖縄文字) are a system for writing the languages of Okinawa devised by Dr. Yoshiaki Funatsu, who for most of his life was a professor of statistics, applied mathematics and economics. Later in life, he visited Okinawa and became interested in its language; in the 1980's, he began creating the system of Okinawan letters described in this paper.

The Okinawan letters created by Funatsu are designed to be easy to understand for speakers of Okinawan; rather than being a complication, they're meant to simplify the writing of the language. It was also Mr. Funatsu's observation that children who were familiar with the system of Japanese kana more easily took to letters like ら than sequences like とう, which they would mispronounce as [tou].

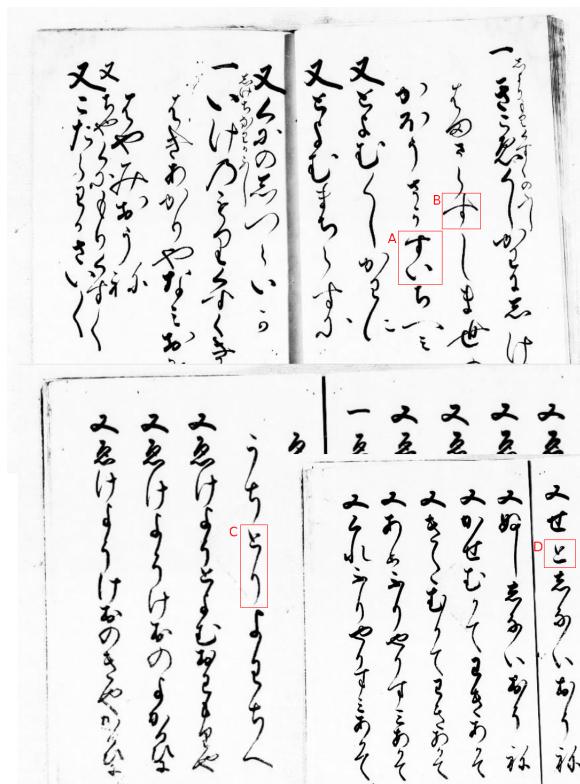


Figure №1—Omoro Sōshi (うむるそーし), NARA A3389

The image above compares three pages from the Omoro Sōshi (うむるそーし), a compilation of traditional Okinawan music. The manuscript above was recorded some time in the 16th century. The version above was put on microfilm after World War II and is from the National Archives. While I don't make any claims of character identity, the origins of the New Okinawan Kana letterforms are clear from this medieval hiragana document; the same impulse to combine characters seen in the form of すい (A) vs. isolated す (B) and in とう (C) vs. isolated と (D) is seen in the characters す HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN SI and と HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TU.

The New Okinawan Kana are known in their author's documents as simply the "Okinawan Kana" (沖縄文字), literally "Okinawan letters". They were originally disseminated in a series of newspaper articles in the Ryūkyū Shimpō (週休新報) by Funatsu beginning on June 6, 1986.¹

The name "New Okinawan Kana" is often used in third party reporting to refer to the characters, as a neutral term for them that does not prescribe their use to the community.²

Funatsu claims no copyright on these characters and allows free distribution of their shapes and phonetic values, unlike, for example, Mojikyō; therefore, GlyphWiki, (sticklers for copyright issues,) accept the New Okinawan Kana and have a category for them.³

1. Funatsu, Yoshiaki (1986-06-06 – 1986-07-16). よみがえれ地方語 [Yomigaere Chihōgo; lit. Resurrecting a Regional Language] (series of 15 articles). *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (週休新報). Archived by Funatsu on his website.

2. See e.g.: Emori (1987); Otsuka (2010); Japanese Wikipedia's 沖縄方言の表記体系 [Comparison of Okinawan Scripts] article. While both 新しい沖縄文字 and 新沖縄文字 are in use, (having identical English translations, "new"), there is a preference for 新 over 新しい in modern sources.

There are two repertoires in current use. The first repertoiree, consisting of all characters up to and including U+1AFE6, is exactly as it was in 1986, as explained in Funatsu's series of articles in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (週休新報). The second repertoiree, that plus U+1AFE7–U+1AFEA, is of more complex origin. It seems that originally, Funatsu did not consider word origin when coming up with this writing system. However, with the frequent and common mixing of Okinawan and Japanese words, he came up with those four characters in around 2004 to mark out a word's origin. For example, both ちち and ツチ are pronounced equally, as [t̪eit̪ei]. However, because 月 is pronounced in Japanese as つき, the second is used: 月. Likewise, the extremely rare character ツ has hardly any use at all, being used to transcribe e.g. 三日月. Nevertheless, just barely enough attestations were found for me to recommend even these rare characters.⁴

The chart:

沖縄文字一覧	
ぢ[tu]	ぢい (鳥)、うぢ (音)、みーぢ (夫婦)
と[to]	とーふ (豆腐)、とーばる (桃原<地名)
ぢ[du]	ぢし (友人)、やぢ (宿)、ぢー (自分)
ど[do]	どーぐ (道具)、まんどーん (たくさんある)
ゑ[ti]	ゑーち (一つ)、ゑーだ (太陽)、ゑん (天)
て[te]	てーく (太鼓)、てーしち (大切)
ゑ[di]	ふゑ (筆)、ぬーゑー (喉)、ゑきやー (秀才)
で[de]	でーじ (大変なこと)、ちょーでー (兄弟)
ゑ[kwa]	ゑじ (火事)、ゑっちー (ごちそう)
か[ka]	かじ (風)、かんない (雷)、かーま (遠方)
ゑ[gwa]	にんゑん (念願)、ゑんく (頑固)
が[ga]	がんちょー (眼鏡)、めがね)、しがた (姿)
ゑ[kwi]	ゑー (声)、さっくー (咳)、ゑゆん (呉れる)
き[ki]	きー (木)、きゅん (蹠る)、きぶし (煙)
ゑ[gwi]	ゑーく (越來<地名)、
ぎ[gi]	かーぎ (容ぼう)
ゑ[kwe]	ゑー (錆)、からじゑー (髪きり虫)
け[ke]	けー (かゆ)、ちけー (使者)
ゑ[gwe]	ゑったい (ぬかるみ)
げ[ge]	げー (吉)、にげー (願い)
ゑ[hwa]	ゑー (葉)、なーふ (那嘲)
は[ha]	はる (爛)、はぎもー (荒地)
ゑ[hwi]	ゑじゅやい (左)、ゑーぢ (いるか)
ひ[hi]	ひやみかすん (えい、と言う)
以下の4文字は文語専用	
ゑ[i]	ゑむん (済む)、ぐゑく (城)
ゑ[i]	ゑんぶん (知恵)、しそか (静か)
ゑ[i]	ゑち (月)、まーゑ (松)
ゑ[i]	みかゑち (三日月)

[] 内は沖縄語辞典による読み方 (沖縄文字の使用は自由です。)

* は単語の語頭だけに用います。語頭以外では用いません。例 ○ぢい (鳥)、 ×ぢい

△ 音の出だしに、僅かに i をひびかせます。

「ゑ」、「ぢ」の z の上のダッシュは、沖縄語辞典では z の下についていますが、ここではフォントの都合で上につけたものです。

Figure №2—Funatsu (2016)

3. グループ:沖縄文字. GlyphWiki. Retrieved 2021-09-03.
4. Thanks again to Daichi Shimabukuro.

The system proved immediately popular, as the shapes of most of the letters are extremely obvious to any Okinawan speaker literate in Japanese (or even just in hiragana), and led to press attention for Funatsu inside and outside Okinawa. Some of this attention led to the unusual character of Funatsu himself, a university professor from Tokyo who had no obvious connection to Okinawa beyond a short business trip to it. At what must have been not inconsiderable expense in 1987, the *Asahi Shimbun*, as of 2020 the 2nd most circulated newspaper in Japan, even used some of the letters in its writeup of Funatsu:



Figure №3—Emori (1987). Note highlighted letters と HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TU and も HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN KW, made especially for this story. (Perhaps *Asahi* wanted to be prepared in case they needed to print more stories using them—perhaps they did, but I have no evidence of it if so.)

Also of aid to the spread of the system could have been Funatsu's statement in most charts he authored which bear the letters, such as the 2016 one on the previous page, that:

沖縄文字の使用は自由です。
Use of the Okinawan letters is free.⁵

5. In the sense of freedom, not price; Japanese, like French and Spanish, has different words for the different concepts.

0.3 Potential technical issues

0.3.1 Atomicity of い and え

The atomicity of い and え is unlikely to be upheld, however, I find it necessary to request it be considered; in any event, I mention it here so users understand why it was not done.

Existing fonts encode the characters atomically (see § Fonts), and, a legacy encoding, known as TRON,⁶

encoded these characters atomically because they also appear in the *Dai Kan-Wa Jiten [The Great Kan(ji)-Japanese Dictionary]*. They are located in TRON Plane 9 (TRONコード第9面): い = TRON9-8027; え = TRON9-802E.

Daisuke Miura (@qvarie) has come up with a de-facto standard that also assumes their atomic encoding; at least one other font is using this encoding as well, and it is mentioned on GlyphWiki as "unstable-nishiki".⁷

い = にしき的F464; え = にしき的F466.

0.3.2 Infrequent disambiguation letters

I have fewer attestations of these letters, but still more than enough for encoding.

These letters are in all fonts I've seen which support this system, including Nishiki-teki (にしき的). They are certainly expected, and they certainly do have a use, it is just that finding inline examples of them is challenging because they are ~~only~~ used in a few words. Especially, as noted, イ, which only has a single example across repertoires, 三日月. There just aren't that many words which have a clear shared etymology with Japanese and begin with イ, itself a rare kana, as it is pronounced equally to す in Standard (Tokyo) Japanese (e.g. in the verb 続く).

0.3.3 Shima Shotai collision

あ い う え お か き く け こ さ し し し す せ そ た ち ち つ つ
て と な に ぬ ね の は ひ ふ ふ へ ほ ま み み む め も や ゆ よ ら
り る れ ろ わ を ん ゑ あ が ぎ ぐ げ ご ざ じ じ じ じ ず ぜ ぞ
だ ぢ ぢ ぢ づ で ど ば び ぶ べ ぼ ば び ぶ べ ぼ ば つ つ つ つ
つ つ つ つ つ つ つ つ つ が ぎ ぐ げ ご い い う い い ゆ い
デ デ デ デ エ エ エ あ あ あ あ す す す す い あ い う え お あ あ か
く け こ が ぎ ぐ げ ご さ し し す せ そ ざ じ じ じ ず ぜ ぞ ち
ち う う て と だ ぢ で ど な に ぬ ね の は ひ ふ ふ へ ほ ば
ぶ べ ぼ ば び ぶ べ ぼ ま み み も め も や ゆ よ ら り る れ ろ わ
ふ ふ ふ ふ ふ ふ ふ ふ ふ か き く け こ た ち ち う う と と な に
ぬ ぬ の ば び ぶ べ ぼ ま み み む め も や い い ゆ よ ら り る れ
ろ わ く く す す し し し し と ち ち と ち ち ち ち ち ち ち
う う ぶ
な な へ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ ほ
た ち ち う う う う う う う う う う う う う う う う う う う
ぎ ぎ あ い う え お や ゆ よ わ か け こ ア イ ウ エ オ カ キ ク
ケ コ サ シ シ ス セ ソ タ チ チ ツ ツ テ ナ ニ ブ ネ ノ ハ
ヒ フ フ ヘ ホ マ ミ ム メ モ ャ ュ ョ ラ リ ル レ ロ ワ ヲ ン エ
ヰ ガ ギ グ ゲ ゴ ザ ジ ジ ジ ジ ズ ゼ ゾ ダ チ チ チ ヴ デ ド バ
ビ ブ ベ ボ パ ピ ブ ブ ブ ポ ツ ツ ツ ツ ツ ツ ツ ツ ツ
ツ ツ ガ ギ グ ゲ ゴ イ ウ イ イ ゴ ェ ヴ ヴ ヴ ェ エ ァ ァ
ア ズ ズ ス イ ア イ ウ エ オ ア ァ カ キ ク ク カ オ ギ グ ゲ ゴ
サ シ シ ス セ ソ ザ ジ ジ ズ ゼ ソ タ チ チ ツ ツ テ ト ダ ジ デ
ド ナ ニ ス ネ ソ ハ ヒ ラ ヘ ホ パ ピ ブ ブ ブ ブ ブ ブ
マ ミ ミ ム モ ャ ュ ョ ラ リ ル レ ロ ワ フ フ フ フ フ フ
カ キ ク ケ コ タ チ チ ツ ツ テ ト ナ ニ ヌ ネ ソ バ ピ ブ ブ
マ ミ ム マ モ ャ イ イ ュ ョ ラ リ ル レ ロ ワ ク ク ス シ シ
シ ト チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ チ
ン ジ カ フ カ フ サ シ シ シ シ シ シ シ シ シ
グ ド フ カ キ ク ケ コ サ シ シ シ シ シ シ シ
ヒ フ ワ ヘ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ ッ
6. TRON has very similar aims to Mojikyō: encode characters without Han unification, both were created by Japanese people.
7. This uses Private Use Area codepoints in Miura's font "Nishiki-teki" (にしき的). →

Shima Shotai (しま素体) is an incompatible system presented by Shinji Ogawa (小川 順史), Masahiro Yamada (山田 貢寛), Yuka Hayashi (林 由華), and Hiroto Ueda (上田 寛大) at ATypI, the typography conference held by the Association Typographique Internationale, in 2019.⁸

It is for the representation of the Ryukyuan languages. I have not as yet been able to find enough community use of this neography to recommend formally the encoding of its characters. The encoding of the New Okinawan Kana does not preclude future encoding of the *Shima Shotai* system, should it be used more widely.

Furthermore, there is no possibility of a name collision between the New Okinawan Kana and the *Shima Shotai*. The only characters missing for the *Shima Shotai* are some small versions of existing hiragana and katakana letters. These have a clear pattern by which their names are derived, and it is already known that they belong in the block Small Kana Extension, which has room to receive them. It is also possible some more diacritics are needed to represent the *Shima Shotai*, but there is also an obvious way to name these diacritics as they are very similar in appearance to Latin typographical diacritics, and if new diacritics are needed, they wouldn't have any specific Script category.

While the authors of the *Shima Shotai* stated in 2019 that their top priority was being encoded in Unicode, no proposal has been submitted as of the date of this paper. Nonetheless, I am confident that the encoding of my requested characters would do nothing to hinder a possible future encoding of theirs should adequate third-party use of their *Shima Shotai* system be documented.

0.4 Evidence

0.4.1 Attestations

Note: Listed below are only attestations in which Funatsu, the creator of the characters, was either not involved, or was not the lead author. If I were to include Funatsu's work this subsection could be neverending, but because the ISO P&P are about proving the existence of a user community, Funatsu's works aren't relevant for proving one.

• 新沖縄文字

さいきんになって琉球語の発音をあらわすために考えられた文字です。

い	あ	え	や	ゆ	よ
て	と				さ
で	ど				な
あ	あ	ゑ	す	ゞ	ゞ
お	く	く	つ	づ	づ
お	ぐ	ぐ			
お	ゑ	ゑ			
ん					

↓実際に新沖縄文字をつかって単語をかいて見ると・・・

ど	し	(ともだち)		
ご	っ	ち	-	(ごちそう)
太	陽	(たいよう)		
か	い	子	(かいこ)	
お	ん	な	ぐ	(おんな)

8. See [しまの文字.site](#). In the presentation, Ogawa mentions that *Shima Shotai* have existed since 2015, but I could not independently verify this.



Figure №4—Tamaki, Yumi [玉城 裕美] (2009). ウチナークトゥバ：琉球語 [Okinawan: A Language of Ryūkyū]. Kid's Seminar 2009 [きつせみなあ 2009]. Chubu University Center for the Study of Foreign Languages [中部大学語学センター].

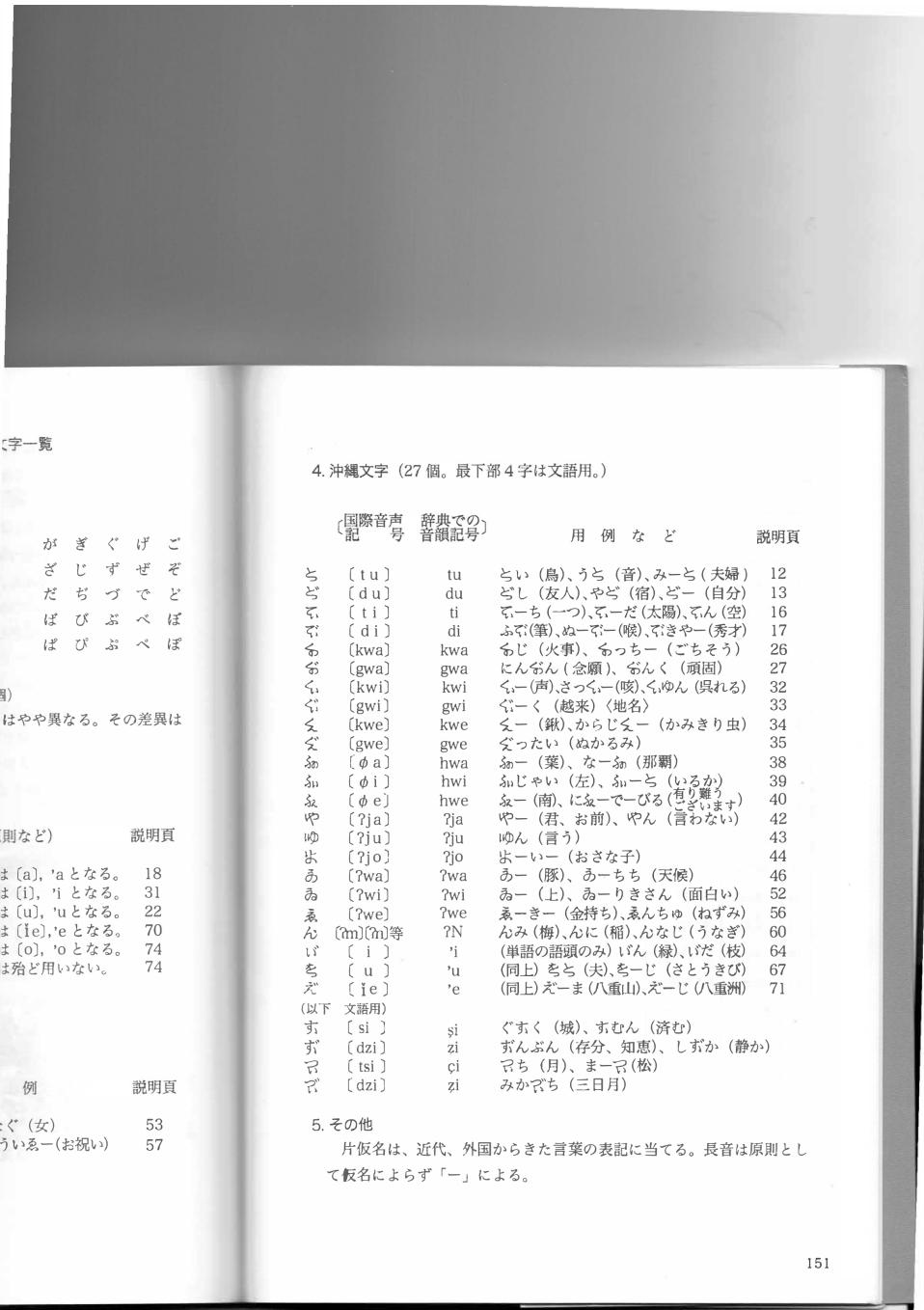


Figure №5—Nakamatsu, Takeo [中松 竹雄]; Funatsu, Yoshiaki [船津 好明] (2010). 沖縄口さびら [Let's Speak Okinawan]. Naha: Ryūkyū Shimpo Publishing House [琉球新報社]. p. 151.

ご家族のお前にてよいお正月をお迎えでしようか。
今年は龍年ということですが、その龍というのは戦争の
終わり頃までは曾里城正殿の臺（いらか）に龍頭が飾られ
てありました。また、正殿へ上がる階段の左と右側に龍柱
が向き合って立っていました。それから、龍頭の水も龍の
口から湧き出るようになつてましたが、とても冷たくて
おいしい水でした。
その龍といふのは、水の神として、非常に守護神と言
われています。いつでも海の中や池などに籠り、時には天
空の彼方北方を自由に飛び回るといふい伝えられています
が、今年はその龍にあやかって、皆様方で健幸なご活躍で
ださい。
東京沖縄県人の新聞「月刊おきなわの声」も何卒わざと
れなくお愛読くださいますようお願いいたします。

いー正月でーびる
家人衆打ち揃へ揃へ、
いー正月迎えみしえーびー
て、
今年、龍年んで言ひーし
が、うぬ龍んで言しえー、
戰世ぬ終わいるぐるまでー
唐破風ぬ瓦屋ぬ上なかい戴
してあいびーたん。また、
唐破風ぬ上い口ぬ左と右面
んかい、龍柱ぬ向かて建つ
ちょーいびーたん。うりか
ら、う龍磧ぬ水ん、龍ぬ口
から走り出じーる如成とー
やびーたしが、一杯冷つ
てーんし旨さ水やいびーた
頤ーさびら。
城問朝昌

Figure №6—Excerpt from おきなわの声 (*The Voice of Okinawa Monthly*) issue 98, 1988.

そ一篠ち

This article, entitled いー正月でーびる, is of unknown authorship. At right is the Okinawan text, at left a Japanese translation.

It's of particular interest that this was published without an explanatory chart, and lends credence to the idea that the letters have shapes that are so obvious to literate Okinawans as to need no explanation. The article ~~is not~~^{is} about the kana themselves, but is rather about the fact that 1988 was the year of the dragon (龍年) in the Chinese Zodiac.

2021年2月2日 投稿者: 小林

沖縄文字と発音

沖縄文字と発音についての問い合わせがありました。

「と」「で」「て」などの扱いや「沖縄文字」との互換についてはどこかで紹介がないか?

ということです。問い合わせの答えになるかどうか自信がありませんが、分かる範囲でお答えしようと思います。

Figure №7—Kobayashi, Hitoshi [小林ひとし] (2021). 沖縄文字と発音 (Okinawan Kana and Pronunciation). 沖縄語を考える [Thoughts on Okinawan (blog)].

This article is interesting in that it shows documentation of enduring user community demand for these characters. Dr. Kobayashi is a professor emeritus of engineering; he's the author of several

fonts for the characters. In this article he explains why he went to the trouble of using web fonts to get them on his personal blog about Okinawan, because he believes they aid pronunciation.

さんしん
三線で琉歌を歌いたいと思っているひとへのアドバイスです。三線は楽譜として工工四がありますが、歌う場合の発音が問題です。沖縄語には正書法がないので、歌詞を正しく発音するには師匠からの口伝になります。ところが、この「師匠」たるもののが問題で、その琉歌が唄われる地方の言葉に精通してないことがあります。また、前にも書きましたが「梅」=「んみ」の「ん」（「ん」のグロッタル音）ができない師匠も多くいます。聞いていると「うん」とか変に籠らせた「ん」を発声したりしています。師匠の教えは教えとして、正確な発音は古い先人のレコード、たとえばマルフクレコードに収録されているものを参照されるようお勧めします

Figure №8—Kobayashi, Hitoshi [小林ひとし] (2021). 「沖縄語」は話せなくてよい (It's Fine Not to Speak Okinawan). 沖縄語を考える [Thoughts on Okinawan (blog)].

The excerpt above laments the loss of the unique phonemes of Okinawan in colloquial speech, and shows one of the problems Dr. Kobayashi has with using regular hiragana only to write Okinawan: there's no good way to distinguish ん (n) from ん (?n), which can appear word-initial in Okinawan. This leads, he speculates, people to assume that they are the same. As Okinawan is not taught in most schools, the author writes, this has led to them *becoming* the same.

Above, highlighted is ん.

うちなー もとい
沖縄ぬ 踊

児玉清子（横浜市港北区）

なま お たー ちた うちなー^{をとい}
今、我つ達んかい伝わどーる沖縄ぬ
踊や、沖縄ぬ琉球 やたる時に、御城
ぬ 踊 どっしりじまとーたしと、村々
かい伝わとーたる御神んかい捧ぎーる
踊ぬ合ーさったしやいびーん。
えーぐに てーしち じーぬーな
親國ぬ大切な芸能成とーいびーたく
ど、踊と唄三線ー400年余いぬ 間栄
ーやびたん。
隣ぬ国、明國ぬ皇帝や、14世紀ぬ
はじめ、琉球んかい使ー出じやさびたん。

むゆー じーぬー う ふんしんをとい
かい 催 さったる芸能や「御冠船 踊」
んで言ちょーいびーたん。くぬ御冠船
踊 どくに あちね なみ いっぺーやく
ど國ぬ 商 一ぬ為なかい一杯役に
た 立ちやびたん。御冠船 踊 や冊封使達が
ち 来ゆーる2、3年前から稽古そーいび
ーたん。あつ達や長ー居たくと、踊や
しちかい わ 7回んかい分きらって催 さって、うれ
ー「七宴ぬ式」んで言らっとーいびー
ん。

う ふんしんをとい ぬ
御冠船 踊 ンかい出じーるつ人ぬ
ちやー う ぐしく ちど くれー たか
達や、御城 んかい勤みどーる位ぬ高
さむれー じなん さんなん いら
さる 士 ぬ次男、三男から選ばったし
やいびーん。あんし 踊 奉行ぬ前をて
ナーピ タガ

Figure №9—Newsletter of the Okinawa Speaker's Association (沖縄語を話す会会報), issue 26. Okinawan Edition (うちなーぐちかわら版). 2020-07-04.

All 26 issues of this use the Okinawan kana; the example above is an example of an article in the newsletter by 児玉清子。⁹

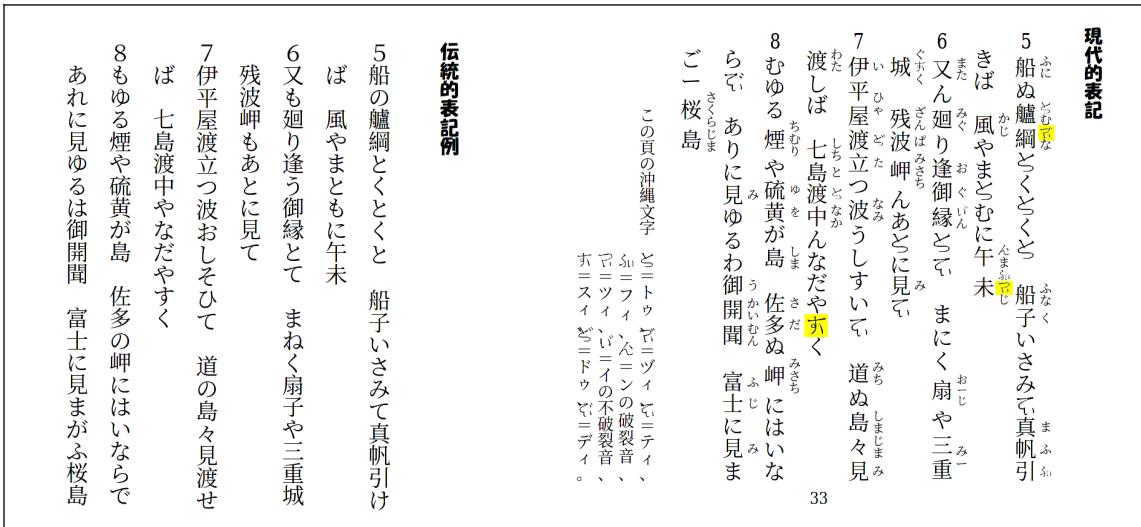


Figure №10—Kuniyoshi et al. (2009) p. 33.

This source is particularly valuable because it has inline examples of two of the infrequent disambiguation letters. Because each song in this collection is intended for use detached from the whole, an explanation of the New Okinawan Kana used in the lyrics are on each page. **Highlighted** are, from right to left, top to bottom, ヲ HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN DZI, ン HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWA and 𠮾 HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN SI.

「琉球古典音楽」書て、---うちなーぐちにて---

我んねー、四十八ぬ歳に、「琉球古典音楽」書い始みて、なー、今ー、八十ぬ歳成いびたん。
書い始みたる頃ー、教室をて、皆んかい珍ささって、又、しーじゃ弟子ぬ御方
からー、「珍さる大和人ぬ、入っち来よーんどー。」んで、言らりやびたん。
今ー、「野村流音楽協会関東支部」ぬ会をそん、沖縄ん人、えーねー、うぬ弟子や
かん、大和人ぬど、多さいびーる。八割ー、超ーとーんで、恩ーりやびーん。
古典音楽第一、歌詞いる際に、肝えーぬ切り目ぬ場所をて、声や、必じ切らり
るむの一、あらんあい、文、色分きて、名詞ー、二ちんかい分きらって、う
ぬたばさなかい、難子詞ぬ入りらったいさびーん。
歌ぬ発音ー、世間をて、言らっとーる沖縄口ぬ音どやくと、どー易さるむの一、
あいびらん。
歌ぬ発音ー、大切やんで思て、「沖縄語を話す会」かい、一年びけーん通したが、
今やでん、大和口し言ーどんしぇー、「遠洋の帆」どやいびーる。
古典音楽聴ちよーいねー、眼ーぶいするつんん居んでぬ、話ー、いきらこ
無一やびらん。
うれー、あんやる苦やいびーしが、一ちぬ考ーぬあで、其んかい入っち来ゆー
る音め、胴体んかい響ぬ伝ーらって來ゆーる音ぬど、つんぬ命続かぢ行ちゆる
力ぬ、あんぐん言らとーいびーん。うれー、あんがやら分かいびらんやー。
「新人賞課題曲」ぬ、一ちやいびーしが、伊野波節んかえー、此ぬよーなつぬ
命続かする力ぬあいがすら分かいびらん。
伊野波ぬ坂道から、どーぬ安ぬ覗、えーねー、ぞない、思や一小添ーて上で、

9. Reading unknown. (Some Japanese names have multiple possible pronunciations and blends specified explicitly to be guessed at.)

に隔てあーかさんだれー成らん場」ぬ事やいびーん。此ぬ事ー、どく嘆かさぬ、
肝病て出じーる声ど、味あーぬある何どんぐん言らん、聲ぬ音んかい応じて、
思ーじふらーじ、群り毛立ちするあたい氣引ち補みらんだれー成らんてる思
やいびーん。
年寄いぬ年寄い見一考ーする事、見一考ーするつんん居らんくど、胴独い死
ぬる事、うりから、どく見一考ーする故に、心勞びけーいっし疲りて、後ぬう
じゅめー、命捨てーる事でーや、つんぬ命んかい係わいる事やて、此れー、生
ちみどーみ、考ーらんどんあれー成らんむんやいびーさ。伊野波節ー、此ぬ
よーな考ーどっし、我んねー、愛き止みとーいびーん。此ぬ事ー、何がな見ー
出じやさりーがすら、分からんしが、肝要なむんぬあえーさにんぐ、思とー
びーん。
我っ連師匠、仲宗根忠治先生や、何時がやら、くん如っし、言みしえー
びーたん。「いつ連が、ちゃーがなっし、沖縄ぬ文化分かいる如成いる事やさ。」

Figure №11—Gokita, Hideo [五木田 秀夫] (2018). 「琉球古典音楽」習て. [Learning Ryukyuan Classical Music]. Ryūkyū Classical Music Association [琉球古典音楽協会].

(The pixelation of this image is in the original source.)



Figure №12—Ōtsuki, Noriko [大槻紀子] (2011). うちなーライフ in 東京 [Okinawan Life in Tokyo]. *Shima-be* [島へ。] (magazine), 78: 31.

This cute cartoon is of a meeting of the Okinawan Speaker's Association (沖縄語を話す会), a Tokyo group of Okinawan speakers, native and non-native. **Highlighted** are ど HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN DU and て HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN TI.

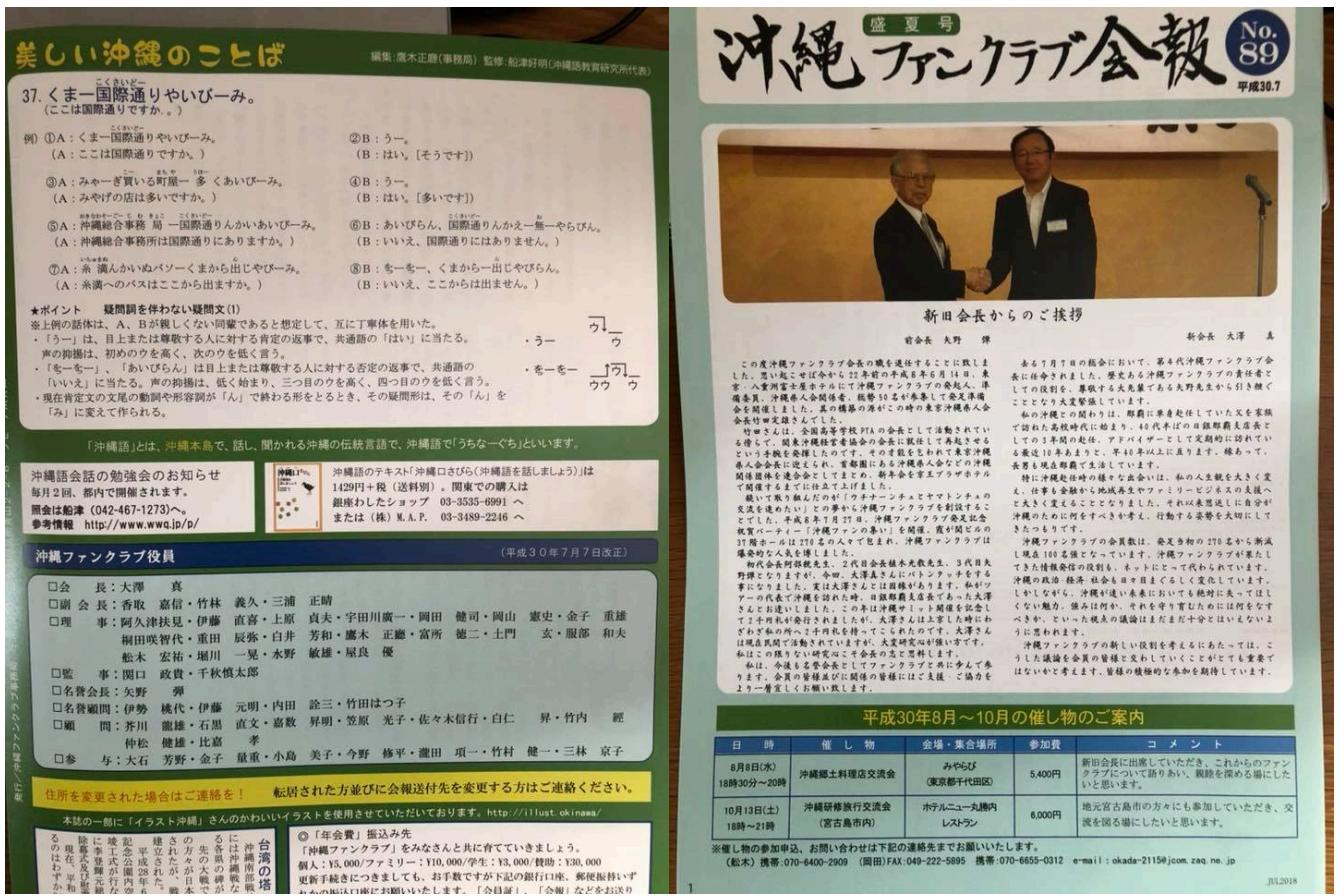


Figure №13—沖縄ファンクラブ会報 [Okinawa Fan Club Newsletter] issue №89 (July 2018)

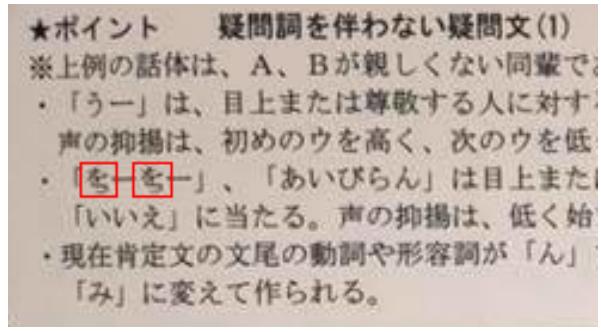


Figure №14—Above newsletter, closeup of ^{タガ} HIRAGANA LETTER NEW OKINAWAN WU

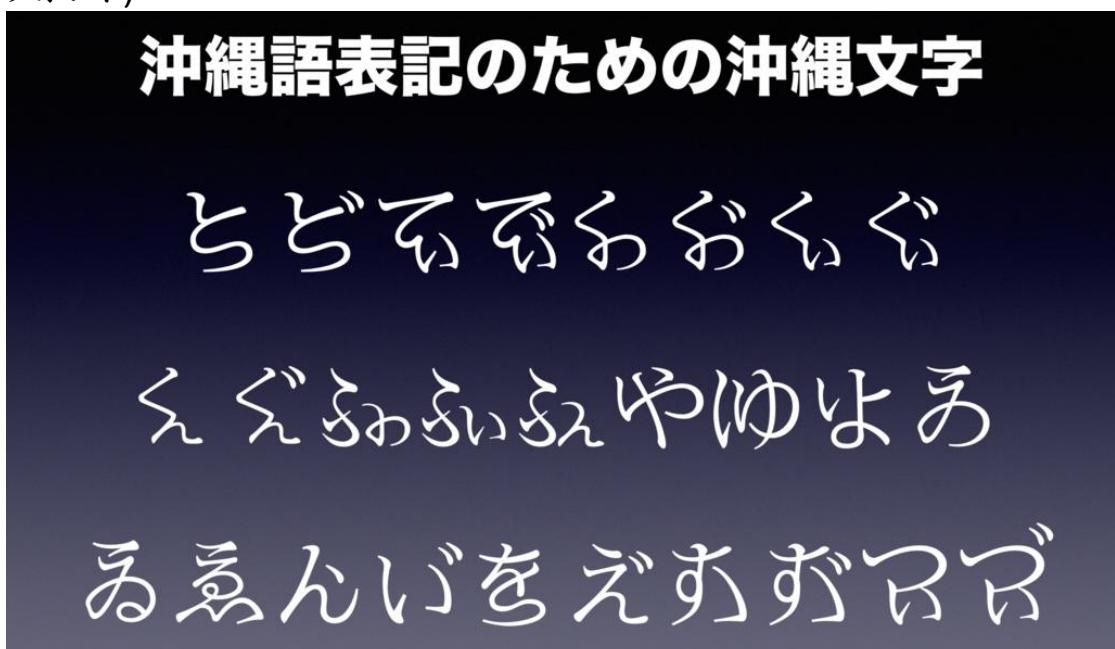
0.4.2 Fonts

Many fonts have existed for writing this script. As it is not feasible for me to go back and research fonts used in the 80's-00's, listed here are only fonts publicly available for download as of 2021.

Daisuke Miura's Nishiki-teki (にしき的)

✧くんづち じゅーはちにち しまくとばぬ ひ
い[ji] ウ[wu] エ[je] ハ[?^a] ヲ[?^u] オ[?^o]
ア[?^a] エ[?^i] イ[?^e] ハ[k^a] ヲ[g^a]
イ[k^i] ヲ[g^i] イ[k^e] ヲ[g^e] シ[si] ジ[zi]
チ[ti] デ[di] チ[tu] ド[du] テ[tsi] デ[dzi]
フ[fa] フ[fi] フ[fe] ハ[?n, ?m]
ア[?a] イ[?i] ウ[?u] エ[?e] オ[?o] ヲ[wo]
ジ[çi] ヲ[çi] ブ[dzu] ヒ[çi] フ[fu] ハ[n]

Three Ring Font Shop (参環のフォントショップ)'s [FROkinawaMoji](#) (明朝体用の沖縄文字フリーフォント)



Kobayashi Hitoshi's FKOKinawan fonts

A handwriting practice grid for Japanese hiragana characters. The grid consists of three rows of eight boxes each, labeled A through H at the top and 1 through 8 on the left. Each box contains a large, bold hiragana character for tracing practice. The first row contains 'と', 'ど', 'て', 'で', 'く', 'ぐ', 'く', 'ぐ'. The second row contains 'え', 'ぐ', 'ふ', 'ふ', 'い', 'う', 'や', 'ゆ'. The third row contains 'あ', 'あ', 'ゑ', 'ん', 'い', 'ば', 'き', 'え'. Each character is written in a fluid, cursive style.



0.5 Bibliography

1. Emori, Yōkō [江森 陽弘] (1987-02-14). 独自の工夫で新しい沖縄文字を考案した船津好明さん [Uniquely developed “New Okinawan Kana” invented by a Mr. Yoshiaki Funatsu]. *Asahi Shimbun* (朝日新聞), ひと (series).
2. Kuniyoshi, Shinshō [國吉 真正]; Funatsu, Yoshiaki [船津 好明] (2009). 現代仮名遣いで易しく読め 沖縄の古典音楽歌詞118 [118 Classical Okinawan Songs Made Easily Readable via Modern Kana]. Tokyo: Okinawa Language Education Institute [沖縄語教育研究所].
3. Otsuka, Satoru [大塚 聰] (2010). アイヌ語用仮名文字：新沖縄文字（拡張ひらがな・拡張カタカナ・を探せ!!） [Ainu Specialized Kana and New Okinawan Kana (hunting for extended hiragana/katakana!!)].
4. Funatsu, Yoshiaki [船津好明] (2016). 沖縄文字一覧 [Okinawan Kana Chart].