

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910787541203321
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Titolo	The writing on the wall [[electronic resource]] : how Asian orthography curbs creativity // William C. Hannas
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, : University of Pennsylvania Press, c2003
ISBN	0-8122-0216-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (357 p.)
Collana	Encounters with Asia
Disciplina	495
Soggetti	Creation (Literary, artistic, etc.) Creative ability East Asia Languages Writing
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [323]-336) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction -- 1. Japan's Creative Imitations -- 2. Sources of Chinese Innovation -- 3. Korean Technology Transfer -- 4. Asia's Creativity Problem -- 5. The Anatomy of Creativity -- 6. Creativity and the Alphabet -- 7. Asia's Orthographic Tradition -- 8. The Concrete Nature of Asian Writing -- 9. The Impact of Language on Creativity -- 10. Chinese Characters and Creativity -- 11. Creativity and East Asian Society -- 12. Conclusion -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- Acknowledgments
Sommario/riassunto	Students in Japan, China, and Korea are among the world's top performers on standardized math and science tests. The nations of East Asia are also leading manufacturers of consumer goods that incorporate scientific breakthroughs in telecommunications, optics, and transportation. Yet there is a startling phenomenon known throughout Asia as the "creativity problem." While East Asians are able to use science, they have not demonstrated the ability to invent radically new systems and paradigms that lead to new technologies. In fact, the legal and illegal transfer of technology from the West to the East is one of the most contentious international business issues. Yet Asians who study and work in the West and depend upon Western languages for their research are among the most creative and talented scientists, no less so than their Western counterparts. William C. Hannas contends

that this paradox emerges from the nature of East Asian writing systems, which are character-based rather than alphabetic. Character-based orthographies, according to the author, lack the abstract features of alphabetic writing that model the thought processes necessary for scientific creativity. When first learning to read, children who are immersed in a character-based culture are at a huge disadvantage because such writing systems do not cultivate the ability for abstract thought. Despite the overwhelming body of evidence that points to the cognitive side-effects, the cultural importance of character-based writing makes the adoption of an alphabet unlikely in the near future.
