Emmanuel College Cambridge

Graduate Summer School on Edo-period Written Japanese

Reading *hentaigana* and *kuzushiji*

Manual

Laura Moretti

04-16 August 2014
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First part: some basic knowledge
Introduction

The age of wahon literacy 和本リテラシー

We are living in a very exciting age when it comes to pre-Meiji texts, in particular Edo-period texts. This is due partly to the fact that accessibility to these texts has been steadily enhanced thanks to various projects of digitization developed in recent years and partly to the fact that the community of Edo-period scholars within and outside Japan has been growing. But these are not the only reasons. More than anything else, from 2008 scholars in Japan have began drawing attention to the need to provide younger generations with the necessary tools to access not only their ‘present’ but also their own ‘past’, so as to build a better ‘future’. In particular Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏 has become the advocate of what he has named wahon literacy 和本リテラシー.

There are two terms that need to be defined here. The first is wahon. As Peter Kornicki explains it, wahon is a word ‘generally used loosely to include books with Japanese binding (watojibon 和綴本), folding books with leporello binding (oribon 折本) as well as other forms of binding, and includes both manuscripts and printed books. In other words it is used to distinguish books produced in Japan up to the end of the Edo period as opposed to imports from Korea or China’. The second term is ‘literacy’. In this context, ‘literacy’ indicates the specific and basic skills that are required to ‘read’ wahon. These specific basic skills mainly refer to bentaigana 变体仮名 (multiple variants of hiragana signs used for representing a single sound) and kuzushiji くずし字 (calligraphic renderings of kanji. These skills might appear difficult, even daunting, to us today but we should never forget that they were part of the daily-life of Japanese people up to the first twenty or thirty years of the Meiji period. Therefore wahon literacy is an intellectual movement that aims at putting young Japanese back into a position to be able to read wahon freely and without any ‘literacy’ barrier.

The present workshop posits itself in this wider context. It aims at providing the younger generations of scholars, who work in any field of pre-Meiji studies and in particular on Edo-period printed books, with the necessary skills to read and to transcribe pre-Meiji texts. In other words, this workshop wants to allow younger scholars to have the knowledge which is necessary to freely access pre-Meiji wahon and to make these texts accessible for non-specialists.

In order to allow you to better understand the wider intellectual context into which our workshop posits itself, we are giving below some of the most relevant passages of Nakano Mitsutoshi’s work.

Laura Moretti
University of Cambridge - August 2014
先回は連載第一回ということともあって、やや心持ち進、大七段に、近代の成熟に欠かせないのが和本というイネフラであるなと、それをいも、あまえ、その和本は現代目を広げ、あまえ、その和本は現代目を広げ、日本語の一部で、近代の学習をもつということに、何か少なからず、むかしの和本であるなと。

しかし、百歩譲って、近代の学習をもつということに、何か少なからず、むかしの和本であるなと。

和本教室の第1巻「和本教室の第2巻」に「変体仮名のすすめ」を発刊した中野三敏

中野三敏

単位としての文字の読解力こそが問題なのである。それは著者の漢文をもつ草書体漢字や仮名を除けばほとんど百ページ、その名もおぞましい変体仮名や草書体漢字によって起されている。そしてこれらの文字を少くとも江戸の一般人と同程度のスピードを以て読む能力を備えた知識人によって起されるべき。そうした知識人のために、転じた和本教室の侍に、ある点ではある。

しかし、妙なことに、読解力は、前回の侍に、ある点ではある。

侍は、前回の侍に、ある点ではある。
シフトなどでできるはずもない。また江戸以
前の古典の場合、発字化の割合いにおい
てはかなり達成度を示してはいるが、
それはすでに写本として伝来しているの
である。点と点に数々のドットのヴァ
ントが存在するのは常識である。そして
発字化はほとんどその内容の一種のみ。とい
うことは必然的で、発字化されたものは根
目に及ぼさぬ限り、新しい枠組みの組み
上げはやや不可能に近い。
そこで、だからこそ専門家の出番
で、変体仮名や書草はそこへ任せておけば
よい。そのために囲ってあるのがわから
理由を保証していただけである。専門家
の存在は大ビンの状況であることは大学
人が知っているほど常識化しており、近
内には発字化の担い手そのもののが絶滅す
ようにも思われる。依れば仮名は専門家
を含む。書写の絵板を角力の番付、どれをと
っても結構 оформっている。大いに始めずとも
気付いた読める文字はなぜである。要はちょ
っとした気のするかなよいかの問題
に帰着しよう。
筆者が大学教員の頃、研究室では必ず大
学院生の新生命をひもくめる「変体
が知らぬ会」という企てを続けている。\n
略称「変たの会」。授業の合間の手抜
き仕事ですぐに上達する。上達の度合いに
応じて変たいから変たい度五まで、時
はいかん、「練習」に動むといえど、何ら
にはその度数でたたむを呼び合ったり、もし
仮名仕様のすっかり紛れの看板が目に入る
と、rizhさんがいる。とうよ。雑儀の交
居・寄席の絵板、角力の番付、どれをと
っても構造的解明。大いに始めるなら
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学院生の新生命をひもくめる「変体

See PDF file
Japanese manuscripts and woodblock printed books: useful terminology

The word **komojo 古文書** is often used in a quite generic fashion to indicate any text written in hentaigana and kuzushiji, normally produced before the Meiji period. This is not the most correct use, though. In reality there are different types of texts and different terms to indicate these kinds of texts. It is important to recognize the different types of texts and to name them correctly, in order to avoid developing false expectations towards one text. The following pages are intended as a guide to distinguish three types of texts and they offer an annotated bibliography of the main resources that can be used in order to become familiar with each of these textual types.

**Kohitsu 古筆**

This term refers to manuscripts produced up to the Edo period. Despite the fact that texts written in kana, such as Buddhist sutras, are considered an essential part of kohitsu, the majority of kohitsu are texts written in Japanese such as waka and monogatari. The combination of calligraphy and beautifully designed paper make kohitsu highly valuable as objects to be appreciated for their artistic value. The appreciation of kohitsu as art is visible already from the Edo period. Many wealthy people, among bushi and chōnin, developed an interest in collecting kohitsu to the extent that many manuscripts were dismembered and the single sheets obtained through this process gave life to what are known as **kohitsu tekagami 古筆手鑑**. These are normally albums in the format of oribon 折本 (see explanation on p.19) in which single sheets from kohitsu are displayed in a specific order to allow the full appreciation of their artistic quality. The most famous tekagami are **Mino yo no tomo 見努世友** and **Moshiogusa 藻塩草**.
The artistic quality of *kohitsu* is enhanced by the fact that many of them were written by poets who were also renowned as fine calligraphers, such as Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之, Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家, Fujiwara no Kintō 藤原公任, etc. As can be seen from the transcription of the example included above, the text is written mainly in *hiragana*, with a small number of *kanji*. The variety of *hentaigana* used is greater than what we find in Edo-period printed texts or manuscripts. Some of these *hentaigana* even become characteristic features of a calligrapher’s specific style.

If you are not a specialist of the Heian and Kamakura periods and do not ‘naturally’ get exposed to *kohitsu* in your research, the only way to master the reading of *kohitsu* is to read as many examples as possible. As mentioned above, the reading of *kohitsu* requires a set of palaeographic skills which are slightly different from Edo-period printed books and manuscripts. Therefore they require a specific training, which can be achieved only by reading as many *kohitsu* as possible. This set of skills is essential for scholars of art, also of Edo-period art, as the calligraphy produced in the Edo period often followed the styles applied in *kohitsu*. The following resources will prove particularly useful for your self-study.

**Nagoya Akira** 名児耶明, *Kana wo yomu. Hentaigana kaidoku to, kohitsu no kanshō かなを読む—変体仮名解読と、古筆の鑑賞* (淡交社, 1993) [This is an introductory manual that teaches the fundamentals of the *hentaigana* used in *kohitsu*. It is an excellent starting point for your self-study.]

**Kohitsu tekagami 古筆手鑑** (Idemitsu bijutsukan, 2012) [This is the catalogue of an exhibition of *Minu yo no tomo* and *Masubingusa* that took place at the Idemitsu Museum in 2012. It contains excellent reproductions and accurate transcriptions of selected sheets of these two *tekagami* together with other examples of *kohitsu* kept in the Idemitsu Museum.]

**Tekagami 手鑑, Nihon no bijutsu 日本の美術** n. 84, 1973 [It includes pictures and transcription of famous *kohitsu* which are included in *tekagami* kept at Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara National Museums. The transcriptions must be used with sufficient care as they are not always accurate.]

High-quality reproductions and accurate transcriptions of whole famous *kohitsu* are available in the series named **Nihon meihitsu sen 日本名筆選**. These are books originally designed as samples for calligraphy but can be used as very useful tools for reading practice as well.

**Nihon no sho. Kodai kara Edo jidai made 日本の書—古代から江戸時代まで, special number of Taiyō 太陽* (‘Nihon no kokoro 日本のこころ – 191), 2012 [This is an illustrated history of Japanese calligraphic works from the Nara period to the Edo period. There are photographs of the originals with detailed explanations but no transcriptions.]

**Nihon no bijutsu** includes many numbers which focus on manuscript sources of specific periods (e.g., n. 183 on manuscripts of the Momoyama period, n. 468 on the copy of the *Genji monogatari* written by Fujiwara no Teika, n. 503 on handwritten texts produced by *bushi*, etc.). They are extremely helpful in order to become familiar with the different aspects related to the world of *kohitsu*. 

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This workshop focuses on Edo-period printed texts, normally referred to as hanpon. As shown by the extensive research conducted by Peter Kornicki, the Edo period is not only the age of commercial printing but also the age of ‘scribal publication’. Manuscripts (generically referred to as shahon) were produced for specific reasons alongside printed texts with the similar aim of reaching a wider readership. It is often the case that manuscripts were written using the hentaigana and kuzushiji normally applied in printed texts. Therefore hanpon and shahon are considered together here.

Since the present workshop focuses on this production, you will be able to access a selection of examples in the second part of this Manual. In view of your self-study time, some useful resources are given below.

Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏, *Kuzushi ji de Hyakunin isshu wo tanoshimu くずし字で「百人一首」を楽しむ* (Kadoawa shoten, 2010) [As indicated in the title, this book focuses on the hentaigana used in a bakumatsu copy of the *Hyakunin isshu*. Beginner level hentaigana.]

Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏, *Kuzushi ji de Oku no hosomichi wo tanoshimu くずし字で「おくのほそ道」を楽しむ* (Kadoawa shoten, 2011) [As indicated in the title, this book focuses on the hentaigana used in a manuscript copy of the *Oku no hosomichi*. Intermediate-level hentaigana.]

Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏, *Kuzushi ji de Tōkaidōchū hizakurige wo tanoshimu くずし字で「東海道中膝栗毛」を楽しむ* (Kadoawa shoten, 2012) [As indicated in the title, this book focuses on the hentaigana used in *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige*. Beginner-level hentaigana.]


Kanno Shunsuke 菅野俊輔, *Kaiete oboeru Edo no kuzushiji iroba nyūmon 書いておぼえる江戸のくずし字いろは入門* (Kashiwa shobō, 2006) [Beginner-level hentaigana]

Kanno Shunsuke 菅野俊輔, *Kaiete oboeru Edo meisho zue kuzushiji nyūmon 書いておぼえる「江戸名所図会」くずし字入門* (Kashiwa shobō, 2006) [Beginner-level hentaigana]

Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊, *Edo kana komonjo nyūmon 江戸かなる古文書入門* (Kashiwa shobō, 1995) [Here the word komonjo is generically used to indicate Edo period printed texts written in hentaigana and kuzushiji. This book introduces books printed in the late Edo period, in particular books used in terakoya schools, passages from *Ogura hyakunin isshu 小倉百人一首* and portions of kusazōshi. The level of difficulty of hentaigana and kuzushiji is similar to that introduced on the first day and the morning of the second day of the workshop.]
This term refers to handwritten documents, which are normally written in *sōrōbun* 候文 and belong to the realm of bureaucratic and notary documents (e.g., inheritance, money lending, etc.), temple records, official correspondence, contracts (e.g., marriage, divorce, employment, etc.), regulations, etc. They are normally kept in archives (most notably the Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan 国立広文書館) and they constitute indispensable resources for historians of pre-modern, early-modern and early-Meiji Japan. This type of material requires specific skills which are partly different from the skills which are necessary for *kohitsu*, *hanpon* and *shahon*. Namely, it is necessary to master the grammar of the *sōrōbun* style, idiomatic expressions used in *sōrōbun*, a wider number of *kuzushiji*, a specific calligraphic rendering which is applied only in this kind of texts, and a large use of *itajī* 異体字 (unorthodox forms of *kanji*).
The present workshop is not designed to teach the skills which are necessary to access komonjo. We include only one example of komonjo on the last day of the workshop. Here are basic and useful resources for the study of komonjo.

Mori Yasuhiko 森安彦, *Komonjo wo yomō 古文書を読もう* (Kōdansha, 2003) [A collection of komonjo of the Edo period containing copies of the original texts, transcriptions and explanations for each text.]

Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊, *Komonjo tenari 古文書手習い* (Kashiwa shobō, 1998) [A collection of komonjo of the Edo period containing copies of the original texts, transcriptions and explanations for each text.]

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Komonjo daijisō 古文書大字叢* (Kashiwa shobō, 1999) [A dictionary of words and idiomatic expressions used in komonjo. The user can search words in aiueo order or single kanji that compose a word through the kanji reading. Though for each word or idiomatic expression both the modern typesetting and the kuzushiji version are given, this dictionary is not designed to search kuzushiji. There are useful appendixes about the bakufu and its key persons along the Edo period, the exchange rate for Edo, Kyoto and Osaka, the units of measurement in the Edo period, the itaiji which were most widely used in komonjo, etc.]

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Kinsei shojō taikan 近世書状大鑑* (Kashiwa shobō, 2001) [A dictionary of words and idiomatic expressions used in Edo-period komonjo. The user can search words in aiueo order through the index or can search words according to their position in the document (e.g., introductory greetings, final remarks, etc.). Though for each word or idiomatic expression both the modern typesetting and the kuzushiji version are given, this dictionary is not designed to search kuzushiji. This dictionary also contains two substantial sections that give examples of Edo-period komonjo, both in their original format and in transcription.]

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Kinsei komonjo kaidoku jiten 近世古文書解読字典* (Kashiwa shobō, 1972; reprinted in 2005) [This dictionary if composed by three sections. The first section includes examples of Edo-period komonjo both in their original format and in transcription. The second section offers idiomatic expressions ordered according to their position in the document. The third section is a dictionary of kuzushiji used in komonjo. Kanji can be searched through their radicals and their readings.]

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Komonjo kaidoku jiten 古文書解読字典* (Kashiwa shobō, 1993) [This is a kuzushiji jiten for kuzushiji used in komonjo. The search is the same of a normal kuzushiji jiten. There are useful appendixes containing idiomatic expressions, common names of persons and places, etc.]

Kouamé, Nathalie. *Initiation à la paléographie japonaise* (Paris: L’Asiathèque, 2000) [This is an invaluable guide to the reading of Japanese manuscript materials based on documents relating to the Shikoku pilgrimage in the Edo period. It includes reproductions of the originals, transcriptions, translations into French and notes].
The following kuzushiji jiten mainly includes examples from handwritten letters. Therefore it can be used as a tool for reading komonjo.

Tōkyō tegami no kai 東京手紙の会 (ed.), Kuzushiji jiten くずし字辞典 (Shibunkaku shuppan, 2000)

The style used by women in letters is considered part of komonjo. A useful introductory book to this specific epistolary style can be found in:

Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊, Komonjo nyohitsu nyūmon 古文書女筆入門 (Kashiwa shobō, 2004)

* * * *

There are few resources that put kohitsu, komonjo and hanpon/shahon together. Useful books are the following:

Sugano Noriko 菅野規子, Sakurai Yuki 桜井由機, Komonjo wo tanoshimu 古文書を楽しむ (Takeuchi shoten shinsha, 2000) [It includes printed texts used in terakoya schools as well as Edo-period komonjo]

Tsunoda Eriko 角田恵理子, Nihongo no kuzushiji ga yomeru hon 日本語のくずし字が読める本 (Kōdansha, 2011) [It includes a wide range of handwritten sources such as Heian-period kohitsu, Edo-period komonjo, Edo-period movable-type printed texts, etc.]

As regards the field of paintings and of ukiyoe other typologies need to be considered. Among the recent publications, useful resources for approaching the variety and vastness of this field are:
