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A Handbook to Classical Japanese. By John Timothy Wixted. Cornell East Asia Series, 2006. 374 pages. Hardcover \$69.00; softcover \$32.00.

We should be grateful to John Timothy Wixted for his *Handbook to Classical Japanese*, published in 2006. Though this review comes three years after publication, this does not mean that the book has gone unnoticed. The author is a veteran teacher of *bungo* in the United States, and the handbook is the result of his long experience in the classroom. Not only his words, but the structure and layout of the book as well, amply reflect Wixted's field experience. The volume is intended as an introductory manual for those who are currently studying, or still have something to learn about, classical Japanese.

As Wixted states in the preface, the purpose of the book is

to help students of *bungo* master the core constellation of grammatical problems posed by the classical language; to provide users with a generous sampling of real-language examples; . . . to present a serious but manageable amount of vocabulary in context; to introduce readers to writings in great classic texts; and to serve as a reference work for pre-modern Japanese language and literature.

(p.3)

The book's Japanese title, *Bungo handobukku*, it may be noted, tells us that by "classical Japanese," Wixted means *bungo*, the grammatical forms and modes of expression associated typically with literary texts of the Heian and Kamakura periods.

Wixted has organized the handbook topically. After a chapter on orthography comes an introductory overview of verbs, verbal adjectives (*keiyōshi*), pseudo-adjectives (*keiyōdōshi*), and their declensions and uses. In addition to the detailed explanations of the six verb-forms and of the adjectives are seven subsections offering guidance on particular issues for the benefit of students lost in the intricacies of classical Japanese grammar; these sections, which include "How to 'Unpack' *Bungo* verbs" and "Nari Headaches," are all very welcome. The bulk of the handbook deals with verb-suffixes (*jodōshi*), which Wixted considers "the central issue of *bungo*" (p. 2). In this part, the verb-suffixes are presented in the order of the verb-form to which they are linked, and

examples using each suffix are presented for all six forms. This strategy allows users to have at their disposal all the possible forms in which the verb-suffix may turn up when reading classical texts.

Special mention must be made of the examples Wixted has taken from classical literary texts, an undertaking in which he has invested substantial effort. As he states, of the 670 citations used as examples, 62 percent are not to be found in previously published books on classical Japanese. Wixted derived these illustrative passages from the Japanese Text Initiative of the University of Virginia Library and adjusted them by comparison with the editions included in the Iwanami *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* (NKBT). The large number of examples is a key feature of the handbook and has an explicit didactic purpose; as Wixted states, "one learns through examples" (p. 4). Each quotation is accompanied by a romanized transliteration and English translation. Wixted also cites the source, including the chapter and the page from where the passage is taken, enabling readers to check its context if they so desire. The range **[End Page 380]** of texts used as sources spans four time periods: early (Nara), classic (Heian), medieval (Kamakura), and late (Edo). It perhaps would have been preferable if the author had limited the time periods for language samples to the first three, as the last is not strictly "classical." In fact only a few post-fourteenth-century works are represented.

Wixted notes that he himself translated 95 percent of the quotations and, for pedagogical purposes, deliberately chose not to polish the results to the degree one would expect to find in literary translation. Appendix C and appendix D give a wide range of alternative translations of the passages cited, not only translations into English but into a number of European languages, including Italian and Russian, as well. Here, too, in this full panorama of possible renderings, we see evidence of Wixted's great care and thoroughness. Of the remainder of the book's seven appendices, appendix A and appendix B list the Japanese texts from which Wixted has drawn his illustrative examples; appendix E provides a reference list of books on classical Japanese; appendix F is an analytical chart that provides a page-by-page key to discussions of verb-suffixes in other English-language grammars of classical Japanese; and appendix G is a summary chart of verb-endings.

The range of books available in English on classical Japanese is gradually increasing. Among the best-known works are those by P. G. O'Neill (1968), Ivan Morris (1970), Ikeda Takashi (1975), Akira Komai and Thomas Rohlich (1991), Helen C. McCullough (1993), Alexander Vovin (2003), and Shirane Haruo (2005). In Europe, where the study of *bungo* at the university level has been spreading rapidly in recent years, especially in Germany, France, and Holland, but also in Italy and other countries, the production of books on *bungo* is still limited, and as a result these English-language guides are used extensively in the classroom. There, too, the publication of Wixted's book just one year after Shirane's may be expected to contribute further to a welcome heightened interest in the field—particularly in the exploration of original literary texts—among both students and scholars. The handbook provides a remarkable tool not only for in-class learning but also as a highly reliable, accurate, and complete reference work for anyone engaged in Japanese studies.