

Emmanuel College Cambridge

Graduate Summer School on Edo-period Written Japanese

Reading *sōrōbun* Manual

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Table of contents	
Preface	p. 3
Grammatical features of <i>sōrōbun</i>	p. 5
The use of 候	p. 6
The different meanings of 候	p. 9
The <i>kanbun</i> essence of <i>sōrōbun</i>	p. 10
<i>Kanji</i> used phonetically to display <i>kana</i> sounds	p. 19
Vocabulary typical of <i>sōrōbun</i>	p. 21
<i>Sōrōbun</i> in calligraphic rendering	p. 23

Preface: definition of *sōrōbun* 候文 and aims of this manual

Yada Tsutomu 矢田 勉 (*Kokugo moji hyōki shi no kenkyū* 国語文字・表記史の研究, Kyokun shoin, 2012, p. 449-91) has provided for the first time a systematic linguistic analysis of the writing style named *sōrōbun* 候文.

The first point that needs to be clarified is that *sōrōbun* is the ultimate stage in the evolution of *bentai kanbun* 変体漢文 and that it is solely a ‘written’ style, with no counterpart in the spoken language (Tsuda pp. 449-50, p. 464). Hence, it is a style which is meant to be highly visual and which, as a consequence, must be ‘visually’ clear (直接視覚・視覚的な理解しやすさ; Tsuda p. 464). Tsuda defines it as a 文書体 and 書記体 (Tsuda p. 471).

Tsuda distinguishes between two styles that are often conflated when talking about *sōrōbun*. The first is the style applied since the 11th century in *ōraimono* 往来物 and more specifically in letter writing (*shokan* 書簡), having *Teikin ōrai* 庭訓往来 as the oldest and most representative example of this genre. The second is the style employed in both private and public documents (*shojō* 書状; defined in the manual for *bentaigana* and *kuzushiji* as *komonjo* 古文書). The former is labelled *ōraitai* 往来体 and the second *sōrōbun* 候文. We shall adopt the same distinction in this manual and, similarly to Tsuda, we shall focus on the latter definition of *sōrōbun*, aiming at detecting the features of this style in early-modern documents.

When studying *sōrōbun* one needs to consider three dimensions.

1. Grammar

The grammar that characterizes *sōrōbun* shares elements of *kanbun*.

- 1.1. There are passages in which it is necessary to apply レ点 and 訓点 (normally 一 and 二 only).
- 1.2. There are *kana* sounds that are normally displayed by *kanji*.
- 1.3. One needs to read the text by applying the classical grammar (e.g. ず for the negative; し for the past, etc.).

This means that, when studying *sōrōbun*, you must make full use of your knowledge of both *bungo* and *kanbun*. It is worth pointing out at this stage that the *kanbun* features that permeate *sōrōbun* are quite limited. This means that one need a fairly limited amount of knowledge to cope with the grammar side of *sōrōbun*. This manual intends to cover all the necessary knowledge.

2. Vocabulary

There are single *kanji* and compounds that have peculiar readings and meanings. There are also set phrases to be used in specific contexts. This aspect makes *sōrōbun* a kind of different ‘language’, similar to ‘bureaucratese’ in other countries. It also shares aspects of ‘letter writing’ in contemporary Japan, with the peculiar language that needs to be mastered to write good letters. In order to gain familiarity with this linguistic aspect of *sōrōbun*, one must make full use of the specific dictionaries that are introduced in this manual.

3. Script

Sōrōbun texts are normally written in *sōsho*. Therefore you need to recognize the *kuṣushiji* that are employed. This is by far the most challenging feature of *sōrōbun* and it requires: first, a solid knowledge in *kuṣushiji* per se; second, great familiarity with the specific dictionaries introduced here; third, a thorough knowledge of the grammar and the vocabulary so that inferences can be made.

This manual and the sessions dedicate to *sōrōbun* will deal with the above three aspects of this written style.

Grammatical features of *sōrōbun*



1. The use of 候

The first grammatical feature of *sōrōbun*, which gives the name to the style itself, is that sentences finish with 候.

Before describing the different uses of 候, it is worth noting how the conjugation of 候 as a verb works.

候 can be written in *hiragana* as follows:

さふらふ

Remember that さふらふ works as a *yodan dōshi* 四段動詞 (さふら・ふ) and is conjugated as follows:

未然形	さふら	は
連用形	さふら	ひ
終止形	さふら	ふ
連体形	さふら	ふ
已然形	さふら	へ
命令形	さふら	へ

Remember also that 候 requires the *ren'yōkei* 連用形 in anything that precedes it.

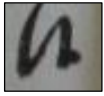
Let us examine what are the multiple uses of 候.

1.1 候 at the end of the sentence (終止用法)

It is the norm that 候 closes sentences in *sōrōbun*. This feature is shared by *ōraitai* and *sōrōbun*. In both cases 候 sets the linguistic register of the sentence as polite (*teineitai* 丁寧体). The main difference between *ōraitai* and *sōrōbun* when using 候 to close a sentence is the following.

<i>ōraitai</i>	<i>sōrōbun</i>
It can appear in the following forms: 候ぬ 候つ 候了 候也	It appears only as 候 Few exceptions with the addition of: 哉 (や) → ～するであろうか 歟・歟 (か) → ～するであろうか

In other words 候 becomes like a fixed sign that ‘systematically’ appears at the end of the sentence (Tsuda defines this function as 表示機能). From this point of view, it works as if it were a period (Tsuda p. 464). This enhances the ‘readability’ of the text as a written text.



This remark is very important when reading documents in their original format. No matter what the shape that 候 takes (see attached material), one expects the sentence to finish with 候 and can infer its presence when decoding the text.

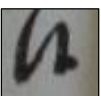
1.2 候 coordinating two sentences in conjunction with *setsuzoku joshi* 接続助詞

There are four *setsuzoku joshi* which are normally used in conjunction with 候

- ① て
- ② ば
- ③ と
- ④ ども

Differently from *bungotai*, these connectors are indicated in characters as follows:

			How to read it
①	て → 而	候而	そうらいて
②	ば → 者	候へハ 候得ハ 候へ者 候得者 候ハ、	そうらえば そうらはば
③	とも → 共	候へ共	そうらえとも
④	ども → 共	候得共	そうらえども



See attached material to see some examples of how the above structures are rendered when written in *kuzushiji*.

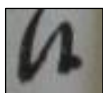
In addition to the above *setsuzoku joshi*, 候 can also be connected to the following ones:

Structure	Reading	Meaning
候間	そうろうあいだ	～でありますので
候故	そうろうゆえ	～したので
候所（處）	そうろうところ	～ありますが・～したところ・～したので
候二付	そうろうにつき	～でありますので

1.3 候 used before a noun (連体用法)

候 can precede nouns when closing a relative clause. It can also be combined with specific words to create set phrases. See the list below.

Structure	Reading	Meaning
候間	そうろうあいだ	～でありますので
候趣	そうろうおもむき	～する趣旨は
候儀・候義	そうろうぎ It can be followed by the particles (<i>kakujoshi</i> 格助詞): ハ・者 モ・茂	～したことは・～したことについて・～である こいとは
候刻	そうろうきざみ	～した時
候條	そうろうじょう	～したこと・～した段・～した時・したゆえ
候節	そうろうせつ It can be followed followed by the particles (<i>kakujoshi</i> 格助詞): ハ・者	～したさい・～したとき・したそのときは・ ～した場合は
候段	そうろうだん	～したこと・～したことは
候通	そうろうとおり	～した通り
候様	そうろうよう	～でありますよう
候旨	そうろうむね	～した趣旨
候由	そうろうよし	～であるわけ



See attached materials to see examples of how these expressions are represented when using *kakujoshi*.

2. The different meanings of 候

Not only 候 can be used in different positions within the sentence, as mentioned above, but it also possesses different meanings according to the structures it is embedded in. Below are listed the different meanings that 候 can take in a sentence.

2.1 「～も候はば」、「～も御座候はば」

In these structures it indicates ‘existence’.

2.2 「Noun + ニ + 候」、「Noun + ニ + 而 + 候」、「Noun + ニ + 御座候」

In these structures it plays the same function as the *jodoshi* なり (也→断定).

Pay attention at the presence of ニ in these structures. Tsuda suggests that ニ should be inferred in the reading even in those cases where it is not specified in the written text.

2.3 「動詞 + 候」、「動詞 + 補助動詞・助動詞 + 候」

In these cases the verb or the suffix need to be conjugated in *ren'yōkei*. Also, since *sōrōbun* is a form of *bentai kanbun*, it is normal that the characters follow the order typical of *kanbun*.

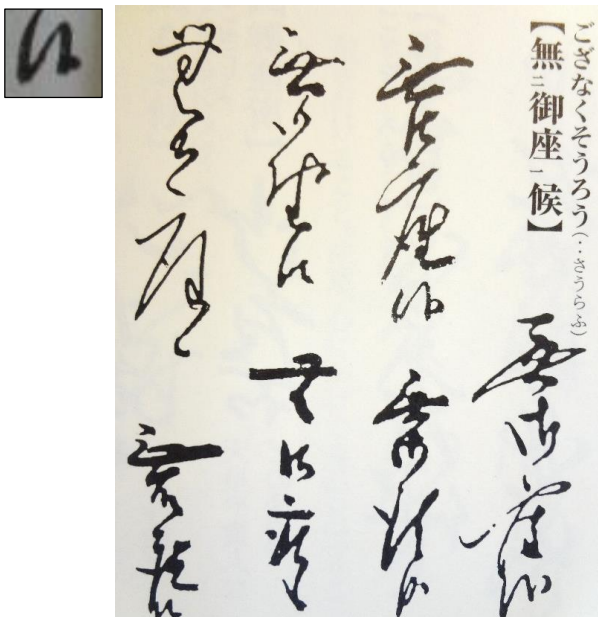
Example (N.B.. more about the order in the following section):

① ～無御座候

Order of reading ① 御座 ② 無 ③ 候

Reading: ござなくそうろう

Meaning: でございます・ではありません



3. The *kanbun* essence of *sōrōbun*

As mentioned above, *sōrōbun* is a form of *bentai kanbun* and, as such, it shares a specific set of features which characterize *kanbun*.

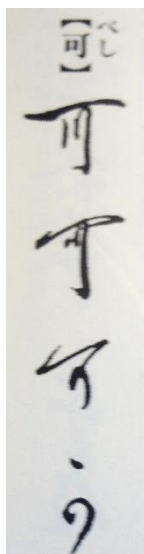
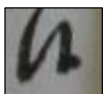
1. There are *jodōshi* that are positioned before the verb (followed or not by 候) and require to be read upside down.
2. No *okurigana* is added and only characters are used. This means that you need to infer the *okurigana* by applying your knowledge of *bungo* grammar.
3. Particles are often indicated by using *kanji* and not *kana*.

What follows here is a comprehensive list all ALL the *jodōshi* that needs to be read by applying the *kanbun* order. Please note that in Edo-period printed manuals of letter writing レ点 and 訓点 are explicitly marked so that learners could familiarize themselves with this technique. In handwritten documents the use of レ点 and 訓点 is implied. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that you memorize what *jodōshi* need to be read in the reverse order.

① 可 べし

Meaning: to translate according to the meanings of べし in *sōrōbun*

1. ～なさい (命令)
2. ～するのがよい (適當)
3. ～するはずである (当然)
4. ～だろう (推量)
5. ～しなければなりません (義務)



Example:

可申聞候

Order of reading ① 申聞 ② 可 ③ 候

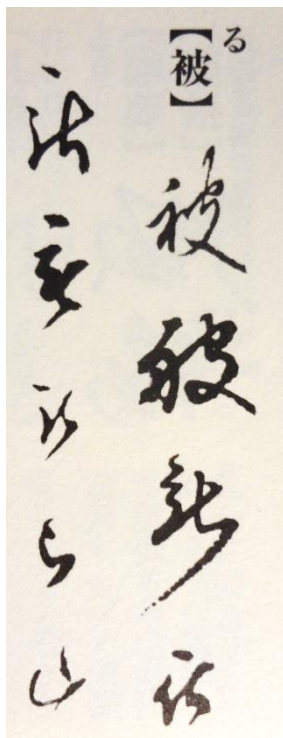
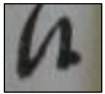
Reading: もうしきく **べく** そうろう

N.B. Pay attention to the fact that べし becomes べく when attached to 候

② 被 る・らる

Meaning: to translate according to the meanings of る・らる in *sorobun*

1. 受け身
2. 可能
3. 尊敬



Example:

被仰付候

Order of reading ① 仰付 ② 被 ③ 候

Reading: おおせつけ **られ** そうろう

③ 不 ず

Meaning: to translate according to the meanings of ず in *sōrōbun*

1. 打消し

Example:

不相更

Order of reading ① 相更 ② 不

Reading: あいかわら^ず

④ 如 ごとし

Meaning: ～と同じだ、～の通り

Example:

如件

Order of reading ① 件 ② 如

Reading: くだんのごとし

Meaning: 上記の通り (normally used at the end of letters)

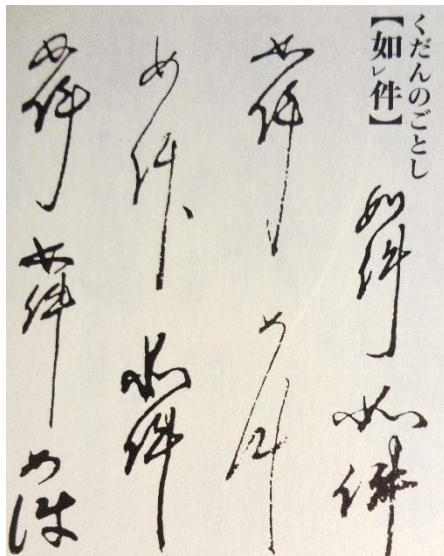
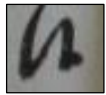
如此・如斯

Order of reading ① 此・斯 ② 如

Reading: かくのごとし

Meaning: 前述の通り・その通り・この通り

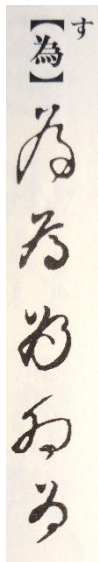
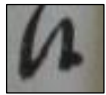
N.B. 如此候 → かくのごとくそうろう



⑤ 為 す・さす

Meaning: to translate according to the meanings of す・さす in *sōrōbun*

1. 使役
2. 尊敬



Example:

為申上候

Order of reading ① 申上 ② 為 ③ 候

Reading: もうあげさせそうろう

⑥ 為 たり

Normally it comes within the structure: 可為→ たるべし. Normally it is preceded by nouns.

Meaning: ～である

Example:

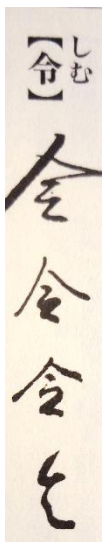
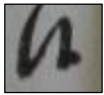
可為挨拶次第候

Order of reading ① 挨拶次第 ② 為 ③ 可 ④ 候

Reading: あいさつしだい^{たる}べくそうろう

⑦ 令 しむ

Meaning: 使役



Example:

令吟味

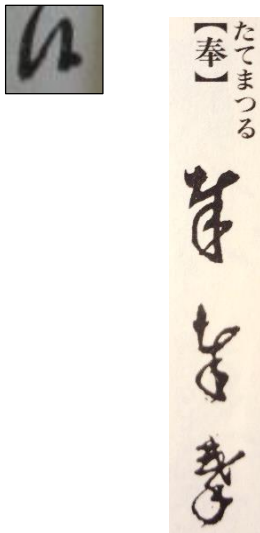
Order of reading ① 吟味 ② 令

Reading: ぎんみせ^{しむ}

N.B. Even though it is not written, one needs the verb す in *mizenkei* to combine the noun 吟味 to the *jodōshi* 令.

⑧ 奉 たてまつる

Meaning: ～して差し上げる、～申し上げる (used as 謙讓語).



Example:

奉存候

Order of reading ① 存 ② 奉 ③ 候

Reading: ゾんじたてまつりそうろう

奉願上候

Order of reading ① 願上 ② 奉 ③ 候

Reading: ゾんじたてまつりそうろう

There are other characters that follow the same behaviour:

Character	Example	Reading
有	有之	これあり
無	無相違	そういなし
致	致承知	しょうちいたす
難	難有	ありがたし
及	不及申	もうしおよばず
依	依之	これによりて
以	以返答書	へんとうしょをもつて
為	為後日	ごじつのため
為	為敷金	しききんとして

乍	乍恐・乍憚	おそれながら・はばかりながら
従	従最初	さいしょより
於	於当村	とうそんにおいて
預	預御厚情	ごこうせいにあずかり
雖	雖然	しかりといへども
得	得貴意候	きいをえそうろう
蒙	蒙御赦免度	ごしゃめんをこうむりたく
遂	遂吟味	ぎんみをとげる
処	可被処嚴科	げんかにしょせらるべし
任	任其意	そのいにまかせ

REMEMBER THESE GOLDER RULES:

1. WHEN ENCOUNTERING THE CHARACTERS ANALYZIED IN THE PAGES ABOVE, YOU NEED TO USE THE ㇪点 AND THE *KUNTEN* TECHNIQUES THAT ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF *KANBUN*.
2. THERE IS NO *OKURIGANA*, HENCE YOU NEED TO INFER IT FROM THE CONTEXT AND YOU MUST APPLY THE RULES THAT YOU HAVE LEARNT IN *BUNGO*.
3. 候 NORMALLY ENDS A SENTENCE.

EXERCISES

Read the following sentences

及爭論

以返答書申上候

可令詮議候

乍恐以書付奉願上候

可被成候

御苦勞奉掛

乍恐以書付御返答奉申上候

得其意候

差上候故

於御役所

為後日

為作候

被為救

可為越度事

無是非

被仰付被下置候

預御厚情

可得其意候

從御公儀様

可令皆濟

不可仕

不叶子細有之候

4. *Kanji* used phonetically to display *kana* sounds

There are specific sounds that are normally displayed by means of *kanji* and not *kana*.

Character	Sound	Function
度	たし	助動詞・希望（たい）
半	はん	四段動詞の未然形+助動詞「む」
得共	えども	四段動詞の已然形+とも
得者	えば	四段動詞の已然形+ば
敷・舗・鋪	しき・しく	シク活用のシキ・シク
	間敷	ましき・まじく
	敷敷	きびしき・きびしく
	睦敷	むつまじき・むつまじく
	夥敷	おびただしき・おびただしく
	宜敷	よろしき・よろしく
	悪敷	あしき・あしく
ヶ間敷	がましく・がましき	のようである・らしい
者	は	格助詞・題目
与	と	格助詞・共同動作者
江	へ	格助詞・方向／帰着点／対象
之	の	格助詞・所有／所属／所在など
茂	も	格助詞・並立／並列
迎	とて	格助詞
耳	のみ	副助詞・限定
坎	か	係助詞・不定
而	て	接続助詞
訖・畢・了	おわんぬ	（動詞・助動詞の連用形の下について）てしまった・た

Remember that *okurigana* is not made clear and that you need to reconstruct it according to the sentence you are dealing with. For example 度候 → たくそうろう; 間敷候 → まじくそうろう; etc.

EXERCISES

Read the following sentences

迎茂間二合申間敷候

田畑子孫江分為取申間敷候

殊之外

恨ヶ間敷

堅令停止畢

為作候而

致不足候歟又者

当方江相掛候一件

悲分与者存申間敷候

願書差出度由

願度存候

Vocabulary typical of *sōrōbun*



The main tools to check meanings of specific words used in *sōrobun* are the following:

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Shinpen Komonjo kaidoku jiten* 新編・古文書解説字典 (Kashiwa shobō, 1993) [This dictionary allows you to search single characters as in a normal *kanwa jiten*. After giving the *kuzushiji* version of the character, it also gives examples of sentences where you can find the character in use.]

Hayashi Hideo 林英夫, *Zōtei Kinsei komonjo kaidoku jiten* 増訂・近世古文書解説字典 (Kashiwa shobō, 1972) [This dictionary allows you to search single characters as in a normal *kanwa jiten*. There is also a section with copies of primary sources and their transcriptions (pp. 5-68).]

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.]

Wakao Junpei 若尾俊平, *Zuroku / Komonjo nyūmon jiten* 図録 古文書入門事典 (Kashiwa shobō, 1991) [A comprehensive dictionary of various aspects of *sōrobun*. The part dealing with both grammar and vocabulary can be found at pp. 274-306.]

Sōrōbun in calligraphic rendering



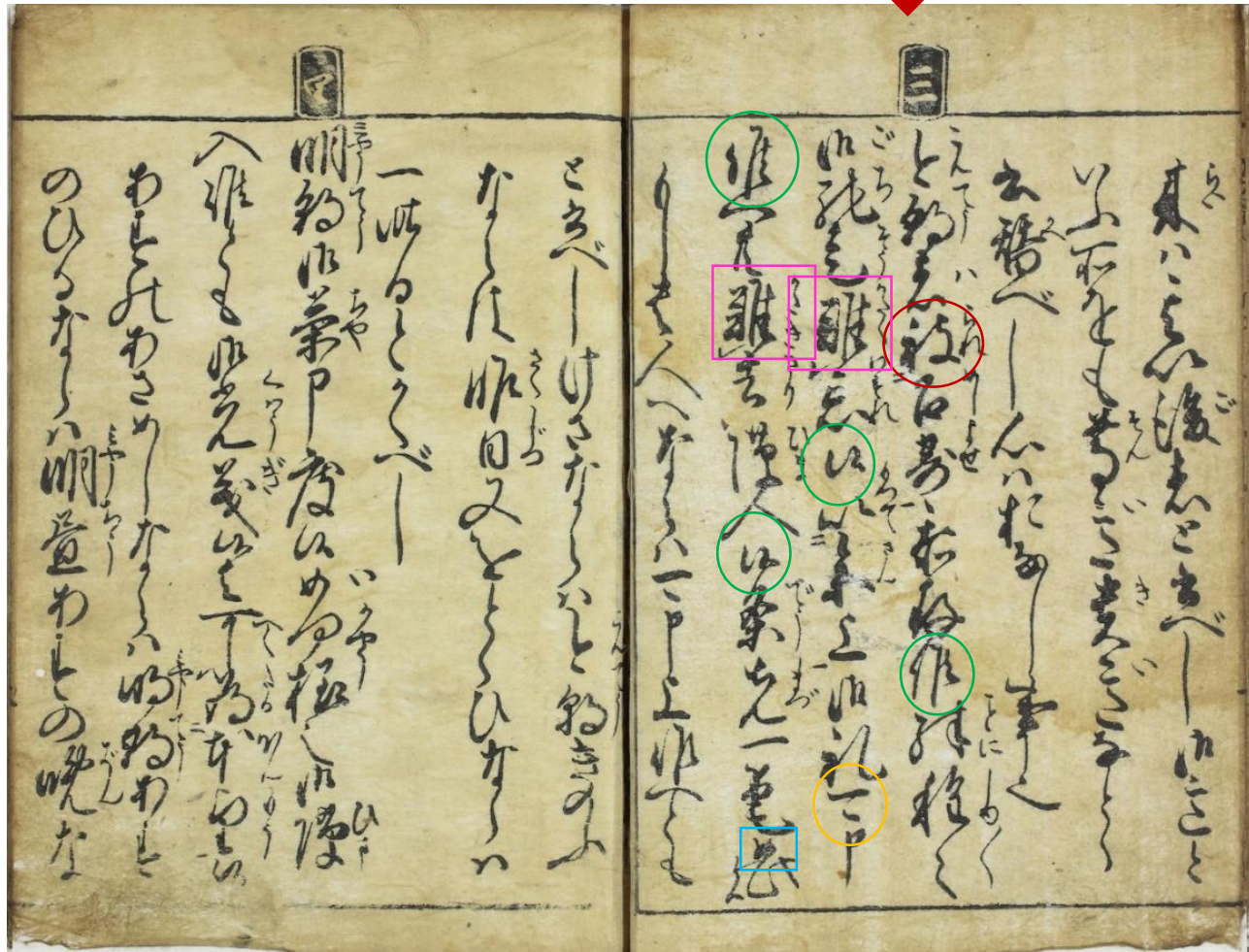
In order to learn how to read *sōrōbun* when rendered in calligraphy (as normally is), we shall start by using the manuals that were available to Edo-period readers. As you will notice from the examples offered in the following pages, the text is made accessible to a wider readership by adding *furigana* and *kunten* marks. These examples should be used in order to:

1. Practice the grammar studies above
2. Learn some specific vocabulary
3. Familiarize yourself with the way in which the calligraphy is rendered

What follows are some examples taken from the Edo-period manuals that we shall be using on Thursday of the first week. More examples will be given when you attend the workshop.

初学文章并万難方 (1634 – Suzuka Collection)

「余所へよばれて後礼にやる事」



候

被

可

難

如

三

今朝者被召寄忝存候殊種々
ことしゆく
こんでうはられめしよせ
二
一

御馳走難忘候以参上御礼可申
ごちそうかたくわすれ
もつてさん
レ
二
一

候へ共難去隙人候條先一筆如此(下略・七丁ウ)
かたきさりひま
でうまつ
レ

【召寄】目上の人が目下の者を呼び寄せる。

【忝】①ありがたく嬉しい。②恐れ多い。③恥ずかしい。みっともない。

【参上】目上の人の所へうかがうこと。

【條】ゆえに、によって

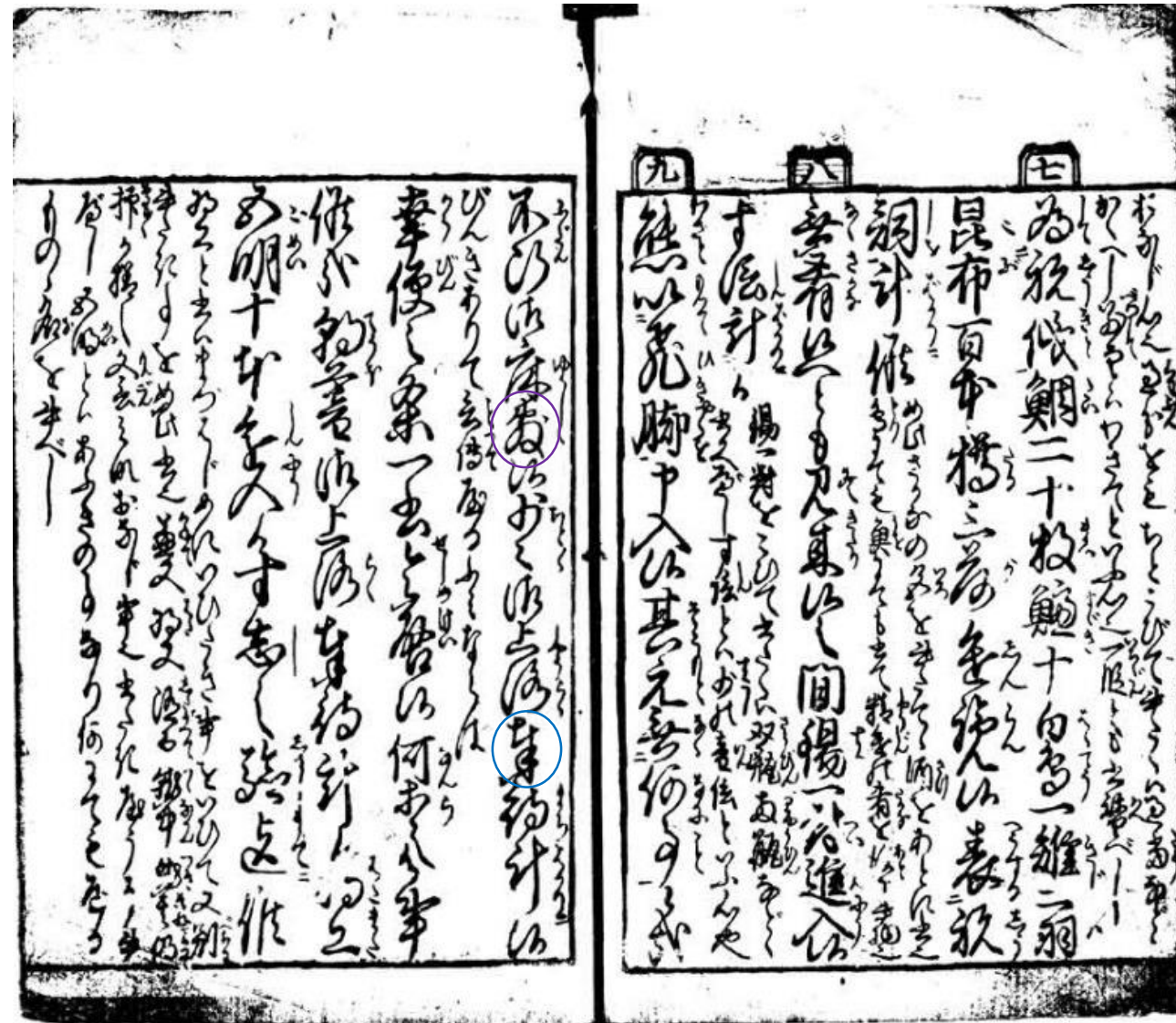
※ 意味を調べるために22ページに挙げた資料を使ってください。

覚えておく必要がある字

忝 殊 難 隙

初学文章并万難方 (1647 - Gakugei daigaku)

「田舎へつかはすふみ書様の事」



敷

奉

九

態わざともつて以ひ飛ひきやくを脚そのもとなくなること申入候其元無何事候二欤一

不ふ断だん御床敷候少々御上洛奉待斗候レ(下略・九丁才)

【飛脚】書簡などを配送する使い物。

【其元】①そのあたり。そこらへん。②あなた。そなた。

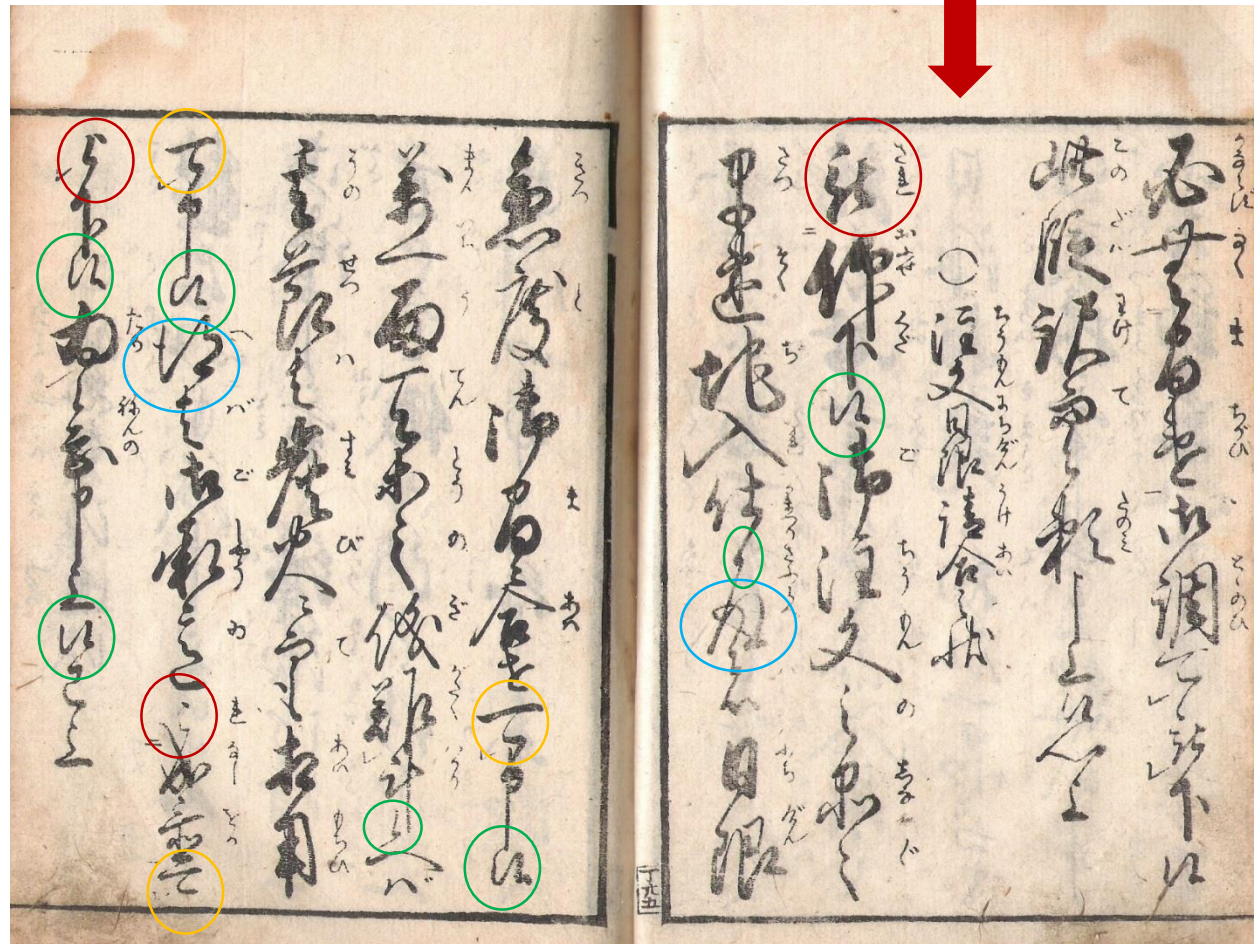
【不断】①物事が絶えず続くこと。②いつも。日頃。

【床敷】心がひかれること。知りたい。

覚えておく必要のある字

以 無 敷 奉 斗

町人書状鏡 (ca. 1810 – Suruzan Collection)



候

被

得

可

ちゅうもんにちげんうけあい
注文日限請合之状

されおふせくだ　ごちゅうもんのしなぐ
被仰下候御注文之品々
二

さつそく　地いれつかまつりさふらへばにちげん
早速地入　仕　候得者日限

きつと　ま　あは
急度御間ニ合せ可申候（二十五丁ウ）
レ

まんいち　うてんどうの　ぎがたくはかり
万一雨天等之儀難斗候へば
レ

そのせつはすみび　て　あいもちひ
其節者炭火ニ而も相用

へばごしやうみれなしをか
可申候得者御承意被成置可
二
一

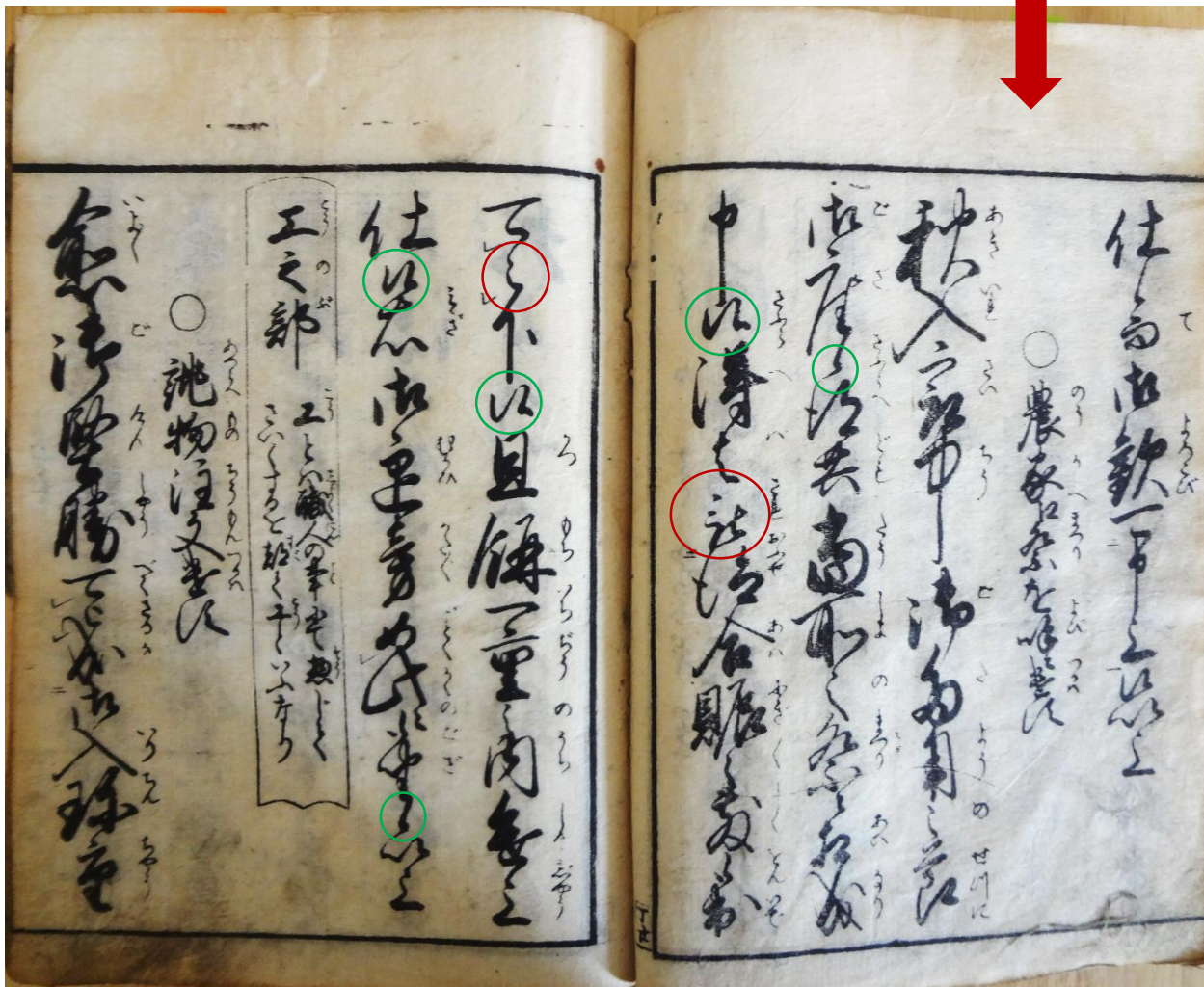
ためねんの
被下候為念申上候已上（二十六丁オ）
レ

【早速】①すみやかなこと。又そのさま。②すぐに

【急度】①必ず。②厳しく。③しっかりと。相違なく。④いそいで。

【万一】まんがいち。もしも。

町人書狀鏡 (ca. 1810 – Suruzan Collection)



候

被

のうかへまつりよびつかは
農家江祭を呼二遣す

あきいれさいちうごたようのせつに
秋入最中御多用之節

こぎさふらへどもとうしよのまつりあいなり
御座候得共当所之祭二相成

さふらへばされおふせあはにぎくしくをんいで
申候得者被仰合賑々敷御出（二十丁ウ）

かつもちいちちうのうちしんじやう
可被下候且餅一重之内進上

みぎむかひかたゞごとくかくのござ
仕候右御迎旁如此御座候以上（下略）