

## Re: pudding and de v. di

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  - *Date:* Fri, 11 May 2007 12:06:18 -1000
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if wrote:

[...]

I've heard it said that KYA more closely represents the English "ka" sound, e.g. in "cash", however this seems to suggest that the Japanese "ka" isn't really pronounced like English "ka" after all. It is commonly held that Japanese has just a small number of pure vowel sounds, but these anomalies suggest otherwise, unless the spelling is purely a matter of convention.

Ain' it a bit odd to refer to the onset and nucleus of "cash" as "the English 'ka' sound"? There are no words in English that have that vowel sound not followed by a consonant coda, except perhaps such semi-words as "yah/yeah."

Japanese /a/ varies fairly widely phonetically, from rather fronted as in what could be called chimpira-talk, to fairly backed in a pompous style. It can be about as high as the "u" in "up," especially before a long stop. (But I remember the surprised look I got when about six months into Japanese I asked someone for whom I was transliterating some English into katakana, "What should I use for 'the'"? "Write 'zuh'!" she told me, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. It still took me a few moments to realize she meant 'za.')

/a/ after /y/ tends to be fronted, chimpira speaking or not. That's why "kyasshu" is closer to "cash" than "kasshu" is.

Bart

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