

Phil Taylor

<macro> macro

Typesetting a multi-lingual document, even something as simple as a Christmas letter, can be time-consuming and error-prone if the embedded languages make frequent use of diacritics. To eliminate both of these problems, I wrote a macro called `\macro` which enables me to encapsulate all of the tricky words and phrases into macros whose names are (normally) identical to the words or phrases but without the corresponding diacritics.

The following code implements the `\macro` macro, and is followed by some sample definitions and applied occurrences.

```
\catcode'\<=\active
\def<#1>{%
  % cf. Bernd Raichle: check if defined, no side effects (2006)
  \if \csname macro:#1\endcsname \relax
    {\bf {$\ll$}\#1{${\gg$}}}%
  \else
    \csname macro:#1\endcsname
  \fi}

\def\macro#1#2{\expandafter\def\csname macro:#1\endcsname{#2}}

\macro {Zhou Shang Zhi}{Zh\=ou Sh\`ang Zh\=i}
\macro {Shangzhi}{Sh\`angzh\=i}
\macro {Sai Gon}{S\`ai G\`on}
\macro {HCM}{H\raise 0,5 ex \rlap {\` }^o Ch\`i} Minh}
\macro {Mui Ne}{M\~ui N\`e}
%\macro {Le}{L\rlap {\d e}\^e}
```

On a happier note, the year started with both Khanh & I being invited to spend time with one of my former Chinese teachers, <Zhou Shang Zhi>, and his family in Kyoto, Japan. <Shangzhi> was there for one year, teaching at a local university, and the last three months were effectively a holiday for him with very few formal duties. Knowing that we might like to visit Kyoto, <Shangzhi> very kindly invited both of us, which we accepted with great pleasure.

Khanh's journey commenced with a flight to <Sai Gon> ('<HCM> City'), from where she took a bus south to <Mui Ne> (a distance of some 100 miles or so), where her sister <Le> Hoa had booked her into a very posh hotel by the beach. Once in <Mui Ne>, Khanh hired a moped driver.

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