



## Questioned Documents Section – 2011

### J9 Examination of Signatures Written by Japanese

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the uniqueness of the Japanese idea of a signature and the common characteristics of the character arrangement observed in a genuine signature and a handwritten false name.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating the uniqueness of the Japanese idea of a signature and the writing behavior of a Japanese writer.

One of the characteristics of a signature written by a Japanese writer is the readability of the signature. There are many cases in Japan where one is required to write one's name in a clear and square style. The importance of a seal stamp explains this: a seal stamp is expected to identify a person together with his handwritten name in a clear and square style. Does a Japanese writer have his own way of signing his name? Do Japanese writers write another's name in a different manner than their own? Research was conducted to answer these questions.

One hundred and thirty subjects, 112 male and 18 female, were asked to write their own name and an assigned name twenty times, respectively. The assigned name was a false male name and all the subjects wrote the same assigned name. No subjects had the same family name or given name as the assigned name. The assigned name was written in four kanji characters, two were for the family name and other two were for the given name, the combination of which being the most popular in Japan. All the male subjects' names and 12 female subjects' names had the same number of kanji characters as the assigned name in both the family and the given names. So, the experiments were conducted using 124 subjects' samples. The space given for writing the respective name was an 8 mm by 75 mm space which was surrounded by ruled lines. The following distances were measured: (1) the distance between the far left of the space and the far left of the first character; (2) the distance between the right edge of the space and the right extremity of the last character; and, (3) the distance between two characters. After the measurement, intra individual variance and the inter-individual difference were examined: (1) Intra-individual variance: Intra-

individual variance was examined as for the character arrangement of the writer's own name and the assigned name respectively. Then, the difference between the character arrangement of the writer's own name and the assigned name was examined; and, (2) Inter-individual difference: Inter-individual difference was examined as for the writer's own name and the assigned name respectively.

Intra-individual variance was not statistically significant either for the subject's own name, assigned name or the difference between the subject's own name and the assigned name. The distance between the second character of the family name and the first character of the given name was significantly larger than the distance between the other two characters both on the subject's name and on the assigned name. Inter-individual difference was statistically significant both on the subject's own name and the assigned name.

Suggestions obtained from the results are as follows: (1) the Japanese idea of a signature is different from that of the western writer; (2) Japanese people write their own names in a square style and do not have a special writing manner peculiar to their signature; (3) Japanese writers regard signing to be the same task as locating the characters in a given space; (4) Japanese writers arrange characters following their own way when they are asked to write their name. Japanese writers apply the same manner as writing their name to writing another person's name when they are asked to write other person's name which has the same number of characters as theirs; (5) a large number of Japanese writers separate their family name and given name by a larger space between them. That is true of the case where they write other person's name; and, (6) In the case of the examination of a handwritten fraud name, character arrangement gives a clue as to the genuine writer to the examiner. **Handwriting Identification, Signature, Arrangement**