

Japanese GR8040 (Graduate Seminar in Premodern Japanese Literature) • Fall 2018
8th Century Japanese Narrative: Theoretical Perspectives

Wednesdays 2:10-4:00pm • 424 Pupin Laboratories

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3pm and Thursdays 11am-12pm in 500C Kent Hall

Course Rationale:

This seminar examines the nature of story in the earliest extant Japanese narratives, composed across the 8th century.¹ Selections from the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, *fudoki* gazetteers, and *Man'yōshū* will provide a broad introduction to the literature of the Nara period. This earliest stratum of belletristic writing is at least as rich and entertaining as those of succeeding eras, and many fundamental issues of interpretation and literary history for the Heian and Medieval periods are already broached in these texts.

Alongside these primary sources and modern Japanese scholarship devoted to them, we also encounter some major modern western theoretical approaches to narrative. This juxtaposition is intended to provoke sustained thought about the fundamental techniques and structures of the narratives encountered over the course of the semester, but it *does not* mean that we will 'apply' neutral or transcendent theoretical frameworks from an advanced culture to 'raw materials' from a more primitive one. Reliance on modern, western theory is a kind of short-cut; were more time available we could distill alternate theorizations of narrative from pre-modern and modern East Asian critical and philological texts. In addition, all narrative texts contain their own implicit theoretical models of how and why stories are told; we must be particularly attentive to areas where those implicit models do not fit with those proposed by our theorists.

A major challenge in assembling this syllabus was finding discussions of the nature of narrative in general that were not marred by Eurocentric and modern-chauvinistic obsession with the 18th-20th century novel. The theoretical works included here are intended to further our conversations about the inner workings of early Japanese narrative, but no assumptions are made about the universal value or applicability of this class of assigned readings.

Prerequisites and Expectations:

Familiarity with *kanbun* and/or Classical Chinese will certainly be helpful, but we generally will not be dealing with Nara period texts in their original forms (the editions we employ are entirely in *yomikudashi* using the standard modern mixed orthography), so such skills are not required.

However, students must have advanced capabilities in Classical Japanese and be able to read modern Japanese scholarly writing with speed and accuracy. Anyone with concerns about their linguistic preparation should discuss them with the instructor. Students who are not already familiar with Nara period Japanese should review the discussion of some prominent departures from the Heian classical standard that is provided by pp. 308-321 of Haruo Shirane's *Classical Japanese: A Grammar* (Columbia, 2005); other aspects will be discussed as they come up in the reading.

It goes without saying, but as this is an advanced graduate seminar, expectations for quality of preparation and participation are high. Students who miss postings, or who come to class unprepared to read and translate from the primary sources and to discuss in detail the other assigned texts, will be required to drop the course.

Assignments:

In addition to preparing *all* of the assigned readings for each week, students are required to do the following for weeks 2-3 and 5-13 (see below for the special assignment for week 4). First, submit a brief Courseworks posting (approx. 500 words) by **midnight on Sunday**, raising questions about or otherwise responding to one or more of the secondary sources. Then, as part of preparation for in-class reading and translation of the primary source selections, by **midnight**

¹ Portions of the *Nihon ryōiki* date to the early 9th century.

on **Tuesday** students are also required to *email* to the instructor (do not post on Courseworks) a short mini-report (a few sentences or a brief paragraph) about a particular key word, phrase, or grammatical pattern used in one of more that week's primary readings.

Final project:

This paper (**due on Friday 21 December**) is meant to be a short analytic exercise (around 10 pages), with minimal reliance on secondary sources (other than those assigned in class). Students are encouraged to pursue a text or texts with connections to their own research interests; comparative projects or discussions of theoretical issues are welcome, but **the paper must be substantially devoted to at least one narrative from 8th century Japan**. Please keep this project in mind from the beginning of the semester, and consult with the instructor about it by the end of November.

Schedule:

1) 5 Sept.: **Introduction and Orientation**

Introductory reading **TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THIS CLASS MEETING:**

- a) Chapters on ancient literature, history and myth, and the *fudoki*, from the *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* (2015), pp. 15-39 and 45-49
- b) Edwin Cranston, "Man'yōshū," *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (Kōdansha, 1983), vol. 5, pp. 102-110²

2) 12 Sept.: **The Betrayed Assassin and the Dysfunctional Son**

•Prince Mizuhawake and the Assassin Sobakari: *Kojiki* Book 3, Emp. Richū (pp. 311-315 [line 3])

•"How an Evil Man Neglected the Mother who Nursed Him and Attained a Bad Death in the Present Life": *Nihon ryōiki* 1:23 (pp. 36-37)

- a) Kōnoshi Takamitsu, "Dekigoto no keiki no monogatari," in *Kanji tekisuto to shite no Kojiki* (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2007), pp. 97-117
- b) Erich Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Thought*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton University Press, 1953)

3) 19 Sept.: **Urashimatarō: Temporality and Mortality**

•*Nihon shoki* Yūryaku annal (22nd year, 7th month), p. 84

•*Tango no kuni fudoki* (as quoted in the *Shaku Nihongi*), pp. 473-479

•*Man'yōshū* 9:1740-41

- a) Sakurai Mitsuru, "Mizunoe Urashimako o yomu uta," in Itō and Inaoka, eds., *Man'yōshū o manabu* 5 (Yuhikaku, 1978), pp. 154-65
- b) Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp. 83-109

4) 26 Sept.: **Theoretical Interlude: Structuralism and Formalism**

NO CLASS MEETING THIS WEEK; see special assignment below

- a) Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (University of California Press, 1977), pp. 32-73
- b) Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in Thomas Sebeok, ed., *Myth: A Symposium* (American Folklore Society, 1955), pp. 50-67
- c) Vladimir Propp, "The Structure of Russian Fairy Tales," in Alan Dundes, ed., *International Folkloristics* (Rowan and Littlefield, 1999), pp. 119-130

² Mack Horton's *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* chapter on the *Man'yōshū* is a valuable reference; the older Cranston survey, while also quite good, is assigned here mainly because it is more compact.

- d) Lévi-Strauss, “Structure and Form: Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp,” in *Structural Anthropology* (Basic Books, 1977)
- e) Propp, “The Structural and Historical Study of the Wondertale” and “Transformations of the Wondertale,” in *Theory and History of Folklore* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 67-99

Special Assignment: by **4pm on Wednesday the 26th**, email the instructor a 700 word response comparing aspects of Propp’s and Lévi-Strauss’s analyses of narrative *and* speculating about how one or both might be applied to one of the 8th century Japanese texts we’ve already read.³

5) 3 Oct.: **The ‘Poem-tale’ of the Aged Maiden Akaiko**

- Kojiki* Book 3 (Yūryaku), pp. 341(line 3)-344
- FOR COMPARISON: *Ise monogatari* section 23

- a) Torquil Duthie, “Songs of the Records and Chronicles,” *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, pp. 40-44
- b) Kōnosshi Takamitsu, “Kayō monogatari,” in *Kojiki no tassei* (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1983), pp. 227-243
- c) Shinada Yoshikazu, “Kayō monogatari: hyōgen no hōhō to sui jun,” *Kokubungaku* (Gakutōsha) July 1991, pp. 98-105
- d) Susan S. Lanser, “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” *Style* 20:3 (Fall 1986), pp. 341-363

6) 10 Oct.: **Short and Long Tales from the *Nihon ryōiki***

- “How a Man Who Heartlessly Flayed a Rabbit Alive Met with a Terrible Fate in the Present Life”: *Nihon ryōiki* 1:16 (pp. 29)
- “How a Man Who Heartlessly Overburdened a Horse Met with a Terrible Fate in the Present Life”: *Nihon ryōiki* 1:21 (pp. 34-35)
- “How an Orphan Girl Worshipped a Bronze Image of Kannon, Producing a Miraculous Manifestation and Obtaining a Reward in the Present Life”: *Nihon ryōiki* 2:34 (pp. 112-15)
- “How Fish that a Meditation Master Wanted to Eat Became the Lotus Sutra and Turned Back Criticism from Common People”: *Nihon ryōiki* 3:6 (pp. 137-38)

- a) Masuda Katsumi, “*Nihon ryōiki no hōhō*,” in *Setsuwa bungaku to emaki* (1960), reprinted in *Masuda Katsumi no shigoto 1* (Chikuma shobū, 2006), pp. 79-101
- b) Wayne Booth, “Telling and Showing,” in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (University of Chicago, 1961), pp. 3-20

7) 17 Oct.: **Sister or Consort: The Divided Loyalties of Sahobime**

- Kojiki* Book 2 (Suinin), pp. 198-205(line 5)
- Nihon shoki* Suinin annal, pp. 24(line 12)-32(line 3)

- a) Kōnosshi Takamitsu, “Kun ni yoru jojutsu no hōhō: dekgoto no fukusenka,” in *Kanji tekisuto to shite no Kojiki* (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2007), pp. 118-130
- b) Boris Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (University of Nebraska, 1965), pp. 61-95

8) 24 Oct.: **Feather Robe and Swan Maiden**

- Tango no kuni fudoki* (quoted in *Kojiki uragaki* and *Gengenshū*), pp. 483-86

³ NB: This need not be a polished piece of writing (although complete sentences, spell-checking, etc. are expected), and given the length it is expected that it will be highly selective in what it addresses. Feel free to raise questions about the readings or point out opaque/puzzling passages in them.

- Ōmi no kuni fudoki* [?] (quoted in *Teiō hennenki*) pp. 457-58 (NKBT)
- FOR COMPARISON: The Nō play *Hagoromo* (SNKBZ), pp. 382-89

- a) Christine Goldberg, “The Historic-Geographic Method: Past and Future” *Journal of Folklore Research* 21 (1984); reprinted in Dundes, ed., *Folklore: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* 4 (Routledge, 2005), pp. 290-306
- b) Alan L. Miller, “The Swan-Maiden Revisited: Religious Significance of ‘Divine-Wife’ Folktales with Special Reference to Japan,” *Asian Folklore Studies*, 46:1 (1987), pp. 55-86

9) 31 Oct.: **The Crimson-Daubed Arrow**

- Kojiki* Book 2 (Jinmu), p. 157
- Yamashiro no kuni fudoki* (quoted in the *Shaku Nihongi*) pp. 437-39
- Kojiki* Book 2 (Ōjin), pp. 279-81
- Izumo no kuni fudoki* (Shimane county, Kaka no sato/Kaka no kanzaki), pp. 162(last line)-163(line 3); 181(line 11)-182

- a) Sigmund Freud, “Symbolism in Dreams,” in Dundes, ed., *International Folkloristics* (Rowan & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 177-195
- b) Alan Dundes, “Projection in Folklore: A Plea for Psychoanalytic Semiotics,” in *Interpreting Folklore* (Indiana University, 1980), pp. 33-61
- c) Geza Roheim, “Psychoanalysis and the Folktale,” in *Fire in the Dragon* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 3-11

10) 7 Nov.: **Snake Deities and the Women who Love Them**

- Kojiki* Book 2 (Sujin), pp. 185(line 12)-188
- Nihon shoki* (Sujin), pp. 292(line 2)-294(line 2)
- Hitachi no kuni fudoki*, Naka county, Ubaraki village, pp. 404-407(line 6)
- Hizen no kuni fudoki*, Kagami Ford and Hirefuri Peak, pp. 328(line 15)-333(line 6)

- a) Dan Ben-Amos, “The Concept of Motif in Folklore” [1980], reprinted in Dundes, ed., *Folklore: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* 4 (Routledge, 2005), pp. 196-224
- b) SKIM: Michael Como, “Shamanesses, Lavatories, and the Magic of Silk,” in *Weaving and Binding* (Hawai’i, 2009) pp. 109-135

11) 14 Nov.: **To Hell and Back: Complex Narratives of Death Escaped**

- “How an Infant was Taken by an Eagle but Managed to Meet Her Father in Another Province”: *Nihon ryōiki* 1:9 (pp. 21-22)
- “How a Man Who Unjustly Stole from Others and Acted Evilily Met a Bad Fate and Manifested a Marvel”: *Nihon ryōiki* 1:30 (pp. 44-47)
- “How a Priest Who Chanted the Expansive Great Vehicle Sutra Sank into the Ocean but Did Not Drown”: *Nihon ryōiki* 3:4 (pp. 134-36)
- “How a Man Who Vowed to Copy the Lotus Sutra Was Able to Preserve His Life in a Sunless Pit through the Power of that Vow”: *Nihon ryōiki* 3:13 (pp. 146-48)

- a) Roland Barthes, “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,” trans. Lionel Duisit, *New Literary History* 6:2 (Winter 1975), pp. 237-272

NO CLASS ON 21 NOV.; THANKSGIVING BREAK

12) 28 Nov.: **The Virgin Suicides: Narrative Poetry in the *Man’yōshū***

- MYS 3:431-3 (Yamabe no Akahito, Mama no otome)
- MYS 9:1807-8 (Takahashi no Mushimaro, Mama no otome)

· There are doubts about whether this quotation is from the *Ōmi no kuni fudoki*. For this reason the SNKBZ provides neither annotation nor *yomikudashi*, so we use the NKBT edition.

- MYS 9:1809-11 (Takahashi no Mushimaro, Unai otome)
- FOR COMPARISON: *Yamato monogatari* 147 (*Kōchū Yamato monogatari*, Shintensha, 1988), pp. 106-110

- a) Satō Masashi, “Katsushika no Mama no otome o yomu uta,” in Kōnoshi and Sakamoto, eds., *Seminā Man’yō no kajin to sakuhin* 7 (Izumi shoin, 2001), pp. 259-67
- b) Nakagawa Yukari, “Unai otome no haka o miru uta,” in Kōnoshi and Sakamoto, eds., *Seminā Man’yō no kajin to sakuhin* 7 (Izumi shoin, 2001), pp. 268-84
- c) Brian McHale, “Narrative in Poetry,” in Herman, et al., eds., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (Routledge, 2005), pp. 356-58
- d) C.R. Kinney, “Narrative Poetry,” in Cushman, et al., eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: 4th Edition*. (Princeton, 2012), pp. 911-15

13) 5 Dec. **The Poetic Preface as Narrative Genre**

- MYS 16:3803-15
- FOR COMPARISON: *Kokin wakashū* 9:406 and 411

- a) Misaki Hisashi, “Sachūteki-daishi-kei to utagatari,” in Itō and Inaoka, eds., *Man’yōshū o manabu* 7 (Yuhikaku, 1978), pp. 102-112
- b) Kōnoshi Takamitsu, “Den’unkei to utagatari,” in Itō and Inaoka, eds., *Man’yōshū o manabu* 7 (Yuhikaku, 1978), pp. 130-140
- c) Gerard Genette, “Introduction” and “The Prefatorial Situation of Communication,” in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 1-15, 161-95 (SKIM pp. 170-195)

FINAL PAPER DUE **FRIDAY 21 DEC. BY 4PM**; email electronic version AND submit hard copy to instructor’s mailbox in 407 Kent Hall.

Sources:

For the *Kojiki* we use the 1997 Shōgakkan *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (SNKBZ) edition. The best extended commentary is still Motoori Norinaga’s *Kojikiden* (completed in 1798 and best consulted in vols. 9-12 of the Chikuma shobō *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* [1968-1974]), but Kurano Kenji’s *Kojiki zenchūshaku* (Sanseidō, 1973-1980) and Saigō Nobutsuna’s *Kojiki chūshaku* (Heibonsha, 1975-1989) are also very valuable. Kōkugakuin University has an online “*Kojiki* viewer” with an extensive in-progress commentary that will eventually be completely translated into English.⁵

For the *Nihon shoki* we use the 1994-1995 Iwanami bunko paperback edition, which is a corrected re-typesetting of the 1965-67 *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (NKBT) edition. This can be consulted along with the more recent SNKBZ edition (available on Japan Knowledge), but for approaching this text as a literary work the best modern commentary is still the first, Iida Takesato’s 1902 *Nihon shoki tsūshaku* (which ideally should be consulted along with the major Edo commentaries, the *Nihon shoki tsūshō* and *Shoki shikkai*).⁶

For the *fudoki gazetteers* we use the 1997 SNKBZ edition. This should be consulted alongside the NKBT edition (1958) and the recent paperback edition from Kadokawa bunko (2015); for extensive commentary on quoted fragments from no-longer-extant gazetteers, see Jōdai bunken o yomu kai, *Fudoki itsubun chūshaku* (Kanrin shobō, 2001).

For the *Man’yōshū* we use the 1994-1996 SNKBZ edition, which can be consulted alongside the 1999-2003 Iwanami *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (SNKBT) edition (now available in a reset Iwanami bunko paperback). Among several recent commentaries the most

⁵ <http://kojiki.kokugakuin.ac.jp/>

⁶ In anticipation of the 1300-year anniversary of the *Nihon shoki*’s promulgation at the Nara court in 2020, Kadokawa shoten and Kōdansha are preparing new commentaries.

influential is probably Itō Haku's *Man'yōshū shakuchū* (1995-1999), but Omodaka Hisataka's *Man'yōshū chūshaku* (1957-1970) remains an essential resource.

For the *Nihon ryōiki* we use the 1996 SNKBT edition, which should be consulted alongside the 1995 SNKBZ edition (available on Japan Knowledge).

Other valuable resources include the *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, *Kokushi daijiten* (on Japan Knowledge, minus illustrations), *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (on Japan Knowledge), *Nihon shinwa jiten*, *Jōdai bungaku kenkyū jiten*, *Jōdai setsuwa jiten*, and *Jidaibetsu Kokugo daijiten: Jōdai-hen*. Students should familiarize themselves with all of these works, especially the last three. Other specialized sources will be introduced as we proceed through the semester.