The Development of Document Style from Ancient Ages into Medieval : Examination of Preliminary Essays on “Senji” by Hayakawa Syohachi

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This article introduces the outline of Preliminary Essays on Senji by Hayakawa Syohachi while examining each chapter of the book. Based on the results of the examination, some comments and criticisms are made mainly about his theory on the systematization of Senji and on Hosho.

The Senji essays by Hayakawa are aimed to systematize Senji (a letter to inform low-rank officers of decisions made by high-rank officers) by uncovering such documents from the ninth to tenth century and organizing all of them according to their functions from the perspective of who informs whom. His essays are comprehensive as they cover not only Josen, including Senji sent to Geki, Benkan, and Shoshi, but also other types of Senji, such as Senji from Kebiishi, Senji within one Shi, and Senji of Kuroudo. What he missed in his essays is Senji written by local governmental officers, such as Kokushi Chosen and Daifusen, and Senji within organizations, or family systems, outside of official departments, such as Inzen, Ryoji, Kyoji, and Chojasen. Since they all appeared after the 11th century, however, it is only natural that Preliminary Essays on Senji which focuses on Senji in the ninth to tenth century, does not cover them. If any criticism has to be made against his theory on the systematization of Senji, it is that he failed to refer to Kuzen, a type of Senji written by Shikiji to convey imperial decisions. Thus, his systematization of Senji is almost perfect.

Hayakawa’s study also argues the relationship between Senji and letters of implementation, and discovers that the functions of Hosho and Migyosho originated back in the Nara period from letters of implementation sent and received based on Senji. Moreover, his essays sharply criticize the conventional study of paleography for their insistence that Senji, Hosho, and Migyosho appeared as Kugeyo-monjo in the Heian period. Though it is worth paying attention to Hayakawa’s theory that Senji as well as documents with the functions of Hosho and Migyosho originated back in the eighth century, it is also doubtful that all of Kushikiyo-monjo, letters to put Senji into implementation, had the functions of Hosho or Migyosho. Kansenji, which were issued based on Josen, surely had the function of Hosho, but Kampu did not as they were issued based on Josen (letters from Shokei) and sent from Dajokan, some of whom held the rank of Shokei. Moreover, the conventional study of paleography emphasizes the importance that Hosho and Migyosho were often used in the Heian period, not because of their function as Hosho, but because of their function as Shosatsuyo-monjo.
and private documents. Therefore, despite the criticism from Hayakawa, the conventional study of paleography is still useful in the point that it has established a category of Kugeyo-monjo. However, even though he cannot fully discredit the conventional theory, it is not that Hayakawa’s *Senji* essays as a whole have lost luster. His theory on Hosho and Migyosho has made a significant contribution to the study of ancient paleography.

Key words: *Senji*, Hosho, Memorandum, Letter of implementation, Shosatsuyo-monjo