Abstract: "Saijiki; Hyper-Reading Japanese" is a HyperCard application for the Macintosh DE, and is for students at the intermediate to advanced levels learning to read somewhat sophisticated Japanese essays by themselves. *Saijiki* means notes about yearly events and the nature of the seasons. The six essays in this program were selected from a collection of essays titled "*Kotoba No Saijiki*" (*Saijiki* of words) by Haruhiko Kindaichi (1973), an eminent linguist. The essays introduce Japanese culture, literature and nature as well as language. The computer program includes such features as *kanji* (Chinese characters) reading practice, multiple choice questions on comprehension and a pop-up dictionary with links to the essays. The program also has cultural illustrations and *kanji* stroke-order animations to make the study more interesting. The HyperCard system is interfaced with Kanji-Talk¹, so that three types of Japanese characters (*kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*²) are used. English is also used when necessary.

*Keywords:* HyperCard application, reading Japanese essays, culture, literature, language, animation, courseware, pop-up dictionary, *kanji* practice, questions on comprehension.
Instructors teaching Japanese as a second language confront various problems: one is a lack of adequate teaching materials, especially for intermediate and advanced levels. As a result, instructors teaching the intermediate and advanced courses have to look for or create materials by themselves.

Yet another problem is how to teach a large number of kanji especially in intermediate and advanced levels of courses. For elementary Japanese, a communicative approach is taken at most universities. Thus, at most several hundred kanji and their compounds are introduced. However, kanji knowledge eventually becomes crucial, especially in reading, as the courses become advanced.

This project of creating a HyperCard resource is an attempt to meet my long-time desire to solve these problems and to have the type of teaching material I wished for.4 "Saijiki: Hyper-Reading Japanese" (henceforth "SHRJ") is designed to be used as material for (i) intermediate and/or advanced courses, or (ii) an independent study course, or (iii) individuals who have learned basic grammar and several hundred kanji and their compounds and wish to further their reading ability.

FEATURES OF "SAIJIKI: HYPER-READING JAPANESE"

SHRJ is a HyperCard application for the Macintosh SE interfaced to Kanji-Talk 6.0 which is made by Linguist's Software.5

As shown in Chart 1, the content of SHRJ divides into three major parts: an introduction, six essays, and appendices. These major parts are selectable by choices that appear in the "Directory" which is the starting point of the program. The introduction briefly explains the features of the program and how to use the program. The introduction also serves as a "Help" function which is linked to all other sections in the program.

Chart 1: The content of program

In the directory, six essays are organized according to dates in a calendar, since they are in the Saijiki style of essay collections. The user can start with any essay by clicking on the title of that essay. Students at the intermediate level should find it easier to follow the order recommended in the introduction which indicates the degree of difficulty of the essays.

The six essays are chosen from about 380 short essays by Kindaiichi, such
that the contents range over Japanese culture (art, custom, events), language (origins, accents, sayings), literature (poems), nature, and history.

**Directory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Six Essays</th>
<th>Appendices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How to use this program</td>
<td>(each essay)</td>
<td>1. Maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Help</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Chronology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Animation</td>
<td>3. Accents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Essay Text</td>
<td>4. Poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Dictionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Kanji practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Questions on comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHART 1**

In SHRJ, each essay consists of five sections: an animation, an essay, a dictionary, **kanji** practice and questions on comprehension. The animation shows the stroke order of the title of the essay, and an illustration relevant to its contents. The animation is for entertainment but at the same time, by watching it the student will become familiar with the stroke orders of **kanji** and **kana**.

The student can start with either the text essay or with the dictionary. An advanced student may want to start with the text essay and see how much is understandable without consulting the dictionary. On the other hand, if there are many unknown **kanji** or too much unknown vocabulary, the user had better start with the dictionary.

In the dictionary section, each sentence of the essay is shown, one at a time, one per card. If the sentence is too long, it is divided into two or more parts of reasonable length. The characters are fairly large, so that the intermediate level students will have no trouble reading even complicated **kanji**. A hot-linked pop-up dictionary makes sentence-reading easy. This is different from an ordinary dictionary or a computer program with a
separate dictionary in terms of the
time it takes to look for words.
When the user clicks on a word (or a
phrase) in a sentence, the romanized
reading of a word and its meaning
pops up below the sentence. The
meaning includes grammatical,
cultural and/or simple translation
information as needed. The student
can continue to click on words until
the meaning of the sentence is clear.
To proceed to the next sentence (or
the previous one), the student uses
the arrow button at the bottom of the
card.

When the student has finished
reading the essay with the
dictionary, the next step is to practice
reading kanji. It is up to the student
to decide how much to practice kanji.
The student can also skip some kanji
without practicing them. Or the
student might like to repeat
practicing the same kanji until all
readings are perfectly learned. In
this section, sentences appear with
certain kanji in parentheses. When
the student clicks on one of these
kanji, a pop-up dialog box appears.
The user then types in the equivalent
hiragana reading below. Then, at the
click of the "OK" button, the program
will tell whether the answer is
correct or not. If it is not correct, the
right reading will be provided.

The questions on comprehension
conclude the essay reading. There
are five or six questions for each
essay. Each question begins with the
passage (a part of the essay) relevant
to the question. After reading the
passage, the student clicks the
question button below. A pop-up
dialog box appears, with a question
in English. Three short possible
answers in Japanese are provided
below the question. When the
student clicks on one of the three
answers, the program will indicate
whether the choice is right or not. If
the answer is wrong, the right
answer is provided. I am sure that
students will enjoy these
sophisticated essays.

The appendices include maps of
Japan: one for locations, and one for
the accent distribution, an
explanation of Japanese accents,
Japanese chronology and some
Japanese poems. They are used as
references for the essays, therefore
some vocabulary in the dictionary
and the corresponding information
in the appendices are linked to each
other.

I estimate that students will spend
three to six hours per essay. In
addition, if the program is used for a
course, it is desirable to provide at
least one hour per essay for
discussion and questions.

Examples

Let us look at some of the cards (i.e.,
screens of information) that the
student will see in this program.
When the student first starts SHRJ, the directory card will appear (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The directory**

As a first-time user the student is to click the "Help" button (right-most), which leads to the section on how to use the program, the student clicks on the house icon button which is present in all of the cards. The house button takes the student back to the directory, so that from there the student can go to any of the essays, the introduction, or the appendices. As you can see, the directory is written in kanji and kana. If the main directory is too difficult for the student, clicking the kana translation button (top-right) causes a display of the kana version of the directory. If the English version of the directory is desired, clicking the English translation button (top-left) causes a translation card to appear.

From the directory card, clicking the book icon for *Kawa To Kawa*, "River and Skin" (third book from the right), takes the student to a card showing a closed book titled *Kawa to Kawa* (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Kawa to Kawa**

This card has five buttons in addition to the "Help" and house icon buttons on the right side of the book. Clicking the animation button (top of the five buttons), starts the animation.

From the animation, the student can go either to the text of the essay by clicking the button at the bottom of the card, or to the dictionary. In order to go to the dictionary, the user clicks on the book icon button at the top right of the card which goes back to the closed book with the title, and from there the student clicks on the dictionary button. The first sentence of the essay then appears.

**The Dictionary I**

Supposing the student clicks on the first kanji of the sentence, the reading of the kanji and its explanation will appear below the sentence.

**Figure 3: The Dictionary II**

This first kanji happens to be Mukoojima, a place in northeast Tokyo, so the student might want to see where Tokyo is by clicking the map button provided in the explanation. In this map, the names of Japan's five islands and ten biggest cities are listed in kanji. When the student clicks on Tokyo (first kanji in Ten Biggest Cities, the location (with kana reading of Tokyo) appears on the map as in Figure 4."
Figure 4: The Map

The student can return to the dictionary by clicking the button of the essay on the right side of the map.

The student can also go to the kanji practice for the same essay, Kawa to Kawa. A kanji practice card shows a sentence with some kanji in parentheses.

Figure 5: Kanji Practice I

When the student clicks on the first kanji of the sentence (which is in parentheses), a pop-up dialog box appears. In it, the same kanji is shown in a dialog box. The student types in the hiragana reading for the kanji. The input appears in a small rectangular box below the kanji. The student then clicks the "OK" button and the program tells whether the answer was correct or not. If it was wrong, the program provides the right answer and some (hopefully) relevant comments. (In this case, it says, "There is such a place as Mukaishima." which the student typed in) "But this (particular) place is called Mukoojima."). Such comments are provided for most predictable wrong answers.

CONCLUSION

This article has described a HyperCard program for the Macintosh SE which, it is hoped, will help students of Japanese at the intermediate and advanced levels. It addresses the problem of the difficulty of learning a great number of kanji. "Saiji: Hyper-Reading Japanese" is designed to help students learn kanji by using such HyperCard technologies as pop-up dictionaries and interactive kanji practice programs. Furthermore, students will be stimulated by the original and sophisticated essays the course is based upon.

It is the author's hope that "Saijiki: Hyper-Reading Japanese" will be a help to those students who are taking up the challenge of upper-level Japanese studies, and to instructors who are looking for adequate teaching materials.

NOTES

1 Kanji-Talk 6.0 is in MacKanji 6.0 by Linguist’s Software, Inc. P.O. Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580, Tel (206) 775-1130.

2 Two types of kana, hiragana, and katakana consist of 46 basic letters. Roughly each letter is one syllable. Katakana is usually used for loan words and foreign names.
Kanji, originated from Chinese characters, are use and mixed with kana in sentences. Japanese characters, especially kanji, are explained in detail in Nakajima (1988).

3 Three interesting program concerned with kanji for the elementary Japanese level have been introduced; KanjiCard by Nakajima (1988), Kanji City by Ashworth and Stelovsky (1989), and Kanji Exercises NO. 1 by Anonae Software, P.O. Box 7629, Berkeley, CA 94707 Tel: (415) 527-8006.

4 I have addressed kanji problems, curriculum for intermediate and advanced courses, desired materials for upper-level courses, and computer-assisted language learning, in the 1986 ASPAC (Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast) Conference, the 1987 WCAAS (Western Regional Conference of the Association for the Asian Studies), the 1989 International Conference on Cross Cultural Communication as well as in an article (Hirata: forthcoming).

5 “Saijiki; Hyper-Reading Japanese” uses Macintosh SE or any Macintosh II with a hard disk, HyperCard and Kanji-Talk 6.0.

6 By clicking, we mean pointing to the title of the essay (or other such object) with the mouse and pressing the mouse button.

7 Each card in HyperCard in one screenful of information.

8 This is a simplified version of the accent distribution map by Kindaichi and Akinaga (1981).

9 The author realizes that the advanced students will certainly know where Tokyo is, but this feature may be useful with respect to some of the other cities. Also, the map is designed for students to learn the kanji name of the islands and big cities.

10 A dialog box is a feature of HyperCard which allows the student to talk to HyperCard through the Macintosh keyboard. In this program, dialog boxes are used wherever the student must respond to a question, such as “what is the reading of a given kanji?”
REFERENCES


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FIGURE 1
FIGURE 2
FIGURE 4
(1) 向島といえば、戦前までは東京で
指折りの桜の名所であったが、ひとりの
地方出身の客が、土手の茶店に腰をかけ
て名物の桜もちを食べていた。