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FUKUDA, Chizuru
Faculty of Arts and Science, Kyushu University

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[要旨] 日本では、様々な鷹を鷹狩に用いていたが、鷹の種類により鷹の飼育法は異なる。特に 16 世紀になると、それまでの鶴や隼に変わって、大鷹で鶴を取る鷹狩が流行する。自然界の猛禽類は自分より大きい獲物を取る危険な狩はしないので、鷹に鶴をとるように仕向けるための人為的な訓練が必要であった。こうした実践的な鷹術が、17 世紀初頭には鷹書として記録された。17 世紀後半になると、隼でも鶴を取る方法が試みられるようになる。この小論では、そうした鷹書を用いて、日本の鷹狩文化の特質に言及する。

[Abstract] Varieties of Taka(*taka* 鷹) were used in Japanese falconry. The breeding method of birds of prey differs depending on the type of hawks or falcons. Especially in 16th century, falconry with Northern Goshawks catching cranes became popular instead of hunting with Peregrine falcons or Eurasian Sparrow-hawks. In the natural world, birds of prey do not engage in dangerous forms of hunting, such as trying to catch prey larger than themselves, it was necessary to train birds of prey to artificially engage in such behavior. These practical falconry methods were recorded as falconry text in the early 17th century. In the latter half of the 17th century, even falcons began to try to catch cranes. This essay examines falconry texts to reveal the methods used to train birds of prey and refers to these characteristics of Japanese falconry culture.

[Keywords:] falconry text, Northern Goshawks catching cranes, Falcons catching cranes, breeding method

Introduction

The main varieties of Taka¹(*taka* 鷹) used in Japanese falconry were Northern Goshawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Eurasian Sparrow-hawks. On rare occasions, Japanese Sparrow-hawks and Mountain Hawk-eagles were also used. After restrictions on the use of Taka were lifted during the Meiji period, large species of Eagle were also used by the *Matagi*, traditional winter hunters in the Tōhoku region.

Within this general framework, one unique aspect of Japanese falconry culture was the technique of using Northern Goshawks to catch cranes. In the middle of the Edo period, Hitomi Hitsudai provided a commentary on the Japanese culture of eating cranes in *Honchō Shokkan* (*An Overview of the Food of Japan*), a book written in 1692 and published in 1697 (Tōyō Bunko, Heibonsha). His commentary is as follows:

It is unclear when cranes first began to be treated in Japan as a “delicacy.” However, it is only recently that Taka have begun being used to catch cranes. Few Taka are capable of catching cranes, and those that are adept at doing so are referred to as “the Taka catching cranes” and shown greater affection than other birds. While cranes are not eaten in China and Korea because they are considered auspicious symbols of

a long life, in Japan, they are used as gifts to convey ceremonial congratulations. The first cranes to be captured in autumn are presented to the shogun as the “first cranes.” The first cranes captured by the shogun are, in turn, presented to the Imperial Court. At the beginning of each year, the Imperial Court holds a “*tsuru-no-hōchō*” (crane-cooking) banquet. What remains of the shogun’s offerings to the Imperial Court are presented to relatives and daimyō. The relatives and daimyō then hold their own banquets, where the gifted cranes are prepared and savored.

In short, the enjoyment of cranes is a unique feature of Japanese food culture. Cranes are not eaten in China or Korea. Although it is not clear exactly when Japanese people began to eat cranes, historically, the practice of using Taka to catch cranes did not exist for very long before the end of the seventeenth century. Northern Goshawks, capable of catching cranes, are also quite rare.

In his *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*), the Buddhist Monk Yoshida Kenkō (a famous essayist of the early Japanese Middle Ages, who lived between 1283 and 1352), wrote: “For fish, carp. For birds, pheasant.” According to a cookbook from the middle of the fifteenth century, *Shijōryū Hōchōgaki* (*Cookbook of the Shijō School*), “In speaking of fowl, what is really meant is pheasant.” In other words, the

best-quality fowl of the Middle Ages was the pheasant. As we saw earlier with *Honchō Shokkan*, this view began to shift during the Edo period, with cranes surpassing pheasants as the foremost delicacy among fowl. Naturally, this shift from pheasants to cranes was not unconnected to the sixteenth-century rise in the popular falconry technique of catching cranes with Northern Goshawks.

In the natural world, birds of prey do not engage in dangerous forms of hunting, such as trying to catch prey larger than themselves. To catch large birds such as cranes using falconry, it was necessary to train birds of prey to artificially engage in such behavior. This need drove the development of falconry techniques for catching cranes. In the sixteenth century, this technique was still a secret, part of the hidden experiential wisdom of falconry experts, transmitted through oral instruction. Only during the seventeenth century was this technique included in falconry texts, so that it could be imparted to future generations. This chapter examines falconry texts to reveal the methods used to train birds of prey during this period.

1. *Shinshū Takakyō*'s Technique for Raising Hawks (*The New Edition of the Hawk Scriptures*)

In the Middle Ages, *Shinshū Takakyō* (in three volumes) was regarded as a hawk-raising bible. This text was commissioned in 818 by Emperor Saga (786–842). It was a “new edition”; no documents in China or elsewhere have been identified as its original source material. Instead, there is a strong possibility that it was compiled first in Japan, although influenced by the hawk poetry in Tang dynasty texts, such as the *Yi-wen lei-ju* and *Chu-xue-ji* (see Akiyoshi Masahiro, 2004). Of the various copies of the text that exist, the oldest can be found in the Sonkeikaku Library collection. Although it is unclear how it came to be in that collection, it appears to be a copy made during the late Muromachi period (about the first half of the sixteenth century). Unfortunately, the first part of the text is missing. The remaining copies of the text are no older than the Edo period, when annotated editions were also produced (Miho Tadao, 2016). Among these, one annotation has attracted particular attention: *Shinshū Takakyō Genkai* (held in the Naikaku Library Collection) was composed by members of the Hayashi family, neo-Confucian advisors to the

shogunate, following instructions provided in 1718 by Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth shogun. This annotation included the Japanese kana script alongside the original classical Chinese characters, rendering it easier to read. The existence of such a text suggests that, even during the Edo period, *Shinshū Takakyō* was still regarded as a key resource on hawks. It was also included in the *Gunsho Ruijū* collection of old Japanese literature and history texts, assembled during the late Edo period by Hanawa Hokiichi (1746–1821) (in band 356).

As mentioned above, *Shinshū Takakyō* was a favorite book, even during the Edo period. However, it is important to note that the book describes how to raise hawks in medieval falconry.

The first volume of *Shinshū Takakyō* consists of the following sections: forms; overall methods for discerning hawks of differing quality; methods for discerning the condition of various parts of hawks; capturing young (agake) hawks with a net or taking them from the nest as chicks; and methods of handling falcons. Here, the term “hawks” refers to Northern Goshawks and Falcons (Note: the illustrations appear to depict a hawk variant, not a falcon). Another noteworthy point is the fact that this ninth-century text already provides knowledge about ways of capturing one-year-old yellow hawks with a net (agake), and ways of taking “chicks from nests” (sudaka).

The middle volume has 19 entries, which provide concise explanations of various topics, including recuperation, methods of keeping hawks, and techniques for hawking in fields. The final volume includes 13 entries on different parts of hawks and methods for treating various ailments. Interestingly, from the middle volume onwards, the hawk-related information has been supplemented with information about Eurasian Sparrow-hawks. This detail has attracted particular attention from researchers.

The middle-volume section on ways of keeping hawks covers topics such as how to create a coop, and the importance of giving birds somewhere to bathe. It also includes the following comments about food:

“To raise hawks of decent weight, feed them with the meat of horses, pigs, rabbits, mice, and cock pheasants.”

The text then offers essential tips on feeding hawks, including the size of the pieces of meat, how to clean them, and how to mix in bird feathers. It notes that, when hunting, it is best to prepare meat five to six days before the hunt (or ten days before for very heavy hawks). The birds can then be fed every other day, or every two or three days. Hawks with low body weight can be fed the sliced meat of pigs or rabbits, washed first in hot water. It is also essential to wash the meat of horses and mice. When using cock pheasants or waterfowl (mandarin ducks, herons, etc.), the breast should be cut open and the meat soaked in warm water. Eurasian Sparrow hawks should be conditioned with a diet of quails, sparrows, and rabbits. When this has been done, a bell can be attached to the hawk, which is then ready to be used for hunting, where it can be released before a pheasant. Once the hawk has taken a pheasant, both male and female birds should be granted. Eurasian Sparrow hawks can be released before quails or other small birds. Energetic Eurasian Sparrow hawks can also be used to catch pheasants, although sluggish hawks are unsuitable. In this context “releasing” a hawk means taking a bird that is perched on a falconer’s arm, turning it towards its prey, and letting it loose.

One point that stands out in this text is the use of meat from four legged animals, such as horses, pigs, and rabbits, to fatten up hawks. However, this advice may have been written with Northern Goshawks in mind, as these were widely used in China and Korea. *Shinshū Takakyō* also covers methods of raising and keeping Eurasian Sparrow-hawks, a smaller species of hawk that was frequently used in Japan in ancient times and during the Middle Ages. On this point, the text may be unique in comparison to guides written inside and outside Japan. This subject requires further investigation in the future.

During this period, the largest prey were pheasants, with Eurasian Sparrow-hawks primarily used to catch quail and other small birds. This proves that using hawks to catch cranes was not a traditional falconry technique. Hence, although *Shinshū Takakyō* explains how to look after the Northern Goshawks, Falcons, and Eurasian Sparrow-hawks, it does not address the topic of catching cranes. We may conclude that Japanese falconry at this stage was characterized by a “cooperative” approach, in which humans made use of the capacities that wild birds of prey already possessed in the

natural world.

2. Catching Cranes with Northern Goshawks

Most of the Taka used to capture cranes were the Northern Goshawks. The females of this species were valued more than males, due to their larger size. Of particular value were hawks born during the same year, which had not yet molted. Even when it was possible to secure such young hawks, training them to capture cranes was a difficult process. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), known for his love of falconry, kept many excellent Taka. Among these, one Northern Goshawk, known as “Kufushi,” was particularly special. It is recorded that, of the 135 cranes captured by Tokugawa Ieyasu’s Taka in the year 1608, 110 were captured by Kufushi (“*Tōdaiki*,” *Zoku-Gunshoruiju Kanseikai*). In other words, approximately 81% were captured by one hawk. This was not simply a large number; it also reflects an incredible success rate. The account that included this information was written on the occasion of the death of Ieyasu’s falconer, Toda Yoshihisa. We surmise that these results were the combined product of the capacities of a first-rate hawk, and the technique used by a superior falconer. Although hawks capable of catching cranes could do so continuously, few hawks were able to perform this feat at all. To provide the special training required, it was necessary to have a falconer with a wealth of knowledge and specialized techniques.

This point is further demonstrated by the case of another falconry lover, Hosokawa Tadatoshi, the daimyo of the Kumamoto Domain in Higo Province. In 1635, Hosokawa Tadatoshi owned only five Northern Goshawks that were capable of catching cranes (listed below). Incidentally, a number of different names were used to describe hawks based on age. Hawks that had grown from chicks into young hawks during that year were referred to as “kidaka” (yellow hawks). These hawks were kept in special coops during their first molting. Once the first molting was concluded, they were removed from these coops (known as “toya”) and referred to as “kata-toya” (that is, half-cooped-meaning two-year-old hawks that had partially molted). Three-year-old hawks, which had completed their second stay in a coop, were referred to as “moro-toya” (fully-cooped). Older hawks were referred to as “san-toya” (third coop), “yon-toya” (fourth coop), and so on,

depending on the number of times they had molted in coops. The following text is an explanation given by Tadatoshi to a friendly acquaintance, Toda Ujikane (the daimyō of Ōgaki Domain in Mino Province), who wanted some hawks that could catch cranes.

1. The seventeen-year-old hawk received from Kanamori Shigeyori (daimyō of the Hida-Takayama Domain) captured 11 cranes. It would capture at a muscle weight of eight per ten; however, as it is now getting too old, this year it might not be able to manage this anymore.
2. The eight- or nine-year-old hawk received from Ogasawara Tadazane (daimyō of the Kokura Domain in Buzen Province) captured 60 –70 cranes. It also caught some white-naped cranes. Since receiving it, this hawk has caught 13 cranes in total. It did this at a muscle weight of approximately eight. It was also capable of catching ducks and crows. It has not yet been released at geese. It is not averse to being on the arm of someone other than its trainer (*kobushigirai*).
3. The roughly four-year-old hawk received from Date Masamune (the daimyō of Sendai Domain in Mutsu Province) was used for the first time last year. It is a particularly excellent hawk and captured two or three cranes. However, it has been injured, so I am not currently having it hunt. When hunting ducks, it catches with a muscle weight of 12. It is excellent at catching geese, catching crows with a muscle mid-weight, and bean geese. It is a “well-tempered hawk.”
4. The two-year-old hawk owned by his father, Sansai, captured a crane at a muscle weight of seven. It has a dripping nose, so I am not keeping it in the weight range for catching cranes right now.
5. A 17-year-old hawk. Last year, it succeeded in catching one crane at a muscle weight of seven, but has not managed to do so since.

As we can see from this explanation, Hawk No. 3 was “well-tempered” and still young. Tadatoshi therefore recommended this particular bird, and gave it to Ujikane. The other hawks were less suitable: Hawk No. 1 was already old; Hawk No. 2 was skilled at catching cranes, like Ieyasu’s hawk,

Kufushi, however, it was getting on in years. Hawk No. 4 was ill; Hawk No. 5 was old and had unfortunately succeeded in catching a crane only once.

Later, Tadatoshi received a request for hawks from Honda Tadayoshi (the daimyō of the Himeji Shinden Domain in Harima Province). Tadatoshi explained that he was not unwilling to send hawks, but that the situation was as described above. Although he owned around ten hawks, ranging in age from two to four or five years old, none were of particularly high quality. Tadatoshi apologetically explained that he would be happy to give away any of his hawks apart from No. 3, which had already been given to Toda Ujikane. Alternatively, he noted that he planned to secure some Korean Northern Goshawks the following spring, and would be happy to send such a bird at that time, if that would be acceptable (*Hosokawa-ke Shiryō*).

As we can see from the above, although many daimyō wanted to own hawks that were capable of catching cranes, this was quite a difficult proposition. Even especially important (*kunimochi*) daimyo, such as Hosokawa Tadatoshi, who ruled over Higo Province, found it difficult to source these hawks. Those able to catch cranes were seen as very precious, even when they were old (e.g., 17 years old), like No. 1 and 5 above. Furthermore, as Tadatoshi points out in a different letter, all of his crane-catching hawks had been gifts received from other daimyō. The Hosokawa clan itself had not mastered the technique of training hawks to catch cranes. To train its hawks, it had to request assistance from the falconer of Nabeshima Katsushige in the neighboring domain of Saga (Fukuda Chizuru, 2020).

In summary, as it became more popular to catch cranes with Northern Goshawks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and during the Kanei era (1624–1644), there was a high demand for hawks with the necessary ability. At this point, the technique for teaching hawks to catch cranes had never been publicly shared as common “wisdom.” Since the method was still a school secret, daimyō had to rely heavily on the experiential knowledge and skills of individual falconers.

Among these skilled falconers, one individual who perfected the technique for catching cranes was Ikenouchi

Yoshinaga. Initially, Ikenouchi served the Gamō clan of the Aizu Domain in Mutsu Province. There, he studied falconry techniques from some of the top pupils of Nezu Shōyōken (the restorer of Nezu school, which is one of the famous falconry art schools), including Arai Buzen-no-Kami and Asari Hyogo-no-suke. Leaving the Gamō clan after a period of internal strife, Ikenouchi was taken into the service of the Katō clan, rulers of the Kumamoto Domain in Higo Province. In Kumamoto, he studied the Ōsaki school of falconry from fellow falconer Kanda Shuri before leaving Kumamoto to return to the Aizu Domain, where he learned the secret Arai school falconry technique from Tōshichirō, a “descendant” of Arai Buzen-no-Kami. In 1633, Ikenouchi compiled everything he had learned into the “*Taka-kuden-sho*” (Secret Instructions on Hawks), which he passed down to his son, Kumanoshin. Most of the texts passed down by Ikenouchi had no cover. This one, however, was a properly bound book, with a deep blue cover attached using the book binding technique known as “*retchōsō* 列帖装.” An explanatory inscription at the end of the book says, “In these seven sections, I have written down the fruits of my experience, having first carefully studied the entirety of the three schools of Asari Hyogo-no-suke, Arai Tōshichirō, and Ōsaki Saemon-no-jo. [This text] contains my knowledge of how to feed [hawks] so that they may be capable of catching cranes and geese. If you study this text carefully in your raising of hawks, they will surely grow to become excellent specimens. This text contains the mysteries of the art and should be kept hidden.” In short, the message explains that the text is a so-called “book of secrets” (*hidensho*), which compiles the methods that Ikenouchi Yoshinaga developed to raise hawks capable of catching cranes and geese. He arrived at these methods through his own experience, after inheriting the techniques used by various falconry schools.

Ikenouchi Yoshinaga also left behind a substantial falconry record entitled “*Otake Shishi Ate no Nikki*.” This diary is extremely valuable for its detailed insights into falconry (Hiroki, 2019). When we examine falconry texts and practical journals, we can see that both mental conditioning (*dekishio*), and muscle training (*shishiate*), are important tools for raising hawks capable of catching cranes or geese. Mental conditioning refers to the hawk’s mental training, which makes it obedient and eager to catch cranes and geese. Muscle training is weight training, which ensures that the hawk is strong enough to hold down larger prey, and prevent it from

escaping. It is particularly important to ensure that hawks have sufficient muscle mass; their diets are adjusted appropriately to achieve the ideal body mass of “ten.” The key to success in hunting is to finely adjust the weight of each hawk, depending on its condition and the type of bird to be hunted.

Ikenouchi Yoshinaga’s falconry techniques spread beyond the Kumamoto Domain. First, Nabeshima Katsushige of the neighboring Saga Domain learned of Ikenouchi’s method of training hawks to catch cranes. The dialogue between these two men was recorded in a volume produced on September 3, 1624, entitled “*Record of Instructions from Ikenouchi to Nabeshima*.” The text reveals that Ikenouchi had already mastered the secret of catching cranes and geese. Nine years later, he refined this knowledge, incorporating it into the previously mentioned “*Taka-kuden-sho*.”

Indeed, almost all of the knowledge in Japan on using hawks to catch cranes and geese seems to derive from Ikenouchi’s falconry technique. Evidence of the importance of this lineage can be seen in the text, *Taka no Sho: Suwa-han ni Nokoru “Takasho (Dai)” no Honkoku to Chūkai (Texts on Falconry: Reprints with Annotation of the “Texts on Falconry (Large)” Extant in Suwa Domain)*, which was reprinted by the Society for Texts on Falconry. Of the book’s 11 chapters, three (Chapters 2, 3, and 5) are copied from Ikenouchi Yoshinaga’s writings on falconry.

In 1632, Ikenouchi’s lord, Katō Tadahiro (the daimyō of the Kumamoto Domain in Higo Province) was deprived of his fief. Ikenouchi’s son, Ikenouchi Kumanoshin, was summoned to serve the Kuroda clan of Chikuzen Province. Changing his name to Seidaifu Yoshihisa, he became an attendant to the clan’s second daimyō, Kuroda Tadayuki. He was granted use of the family name Kuroda, and a fief of 4000 koku (koku; a denomination of rice produced annually by the farmers within the fief). While he was no longer serving as a falconer, the Kuroda clan received transcriptions of some falconry writings handed down to him. Through the book collection of the Matsudaira clan of Shimane, these transcriptions eventually made their way to the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency (The Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency, 1931). Ikenouchi had managed to almost perfect his falconry technique for catching cranes. This technique was then

transformed into pearls of wisdom accessible through the written word, ensuring that his knowledge would continue to play an important role in Japan's broader falconry culture well into the future.

3. Catching Cranes with Falcons

According to one legend, the “*agetaka*” method used with falcons was created by the Yokoi family, rulers of Akame castle in Owari. Handed down within this family was a text entitled *Kokin Imakagami* (*The New Mirror of the Past and Present*), which contained the following explanation:

I am not sure who it was, but when the ancestor of the Yokoi family was passing by Ikoma-ga-ike lake” at Kiyosu in Owari Province, there was a falcon flying above it. When a fishmonger used a pole to drive away ducks on the lake, the falcon would swoop down to capture them. When, on another occasion, he held out a pole [at that lake], a falcon appeared from afar, approaching the surface. After observing this behavior, the ancestor developed the technique of “*agetaka*.” As a result, the Yokoi family came to be regarded as “skillful with Taka (referring to Falcons).”

The 4th head of the Yokoi family, Tokiyasu, was known for his refined knowledge of Falcons. In fact, he received a red-seal license to use Taka at any location from the unifier Toyotomi Hideyoshi himself. Therefore, we can surmise that this legend has some basis in fact.

According to *Hōyō* (edited by the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency, p. 362), the “*agetaka*” technique is as follows: The falcons are first made to circle high in the air. As they are given signals from the ground to guide them toward their prey, the targeted birds are frightened to drive them forward, allowing them to be caught. This approach makes use of the falcon's instinctual behavior, allowing them to suddenly plummet downward, striking birds in order to capture them.

Passed down within the Yokoi family was a small horizontal booklet with the title, *Taka no Sho* (Writing on Falconry) (*Hachikai-shishi, shiryō hen 2*). The subtitle



Fig.1 “*marutori*”, falconry scrolls, the scene which is calling the Northern Goshawk on the top left to attack a duck attached to an “*okinawa*” rope.

“Method of Keeping Falcons” was inscribed on the inside cover. As can be surmised, this text consisted of instructions on caring for falcons, divided into 31 topics. Compiled in 1631 by Tokiyasu's son, Tokinaga, it includes falconry techniques passed down for generations. On the topic of “*agetaka*,” it argues that falcons do not need more muscle weight than normal. However, the technique requires falcons to fly high in the sky, and so it is essential that they are trained to attack so-called “*marutori*.” Here, “*marutori*” refers to living birds, such as pigeons, which are tied to a long silk thread, known as an “*okinawa*,” and allowed to fly about. The falcons were then trained to attack these birds. Falcons capable of such attacks, known as “*kakerasu*,” can then be trained to fly in circles in the sky. Subsequently, they are brought to a body of water, which can be splashed to force wild ducks and similar birds to take flight. The falcon was trained to use this opportunity to catch the startled prey. Those that achieve this can be made to remember the pole used to startle the prey, ensuring that they stay near the water. The text then lays out methods for raising



Fig.2 “*Okinawa*”, Falconry List, owned by National Archives of Japan. Overview of various tools used by falconers. In the red line of center is a depiction of the “*okinawa*” rope.

one-year-old falcons, and falcon fledglings. Unfortunately, space does not allow us to examine these methods here. It is worth noting, however, that the text repeatedly states that the prey caught using “*agetaka*” are ducks. It is the method used to catch waterfowl, which is an essential issue.

The final section of “*Taka no Sho*” addresses the subject of geese, introducing a method for catching them with falcons, known as “*yarikake*.” According to the instructions, the falconer should dress like a peasant and pretend to swing a hoe. A “*marutori*” can be shown to a flying falcon to prevent it from noticing that it is being lured in to attack a goose. When the falcon tries to catch the “*marutori*,” it is suddenly hidden. Losing sight of the “*marutori*,” the falcon will naturally try to attack the goose. If this pattern is repeated a number of times, the falcon will naturally learn to approach geese. This section ends with the following explanation: “At the present moment (early seventeenth century), the method of launching Falcons at geese is the same method used with Northern Goshawks. However, if the Falcon does not take down the goose right away, it will end up flying off a long way in pursuit. It is therefore important to use a kind of silk rope known as an “*okinawa*” when launching Falcons at geese.” Here, we find a deep understanding of the different characteristics of Northern Goshawks and Falcons; the use of an “*okinawa*” is suggested to prevent Falcons from flying far away. More importantly, however, it is clear that falcons were not used to catch cranes at all.

Once we reach the second half of the seventeenth century, we come across attempts to use falcons to catch cranes. In 1670, Hiroha Yoshikatsu wrote a text on falconry, which was also called *Taka no Sho*. This text was passed down within the Hiroha family, who served as feudal retainers in the Fukuoka Domain. Some 70 years earlier, in March 1601, Hiroha Heiemon was invited by the first lord, Kuroda Nagamasa, to serve as head falconer in exchange for a stipend of 150 koku. Unfortunately, Heiemon’s son passed away early in life, when his grandson Hachishirō was not yet of age. As a result, the annual stipend ended after Heiemon’s death. After 1635, Hachishirō received a small stipend to serve as a personal attendant to the second daimyō, Kuroda Tadayuki. After coming of age, he began to work as a falconer. Considering his age, it seems that this Hachishirō was, in fact, Yoshikatsu.

According to the first section of “*Taka no Sho*,” young Taka (both Northern Goshawks and Falcons) in their second year should not be launched at ducks alone. Instead, they should be launched at whatever prey they prefer, following their first molting. The reason for this is that, although “brave” Taka can catch prey at any time, continuously launching more “hesitant” Taka at ducks will cause them to refuse to hunt. This will also make it difficult to launch them at cranes. Instead, “shy” Taka should be encouraged to gradually become “brave.” Here, the falconer’s artifice is particularly important.

As the passage above illustrates, this text taught falconers how to train Taka to catch cranes. The second section includes the following instructions:

In order to teach Falcons to hunt cranes, they should first be launched at four or five geese. Afterwards, if they show an inclination for hunting birds, such as the great egret, spoonbill, or grey heron, that is a good sign that they may be capable of catching cranes. Like Northern Goshawks, Falcons are not very aggressive. For this reason, the hunting sessions should be spaced out by four or five days. It is not a poor performance if a falcon catches a goose once every five or ten days. The trick is to prevent falcons from losing their enthusiasm when faced with a crane. When it comes to the weight range needed to catch cranes, ten to 15 days before the hunt, take care to launch the falcon at a cormorant for feeding. A Falcon capable of taking down a cormorant will be able to take down a crane. In any case, be careful not to let the Falcon become despondent and lose its will to hunt.

The instructions above clearly indicate a method of teaching falcons to catch cranes. In the third section, these instructions are followed up with more concrete methods for catching cranes. The core of the teaching is covered in the following section:

Build up the falcons’ muscles and launch them at a black kite or crow, before having them catch a crane. Whether the prey is a crane or a bean goose, it should first be thrown for the falcon to catch. Stitch the crane’s eyes closed. Bind its feet with leather and place it in a bag. Cover the crane with a net and allow the falcon to keep seizing it. In general, it is important to provide a falcon with living domesticated cranes.

Wild birds, even after being caught by a falcon, try to escape when they see people approaching, striking the falcon. Prepared living cranes will not be afraid of people, but will simply attempt to get away [from the falcon] repeatedly, writhing, and thrashing about as they try to get free. The essential secrets here will be given via oral instruction.

To summarize, after launching falcons at black kites or crows, the falconers should launch them at living cranes (training them by giving them cranes as food). Strong resistance from the cranes can be prevented by sewing their eyes closed, binding their feet with leather, placing them in bags, and covering them with nets. These steps are important for training falcons. We can assume that this approach is more or less the same, regardless of whether one is training Northern Goshawks or Falcons. The next problem involves the Taka's mental state.

The fourth section explains that Northern Goshawks should be fed quietly and slowly, as should Eurasian Sparrowhawk chicks in nests. However, Falcons have a different character, as the following passage explains:

Falcons should be fed quickly, whether or not they are good at hunting. Otherwise, their conditioning will suffer.

In other words, all falcons, whether or not they are skilled hunters, should be fed quickly after they are brought out of their coops. If this is not done, their "conditioning" will suffer, and they will become harder to handle. Northern Goshawks and Eurasian Sparrowhawks should be treated in a fundamentally different way from falcons. This instruction was understood to reflect the different mentalities of various species of Taka.

According to the *O-Daidai Otaka-no-oboe*, a text passed down within the Suō family of falconers, 26 falconers were employed by the third daimyō of Fukuoka Domain, Kuroda Mitsuyuki (1628–1707). Of these, three were responsible for "agetaka" style hunting. Why did this falconry technique emerge? Several factors may have led Hiroha Yoshikatsu to devise a method of training falcons to catch cranes. These factors include the environment of Western Japan, where falcons could be regularly captured within local territories, and the difficult challenge of catching cranes using

rare Northern Goshawks. In the end, the efforts of these Fukuoka Domain falconers bore fruit. During the late Edo period, they succeeded in teaching falcons to catch cranes (Fukuda Chizuru, 2017). Thus, the practice of using Falcons to catch cranes did not necessarily require Northern Goshawks during the Edo period. This development allowed falconers to develop and adjust falconry techniques designed for one species so that they could be applied to another. This aspect of Japanese falconry culture was developed and sustained through direct human intervention.

Conclusions

From the sixteenth century onward, it became popular to use Northern Goshawks to catch cranes in Japan. Building on this new falconry technique, further attempts were made during the seventeenth century to use Falcons to catch cranes. Falconry texts provided an initiation into falconry knowledge, relaying practical techniques, and expanding the shared wisdom within falconry culture. Although these falconry texts explained the technique for catching large birds, they were not published or widely available. Often, falconry wisdom was still handed down from master to student, as a form of secret knowledge passed down through oral instruction. Increasingly, however, a great deal of falconry knowledge was written in manuscript form. By the middle of the Edo period, some of this written heritage was published in print, reaching a larger readership.

It is generally believed that members of the upper samurai class were the only people allowed to engage in falconry during the Edo period. When this topic is considered from a broader perspective, however, it is clear that human relationships with Taka were not limited to high-ranking samurai families. It is important to recognize other groups of people, including falconers, whose steady and sober work supported falconry culture, the regional populations who helped to maintain hawking grounds, and the wealthy classes who, even when not participating directly in falconry, admired hawks and enjoyed reading falconry texts and viewing falconry art. From this perspective, it is clear that the expansion of falconry culture is a complex and nuanced subject, which requires further investigation in the future.

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Note

- 1 The Japanese word “Taka” is used here as a general term for birds of prey in Japanese falconry culture. Readers should bear in mind that “Taka” signifies a broader range of birds of prey than either “hawks” or “falcons.” In addition, the specific birds of prey included within the concept of “Taka” can change, depending on the context.

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