



Digital Textbook Collections

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It is said that textbooks mirror the current state of a nation and its society. Fundamental to education, textbooks are packed with reflections of a nation's ideal image of its citizens as well as ideas about the formation of personal character and historical perspectives. In the past, textbooks were viewed as divine and it was often held that "textbooks made the Japanese" (Tomitaro KARASAWA). During the pre-war period, textbooks served as the center of school education. The mainstream of effort consisted of teaching and learning about "what textbooks have written." Even after World War II, when a new perception of textbooks emerged which treated textbooks as merely one of various teaching tools, the view of textbooks as one of the primary sources of public education has remained the same. Because of this great importance, textbooks draw intense attention, both within Japan and overseas.

For the past half a century, textbooks have constantly produced controversial episodes, such as the history textbook litigation which questioned the nation's stance toward history education led by the late Professor Saburō IENAGA. Similarly, international conflict created by a new history textbook written by the Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii Rekishikyōkasho o Tsukurukai*) serves as evidence of the influential power of textbooks. In recent years, the number of researchers who tend to regard textbooks as primary sources of information have been increasing in Japanese studies. Thus I would like to take this opportunity to introduce some notable databases on Japanese textbooks, especially those which have received special attention as tools of "reeducation" or "search for self" in relation to lifelong learning for adults.

The Japanese government does not write textbooks for public schools nor is textbook use state-mandated. Instead, writing, editing, and publish-

ing are left to the authors and publishers, while the government enforces a screening process to maintain quality of content (i.e., fairness and accuracy) as a minimum requirement. Whether or not government-approved textbooks are actually used depends on the decisions made by the selection committees of local school boards.

Before the implementation of this current textbook screening system in 1949, however, there were various changes in terms of the institutional system for dealing with textbooks for public schools. In general, institutional system changes for textbooks can be divided into six periods: (1) before the Fundamental Code of Education, including the Edo Period, 1603-1871, (2) before the Certification System, 1872-1885, (3) the Textbook Certification Period, 1886-1902, (4) the State Textbook Period, 1903-1945, (5) the Interim Textbook Compiled by the Ministry of Education Period, 1946-1948, and (6) the (current) Authorized Textbook Period, 1949-present. Regardless of the institutional textbook systems, however, publishing and distribution of textbooks have been entrusted to private publishers both before and after World War II.

Tosho Bunko: Library of Textbooks
<http://www.tosho-bunko.jp/>

The Tosho Bunko: Library of Textbooks is the first special library on textbooks, which was founded in 1936 to commemorate the 25th year anniversary of Tokyo Publishing Company, one of the largest textbook publishing companies in Japan. The library is well known for its wide coverage and its preservation program. The collection contains about 150,000 volumes, including textbooks used at *terakoya* (village schools) in the pre-modern period, as well as modern textbooks, along with textbooks from the Meiji screening system period donated by the Ministry of Education in 1938. The library has been proactive in archival treatment of its collection, particularly those deteriorating titles published just after World War II. (Bibliographic data and digitized images had been available through their website up to May, 2003; however, the image archive is currently unavailable.) The search system provided at the Tosho Bunko can input *hiragana*,

katakana, and *kanji* (Chinese characters), and has a keyword search by both title and author as well as varieties of search functions consisting of three fields: publication date, type of school, and teaching subject. One can retrieve search results by simply selecting options listed in each category. For instance, when clicking one of the options listed in the publication date, the connecting field automatically lists up relevant options from the previous search results and the options in the following field correspond to these previous search results. Since search options in three fields connect with each other, one can execute various searches without any specific knowledge of Japanese textbooks. Unfortunately, however, the system seems to lack thesaurus control for reading Chinese characters. Thus one may have different search results under "reading" depending on the ways of spelling (e.g. "*yomihon*" in *kanji* or "*tokuhon*" and "*dokuhon*" in *hiragana*).

**Hiroshima University Library
Textbook Collection**
<http://cross.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/>

Although the consolidated modern Japanese school system began with the Code of Education in 1872, popular enthusiasm toward education nevertheless existed in the pre-modern period. Elementary education for commoners was available at neighborhood schools called *terakoya*. The Hiroshima University Textbook Collection is an image database featuring textbooks of the pre-modern era called *oraimono*, as well as modern textbooks published up to 1951. Among 5,600 titles covered in this database, more than half are those published during the State Textbook Period (1903-1945). The significance of this database is that most of the *oraimono* and Meiji textbooks are available in full-text image, although the remainder published in other periods are presented as partial full-text images. The database offers a bird's-eye view of the history of education from the pre-modern era through the contemporary period. Textbooks are often the first printed media that children encounter at school. Illustrations in textbooks, which usually undergo thorough research and historical investigation, not only help children understand the material but also play an



important role in nurturing values and aesthetics. Viewing images of textbooks can be more meaningful to researchers when textbooks present both text and illustrations.

The database contains one of the first modern textbooks with colored illustrations called the "sakura reading book" (1938), which begins with the phrase "cherry blossoms have begun" and includes impressive illustrations of blossoms, as well as the "asahi reading book" (1941), which begins with the phrase "red, red sunrise" and shows a magnificent sunrise scene. As the database covers many textbooks published in the early Showa era, which seems to be both rather distant and yet also relatively close to today, it offers visitors, particularly senior citizens in the aging society, excellent opportunities to encounter their own childhoods. Also, the database contains a more recent history textbook, *Kuni no ayumi* (History of the Nation), compiled by the Ministry of Education during the Interim Textbook Period in accordance with guidance by General Headquarters during the American Occupation Period. The presentation of images has a variety of special features, such as displaying page bottoms or a function to jump to the desired page at once. One can enjoy viewing images in different pages as if actually reading the original book in hand. Finally, along with a seamless search capability on OPAC, the database has excellent search functions encoded for more than 100 categories. Without specific knowledge of textbooks, therefore, one can narrow down the search by combining various options listed in various fields. Also, one can efficiently locate desired *oraimono* as they are classified by genre, such as moral lessons, vocabulary, history, geography, science, or correspondence.

"Sugoroku Collection" and "Mochizuki Collection of Textbooks" at Tokyo Gakugei University Library
<http://library.u-gakugei.ac.jp/lbhome/mochi/mochi.html>
(Oraimono, search system)

<http://library.u-gakugei.ac.jp/orai/color/index.html> (*Oraimono* in color)
<http://library.u-gakugei.ac.jp/lbhome/sugoroku.html> (*Sugoroku*)

http://library.u-gakugei.ac.jp/etopia/index_s.html (E-TOPIA)

Picture *sugoroku* (a board game which was developed during the 17th century as a learning tool) has varieties such as *jodo sugoroku* (pure land *sugoroku*), *meimoku sugoroku*, (name *sugoroku*) and *dochu sugoroku* (travel *sugoroku*). Most versions have an instructional purpose such as moral lessons or liberal arts education, and they played an important role in commoner education and child education during the pre-modern period. In recent years, *sugoroku* has been receiving increased attention due to its qualities of amusement and beauty. Tokyo Gakugei University Library has a *sugoroku* collection covering the Edo through Meiji periods. Another notable collection at the library is the Mochizuki Collection of textbooks, including *oraimono* and titles on teachers' education during the prewar period. Fortunately, these collections are now digitized and available for public viewing as high-density images through FlashPix. While the *Sugoroku* Collection does not have a search function but rather a list that lines up 116 entries, the Mochizuki Collection of *Oraimono*, which includes 950 titles of *oraimono*, offers two types of search: a title search by *kana* and a keyword search. Furthermore, as the collection is consolidated with the Library's OPAC navigation system called E-TOPIA, one can utilize advanced search strategies from its Education Search System, which is basically similar to that of Hiroshima University and has various search functions with many encoded categories. Notable features not found elsewhere among the websites in this article include an excellent sorting system (both ascending and descending) by titles, authors, editors, publishers, and dates. Furthermore, one can forward results by e-mail and save the data onto disks. Images that appear by page are vivid and easy to view. Unfortunately, however, the database is somewhat slow in retrieving images and lacks a jump function from one page to another.


The Educational Archive Collection on *Oraimono* at Nara University of Education Library
<http://www.nara-edu.ac.jp/LIB/siryokan.htm>

<http://beth.nara-edu.ac.jp/COLLECTION/collection.htm>

<http://beth.nara-edu.ac.jp/NYOHITSU/female.htm>

<http://www.nara-edu.ac.jp/search.htm>

Orai originally means letter, especially an exchange of correspondence both sent and received. Compilations of such correspondence, called *oraimono*, have a long history that goes back to the late Heian period. Use of *oraimono* as textbooks for commoners from the premodern period lasted through the early Meiji era. While children of the samurai class used Chinese books at *hankō* (domain school), commoners' children learned practical skills, manners and knowledge necessary for everyday life at neighboring schools called *terakoya*, where the focus was on mimicking samples of correspondence. The Educational Archive Collection on *Oraimono* at the Nara University of Education Library offers images of classical textbooks for letter writing and also pictorial dictionaries. In addition, the archive includes the collection Women's Penmanship that collects model letter writings for females. The *Oraimono* and Women's Penmanship collections are both accompanied by readable annotations to provide useful background information for each title. As the original collection had been well preserved, digitized images in this archive are vivid enough to reflect the high quality of premodern woodblock printing techniques. It was believed that about 1,500 kinds of *oraimono* for women existed during the Edo period. Women's Penmanship may be good evidence that the embryo of the nation-wide schooling system existed in the premodern period although the concept of male superiority was then prevalent. Because of the limited size of the collection, the archive has a list of titles and offers a keyword search by simply combining words while adding AND, OR, and NOT between words. Unique features of this archive are that one can view both right and left pages at a time, as well as jump to desired pages to view, which is the same feature seen at the Hiroshima University Textbook Collection.



Waseda University Library
<http://www.dept.edu.waseda.ac.jp/textdb/>

The Textbook Screenings Committee of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology reviews targeted textbooks for each type of school and grade level every four years. In the latest screening for junior high textbooks, which took place in 2001, literary masterpieces by Natsume Sōseki and Mori Ōgai that have been beloved by many Japanese disappeared from the authorized textbooks. This could be a result of the implementation of a five-day school week, which led to a 30% reduction of teaching content to complement the ministry's new teaching guidelines to adapt to more flexible education. The Japanese language Textbook Database developed by Waseda University is an indispensable tool for tracking such changes in the content of textbooks, which varies as time goes by. For instance, the database can provide a quick answer to what sections of Sōseki's *Kokoro* (Heart) and Ōgai's *Maihime* (Dancing Girl) are used in high school textbooks, or which chapter of *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness) is most frequently used. As the system accommodates name variations, one can enter any permutation: for example, "Fujiwara Teika," "Fujiwara no Sadaie," "Fujiwara Sadaie," and "Teika" are all equally effective. Also, the system has flexible search functions, such as a keyword search for traditional *waka* (31-syllable poem) and *haiku* (17-syllable poem), and one can easily find which poem by whom is included in which textbook. Because the database even has a search capability by names of chief editors and editorial boards, one may be able to investigate the patterns of each textbook or publisher so as to understand their "facade." For instance, one can trace what kinds of materials are provided at actual teaching places, what sort of teaching aids are taken into textbooks, why such materials are adopted, or what is the purpose of compilation of particular textbooks. Due to its limitation of coverage (from 1992 through 2000, as of this writing), however, the functionality of this database is currently somewhat restricted. It would be desirable if retrospective data input had been mounted on this database, at least back to the beginning of the cur-

rent authorization system in 1949, to trace changes in Japanese language textbooks after World War II.

A Bibliographical Database on Foreign Language Textbooks
<http://erikawa.s27.xrea.com/dc2/search11.html>

As part of encouraging international understanding in this time of globalization, some Japanese elementary schools have adopted English language education in their curriculum. However, teaching English for elementary schoolchildren at public schools was not really so new. In fact, English language education at elementary schools was commonly found in the Meiji era, though it was not mandatory. A Bibliographical Database on Foreign Language Textbooks developed at Wakayama University is a basic tool for tracking the history of English textbooks in Japan. Titles included in this database are from around 1887 when the country produced their own English teachers, up to 1947. It also has some imported textbooks from the early Meiji period, when teachers mainly relied on foreign-made textbooks. All these English textbooks are divided into 10 categories, such as conversation, reading, grammar, composition, or penmanship. In addition to a keyword search, one can perform various searches by authors, titles, publication dates, authorization dates, publishers, and owners of the original texts. The search results can be sorted in three different ways by selecting categories encoding 18 options such as authorization date, type of schools, and teaching subjects. As of this writing, however, based upon my trial searches, this sorting function seems to be somewhat problematic in term of accuracy when combining more than two fields. Also, a lack of thesaurus control creates a discrepancy of search results between old and simplified *kanji* when entering by Chinese characters. Japanese English education traditionally tends to incline toward reading and grammar. Out of 5,700 titles entered so far, more than half are on reading, followed by penmanship, composition, and grammar. Among the authors of English textbooks included in this database, one may find it interesting to see names like Umeko TSUDA, who was the youngest participant in the Iwakura

Mission, and Bin UEDA, a well-known poet and a translator. Based upon its design, prepared for a front cover page, table of contents, and bibliographic responsibility, the database seems to have the capability for image presentation; however, it contains no images at this moment. For obtaining images of English textbooks, one may use the above-mentioned Textbook Collection at Hiroshima University. (There, by selecting "English" in the field of "teaching subject," one should be able to see full-texts (some are in partial images) of English textbooks used in the prewar period.)

Textbooks are quite distinctive publications. They are neither available at regular bookstores nor included in book reviews. In terms of unavailability through regular bookselling channels, textbooks resemble grey literature. Yet, perhaps the most notable feature of textbooks might lie in that they have to go through screening processes for authorization required by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Nevertheless, even with the Ministry's endorsement, textbooks may not necessarily be used by schoolchildren unless selected by local education boards. The practical value of textbooks as publications, therefore, depends on whether or not they are chosen by local selection committees. Moreover, rumor suggests that textbooks that reduce teachers' time and labor tend to be favored in selection processes in accordance with the local teachers' preferences. The conditions which surround textbook choice are complex and cannot be resolved easily. However, overriding political and diplomatic conflicts or selfish reasons, it would be desirable to have textbooks that would truly support children in cultivating their intellectual quest and ability to learn. Will this be unattainable?

Finally, I would like to mention that, with the exception of the last database on foreign language textbooks, I had opportunities to visit each of their relevant holding libraries in Japan and to meet with their librarians to learn more about their collections. I would like to express my sincere gratitude toward their kind introduction to these wonderful national treasures.