Monday, 23 January 2017, 5.00pm
Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Rooms 8 & 9
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Formats and Contents of Japanese Books: A Meaningful Interrelation
Professor Sasaki Takahiro
Keio University, Shidô bunkô

For many centuries Japanese antiquarian materials (kotenseki 古典籍) have used five types of binding originally invented in China. The choice of one form of binding over another depended on the type of contents contained in the book alongside its purposes. Something similar happened in the case of the script, i.e. the Chinese characters and the two scripts developed from them in Japan (hiragana and katakana). Namely, the aims of a book as well as the conditions of its production determined the choice of what form of writing was used. Therefore, by studying both binding and script, we discover a meaningful interrelation between them and the contents. This type of analysis allows us to gain understanding of the genre consciousness that existed at the time as well as to determine the nature and the value of the verbal text preserved in a physical book. This lecture discusses concrete examples that will shed light on the features of Japanese antiquarian materials, which, in turn, are helpful in the study of Japanese pre-modern culture.

Seminar will be in Japanese with English interpretation

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