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# Review of: The Complete Guide to Everyday Kanji: A Systematic Approach to Mastering the 1,945 Jōyō Kanji as well as 1,257 Common Compounds and Reading Japanese Financial Newspapers: An Innovative and Integrated Approach to Enhancing Reading Competence in Business Japanese

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a chapter on the Meiji Restoration which deals exclusively with political events also seems questionable.

Despite these problems, *Premodern Japan: A Historical Survey* is a notable addition to survey literature on traditional Japan. It is a beginning in the never-ending work of providing a balanced and up-to-date history of Japan's premodern past.

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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO EVERYDAY KANJI: A Systematic Approach to Mastering of 1,945 Jōyō Kanji as well as 1,257 Common Compounds. By *Yaeko S. Habein and Gerald B. Mathias*. New York: Kodansha International. 1991. 343 pp. US\$24.95, paper. ISBN 0-87011-793-9.

READING JAPANESE FINANCIAL NEWSPAPERS: An Innovative and Integrated Approach to Enhancing Reading Competence in Business Japanese. By *the Association for Japanese-Language Teaching*. New York: Kodansha International. 1991. 388 pp. US\$24.95, paper. ISBN 0-87011-956-7.

THESE books, both assisted by grants from the Japan Foundation, are welcome additions to the library of fast-growing Japanese language materials. Both volumes show the enormous time and effort that the authors put into them.

*The Complete Guide to Everyday Kanji*, a carefully arranged reference to the 1,945 *jōyō kanji*, presents every kanji with *on-* and *kun-*reading(s) as applicable, a concise etymology and English meaning(s), and one or two words, either by themselves or in compounds.

There are various ways to cut the "kanji pie." The present authors cut it into a *meaning* section and a *sound* section, or, more specifically, basic kanji, the forms and meanings of which must be learned, and kanji that have phonetic components which give away the *on-*readings and sometimes also meanings. Following a thorough explanation of the stroke order of kanji in chapter 1, 152 pictographs and ideographs ("Basic-Form Kanji") are introduced in chapter 2. In chapter 3, 488 "Semantic Compound Kanji," including those combined with "classifiers," are discussed. In chapter 4, 1,305 "Phonetic Compound Kanji," arranged according to their phonetic components so as to show the pronunciation similarities, are presented. Chapter 5 contains rules of *kun-*reading, and lists of irregular readings (*ateji*), kanji used for personal names, and old forms of kanji approved for given names. In chapter 6, rules of compounding kanji are discussed with extensive examples; indexes by stroke count and reading are appended.

A highly stratified arrangement of kanji adopted in this volume sometimes seems to strain the natural association we have of kanji; for instance, only one character, "wine" (*sake*), is introduced in the "Classifiers" section under *sanzui*. Apparently others are relegated to different sections elsewhere in the volume, but one may wonder about the practicality and pedagogical effectiveness of such an arrangement. The classification system is

so complicated that it seems to get in the way of reader's learning kanji according to the order given.

Typographical errors: a phonetic component, "spread flat," is missing (p. 228, line 28); the "'fire' as semantic" should be *rekka* (p. 120, line 20). "*Shō*" ("to summon," p. 125) may be better treated as an independent phonetic component.

The book seems somewhat too sophisticated for a student "just beginning to study kanji" (p. 7); it appears more useful for those who already have sufficient knowledge of kanji and want to find out more about kanji.

*Reading Japanese Financial Newspapers* is a textbook, suitable for the students of intermediate to advanced Japanese. This book cannot but be a fruit of the seven years of teaching the "Eighteen Month Curriculum for Businessmen in Financial Institutions" by the authors of AJALT (p. 7). The lessons are carefully laid out so that students can gradually attain the level of Japanese at which they can read typical financial articles in Japanese newspapers.

Part I, "Preparatory Stage," is divided into two sections. In the first half, students are expected to concentrate on the acquisition of extensive vocabulary items, while learning two hundred of the five hundred essential kanji (see part III). In the second half, students are required to learn the rest of three hundred kanji and acquire more politicoeconomic terms. Next, they are introduced to the samples of authentic materials from *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*. Part II, "Reading Financial Articles in Japanese Publications," is comprised of practical grammatical and lexical explanations illustrated by ample examples in eighteen categories. A short chronological table, from January 1987 to January 1989, a Japanese-English glossary, and appendixes of useful terms, country names, Japanese number system, and bibliographical information are attached.

Some suggestions to improve this textbook: (1) A pre-printed set of vocabulary cards for the vocabulary items introduced in the first half of the "Preparatory Stage" would greatly save students' time, especially because they are asked to have a native speaker write the kanji for them. (2) A generative vocabulary-building exercise in the "Preparatory Stage" seems useful along the time line of the approach found in Part II, 2 and 8. (3) Because it seems that students, while going through the "Preparatory Stage," will benefit from studying the grammatical and lexical explanations discussed in part II, cross-references to appropriate sections in the exercises and on the vocabulary lists would aid students' self-study. For instance, the exercise I. 3 on p. 17 may read "see Part II, 17, A-(8)," or *wariai* on p. 19, "see Part II, 11-A-(1)." (4) An English-Japanese glossary would be a nice addition to have.

A typographical error: p. 33, exercise III. 1 should read *shita* ("below") and not *migi* ("right").

This is a textbook worthy of consideration for adoption in a serious "Business Japanese" course or in an "Intermediate to Advanced Japanese Reading" course.