

EAS205 -- REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE STUDENTS

I. Character Dictionaries (*kanji jiten* 漢字辞典):

A. Kanji-English (漢英字典)

1. Hard copy

There are many choices in this category, with more being published every day. My personal recommendation is “Nelson’s,” formally known as *Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, compiled by Andrew Nelson (Tuttle Publishing). Other good choices include Spahn and Hadamitzsky’s *Kanji Dictionary*. How can you tell if your dictionary is good? All good kanji dictionaries should have:

- 5000 or more kanji
- many, many more compounds than characters
- all standard readings of each kanji
- a stroke-order index AND a phonetic index
- BOTH simplified and complex characters (and cross-referencing)

In other words, no matter how much you love it, you may have already outgrown “Kana & Kanji” and it’s time to consider a “grown up” dictionary.

Even if you choose a dictionary with a new, “modified” radical system, it is important to be familiar with the standard traditional system.

Hint: the “new” Nelson’s is not as good as the “old” Nelsons--and the latter is cheaper! Don’t be afraid to buy it used online from bibliofind.com or alibris.com.

2. Electronic dictionaries

They are lightweight, easy to put in your backpack, but often have less information than a hard copy and are much more expensive. Be choosy if this is the direction you want to go--don’t just buy the first one you see. Look for ones based on a good standard dictionary, such as the *Kōjien* 広辞苑 (more on that later). Many students also like the feature of a stylus that lets you write in the character on a screen.

3. Online dictionaries

If you’re short on cash, these can suffice for a while (although you could always use the dictionaries in the library, too). An excellent resource is Jim Breen’s WWWJDIC Japanese-English Dictionary Server at <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>. Another multilingual source is Chinese Characters Dictionary Web at <http://zhongwen.com/zi.htm>

B. Kanji-Japanese (漢和字典)

1. Single-volume

It's good to be familiar with such dictionaries, although not necessary to buy one (at least at this stage). Good 漢和字典 should have 6000 or more characters. They will probably NOT have as many compounds listed as comparable Kanji-English dictionaries, because they are made for Japanese who don't need such things.

2. Multi-volume

When your Kanji-English dictionary isn't enough, where do you turn? Say you're trying to find an obscure character that some jerk in a local bar challenged you to read, and it is not in your Kanji-English dictionary, even when you look it up a second time (sober) the next morning. Your next step should be the *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辞典, affectionately called "Morohashi's" for the editor, Morohashi Tetsuji. (Urban legend has it that he nearly lost his mind working on this dictionary.)

You do not need to purchase this dictionary, but you do need to learn how to use it. Exercises later in the semester will help you along.

II. Bilingual Dictionaries (Wa-ei/Ei-wa 和英・英和)

We will be using the best ones in this course, but those are probably out of your price range. The Cadillac Wa-ei and Ei-wa are published by Kenkyusha, and run about \$120 each. Don't worry--the library has them in the reference section!

If you'd like to invest in a smaller but perfectly servicable wa-ei/ei-wa there are many to choose from. Any of the following publishers are reputable: Kōdansha 講談社, Kenkyūsha 研究社, Sanseidō 三省堂, or Shōgakkan 小学館. Tuttle *might* be OK, but be cautious. Most students are tempted by (and consequently buy) dictionaries with romanization. That's OK at first, but in the end the romanization takes up a lot of room that could be dedicated to more information. In other words, you're missing a lot of words. Look for something with 50-70 thousand entries. This may sound big, but should be quite affordable and not too physically big.

III. Japanese/Japanese Dictionaries (*Kokugo jiten* 国語辞典)

1. Single volume

Most students are entirely daunted by these--but don't be! Again, the larger versions in the library will become your friends, if not your possessions. If you have the cash, I'd recommend the *Kōjien* 広辞苑 (either print or on CD-ROM). If not, Kōdansha, Kenkyūsha, Sanseidō or Shōgakkan all produce wonderfully compact, useful, affordable dictionaries.

2. Multi-volume

The standard multi-volume dictionary for Japanese is the *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* 日本国語大辞典. This has 20 volumes and is arranged in “あいうえお” order. We have a copy of it in the OVERSIZED section of the library (not in the regular reference section!) as well as one in the reference section.

IV. Where does one buy these things?

You have many choices. Here are some starting places:

Online

- <http://www.amazon.com>: they have a decent collection, plus are connected with used booksellers. For books in Japanese, check out <http://www.amazon.co.jp>. However, beware that shipping from Amazon Japan is very expensive (surface mail is no longer an option, so you have to pay for airmail).
- <http://www.sasugabooks.com>: a small Japanese bookseller based in Boston, they'll accept credit cards and Paypal. They are also happy to do special orders.
- <http://www.asahiyausa.com>: their web page is only in Japanese, for the brave at heart. They also have a bricks and mortar store (see below) in NYC
- <http://www.kinokuniya.com/newyork/>: a large chain with brick and mortar in NYC.
- <http://www.alibris.com>: short on cash? Alibris sells mostly used books from around the world.

Bricks and mortar

Kinokuniya 紀伊国屋

1073 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10018
Phone: (212)869-1700

Asahiya 旭屋

360 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 212-883-0011
Fax: 212-883-1011

Bookoff USA Inc (used and discount books)

14 E 41st St # L1
New York, NY 10017
212-685-1410

Sasuga 流石 Japanese Bookstore

7 Upland Road
Cambridge, MA 02140 USA
Phone: (617) 497-5460

Fax: (617) 497-5362
sasuga@sasugabooks.com

V. OTHER REFERENCE BOOKS

You will also need to buy *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*, which is more than the title conveys. It has much useful historical information, way beyond literature. Cheap (\$15-\$20) used copies are often available from amazon.com-- try that before you shell out \$45 for a new copy.