
Senji and Rinji: Perspectives on East Asian Comparative Paleography

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In this paper, a comparison is made between Japanese and Tang Dynasty documents regarding the “宣旨 Senji” and “綸旨 Rinji”. The author, feeling the need for an East Asian paleography, has been examining documents of a style not stipulated in official Japanese decrees, and this paper is a continuation of that effort. The word “ Senji” originated in China and was stipulated in the Taiho ordinance as a term used for the emperor’s orals, but its meaning of being specific to the emperor gradually faded away, leaving only a relationship with the orals.

The “奉勅上宣太政官符 Houchoku-Jousen-Dajoukanpu” was a copycat of a letter of response from the prime minister to the emperor in the Tang Dynasty’s “政事堂 Seiji-dou” and may have been established under 藤原仲麻呂 Fujiwara -no-Nakamaro’s policy of Tang-style government.

On the other hand, “Rinji” was a common noun in China, but it was introduced to Japan through documents written by Buddhist monks who entered the Tang Dynasty and Buddhist documents. Initially, it meant only the emperor’s order, but later its function changed, and the function of the emperor’s order was added by “藏人 Kuroudo” to “奉書 Housho”, and it was considered to have been transformed into a medieval document.

Key words: Senji, Houchoku-Jousen-Dajoukanpu, Rinji, East Asian Comparative Paleography, Comparison of Japan-Tang