

## Introduction to Classical Japanese

Japanese W4007 (“Bungo I”)

Fall 2011 Tues./Thurs. 10:35-11:50 522B Kent Hall

**David Lurie** <DBL11@columbia.edu>

**Office Hours:** Tues. 1:30-3:00 and Thurs. 2:00-3:30 in 500A Kent Hall

### Goals and Methods:

Classical Japanese (*bungo* 文語 or *kogo* 古語) was the standard written language of Japan until well into the 20th century. It is based on the language used by metropolitan elites of the Heian period (794-1185), especially as reflected in classic works of prose and vernacular poetry (*waka*) of the 10th and 11th centuries. Despite subsequent linguistic change, it remained a largely frozen written medium (some traditional genres reflected newer spoken forms more than others, but all relied on the classical standard). Classical Japanese is strongly associated with *kana* orthography, but it also provides the linguistic foundation for forms of writing that relied largely or entirely on *kanji* characters, including different types of *kanbun*, the everyday *sōrōbun* style of the early modern period, and modern *futsūbun* (“regular style”), which was the central mode of formal writing until the middle of the 20th century. Command of Classical Japanese is therefore a crucial prerequisite for the study of all but the most contemporary aspects of Japanese history, literature, thought, and so on (and a strong case can be made for its continued relevance through the postwar period).

We cram the basics of Classical Japanese into a single semester. In addition to systematic treatment of the fundamentals of grammar and usage, a selection of classic works from the 8th through 19th centuries introduces the rich and varied corpus of literature in the classical language. The grammatical analysis employed is a synthesis of the traditional approach of Japanese grammarians, which itself combines concepts from early modern philology (*kokugaku*) with 19th century Western grammatical thought. This course is not a history of the Japanese language, and alternate analyses of Classical Japanese grammar will not be discussed.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with traditional classical-language pedagogy, translation into English is used to increase and evaluate fluency in parsing and interpreting grammar and vocabulary. Regardless of their degree of fluency in modern Japanese, all students are required to translate vocabulary items and readings into English. However, in class and on the exams, non-native English speakers will not be penalized for any errors of grammar or usage, as long as they have

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholars of linguistics (*gengogaku* 言語学) working outside the field of Japanese language studies (*kokugogaku* 国語学/*Nihongogaku* 日本語学) have a very different approach to Classical Japanese grammar, one with much to recommend it. But the traditional analysis introduced in this course is universally employed in Japanese-language dictionaries, commentaries, annotations, and textbooks, and anyone intending to work seriously with Japanese-language materials will need to understand it. Students who have a background in linguistics, or who are curious about alternate analyses, are encouraged to consult sources like Alexander Vovin’s *A Reference Grammar of Classical Japanese Prose* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), but to avoid confusion it is very strongly recommended that they wait until they have control of the basics of the traditional analysis before doing so. For those with an interest in the history of the Japanese language per se, Roy Andrew Miller’s *The Japanese Language* (Chicago University Press, 1967) remains lively and accessible. More recent surveys include Lone Takeuchi, *The Structure and History of Japanese* (Longman, 1999) and Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

successfully communicated a correct understanding of the meaning of the original Classical Japanese.

Of course it is impossible to cover the enormous range of Classical Japanese styles and genres in a semester; this course merely provides an introduction to the basic structure of the language and a small sampling of some major literary works. Those who desire broader grounding in traditional written Japanese are strongly encouraged to continue with Bungo II (JPNS W4008; to be taught Spring 2012) and Introduction to Kanbun (JPNS W4019; to be taught Fall 2012).

### **Prerequisite and Grading:**

The official prerequisite is the second semester of second year Japanese (JPNS C1202); students who have not completed that course or the equivalent are not permitted to enroll in W4007. The Shirane grammar and reader are designed to be accessible to students with intermediate modern Japanese skills, but nonetheless, the more modern Japanese you have taken, the more you will get out of the course (and the easier it will be). If you have questions about how well prepared you are, please consult with the instructor as soon as possible.

The breakdown of the grading is: 25% in-class performance, 10% quizzes, 25% midterm exam, 40% final exam. Proper preparation and consistent attendance are essential: students must make up any work missed due to absences, and those who accumulate more than two unexcused absences, or who are consistently underprepared for class, will be required to drop the course.

### **Textbooks:**

There are three required texts. The first two are the Shirane grammar and reader, which are available at **Book Culture** (112th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam; 212-865-1588); there are also some copies on reserve at the Starr East Asian Library.

- Haruo Shirane, *Classical Japanese: A Grammar* (Columbia University Press, 2005): \$55
- Haruo Shirane, *Classical Japanese Reader and Essential Dictionary* (Columbia University Press, 2007): \$55

Although the dictionary section of the Shirane reader provides clear and helpful English glosses for basic core vocabulary items, more detailed and compendious information will rapidly become necessary. Therefore the **third required text** is a classical Japanese dictionary (*kogo jiten* 古語辞典). These are specialized references, intended for beginning students, and they devote a great deal of attention to explaining grammar points and indicating differences between classical and modern language.<sup>2</sup>

One excellent example is the Sanseidō *Reikai kogo jiten* 例解古語辞典; there are also electronic versions of a good classical dictionary from Ōbunsha (*Zen'yaku kogo jiten* 全訳古語辞典) in portable formats (*denshi jisho* 電子辞書) or installable on your computer (consult the instructor about the latter); iOS users can purchase the Kadokawa *Zen'yaku kogo jiten* through the iTunes App Store. In a pinch you can use *Kōjien* 広辞苑, a popular encyclopedic dictionary

---

<sup>2</sup> Students should also be aware of the following handbooks published by the Cornell University East Asia Program: Helen McCullough, *Bungo Manual* (1988) and John Timothy Wixted, *A Handbook to Classical Japanese* (2006). Both are on reserve in Starr Library. The Wixted handbook is particularly helpful, and students with serious interests in the study of Classical Japanese are strongly encouraged to purchase a copy. Its compendious bibliography provides ample citations of other western-language sources.

from Iwanami shoten, because its entries contain extensive information on classical vocabulary, but the explanations in a dedicated *kogo jiten* will be much more helpful at this stage.

Avoid consulting the *Iwanami Kogo jiten* 岩波古語辭典 at first. This is a valuable resource for advanced students but it is too idiosyncratic and too difficult for beginners. For similar reasons you should not rely on the online version of the Shogakkan *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 日本国語大辭典 (a.k.a. *Nikkoku*) as an initial reference: it is not intended for novice readers of the classical language and will often lead you astray if you do not already have a sense of what you are looking for.

### Procedures:

Each class is divided into three segments. First, we review the grammar points for that session and discuss the answers to the exercises (during the first half of the semester a short quiz will often be administered). Second, students take turns reading and translating from the assigned passages from the *Classical Japanese Reader*. Third, before the end of class, the grammar points for the following session are briefly introduced.

Before each class, students must study the assigned chapter in the *Grammar* and answer any exercises. (With a few exceptions, we will not cover the material in the “For Advanced Study and Reference” and “Historical Notes” sections.) Everyone should bring a copy of the *Grammar* to class so that earlier discussions of grammar points can be freely consulted. Throughout the course, refer frequently to the “Tables of Grammatical Forms” at the end of the *Grammar* (pp. 495-513).

At the beginning of the semester, reading and translating the assigned passages will be especially difficult, as many grammatical elements have yet to be introduced. The extensive vocabulary and grammar notes and annotations make it easier to approach these selections; the “Essential Dictionary” at the end of the *Reader* is also very helpful. However, in class students must read and translate from clean, unannotated copies of the selection itself, without consulting any notes or glossary items.

### Schedule

- 1) Tues. 6 Sept. **Introduction and Orientation**
- 2) Thurs. 8 Sept. **Grammatical Terminology and Historical Spelling Rules** (歴史的仮名遣)
  - Grammar* chaps. 1 and 2 (pp. 11-23) and exercises (p. 411)
  - Reader* p. 4: *Hōjōki* section 1
- 3) Tues. 13 Sept. **Verb Forms**
  - Grammar* chaps. 3 and 4 (pp. 24-49) and exercises (pp. 412-18)
  - Reader* p. 4: *Hōjōki* section 2
  - QUIZ** on regular and irregular verb conjugations
- 4) Thurs. 15 Sept. **Adjectives and Adjectival Verbs**
  - Grammar* chap. 5 (pp. 50-63) and exercises (pp. 418-24)
  - Reader* p. 4: continue *Hōjōki* section 2
  - QUIZ** on adjective and adjectival verb conjugations
- 5) Tues. 20 Sept. **Negative and Recollective Auxiliary Verbs**
  - Grammar* chap. 6 (pp. 64-75) and exercises (pp. 425-30)
  - Reader* p. 5: *Hōjōki* section 3

- 6) Thurs. 22 Sept. **Perfective and Continuative Auxiliary Verbs**  
 •Grammar chap. 7 (pp. 76-87) and exercises (pp. 430-36)  
 •Reader p. 5: *Hōjōki* section 4 first half
- 7) Tues. 27 Sept. **Copular Auxiliary Verbs**  
 •Grammar chap. 8 (pp. 88-93)  
 •Reader pp. 5-6: continue *Hōjōki* section 4  
**QUIZ** on auxiliary verbs up to this point
- 8) Thurs. 29 Sept. **Auxiliary Verbs of Speculation and Supposition**  
 •Grammar chap. 9 (pp. 94-122) and exercises (pp. 436-47)  
 •Reader p. 94: “Collection of Tales of Times Now Past” (*Konjaku monogatari*),  
 “Rashōmon”
- 9) Tues. 4 Oct. **Negative Speculative, Desiderative, and Comparative Auxiliary Verbs**  
 •Grammar chap. 10 (pp. 123-39) and exercises (pp. 447-50)  
 •Reader p. 62: “The Pillow Book” (*Makura no sōshi*) section 1 and start of 25
- 10) Thurs. 6 Oct. **Passive-Causative Auxiliary Verbs**  
 •Grammar chap. 11 (pp. 140-52) and exercises (pp. 451-53)  
 •Reader pp. 62-63: conclusion of *Makura no sōshi* section 25  
**QUIZ** on auxiliary verbs (review charts on pp. 151-52)
- 11) Tues. 11 Oct. **Case Particles**  
 •Grammar chap. 12 (pp. 155-77) and exercises (pp. 453-56)  
 •Reader p. 138: “Essays in Idleness” (*Tsurezuregusa*) section 89 and start of 137
- 12) Thurs. 13 Oct. **Conjunctive Particles**  
 •Grammar chap. 13 (pp. 178-200) and exercises (pp. 457-65)  
 •Reader pp. 138-39: conclusion of *Tsurezuregusa* section 137
- 13) Tues. 18 Oct. **Bound Particles**  
 •Grammar chap. 14 (pp. 201-220) and exercises (pp. 466-70)  
 •Reader p. 116: “Collection of Tales from Uji” (*Uji shūi monogatari*), “Long Nose”
- 14) Thurs. 20 Oct. **Adverbial Particles**  
 •Grammar chap. 15 (pp. 221-37) and exercises (pp. 470-75)  
 •Reader p. 116-17: *Uji shūi monogatari*, “Long Nose” concluded and “Yoshihide”
- 15) Tues. 25 Oct. **Final and Interjectory Particles**  
 •Grammar chap. 16 (pp. 238-54) and exercises (pp. 475-80)  
 •Reader p. 172: “The Tale of Genji, a Small Jeweled Comb” (Motoori Norinaga, *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi*), first half
- 16) Thurs. 27 Oct. **Nouns, Pronouns, Adverbs, Interjections, Conjunctions, and Attributives**  
 •Grammar chap. 17 (pp. 255-67) and exercises (pp. 481-83)  
 •Reader p. 173 (*Tama no ogushi* concluded)
- 17) Tues. 1 Nov. **IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM**
- 18) Thurs. 3 Nov. **Rhetorical Techniques in Poetry**  
 •Grammar Appendix 5 (pp. 364-70) and exercises (p. 491)  
 •Reader pp. 102-103: “Hundred Poets, Hundred Poems” (*Hyakunin isshu*): Poems 1-10

**NO CLASS** Tues. 8 Nov. (Election Day Break)19) Thurs. 10 Nov. **Honorific Expressions**

- Grammar* chap. 18 (pp. 271-86) and exercises (pp. 483-87)
- Reader* p. 34: “The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter” (*Taketori monogatari*) section 1 (“Early Years”)

20) Tues. 15 Nov. **Humble and Polite Expressions**

- Grammar* chap. 19 (pp. 287-307) and exercises (pp. 487-90)
- Reader* pp. 34-35: *Taketori monogatari* section 2 (“Princess’s Lament”)

21) Thurs. 17 Nov. **Overview of Sound Changes**

- Grammar* Appendix 2 (pp. 339-47)
- Reader* p. 35: *Taketori monogatari* section 3 (“Heavenly Ascent”), first half

22) Tues. 22 Nov. **Nara-period Grammar**

- Grammar* chap. 20 (pp. 308-21)
- Reader* p. 190: “Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves” (*Man’yōshū* selections); and p. 103, *Hyakunin issyu* concluded (poems 11-15)

**NO CLASS** Thurs. 24 Nov. (Thanksgiving Break)23) Tues. 29 Nov. **Auxiliary Verb Combinations**

- Grammar* Appendix 7 (pp. 387-400) and exercises (pp. 492-93)
- Reader* p. 36: *Taketori monogatari* section 3 (“Heavenly Ascent”) continued

24) Thurs. 1 Dec. **Prefixes and Suffixes**

- Grammar* Appendix 3 (pp. 348-56)
- Reader* p. 54 “The Tales of Ise” (*Ise monogatari*), first half

25) Tues. 6 Dec. **Supplementary Verbs**

- Grammar* Appendix 4 (pp. 357-363)
- Reader* p. 54 (*Ise monogatari* continued) and p. 182: “The Encouragement of Learning” (Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Gakumon no susume*), first half

26) Thurs. 8 Dec. **Review of the Six Inflections**

- Grammar* Appendix 1 (pp. 325-38)<sup>3</sup>
- Reader* pp. 182-83: *Gakumon no susume* continued

**Final Exam TBA (will be scheduled between 16 and 23 December)<sup>4</sup>**


---

<sup>3</sup> Anyone interested in the fate of the six inflections and the development of modern Japanese verb and adjective forms is encouraged to read Appendix 8 (“Conjugational Shifts”).

<sup>4</sup> While reviewing for the final, students should be sure to work through the invaluable chart of “Easily Confused Elements” in Appendix 7.