
記録の文体——選び取られた漢文訓読体

The Choice of a Sinicized Form of Japanese for Chronicling the Iwakura Mission

古田島 洋介

KOTAJIMA Yōsuke

岩倉遣外使節団 (1871-73) にとって、欧米事情の視察は条約改正と並ぶ大きな使命であった。ただし、漫然たる物見遊山とは異なり、明治新政府肝煎りの視察である以上、当然そこでは記録の行為が必要とされる。そして、現在ならば写真や動画などの視覚媒体が果たすべき役割を、当時においては「文章」という書写媒体がほとんど一手に引き受けねばならなかった。

「ほとんど」と言うのは、些少の写生画(スケッチ)や銅版画が有力な補助手段ともなったからである。

では、初めて目にする欧米の新文物をどのような文体で捉えるべきか。『米欧回覧実記』を綴った久米邦武(くめくにたけ) (1839-1931) は、当初それなりに迷ったものと想像される。というのも、今日ならば日本語の文章はほぼ口語体の一本槍、時に交うるに文語風の表現を以てするだけであるが、明治初期の日本語は種々の文体が可能だったからである。各種の文物を記すとなれば、西鶴流の文章もあり得ただろう。書簡文のみならず、公文書にまで用いられていた候文もある。好みとあらば、雅文体(擬古文)を持ち出すこともできただろう。今は記録体とも呼ばれる吾妻鏡(あづまかがみ)体(東鑑体)すなわち変体漢文もあった。その気になりさえすれば、訓読(くんどく)を前提として純粋な漢文を操る道すら存在したのである。事実、新見正興(しんみまさおき)を正使とする万延元年(1860)の遣米使節は、江戸幕府の将軍からアメリカの大統領に宛てる書簡を漢文・和文・英文のいずれにすべきか議論したあげく、和文で綴ることに決め(!)、「うやうやしく亜墨利加

Alongside revising the unequal treaties, one of the primary goals of the Iwakura Mission of 1871 to 1873 was studying things American and European. But the mission was not a leisurely sightseeing trip; it was a tour of observation under the auspices of the recently established Meiji government. Naturally, therefore, everything needed to be recorded. Virtually all records of the journey had to be kept in the medium of writing, even where today they would have taken the form of visual media such as photographs or videos. I say “virtually all” because a few sketches and copperplates served as valuable supplementary materials.

The mission was chronicled by Kume Kunitake (1839–1931) in his *Beiō kairan jikki* (*A True Account of a Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europe*). He must initially have wondered what form of Japanese to use to document the cultural institutions of the West that the Japanese would come to see for the first time. Today, virtually all written Japanese is in the colloquial style, with the occasional expression from the classical language. In the early Meiji period, however, several different styles of written Japanese were available. The literary language of the seventeenth-century novelist Ihara Saikaku might have been a possible medium for describing Western culture. There was the epistolary style (*sōrōbun*), which was used not only for letters but also for official documents. Kume could have resorted to the classicizing style modeled on the Heian classics if he had been so inclined. Then there was a hybrid form of classical Chinese known as the Azuma Kagami style (after the medieval chronicle that exemplifies it), now also referred to as the “documentary style.” Kume even had the option, had he wanted to, of writing his account in pure classical Chinese, on the assumption that his

(アメリカ)合衆国の大統領のみもとにまをす」のごとく書き出したのであった(尾佐竹猛『幕末遣外使節物語』岩波文庫、2016年/p.29)。

結局、久米は漢文訓読体を基調とする片仮名交じりの文語体で『米欧回覧実記』を綴った。それは江戸時代に儒者たちが用いていた文体であり、久米が自身の素養に忠たらんとした結果でもあろう。昌平覺で学び、弘道館で教鞭を執った久米には、豊かな漢学の素養があった。もちろん、欧米の新たな文物を表現すべく、漢字の造語力に恃(たの)むところ大であったがためにも違いない。かつて杉田玄白・前野良沢らが『解体新書』(1774年)を漢文に訳して西欧の医学を日本に移植したのと同じく、久米は漢文訓読体を以て欧米の文物を日本に紹介したのであった。

readers would read it as Japanese. Indeed, when an embassy led by Shinmi Masaoki visited the United States in 1860, a debate arose as to whether the shogun's letter to the American president should be written in classical Chinese, Japanese, or English. It was finally decided to use Japanese. The letter opened in flowery Japanese, "I respectfully address the President of the United States of America."*

In the end, Kume composed his chronicle in a mixture of kanji and katakana in what was essentially the *kanbun kundoku* style: a Sinicized form of literary Japanese in the style of a translation from classical Chinese. It was the style used by Confucian scholars in the Edo period, and he chose it, presumably, because he wished to stay true to his educational roots. Kume was well versed in the Chinese classics, having studied at the Shōheikō, the official academy of the Tokugawa shogunate, and taught at the Kōdōkan academy in Saga domain. Another reason for his choice, no doubt, was the ease with which kanji could be used to form new words to describe unfamiliar Western concepts and things. A century earlier, in 1774, Sugita Genpaku and Maeno Ryōtaku had introduced Western medicine to Japan by publishing a translation of a Dutch anatomy text into classical Chinese under the title *Kaitai shinsho* (New book of anatomy). Kume similarly employed the *kanbun kundoku* style to acquaint Japan with Western culture and technology.

*Osatake Takeki, *Bakumatsu kengai shisetsu monogatari* (Tales of overseas missions at the end of the Edo period) (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 2016), p. 29.