each chapter of the tale. This not only enriches the reader's experience of this particular painting, but serves as a means of refreshing one's knowledge of the tale in order to better engage with the other works in the catalogue.

The Tale of Genji: *A Japanese Classic Illuminated* is the sort of volume every teacher of Japanese literature will want on their shelf. This volume features high-quality, vibrant reprints of a comprehensively curated collection of *Genji*-related images, along with incisive introductory essays that are just the right length for a syllabus. Indeed, for those of us who teach *Genji* courses regularly, it is the long-awaited visual companion volume to the tale. In addition, for those of us outside the field of art history, the four introductory essays help provide the tools to make sense of the images in a manner that will aid in our sharing of them with our students. These features ensure that this volume will remain an indispensable resource for teaching *The Tale of Genji* for decades to come.

The Kanji Code: See the Sounds with Phonetic Components and Visual Patterns.

By **Natalie Hamilton**. Sydney: Ocha Press, 2019. 275 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
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This is a guidebook for nonnative learners of Japanese that covers a subset of commonly used *kanji* (Chinese characters) and presents innovative learning strategies that focus on the sounds of *kanji*, particularly their *on* (Sino-Japanese) readings. The author's approach is unique given that many *kanji* guidebooks for such learners typically focus on pictorial and/or mnemonic approaches in helping remember the shapes and meanings of *kanji* while providing little or no help in learning to read them in Japanese. By introducing systematic ways to learn common *on*-readings of *kanji* (via identification of phonetic hints within *kanji* and application of a visual approach to learning *on*-readings), the

author, who mostly self-studied Japanese, aims to help to reduce learners' reliance on rote memorization.

Together with the above-mentioned purpose of the book, the introduction gives the structure of the volume with its four chapters and eighty-four pages of appendices, the explanation of *kanji* coverage and their grouping, and background information about the author and the book (which is based on her dissertation). It is worth noting that the book's coverage of *kanji* "starts about halfway through Grade 2, when [*kanji*] become more complex and tend to have a phonetic component as well as a radical, and goes up to the secondary school level" (13). In addition, research findings are provided to argue for learning the phonetics, saying, for example: "What can we learn from how CB (character background) learners approach learning Japanese [*kanji*]?" (18); "[*Kanji*] is phonetic and reading it isn't that different from reading alphabets like English" (19); and "[Sounding] it out helps with inferring" (20).

Chapter 1 ("The Scripts and Their Sounds") describes the types of scripts used in Japanese writing. The author says that *kana* (two types of syllabic scripts, *hiragana* and *katakana*) "[represent] sound only" (however, explanations are needed for exceptions such as は *wa*, を *o*, and へ *e*), *kanji* "[represent] both sounds and meanings," and the meaning of a particular *kanji* character "can change depending on how [it] is combined with [*kana*] or other [*kanji*]" (29). She also mentions the complexities of *kanji* having both *on-* and *kun* (native Japanese)-readings (although not all *kanji* have both types of readings), and she offers an explanation for some *kanji* having more than one *on*-reading. The author goes on to note that "rote learning is unavoidable with the [*kun*] readings" (33), and makes several interesting observations about *on*-readings of *kanji*: (a) Because many *kanji* start with K or S in their pronunciations, "you will have about a 50% chance of getting the first letter right if you guess that it stars with K or S"; (b) "[with *kanji*], the last sound [such as N in KAN, SHIN, and NIN] seems to be useful to jog the memory"; and (c) "[t]he H group [*ha, hi, fu, he,* and *ho*] can harden if that character comes second in a compound" and "follows a character with the final sound N" (e. g., 昆布 *kon + fu = konbu* "seaweed") (36–37).

In chapter 2 ("The Kana Code"), the author lists fifty-seven *kanji* that were either the basis for or look like *kana* symbols, with a trace from *kanji* to *kana* (e. g., 不 to ふ). The list is not exhaustive; for example, the

origin of the *ka* symbol comes right after those of *a, i,* and *u* (*e* and *o* are absent). Also, *hiragana* and *katakana* origins are mixed on the list, which starts with *hiragana a*, *hiragana i*, *katakana i, hiragana u,* and then *hiragana ka* (43–44). It is unclear why this is the case. Nevertheless, the author is clear that: (a) "[*Kanji* and *kana*] are closely connected, and work together as a set" (e. g., 加 [*kanji*], カ [*katakana*], and か [*hiragana*]); (b) "You can sometimes 'see' the ON reading as a component within a [*kanji*] character" (e. g., フ *fu* in 不); (c) "You can sometimes 'see' the ON reading of a [*kanji*] character as an artistic impression of the whole character" (e. g., ふ *fu* in 不); and (d) "Understanding how the two styles of [*kana*] were created helps us find two ways to approach learning [*kanji*] readings," which are taken in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 ("The Phonetic Code") first describes the origin and four types of *kanji* (pictographs, ideographs, compound-ideographs, and *keisei-moji*), and explains the components of *Keisei-moji* (semasio-phonetic characters). For example, 請 *sei* "ask" has a radical (meaning component) of 言 "speech" and a phonetic (sound component) of 青 *sei*. According to the author, 80% of *kanji* fall into the *keisei* category though the other three types of *kanji* "get the most attention in beginner textbooks" (64). The chapter then takes "The Fragmenting Approach" (42) to learn *kanji* readings by drawing out 150 phonetic components (e. g., 青 *sei*) of *kanji* (e. g., 請) that indicate *on*-reading. The author gives useful information (e. g., knowing the pronunciation of 青 *sei*, one can read one-half of two-*kanji* words that contain 青, such as 請求 *seikyū* "request") as well as encouragement, saying, "Your familiarity with the phonetics will make reading real Japanese texts like newspapers and magazines less intimidating, and the more at ease you feel with tackling authentic texts the quicker your reading will improve. [*Kanji*] will no longer seem a mess of unintelligible lines but, rather, a combination of recognizable components, each of which has a known purpose and function" (65). She also highlights how radicals and phonetics work together and points out that "when you put together your radical and phonetics knowledge, you'll be able to use it to remember not only the meaning but also the sound of 435 [*kanji*]. Better still, you will understand how the components work together … and feel a lot more [*kanji*]-confident in the process" (70).

In the same chapter, the author then explains the ways in which she categorized the 150 phonetics before listing them with common *kanji*

words wherein they appear. These categories include "Standard phonetics" (simple ones like 可 *ka*) (70) and "Rhyming phonetics" (e. g., 浴 *yoku* and 俗 *zoku*) (71). She also named certain phonetics "Power phonetics" (e. g., 青 *sei* whose sound is consistent in common *kanji* words) (65) and "Creative components" (73). An example of the latter is 壬 *nin*, which appears in 任 "responsibility" and 妊 "pregnancy"; therefore, the author named this phonetic "crying baby" by connecting a person with a crying baby (responsibility) and a woman with a baby (pregnancy) (73). Although useful strategies for learners to adopt, these 150 phonetics are not listed according to the Japanese *kana* order as claimed to be, which makes it difficult to find searched-for phonetics on the list. The Japanese *kana* order should be: *a, i, u, e, o,* and K, S, T, N, H, M, Y, R (not *a, e, i, o, u,* and K, S, T, H, N, M, R, Y as the author says) (72).

By contrast, chapter 4 ("The Visual Code") focuses on "The Artistic Approach" (42) to associate *on*-readings of *kanji* with their visual features. The author presents forty-five sounds (or their partial visual elements) of *kanji* that appear in common *kanji* words in eight categories. The first two are "Trace elements"; one lists not quite phonetic components like ナ in 友 *yū*, 有 *yū*, and 雄 *yū* (140) and the other involves rotation of a character like 介 *kai* in 界 *kai* to 会 *kai* (145). When possible, she added a nickname, mnemonics, and connotation (positive or negative) to help learners remember the *kanji*. To *yū* in the above example, she gave a nickname of "Protective arms," saying the shape of ナ resembles a *katakana* ナ, and a mnemonic description of "a hero [英雄 *eiYŪ*] stretching her arms out to protect YOU," stating that the sound *yū* "generally has a positive connotation" (140).

The third, fourth, and fifth categories are "Shape," "Composition," and "Line," respectively. An example of "Shape" is an imagined triangle of 土 *do* seen in 都 *to*, 徒 *to*, and 等 *tō* (149). An example of "Composition" associates "Three elements" (two on top and one in the bottom center) with 型 *kei*, 啓 *kei*, 契 *kei*, and 警 *kei* (151). "Line" is a category in which "simple characters are matched with short, simple sounds"; for instance, "Simple and centered" are represented by 士 *shi*, 市 *shi*, and 子 *shi* among others (155).

The sixth, seventh, and eighth categories are what the author calls "Series," "[*Kanji*] that look similar from afar," and "Symbolic links." An example of "Series" is the "World series" wherein *mō/bō* are connected by 毛 *mō*, 耗 *mō*, 網 *mō*, 亡 *bō*, and 盲 *mō*, which partially share visual

similarities (176). 先 *sen*, 洗 *sen*, and 染 *sen* are examples of "[*kanji*] that look similar from afar" and their similar overall shape can be seen "[i]f you blur your eyes" (185). The category of "Symbolic links" groups characters in association with their *on*-reading to aid with mnemonics. For instance, "Lucky number three" is associated with *sen/san* in 三 *san*, 山 *san*, 千 *sen*, 占 *sen*, and 川 *sen* (187) since *san* means "three."

Chapter 4 is followed by appendices that contain references, online resources, acknowledgment, glossary, creative component stories (e. g., the above-mentioned "crying baby" for 壬 *nin*), radicals list (about 150 common radicals and their meanings organized thematically such as "nature" [e. g., 木 "tree"] and "human body" [e. g., 口 "mouth"]), components list/index, *kanji* index, English index, and radicals index thematically listing the *kanji* under each radical that appeared in the relevant chapter(s) (e. g., 根, 材, and 枝 under 木). The component list/index and *kanji* index are arranged in accordance with the Japanese *kana* order, and the English index lists translations of *kanji* in alphabetical order. All of the *kanji* listed in Appendices, except the radicals list, are referenced to the ID assigned to each character that appeared in the chapter(s).

Overall, this is an interesting and useful *kanji* guidebook that incorporates learners' perspectives (represented by the author) in studying *kanji*, and it is uniquely positioned to help nonnative learners develop innovative strategies to "[s]ee the sounds with phonetic components and visual patterns" of *kanji*, as the subtitle of the book says. Through her efforts to make the learning of *kanji* manageable and enjoyable with naming and mnemonics, along with her encouragement to build learners' confidence, the author's aim to reduce learners' reliance on rote memorization seems realistically achievable. Since the book only covers 585 commonly used *kanji*, intermediate students of Japanese, who have learned basic *kanji* (pictographs, ideographs, and compound-ideographs), would seem especially likely to benefit the most from learning *keisei-moji* by adopting the strategies suggested by this book, and thereby begin to crack additional *kanji* codes on their own to become efficient readers of Japanese. This volume could also be of interest to graduate students who are inclined to investigate the helpfulness of this approach in learning *kanji*.