

## Studies on the *Kojiki* Preface to the English Translation

*Studies on the Kojiki* (*Kojiki gaku* 古事記学) began at Kokugakuin University 國學院大學 in 2013 as a group project intended to advance research on the *Kojiki* from an interdisciplinary and international perspective. The project has several aims:

1. Compilation of an authoritative transcription of the *kanbun* 漢文 text and a reading (*kundoku* 訓読) of it based on the extant major manuscript and early printed editions and the body of research on them.
2. Examination of issues of terminology and interpretation through text notes that consider positions taken on these issues by premodern commentators and modern researchers.
3. Production of a modern Japanese translation reflecting the understanding gained through the process of compilation and annotation.
4. Provision of additional background information through supplementary notes that consider terminological issues in greater depth than is possible in the text notes or that bring in historical and comparative context.
5. Dissemination of the project's results in both printed form and through a dedicated website, the *Kojiki* Viewer: <https://kojiki.kokugakuin.ac.jp/classics/>.

From 2017 the *Kojiki gaku* project has also included an English translation consisting of a full translation of the original *Kojiki* text and the text notes, along with translations, either in full or abridged, of the supplementary notes.

### Compilation and Annotation

The *kanbun* transcription, *kundoku* reading, modern Japanese translation, and text notes are the work of Taniguchi Masahiro 谷口雅博, professor of ancient Japanese literature at Kokugakuin University, and a team of researchers and graduate students collaborating with him. For its transcription of the *kanbun* text, the *Studies on the Kojiki* research team has taken the earliest extant *Kojiki* manuscript, the Shinpukuji-bon 真福寺本 of 1371–1372, as the base text and collated this manuscript with the other main manuscript and early print editions. Where these versions diverge, the research team has followed the Shinpukuji-bon unless a presumed irregularity makes it difficult to parse the meaning. The research team has focused initially on the *Kojiki* text proper, reserving consideration of the “preface” (*jobun* 序文) for later.

In preparing the *kundoku* reading, the research team has sought to keep as closely as possible to the grammar and style of the *kanbun* text while also taking account of the approaches of earlier commentaries. The text notes focus on items that the research team sees as significant and do not try to cover all phrases occurring in the text. Through these

notes, the research team has attempted to introduce the variety of positions commentators have taken on points of reading and interpretation of the text. Members of the immediate research team have authored some of the supplementary notes; others have been contributed by specialists from a range of fields. The author of each supplementary note is identified at its end.

To coordinate the *kanbun* text, *kundoku* reading, and modern Japanese translation with the commentary, the research team has organized *Studies on the Kojiki* as a series of short chapters. Each chapter consists of a brief section of the *kanbun* text, to which is appended the *kundoku* reading, modern Japanese translation, and commentarial apparatus for that passage. The chapters are being published sequentially in both print and digital form. From 2015 to 2021 the print versions appeared in the dedicated annual periodical *Kojiki gaku* 古事記学. Since 2022 they have been published in the annual research periodical *Kokugakuin Daigaku Kenkyū Kaihatsu Suishin Kikō kiyō* 國學院大學研究開発推進機構紀要 (Transactions of the Organization for Advancement of Research and Development, Kokugakuin University). The chapters are posted simultaneously in digital format on the *Kojiki Viewer* component of the Kokugakuin University Studies on Classical Culture Project (Kokugakuin Daigaku Koten Bunka Gaku Jigyō 國學院大學「古典文化学」事業) website: <https://kojiki.kokugakuin.ac.jp>.

### English Translation

Ignacio Quirós, adjunct professor, Sophia University, and visiting researcher, Kokugakuin University Organization for Advancement of Research and Development, and Kate Wildman Nakai, professor emerita, Sophia University, and visiting professor, Kokugakuin University Organization for Advancement of Research and Development, are responsible for the English translation. Hirafuji Kikuko 平藤喜久子, professor of comparative mythology at Kokugakuin University, and the *Studies on the Kojiki* research team have provided assistance and coordination.

The translators have based their rendering of the *Kojiki* text on the *kanbun* transcription and *kundoku* reading prepared by the *Studies on the Kojiki* research team. Recognizing that the *Kojiki* lends itself to multiple readings and interpretations, they have tried so far as feasible to preserve that characteristic in their handling of the text. They have aimed for a stylistically accessible English version that represents the *Studies on the Kojiki* project's findings as set out in the text notes, modern Japanese translation, and supplementary notes (identified in the translation as “further comments”). At the same time, the translators have tried to produce an English equivalent of the original text that allows the reader to see the grounds for the divergent interpretations introduced in the text notes and further comments.

Differences in syntax and word order in the two languages mean that at times the sequence of text notes and further comments in the English translation varies from the original Japanese version. Text notes have been translated in full. The translators have incorporated the further comments directly into the pertinent text notes, indicating with a

footnote if a further comment has been abridged or paraphrased. They have also added footnotes giving specific page citations for the other texts, commentaries, and sources discussed in the text notes and further comments. Occasionally the translators have provided background information, marked by the acronym TN.

Nine chapters of the English translation appeared in *Kojiki gaku* between 2017 and 2021; later chapters have been published in *Kokugakuin Daigaku Kenkyū Kaihatsu Suishin Kikō kiyō*. As of 2025, the completed chapters of the English translation are being made available as “Kojiki English Translation,” a dedicated section of the Kokugakuin University Studies on Classical Culture Project website. Chapters published previously in *Kojiki gaku* and *Kokugakuin Daigaku Kenkyū Kaihatsu Suishin Kikō kiyō* have been revised on this occasion. The materials published through “Kojiki English Translation” thus represent the most up-to-date version of the *Studies on the Kojiki* translation. Further installments will be added periodically.

### Translation Conventions

- In the interest of readability, the translation uses the standard modified Hepburn system of romanization for phonetic transcriptions of names, terms, and phrases from the *Kojiki* and other Nara-period texts. Romanizations render names and terms according to the modern dictionary pronunciation and do not attempt to indicate historical *kanazukai* spellings or ancient Japanese phonetic distinctions such as the *kō* 甲 / *otsu* 乙 vowels. Ancient usages that later evolved into extended vowel sounds, such as in the honorific prefix *oho* おほ, are indicated by a macron, *ō*.
- Phonetic transliterations from ancient texts follow the rendering given in the *kundoku* version of the edition cited. The translation generally omits phonetic glosses included in the original text.
- The *pinyin* system is used to transliterate Chinese terms.
- Graphs are given for Japanese and Chinese names and terms at their first occurrence and are not repeated unless they are the object of discussion or if desirable for clarity. The graphs for the names of major deities, emperors, and terms recurring throughout the translation are listed in the “Frequently Mentioned Names and Terms” component of the “Kojiki English Translation” site. The graphs for the names of frequently cited commentators and authors can be found in the cumulative “Reference List.”
- Cross-references to other *Kojiki* passages cite the *Studies on the Kojiki* version where possible, referring readers to the pertinent chapter and text note. Citations to sections not yet covered by the *Studies on the Kojiki* project are to the *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 edition compiled by Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀 and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光.
- Footnotes use a shortened citation format. Except when multiple authors share the same surname, citations to modern (Meiji and later) authors provide only the surname; citations

to premodern works give the author's full name. Full bibliographic details of works cited in the footnotes are given in the cumulative "Reference List."

- Citations to the *Kojiki* and other early texts indicate the page numbers of both the original text (generally speaking, the *kanbun* version) as reprinted in the modern edition cited and the *kundoku* version adopted by that edition.

### **Bibliographic Data**

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URL: <https://kojiki.kokugakuin.ac.jp/kojiki-en/>

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