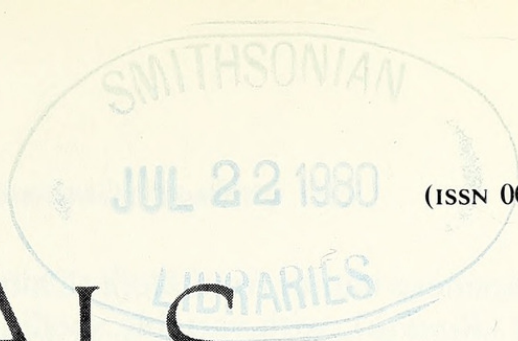


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PROVINCES AND PREFECTURES OF JAPAN: A BIOGEOGRAPHICAL AID

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ABSTRACT

The two political systems of subdivision for the Japanese Islands, that of the province and that of the prefecture, which have been used historically are mapped and discussed. Alphabetical and regional cross comparisons between the two systems, as well as maps on the same scale, are presented to facilitate determining the unknown status of an area, thereby enabling consistency in specimen citation. A glossary of geographical suffixes is provided as an additional aid. A brief discussion of Romanization of Japanese with alternative and equivalent spellings is also presented as an aid to the seeming confusion in geographical nomenclature.

INTRODUCTION

The biogeographer or monographic taxonomist who is utilizing Japanese specimens is soon forced to confront the problem posed by the inconsistency and seeming confusion in Japanese geographical nomenclature. The country itself has been variously known in the West as Japan, Nippon, and Hongo, and such synonyms as Honshiu, Honsyu, Honto, and Hondo may be encountered for the name of its major island, Honshu. Overriding the considerable problem caused by ren-

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dering Japanese names from *kanji* (Chinese characters) into the Roman alphabet (*Romaji*), with variable spellings dictated by the various phonetics of the major Western languages, is the fact that the traditional names of the old Japanese provinces, with both Chinese and Japanese equivalents, were widely used until very recently and are the only names used by pre-Meiji (ca. 1600–1859) botanical collectors such as Engelbert Kaempfer, Christiaan Kleynhoff, C. P. Thunberg, P. F. von Siebold, and P. F. W. Göring who were working under Dutch East India Company sponsorship. In contrast to the traditional Japanese system of provinces used by these collectors is the modern prefectural system with its origins in the early Meiji period and the opening of the door to Japan. Important botanical collectors during the late 19th century were J. Morrow, C. Wright, J. Small, C. P. Hodgson, C. J. Maximowicz, P. A. L. Savatier, and U. Faurie.

Whenever political boundaries are delineated such as the dual province and prefecture system which developed in Japan, the historical responsibility of the cartographer making the map at the time is merely to inform one of the governing authorities and areas in question. All current atlases, road maps, etc. of Japan use the prefectural system, and older atlases which show the provincial boundaries are not readily available to everyone. To effectively deal with historical collections, a comparative understanding of the two Japanese systems of subdivision is essential.

This paper, it is hoped, will help alleviate geographical confusion by presenting two maps as well as tables of equivalent nomenclature, one for the old provincial system and one for the new prefectural system, and a discussion of some of the alternative spellings and names which may be encountered. Of course, no list of equivalent spellings can be complete, since especially with the older Dutch, French, and Russian collectors, the Romanization of place names tended to be highly individualistic. However, there are now two main systems for this Romanization, and, by understanding them and referring to the maps, it is hoped that the biogeographer and taxonomist will have a good chance of identifying to his satisfaction the location of most specimens encountered.

SYSTEMS OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISION: PROVINCES VERSUS PREFECTURES

The Japanese archipelago forms a single series of islands which stretch southward from the Kamchatka peninsula towards Malaysia. Japan itself is presently comprised of four large islands and numerous smaller ones. The four major islands are, from north to south, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu.

Provinces (kuni)

The mountainous topography of Honshu, the largest island and historically the most important, has been the key to the historical division of Japan into political entities. Mid-Honshu is divided cross-ways by the Fuji Volcanic Chain and also longitudinally by a series of granitic mountain-volcano chains. Early capitals and centers of influence, namely Nara, Kyoto, and Tokyo, have all been in the southern half. Since the 7th century, the country has been divided into provinces (*kuni*). Administratively, the central government further organized the country's provinces regionally into one *kinai* (those provinces in the vicinity of the capital) and seven *do* (circuits, areas, or regions) which had six to 15 provinces each.

The original provincial boundaries shifted and their numbers increased as the influence of the central authorities expanded. There were further provincial subdivisions in northern Honshu in the 17th and 18th centuries as consolidation and reorganization occurred. The above provincial naming system officially persisted till the Meiji Restoration (1860's), after which these old feudal place names and boundaries were significantly changed, to be replaced by the concept of prefectures.

Whereas a given Japanese ideograph (*kanji*) can frequently be read in several different ways, the old provincial names had two different reading systems—one based on a Chinese reading, and the other on an indigenous Japanese reading. A map and table relating these two old reading systems was presented by Chamberlain (1971; see also Papinot, 1972). Since the Chinese reading practice is of antiquity, and is not much used on biological labels, it is not pertinent to the current discussion. The provinces of Japan are mapped (Fig. 1), based on Hara and Kanai (1958, 1959), Chamberlain (1971) and Papinot (1972), and listed alphabetically in Table 1 for Honshu and Table 2 for Kyushu, Shikoku, and Hokkaido, respectively.

Prefectures (ken)

Modern Japan is organized into prefectures (*ken*), three urban (Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto) and 43 rural, including Okinawa Prefecture (Ryukyu Islands). It should be noted that the whole island of Hokkaido is now considered a prefecture, while in the past it had variable provincial status. (Note the *do* or circuit ending in *Hokkaido*.) Two systems of further subdivision of this prefectural island are known. One relates to the modern prefecture system and the other to the older provincial system.

Though a modified prefectural system has been in existence for over 100 years, both systems are still used in specimen citation and the

Table 1.—*Alphabetical listing of the provinces and prefectures of Honshu.*

Provinces of Honshu				
Aki	Hoki	Kai	Oki (Isl.)	Suo
Awa	Iga	Kawachi	Omi	Suruga
Awaji (Isl.)	Iki (Isl.)	Kazusa	Owari	Tajima
Bingo	Inaba	Kii	Rikuzen	Tanba
Bitchu	Ise	Kozuke	Rikuchu	Tango
Bizen	Iwaki	Mikawa	Sado (Isl.)	Totomi
Dewa	Iwami	Mimasaka	Sagami	Tsushima (Isl.)
Echigo	Iwashiro	Mino	Settsu	Ugo
Echizen	Izu	Musashi	Shima	Uzen
Etchu	Izumi	Mutsu	Shimotsuke	Wakasa
Harima	Izumo	Nagato	Shimousa	Yamashiro
Hida	Kaga	Noto	Shinano	Yamato
Hitachi				
Prefectures of Honshu				
Aichi	Gumma	Kyoto	Okinawa	Tokyo
Akita	Hiroshima	Mie	Osaka	Tottori
Aomori	Hyogo	Miyagi	Saitama	Toyama
Chiba	Ibaraki	Nagano	Shiga	Wakayama
Fukui	Ishikawa	Nara	Shimane	Yamagata
Fukushima	Iwate	Niigata	Shizuoka	Yamaguchi
Gifu	Kanagawa	Okayama	Tochigi	Yamanashi

volume *Atlas of the Japanese Flora*, Horikawa (1972, 1976) used neither system of political subdivision for his Japanese base map.

The current prefectures of Japan, except Okinawa Prefecture, are mapped (Fig. 2; based on the *Times Atlas World*, 1958; *Times Index-Gazetteer World*, 1965; Gazetteer, No. 10947, 1943; Gazetteer, No. 14, 1945; Preliminary Gazetteer Japan, 1953) on the same scale as the provinces (Fig. 1) and are also listed alphabetically for comparison in Tables 1 and 2.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

By reviewing Tables 1 and 2 and the maps (Figs. 1–2), one can determine the status of a given major political subdivision, that is which main island and which province or prefecture is involved. However, while the Romanized names may be similar under both the provincial and the prefectural systems, in some cases the geographical areas occupied are not. For each of the major islands, a cross comparison of the two systems is presented. Small diagrams, Fig. 3 for Honshu and Fig. 4 for Kyushu, Shikoku, and Hokkaido, respectively, show this name equivalency and associated changes in area. When used in conjunction with the maps, these equivalency figures provide

Table 2.—*Alphabetical listing of the provinces and prefectures of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Hokkaido.*

<i>Provinces of Kyushu</i>		<i>Prefectures of Kyushu</i>	
Bungo	Hiuga	Fukuoka	Nagasaki
Buzen	Hizen	Kagoshima	Oita
Chikugo	Osumi	Kumamoto	Saga
Chikuzen	Satsuma	Miyazaki	
Higo			
<i>Provinces of Shikoku</i>		<i>Prefectures of Shikoku</i>	
Awa	Sanuki	Ehime	Kochi
Iyo	Tosa	Kagawa	Tokushima
<i>Subprovincial Units of Hokkaido</i>		<i>Subprefectural Units of Hokkaido</i>	
Hidaka	Nemuro	Abashiri	Nemuro
Iburi	Oshima	Hidaka	Oshima
Ishikari	Shiribeshi	Hiyama	Rumoi
Kitami	Teshio	Iburi	Shiribeshi
Kushiro	Tokachi	Ishikari	Sorachi
		Kamikawa	Soya
		Kushiro	Tokachi

further geographical information. Thus, for example, a collection labeled under the provincial system can be given its correct prefectural equivalent for consistency in citation.

Honshu (Figs. 1–3; Table 1)

The present prefectures of Honshu are grouped into districts or regions, much as the old provinces were organized into circuits (*do*). These newer districts have no real political function, but they do represent a popular, regional view of Japan which has both a topographical and historical basis. These areas are similar to such regional divisions as the Middle West (U.S.A.) or the Lake District (England). A regional approach for the detailed comparison of Honshu has been used, because of the large number of provinces and prefectures. The districts used in Fig. 3 include: Tohoku (northeastern Honshu), Kanto (Tokyo and surrounding prefectures), Chubu (central Honshu), Kansai or Kinki (west central Honshu), and Chugoku (western Honshu). If a collection is known to be from western Honshu for example, then the Chugoku District cross comparison of Fig. 3 will be useful in quickly establishing whether a marked area is a prefecture or a province and its current geographical status.

Kyushu (Figs. 1, 2 [stars], and 4; Table 2)

Kyushu, the southernmost of the major islands, is now divided into seven prefectures, a reduction of two from the original nine provinces.

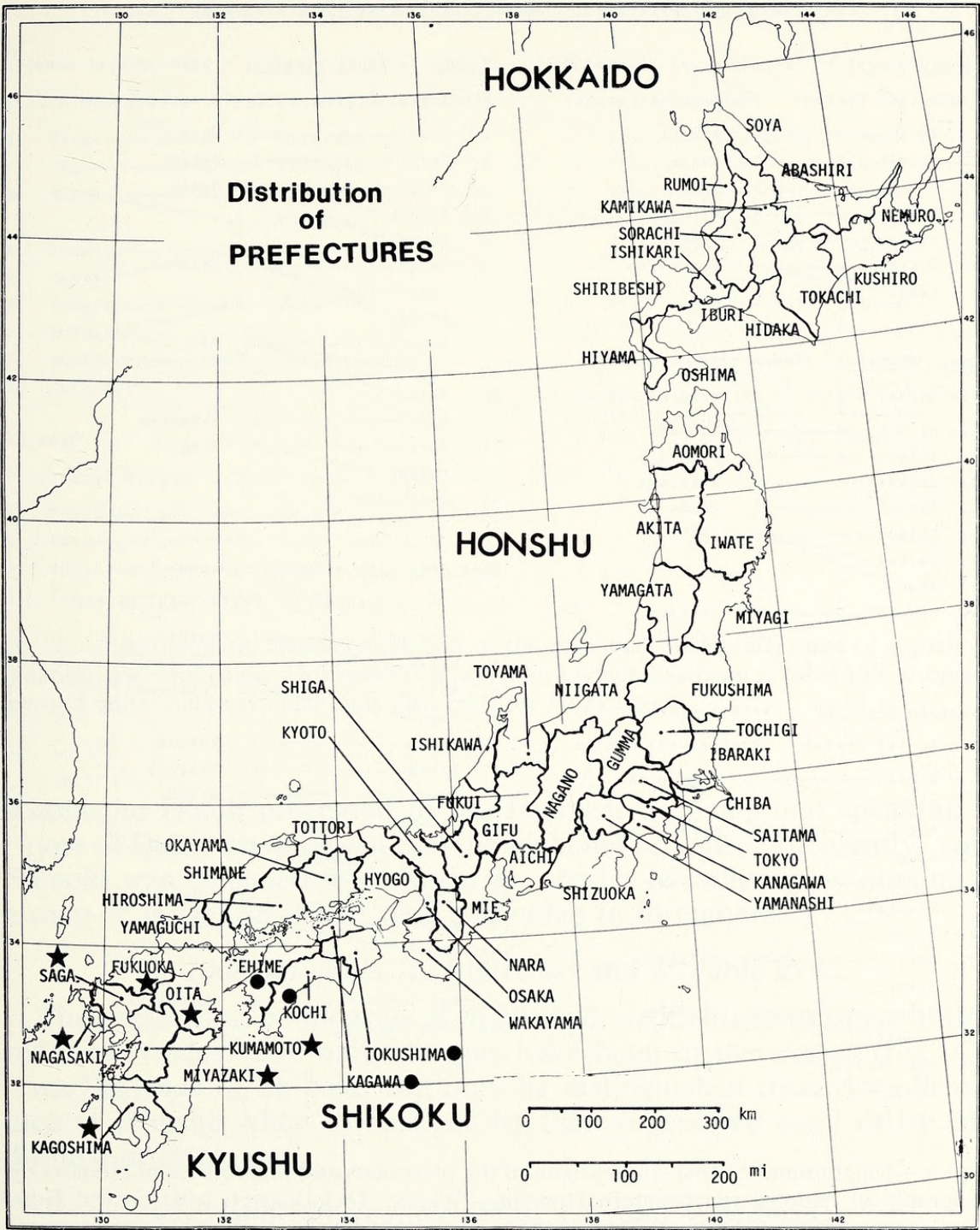


Fig. 2.—Map showing the prefectures of Japan (after *London Times Atlas of the World*, 1958; *London Times Index-Gazetteer World*, 1965).

The subdivision of Hizen and Buzen provinces are indicated in Fig. 4 and in the maps (Figs. 1–2).

Between 1609 and the middle of the 19th century, the only open Japanese port was the Dutch East India Company’s station on Dejima Island (Nagasaki). Most of the earliest western botanical collections,

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF PROVINCES AND PREFECTURES OF HONSHU

Tohoku District - Northeastern Honshu

Provincial System Prefectural System

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Mutsu | 1. Aomori |
| 2. Ugo | 2. Akita |
| 3. Rikuchu | 3. Iwate |
| 4. Rikuzen | 4. Miyagi |
| 5. Uzen | 5. Yamagata |
| 6. Iwashiro | 6. Fukushima |
| 7. Iwaki | |

Kanto District - Tokyo (city) & area

Provincial System Prefectural System

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Hitachi | 1. Ibaraki |
| 2. Shimotsuke | 2. Tochigi |
| 3. Sagami | 3. Kanagawa |
| 4. Kozuke | 4. Gumma |
| 5. Shimousa | 5. Chiba |
| 6. Kazusa | |
| 7. Awa | |
| 8. Musashi | 6. Saitama |
| | 7. Tokyo |

Chugoku District - Western Honshu

Provincial System Prefectural System

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1. Nagato | 1. Yamaguchi |
| 2. Suo | |
| 3. Aki | 2. Hiroshima |
| 4. Bingo | |
| 5. Bitchu | 3. Okayama |
| 6. Mimasaka | |
| 7. Bizen | |
| 8. Hoki | 4. Tottori |
| 9. Inaba | |
| 10. Izumo | 5. Shimane |
| 11. Iwami | |
| 12. Oki (Isl.) | |
| 13. Tsushima (Isl.) | |
| 14. Iki (Isl.) | |

Kansai or Kinki District - West central Honshu

Provincial System Prefectural System

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Yamato | 1. Nara |
| 2. Omi | 2. Shiga |
| 3. Izumi | 3. Osaka |
| 4. Settsu | |
| 5. Kawachi | |
| 6. Tango | 4. Kyoto |
| 7. Yamashiro | |
| 8. Tanba | |
| 9. Ise | 5. Mie |
| 10. Iga | |
| 11. Shima | |
| 12. Kii | 6. Wakayama |
| 13. Tajima | 7. Hyogo |
| 14. Harima | |
| 15. Awaji (Isl.) | |

Chubu District - Central Honshu

Provincial System Prefectural System

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Echizen | 1. Fukui |
| 2. Wakasa | |
| 3. Noto | 2. Ishikawa |
| 4. Kaga | |
| 5. Etchu | 3. Toyama |
| 6. Echigo | 4. Niigata |
| 7. Owari | 5. Aichi |
| 8. Mikawa | |
| 9. Totomi | 6. Shizuoka |
| 10. Suruga | |
| 11. Izu | |
| 12. Mino | 7. Gifu |
| 13. Hida | |
| 14. Shinano | 8. Nagano |
| 15. Kai | 9. Yamanashi |
| 16. Sado (Isl.) | |

Fig. 3.—Diagrammatic cross-comparison of the provinces and prefectures of Honshu by geographical regions: northeastern Honshu—*Tohoku* (*Ou*) District; west-central Honshu—*Kansai* or *Kinki* District; Tokyo (city) and surrounding area—*Kanto* District; western Honshu—*Chugoku* District; central Honshu—*Chubu* District.

such as those of E. Kaempfer, C. Kleynhoff, C. P. Thunberg, F. P. von Siebold, and P. F. W. Goring (Owhi, 1965), were made in the Nagasaki area or on the regularly required courtesy trips to the Tokugawa capital Edo, the modern Tokyo. A description of such an Edo trip from Dejima Island is given by von Siebold (1841, 1973), a German

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF PROVINCES AND PREFECTURES OF KYUSHU, SHIKOKU AND HOKKAIDO

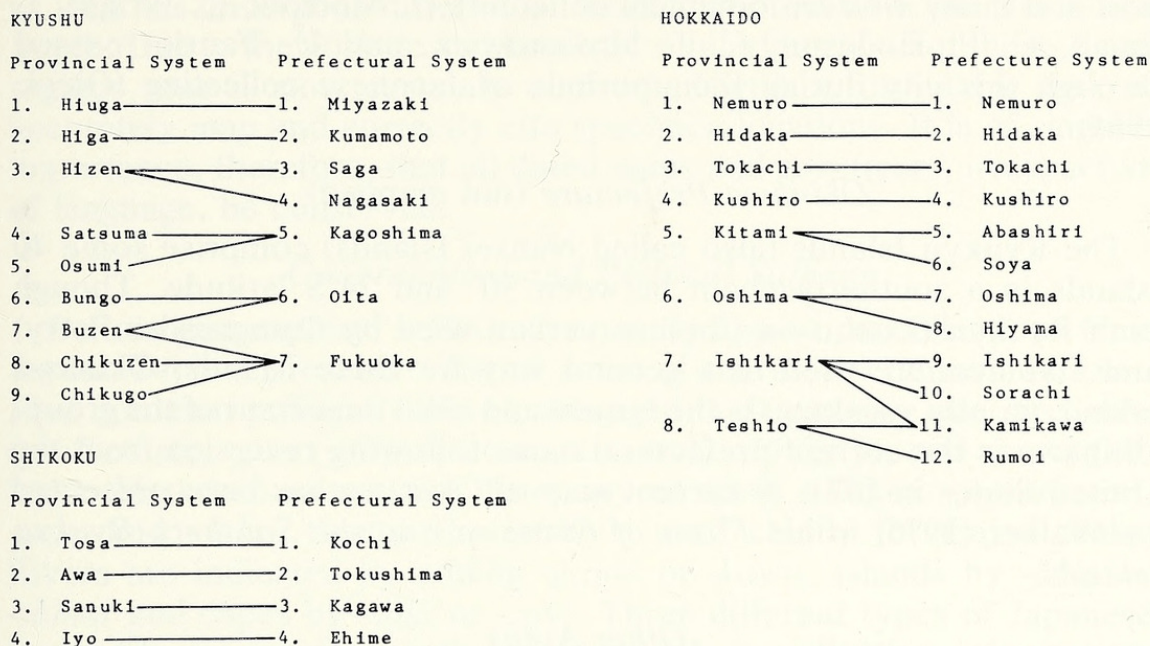


Fig. 4.—Diagrammatic cross-comparison of the provinces and prefectures of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Hokkaido. Hokkaido is a prefecture which has been divided into subprefectural units. Subprovincial units also exist for Hokkaido.

whom the Dutch presented to the Japanese as being and speaking a “type of Dutch characteristic of the highland regions.” Incidentally, von Siebold was banished from Japan as a result of indiscretely obtaining a map of Japan, an object then forbidden to foreigners.

Shikoku (Figs. 1, 2 [circles] and 4; Table 2)

The prefectural boundaries of this island are identical to those of the older provinces. The only changes have been in the names (Fig. 4). Awa Province of Shikoku can only be distinguished from Awa Province of Honshu when Romanized by their respective *kanji* or by additional information.

Hokkaido Prefecture (Figs. 1, 2 and 4; Table 2)

The large northern island of Hokkaido, known also as Kokushu, Yezo, Yeso, and Ezo in the past, is a single prefecture subdivided into 14 special administrative units. Under the provincial system, Hokkaido had special subdivisions in which the names and associated areas are occasionally different from present subprefectural units. Because of the island's large size, a comparison of these two sets of administrative names has been given to parallel the treatment of the other major islands (Fig. 4).

Under the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, Hakodate became an open port and many western botanical collectors (J. Morrow, C. Wright, J. Small, C. P. Hodgson, C. J. Maximowicz, and U. Faurie) passed through this city during their periods of Japanese collecting (Ohwi, 1965).

Okinawa Prefecture (not mapped)

The Ryukyu Islands (also called Nansei Islands) comprise some 40 islands in a southerly chain between 30° and 24°S latitude. Though both Ryukyu (Luchu—a Chinese variant used by Commander Perry) and Okinawa are used in a general way for these islands, Okinawa Island, strictly speaking, is the largest and most important of the group. Okinawa is the current prefectural name following reversion from the United States in 1971. A current map of Okinawa has been presented by Walker (1976) in his *Flora of Okinawa and the Southern Ryukyu Islands*.

Other Areas

Present-day Japan lost territory as a consequence of World War II; these include Taiwan (Formosa), the Kurile Islands, southern Sakhalin Island, Korea (Chosen), and Manchuria (Manchukuo). These areas have had in the past various Japanese political boundaries and location names. Botanical or zoological collections may give a location from these areas in either a Japanized local equivalent or in a Japanese rename. Tremendous difficulties in site location are encountered when such Japanese collections are used in conjunction with older (pre-Japanese) and new (post-Japanese) collections which have different, but well established, names in the West or have been totally renamed. Today these area names may be in either Chinese, Korean, or Russian.

Besides these political problems in geographical nomenclature, there have also been changes in the languages themselves. Most of the language changes have been towards standardization and simplification in order to increase popular education and facilitate telecommunications, as well as to provide an international base for cataloguing and indexing cultural patterns.

Following 1945, and the end of World War II, the Japanese language, for example, has had the number of commonly used script symbols or *kanji* reduced from approximately 3500 to 1800. This reduction represents a real possibility of lost locations due to the inability to read the old *kanji*. Similarly, written Chinese in the Peoples' Republic of China is currently undergoing a new system of Romanization (*Pinyin*), as well as a reduction in the number of characters used. Such old and familiar Romanizations as Peking, Tientsin, Chungking, and Tibet, in old Chinese, for example, become Beijing, Tian Jin, Zhong Qing and

Xiang Gang in the new *Pinyin* (Gazetteer, 1979). The Korean language as well has undergone differential simplification in both the North and South. Due to the floristic and faunistic similarities of all of these Asian regions, one is now certainly confronted with a formidable task to accurately map and correctly cite specimen locations. It is of singular importance, therefore, that all dated maps and gazetteers, irrespective of language, be conserved.

Geographical and Political Suffixes

Certain geographical suffixes frequently appear on collections from Japan. Table 3 presents a list of some of the more common suffixes. Five common political suffixes, arranged in decreasing size, are: *-ken* (prefecture), *-gun* (subprefecture, county), *-shi* (city), and *-mura* (village). Mountain names may have any of these suffixes: *-yama*, *-san*, *-zan*, and *-dake*, though the latter is used chiefly for major peaks. Rivers are indicated by adding *-gawa* or *-kawa*, islands by *-jima* or *-shima* and capes by *-saki* or *-zaki*. Three different types of Japanese parks (*-koen*) are frequently encountered on collection information: *-kokuritsu koen* (National Park), *-kokutei koen* (Quasi-National Park), and *-kenritsu koen* (Prefectural Park).

Notes on Japanese Romanization

Most Japanese sounds consist of a consonant followed by a vowel which constitutes a single syllable, or a single vowel syllable. There are alternate forms for the Romanization of certain sounds in Japanese, and these can cause confusion to persons unfamiliar with the language. The following list (Table 4) covers the most widely used equivalent spellings of syllabic sounds. By consulting this list the reader can dispel doubts about the equivalency of certain names, for example *Izu* and *Idzu*, *Kazusa* and *Kadzusa*, and *Kozuke* and *Kodzuke*. The *y*-combination syllables are often rendered in Roman letters without the 'y,' as in *Mie* (*Miye*). Long vowels are treated as two syllables in the Japanese language, and are variously Romanized by placing a bar (macron) over the vowel to indicate length, or doubling it (especially in the case of 'ii'), or frequently, in the case of long 'o,' by writing it 'ou' or 'oh.' One may find *Ōsaka*, *Kyōto* or *Tōkyō* written with or without the barred "ō" for example, or *Shimosa* for *Shimousa*, *Owari* for *Ohwari* and *Omi* for *Ohmi*. Long consonants are usually doubled to indicate two syllables, but may be encountered written singly. Syllabic 'n' or 'm' are equivalents, thus in the case in which the n or m sound constitutes a full syllable on its own (for example in *Honshu*) the relevant Japanese character must be transcribed as either n or m depending on the sound in a particular word (for example *Gunma* equals *Gumma*). Spellings used in the maps and tables generally follow

Table 3.—*Glossary of common geographical suffixes.*¹

bae	rock(s)
bana	point, cape
banare	rock, island, islet
banashi	island
bise	reef
bishi	reef
byōchi	harbor, bay
chihō	region
chō	territory
dai	plateau, hill
dake	mountain(s), mountain range, mount, mountain peak, ridge
dani	valley
dashi	reef, rock
fu	urban prefecture
fuji	mountain, hill
gaiwan	gulf
gan	rock
gata	inlet, lake, lagoon, bay
gawa	stream, channel, section of stream
guchi	channel, strait
gun	subprefecture
guntō	archipelago, island chain
guri	shoal, bank
hae	rock, reef
hakuchi	anchorage
hama	beach
hana	point, cape
hantō	peninsula
heiya	plain
hishi	reef
ike	lagoon, pond
iri	inlet
ishi	rock(s)
iso	reef, shoal
iwa	rock(s) shoal, reef, islets; mountain
jima	island(s), rock(s) islets and rocks, part of an island
kai	lagoon, sea
kaikyō	strait, channel
kaiwan	inlet
kaku	cape, point
kawa	stream, channel
ko	lake(s) inlet, lagoon
kō	harbor(s), anchorage, basin, inlet, bay, cove
kōchi	plateau
kojima	islet
kokuritsukōen	national park
kōmon	channel
kubi	cape, point
kuchi	stream mouth, channel mouth, bay entrance
kyūryō	hills
ma	cove

Table 3.—*Continued*

machi	minor civil division
maru	mountain
minato	harbor
mine	mountain
misaki	cape, point, peninsula, promontory
mori	hill; forest
mura	minor civil division
nada	sea, gulf
naikai	sea
naikō	harbor
ne	shoal, reef, island
numa	lake, pond
nupuri	mountain
oki	bay
onsen	hot spring
rei	mountain
rettō	island group, island chain
saki	cape, point
sammyaku	mountain range
san	mountain, mountain ridge
sen	mountain
seto	strait, channel
shi	municipality
shichō	subprefecture
shima	island(s), islet(s), rock(s), island section, shoal, reef
sho	island, reef
shō	reef, rock
shosho	islets
son	minor civil division
suidō	channel, strait
tai	sandbar
take	mountain, mountain group
to	capital district
tō	pond, lake
tōge	pass; mountain
tomari	inlet
tsu	inlet
uchi	bay
umi	sea, inlet, lagoon, bay
unga	canal
ura	bay, beach, lake, cove
wan	bay, cove, channel, harbor, sea, anchorage
yama	mountain(s), hill, mountain range, rock, mound, volcano, hot spring
yu	hot spring
zachi	point
zan	mountain, hill, mountain ridge, mountain group
ze	islet, reef
zen	mountain

¹ Adapted in part from *Preliminary Gazetteer Japan* (1953), the Official Standard Names Approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names.

Table 4.—*Some equivalent Roman spellings for Japanese syllables.*¹

shi—si	ji—di or zi	sho—syo	cha—tya
chi—ti	zu—du or dzu	ja—dya or zya	chu—tyu
tsu—tu	sha—sya	ju—dyu or zyu	cho—tyo
fu—hu	shu—syu	jo—dyo or zyo	
n—m*			

* Syllabic.

¹ Left hand member of the pair follows the Hepburn System of Romanization whereas the right hand member follows the Japanese National System of Romanization.

the Hepburn System of Romanization. In Table 4, these are the left hand members of the syllabic pair. The first four equivalencies are the most important and will account for most of the discrepancies in recent Romanizations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Without exercising great caution, the unsuspecting biogeographer or taxonomist who must cite specimens from Japan could conceivably make use of twice as many political subdivisions as actually occur in Japan. Two systems of political subdivision exist—an older one for the provinces and a newer one for the prefectures. Maps of both are presented side by side and on the same scale for quick reference. Alphabetical listings of the provinces and prefectures for the four major islands, as well as diagrammed cross-comparisons, are presented to facilitate determining the location of an unknown area. A brief discussion of Romanization with alternative and equivalent spellings is presented as an aid to the seeming confusion in geographical nomenclature, as well as a list of geographical suffixes frequently encountered on specimen labels. A plea is made for the conservation of all dated maps and gazetteers of an area. This is especially true of Japan and its neighboring regions for during this century considerable geographical name changing has occurred.

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