

Reconsideration of Media Literacy with Mobile Media

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1. Encounter of media literacy with *keitai*

1.1 What is mobile-phone media literacy?

Today, Japan's mobile-phone culture appears to be highly mature. This is a view widely held among mobile-media researchers. Because third-generation mobile-phone technology has advanced further in Japan than in any other nation and Japan boasts a cultural background amenable to mobile objects and technology, the nation has advanced a step further than other countries and regions, where mobile-phone use is still centered on voice communication and short messaging⁽¹⁾. In this paper, we will refer to the media that gives birth to this highly mature information society not as the "mobile phone" but by the Japanese term, *keitai*. This is due to the fact that, although the state of *keitai* in Japan is not unique to that country, it can be considered a case of a highly advanced form of information technology that is relatively emblematic of characteristics unique to East Asia.

Japan's *keitai* today has two contradictory, separate images⁽²⁾. One is the image of a miniature, high-performance business tool. As *Keitai* has evolved to become a kind of portable computer, it has been accepted as a practical tool that enables high-speed lifestyles and work. The other is the image of a subversive type of media, as exemplified by matchmaking sites, surreptitious photography, and various *keitai*-related incidents that have occurred. In this paper, we will not address the relationship between these two images or their appropriateness. What is important is that both of these images are subject to spirited discussions concerning how to use *keitai* in better and more appropriate ways, or *keitai* "media literacy."

But what is *keitai* media literacy?

Do *keitai* users communicate in hotel lobbies, libraries, and other public places in accordance with accepted manners? Do young people in their teens learn how to write *keitai* text messages correctly and avoid i-mode and ezweb matchmaking websites? From the perspective of advancing research inherent to media culture, it quickly becomes apparent that such activities represent a sort of false enlightenment, nothing more than worthless remedies. This is because such remedies presume that current cultural norms are appropriate, without addressing the fact that the spread of *keitai* use itself undermines and reconstitutes such cultural norms.

Does this mean that *keitai* media literacy is unneeded? Not at all; the attempt to free *keitai* from its two separate images as a business tool or a subversive type of media and to transform it into a medium for public expression and communication is a vital experiment. Over more than a century, the telephone has developed primarily as a familiar tool for personal communication. *Keitai* has been influenced strongly by this state of affairs. Furthermore, with the advancement of technology over the past ten years, the medium of *keitai* has made many commercial business services possible as well. However, the possible forms of *keitai* are not restricted to these aspects. We believe the time has come to seek out a form of communal or public *keitai* communication⁽³⁾.

But what kind of *keitai* literacy could not be termed a type of false enlightenment? The purpose of this paper is to develop an overview of such a media-literacy concept. Examining mobile-media literacy beginning with *keitai* requires reconsideration of the concept of media literacy itself, which until now has focused on mass media. To do so, we first examined *keitai* as an object and the individuals who use it, as well as the locations of such an object and individuals. We then conducted a critical media practice workshop based on this examination.

Below, we would like first to examine the concept of media literacy, and then to demonstrate the differences between mobile-media literacy and mass-media literacy. Next, we will describe the significance of our approach to the materiality of *keitai* and the state of the relationship between the *keitai* object and human beings in a more fundamental sense in our consideration of mobile-media literacy. Then, we will give an overview of the workshop conducted to rediscover mobile-media literacy, and finally we will discuss the need for more fundamental consideration of media literacy⁽⁴⁾.

1.2 Media-literacy pedigree and preconditions

Here, we would like to assign a new definition to the term “media literacy.” Media literacy refers to activities for independent communication via media in an information society, and to the technologies and knowledge that support these activities. Although media literacy has been trumpeted since the 1990s as a skill necessary to enable young people to critically interpret television, which is full of vulgar stereotypes, in reality it is a communication activity necessary for resistance among all people to various types of media, from literature through mobile phones, instead of being restricted to the medium of television and to young people only.

The central vein of media literacy began in the United Kingdom after World War II and soon spread throughout the English-speaking world, including North America and Australia. It includes close critical analyses of mass media such as television, comic books, and advertising, and of the popular culture they create, as well as a series of educational activities conducted for this purpose. Its flow has overlapped in many ways with cultural studies, and has involved activities seeking to critically analyze the meaning of media in day-to-day living. The field of media literacy has developed in the countries and territories of East Asia primarily since the 1990s, introduced independently in each locality from English-speaking nations such as the United Kingdom and Canada. However, in recent years a movement toward bringing out topics shared among these localities and working together in addressing them has arisen⁽⁵⁾.

All of these media-literacy activities have placed importance on the asymmetry between media senders and receivers in mass communication. Media-literacy studies have been critical of the way information produced by a small number of specialized media senders has been sent unidirectionally to an extremely large number of consumer receivers of information, and have placed importance on being conscious of the ideology and power relationships involved in the situation. Although naturally it has been argued that this tendency should be approached not

merely through critical information analysis, but also by placing importance on dynamic expression, in any case it could be said that awakening to and combating this asymmetry have been prerequisites.

1.3 New dimensions of *keitai* literacy

Now, let's return to the subject of *keitai*. With this pedigree and these preconditions, it is clear that media literacy faces some difficulties in approaching the topic of mobile-media literacy.

The first difficulty stems from the fact that in the case of mass communication it was considered effective to reconnect senders and receivers using balanced channels, similarly to the restoration of an ecosystem.

However, in the case of *keitai*, communication in an antagonistic structure between sender and receiver cannot be considered a problem. Naturally, the industries that support the various functions and services available in *keitai* can be separated from their users. There are many problems arising between these two sides. However, this relationship clearly differs from those between sender and receiver in the cases of media such as television and newspapers. If the mass media is considered to correspond to a relationship such as that between an absolute ruler and the general public, the mobile media corresponds more to the relationship between an automobile and the road.

To expound on this concept, the topics of interest that have been shared by the disciplines of media literacy and media communication research in cultural studies, such as diversity of interpretation among receivers and sender-related power issues, must be fundamentally reconsidered in the face of mobile media.

The second difficulty is similar to that concerning mass media, in that it involves the importance of fostering the capabilities for critical analysis and active expression among receivers. Particularly in the case of the Japanese *keitai*, which enables the use of a wide range of services and functions, serving as a book, a video camera, and a television, applying mass-media literacy concepts is of no small significance.

But are these the only types of literacy that we must recognize and address as we use *keitai* from day to day? *Keitai* is an object that we carry with us wherever we go in our daily living. It is vital to us as a familiar tool. What's more, people use *keitai* not just in a certain place, the way they watch television in their living rooms. Rather, *keitai* transforms the meaning of any number of places. Although mediated communication such as telephone calls and service content is vital to *keitai*, if we focus on these aspects only *keitai* would be no different from fixed-line telephones at home or in the workplace, or from Internet access using a personal computer.

Examining the subject in this way shows just how much the activities we call media literacy

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have focused on the mass media. At the same time, it shows clearly that while media literacy for mobile media including *keitai* has some elements in common with that for mass media, it is also filled with elements that differ from mass-media literacy. What's more, these bring us face-to-face with new dimensions of media literacy, as we must be aware of and address the relationship between media and human beings in terms of fundamental aspects such as *keitai*, the human body, and the locations in which they interact.

2. “*Ba*” illuminated by *keitai*

In this section, we will consider the fundamental layer of media literacy through practical examination of the characteristics of mobile media. In particular, it is vital to look at issues concerning the form of *keitai* as an object, its relationship with the human body, and the place (in Japanese, “*ba*”) that encompasses these, as important characteristics in reexamining media literacy. Of these characteristics, here we will focus in particular on the “*ba*” illuminated by *keitai*.

2.1 Mobility and Portability

In comparison with other media, *keitai* is extremely compact and highly mobile. As such, it is a form of media that is closer to us than other forms. *Keitai*, which is suited to be carried around with us due to its size and feel, is also a more personal form of media that tends to be closer to us as individuals, as we share it with others less than other media such as television, newspapers, and radio. In addition, we strengthen this experience by having new relationships with *keitai* on a daily basis.

Specifically, let’s compare our relationship with television to our relationship with *keitai*. When we think of the background against which we watch television, we can see there are several set patterns to such use. An example is the pattern of watching television with one’s family in the living room. Each family has its own culture, such as who sits where under the *kotatsu*, the general subjects of conversation during commercial breaks, and traditions such as mother watching the same two-hour drama starting at 9:00 p.m. every Tuesday and family members refraining from criticism of father’s favorite actress. Other patterns concern watching television outside the home. Examples include standing with a friend in front of the television sets lined up at an electronics shop, discussing various aspects of picture quality, and watching the television sets in the corners of bars or in railway-station waiting rooms. In addition, people who work at media companies such as television broadcasters and newspapers are likely to watch television at work in a third pattern. This pattern involves setting certain monitors to certain channels and muting the volume, so that personnel can check and ascertain the content using visuals only. In this way, certain ways of watching television and related rules have developed unconsciously. These combinations are centered on certain patterns, with chances to experience new patterns generally infrequent.

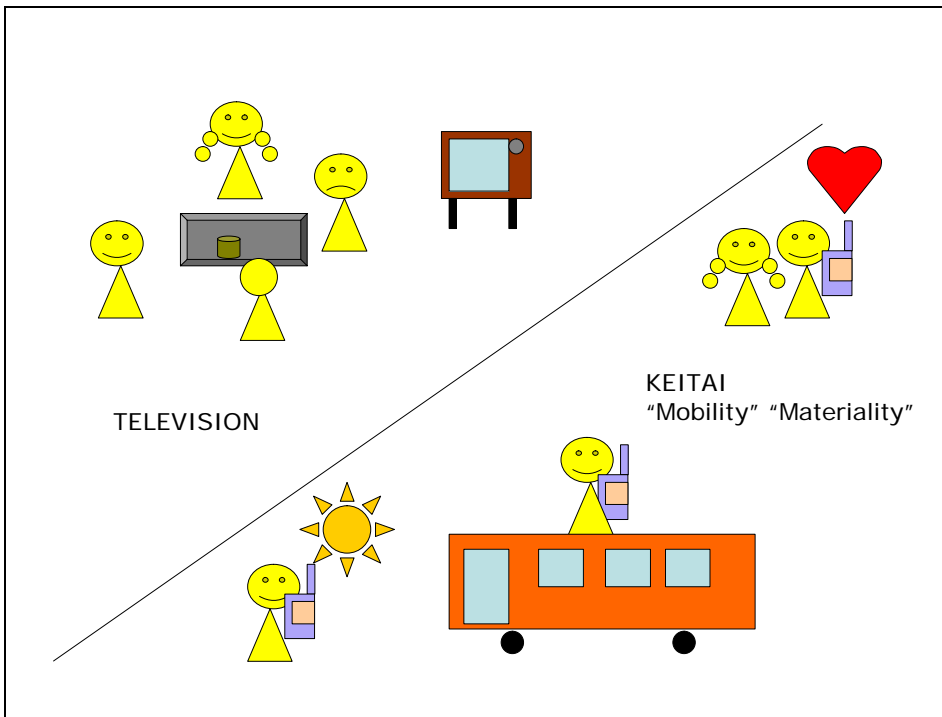


Figure 2.1 Television and *keitai* “ba”

On the other hand, we usually keep *keitai* with us in various locations and under various circumstances, due to characteristics such as its functions, light weight, and mobility. We sometimes speak or exchange text messages with family members in crowded streets, at school, or at work, in the sweltering heat or while text messages with numb fingers in extreme cold. We interact with *keitai* in countless ways, sometimes using it as a paperweight or a mirror, or opening and closing the clamshell body like a Zippo lighter while waiting for someone. We have new *keitai* experiences every day. *Keitai* differs from media such as television and newspapers that come in certain specific forms that do not change from day to day, in that *keitai* is used across a broad range of living activities, providing us with new types of relationships.

2.2 Mobile media and “ba”

In this way, *keitai* illuminates the fact that there are certain types of patterns in forms of using media and the rules that arise when we come into contact with the media. We experience media based on the accumulation of these rules. These rules combine various factors such as the historical and social patterns, concepts, values, and perspectives held by individuals. As such, they can be seen as representations of the fundamental layer of media literacy. Here, we refer to accumulations of these rules and ways of using media as “ba.” *Ba* is a physical and geographical location, or a type of field in which relationships between manners and etiquette and between people and places can operate. Clearly, we do not come into contact with the media in a piecemeal fashion or in a vacuum. Unconsciously, we construct places where we accumulate our individual experiences and rules, and learn how to get along with the media.

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Keitai reminds us that in order to clarify our relationship with technology, we must be careful about how we form this “*ba*” and about whether it changes in accordance with the circumstances that arise.

In the past, media theory research has aimed at some types of *ba*. For example, research has been conducted on cultural-studies of the living rooms, and Shunya Yoshimi, Mikio Wakabayashi, and Shin Mizukoshi have studied the telephone as media⁽⁶⁾. In the latter study, Yoshimi et al. examined changes in the social space from the perspective of how the locations in which telephones are placed have changed as the use of telephones has spread. However, although these studies included vital perspectives, they did not lead to major subsequent movements.

It can be said that when new characteristics of media are discussed, a questioning of their self-evidential nature is always present in the background. Certain restrictions on the relationship between the media and users break down when their special characteristics first arise as subjects of discussion. Until now, depictions of the social self-evidential natures of “*ba*” remained unchanged in the media. The spread of mobile media has shed light on all “*ba*”, and has led to questioning of its self-evidential nature. However, there is one subject that must be considered at this point. In order to interact with media independently, we must seek out the media’s possible forms and construct relationships on our own. For this reason, before the characteristics of media undermine its self-evidential nature, it is vital to independently self-recompile our relationships with media. This can be seen as an area that we must create in the future as a new activity exceeding the bounds of the existing media-literacy framework.

3. Playing Typical *Keitai* Scenes: A mobile-media literacy program conducted as performing ethnography

How should a media-literacy program address *keitai*? It should not be a mere extension of the path already tread by mass-media literacy programs, but must instead focus on the fundamental layer of media literacy. We touched on issues concerning the mobile-media *ba* as an approach to this fundamental layer in the previous section. Here, we will give an overview and report on the intentions, results, considerations, and topics concerning the program we implemented based on an awareness of these issues.

3.1 Overview of the experiment

To summarize, this program, dubbed “Playing Typical *Keitai* Scenes,” was an attempt to stage in skit form typical scenes in which *keitai* is used. Participants were split into teams of several members each and, after consulting on the spot for about 30 minutes, each team performed a skit for approximately five minutes in front of the other teams. For these activities, we as program directors did not set any specific conditions other than that the skits represent typical scenes in which *keitai* is used. However, in order to enable participants to get a clear feel for what we meant by “typical,” we indeed encouraged participants to envision scenes of *keitai* use typical of their own countries, based on the premise that they would be showing to people from other countries a typical scene in which *keitai* is used in their own country. We also told participants that we would film their performance with video cameras, and that people from other countries might actually view these videos. Basically, the only utensils used by participants were their own *keitai*, pens, and sketchbooks.

We implemented this program twice: once in Tokyo and once in Helsinki. The Tokyo experiment was conducted November 24, 2004 at the University of Tokyo. Eighteen research students from the Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies participated, split into five teams that created and performed a total of ten scenes. As most of the participants were students in the department, they were already on friendly terms with each other. The Helsinki experiment was held on December 3, 2004 at the University of Art and Design Helsinki. Seven media laboratory researchers and graduate students participated, split into two teams that created and performed a total of five scenes. The participants ranged in age from their twenties to their fifties, and these participants also were on friendly terms with each other. To help explain the point of the experiment, participants in Helsinki were first shown a video of the Tokyo experiment.

3.2 The intent of the experiment

Through performance, sometimes recognitions and feelings of which we are not normally conscious can appear in the form of actions. Victor Turner proposed a method of performing ethnography whereby the concept of performance is inquired into carefully as a research method rather than as a mere subject of anthropological research. In this way, by attempting in

skit form to perform ethnography in the classroom, one can experience and develop an understanding of different cultures⁽⁷⁾.

Invoking this kind of concept in the area of media research, we intended to use it as a means of attempting to embody extemporaneously, and as a means of visualizing the circumstances of the relationship between human beings and the media, which is rarely expressed in words. Using this method, we first of all were able, from the perspective of an ethnographic survey, to observe various and diverse circumstances in the hidden dimensions of the relationship between human beings and the media that would not be possible through ordinary methods such as interviews and the use of questionnaires. At the same time, from a media-literacy perspective, we were able to become conscious in a critical way of the relationships between human beings and the media by identifying such circumstances anew.

We believe that these types of methods may be very meaningful in studying mobile media such as *keitai*. This is due to the fact that when we consider mobile media, addressing the actual circumstances of use, or issues of the spatial environment and social scenes, is likely to be more important than in the case of other media. In mobile-media research, ethnography gives specific form to such aspects of the relationship between human beings and the media, and aspects related to the circumstances of related spaces and scenes. As such, it would appear to be an effective means of enabling us to identify such aspects anew.

3.3 Results of the experiment and consideration of the results

3.3.1 Envisioned functions and locations

Through this experiment conducted in Tokyo and Helsinki, a total of seven teams created and performed a total of 15 scenes. The *keitai* functions and locations of use for each scene are shown in Table 3.1. In the “Team” column, “T” indicates a Tokyo team and “H” indicates a Helsinki team.

Table 3.1 Functions and locations

Team	Scene	Function	Location
T1	1	Voice calling	On a train
T2	1	Camera	On a university campus
T3	1	Voice calling, text messaging	On a train
T3	2	Text messaging, voice calling	In a cafe
T4	1	Voice calling, text messaging, calculator, schedule, camera	In a bar
T5	1	Alarm	In a bedroom
T5	2	Voice calling	On a train (priority seating)
T5	3	Text messaging	In a university classroom
T5	4	Camera, voice calling, text messaging	On the street, in a cafe

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T5	5	Text messaging	In a restaurant
H1	1	Clock	On the street
H1	2	Text messaging	On a train
H1	3	Voice calling	In a bar or cafe
H1	4	Voice calling	In a meeting room
H2	1	Camera	In a retail store

Table 3.2 shows the number of times each of these functions was invoked in these scenes.

Table 3.2 Number of times each function was invoked

Function	Tokyo	Helsinki	Total
Voice calling	6	2	8
Text messaging	5	2	7
Camera	3	1	4
Clock	1	1	2
Calculator	1	0	1
Schedule	1	0	1

Table 3.3 shows the categories of locations used in these scenes, and the number of times each was invoked.

Table 3.3 Number of times each location category was invoked

Location	Tokyo	Helsinki	Total
At an eating or drinking establishment	4	1	5
On a train	3	1	4
At school or work	2	1	3
On the street	1	1	2
At home	1	0	1
At a store	0	1	1

First, let's look at the functions used in these scenes. As the number of teams in the Helsinki experiment was small, variations in the functions used appear to be scattered evenly. However, when we look at only the results of the Tokyo experiment, we can see that voice calling and text messaging appeared most often, with camera functions appearing next most frequently. For the most part, this tendency seems to accurately reflect the circumstances of *keitai* use in Japan⁽⁸⁾.

Next, let's look at the locations used in these scenes. Although the variation in locations used in the Helsinki experiment also appears to be scattered evenly, a look at the results of the Tokyo experiment shows certain clear tendencies concerning the locations invoked. The first of these is that, with the exception of one scene that invoked *keitai* use at home, most locations used in these scenes were places where people gather together. The second tendency is that a

significant number of locations used in these scenes were places where unspecified large numbers of people gather together, such as at eating or drinking establishments and on trains. But what do these tendencies in locations used represent?

According to Erving Goffman, individuals are required to involve themselves in the situations brought about by gatherings — whether of certain numbers of people or of unspecified large numbers of people — and to behave suitably. Goffman defines “situation” as the “overall spatial environment of a gathering⁽⁹⁾.” Edward Relph recognizes spaces to exist in a continuous range between the extremes of direct experience and abstract concepts, ranging from primitive spaces perceived physiologically by living beings to cognitive spaces conceived of logically by human beings⁽¹⁰⁾. If this is the case, the situations or overall spatial environments reproduced in these scenes of typical *keitai* use can be considered to be composed of combinations of directly sensed spaces such as those in eating or drinking establishments and on trains, and abstract spaces created through *keitai* use.

The suitable behavior for each situation according to Goffman is determined in accordance with the allocation of involvement, which represents how individuals involve themselves with the situation and the balance between various types of involvement⁽¹¹⁾. The situations reproduced in these typical *keitai* use scenes show various gaps and fissures in this allocation of involvement. In other words, these gaps and fissures in the involvement and suitable behavior for directly sensed spaces such as those in eating or drinking establishments and on trains, and abstract spaces created through *keitai* use were invoked repeatedly as key motifs in these performed scenes. To put it another way, it seems that the appearance of these gaps and fissures between these two types of spaces was the most impressive aspect of these scenes of typical *keitai* use in Tokyo and Helsinki. For this reason, these scenes of typical *keitai* use became venues for presenting the performers’ own interpretations of the spatial environments brought about by mobile media such as *keitai*, or the composition of the mobile-media space, and for presenting related issues.

3.3.2 The meanings of characteristic behavior

Next, let’s look in more detail at the kinds of behavior actually exhibited by people using *keitai* for the three functions cited most commonly in these performed scenes: voice-calling, text-messaging, and camera functions. We assigned numbers to the individuals using each function, and observed and recorded the characteristic actions of these individuals, examining the settings of their actions, their genders, their basic postures when using the functions (i.e., whether they were standing or sitting), how they held the *keitai* (i.e., whether in the right hand, left hand, or both hands), and the number of people at the location. The results of this step are shown in Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6. In examining such characteristic actions, we focused in particular on aspects such as body orientations, distances from other individuals, and hand and foot movements, in order to determine how people behave in certain spatial environments.

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Table 3.4 Characteristic actions when using the voice-calling function

Actor	Team	Scene	Location	Gender	Posture	Hand	Other individuals	Characteristic action
1	T1	1	On a train	M	Standing	L	1	Facing counterparts
2	T1	1	On a train	M	Standing	R	1	Facing counterparts
3	T3	1	On a train	F	Standing	R	3	At an angle, facing downward At an angle, facing sideways (right) Mouth covered with hands
4	T3	2	In a cafe	F	Sitting	R	3	At a slight angle, facing sideways (right)
5	T4	1	In a bar	F	Standing	L	3	Distant from others At an angle, facing sideways (right)
6	T5	2	On a train	M	Sitting	R	3	At a slight angle, facing sideways (right)
7	T5	4	In a cafe	F	Sitting	R	1	Slightly distant from others At an angle, facing sideways (left) Legs crossed
8	H1	3	In a bar or cafe	F	Standing	R	2	Facing counterparts
9	H1	3	In a bar or cafe	F	Sitting	R	2	Facing counterparts
10	H1	4	In a meeting room	M	Standing	R	3	Distant from others

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Table 3.5 Characteristic actions when using the text-messaging function

Actor	Team	Scene	Location	Gender	Posture	Hand	Other individuals	Characteristic action
1	T3	1	On a train	M	Standing	L	3	At an angle, facing downward
2	T3	2	In a cafe	M	Sitting	Both	3	Slightly distant from others At an angle, facing downward At an angle, facing sideways (right)
3	T3	2	In a cafe	F	Sitting	R	3	At an angle, facing downward
4	T3	2	In a cafe	M	Sitting	L	3	At an angle, facing downward At a slight angle, facing sideways (left)
5	T3	2	In a cafe	F	Sitting	R	3	At an angle, facing downward
6	T4	1	In a bar	M	Sitting	Both	3	At an angle, facing downward At an angle, facing sideways (right and left) Facing backward
7	T5	3	In a classroom	F	Sitting	Both	3	At an angle, facing downward
8	T5	4	In a cafe	F	Sitting	R	1	Slightly distant from others At an angle, facing downward At an angle, facing sideways (left) Legs crossed
9	T5	5	In a restaurant	F	Sitting	R	0	Temporarily at an angle, facing downward Legs crossed
10	H1	2	On a train	F	Sitting	Both	4	At an angle, facing downward Legs crossed

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11	H1	2	On a train	F	Sitting	R	4	At an angle, facing downward Legs crossed
12	H1	2	On a train	M	Sitting	Both	4	At an angle, facing downward Legs crossed
13	H1	2	On a train	F	Sitting	Both	4	At an angle, facing downward
14	H1	2	On a train	F	Sitting	R	4	At an angle, facing downward Legs crossed

Table 3.6 Characteristic actions when using the camera function

Actor	Team	Scene	Location	Gender	Posture	Hand	Other individuals	Characteristic action
1	T2	1	On a campus	F	Standing	R	4	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
2	T2	1	On a campus	F	Standing	R L	4	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
3	T2	1	On a campus	M	Standing	L	4	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
4	T2	1	On a campus	M	Standing	L	4	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
5	T4	1	In a bar	F	Standing	L	5	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject
6	T4	1	In a bar	F	Standing	R	5	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject

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7	T4	1	In a bar	F	Standing	R	5	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject
8	T4	1	In a bar	M	Standing	R	5	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject
9	T5	4	On the street	F	Standing	R	1	At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
10	T5	4	On the street	F	Standing	R	1	At an angle and facing upward when photographing themselves
11	H2	1	At a store	M	Standing	R	1	<i>Keitai</i> pointed toward the subject

First of all, let's look at the voice-calling function. A total of ten persons acted using this function. When the counterpart for the call was in front of the actor, the caller spoke while facing him or her. However, when the counterpart was not in front of the actor (generally the more common situation), actors showed some characteristic types of behavior. The most common was to position oneself at an angle, facing sideways. This behavior is likely to have an important functional significance. It probably results from the fact that it is easier to speak while turning one's face toward the hand holding the *keitai*. Actually, three of five actors spoke with their faces turned toward the hand holding the *keitai*. Although the other two actors turned away from the hand holding the *keitai*, in both cases this was an effort to achieve distance from the persons around the actor. For this reason, in such cases it appears that achieving distance from others is the first means of achieving an environment in which it is easy to speak.

But why would the actor also position him or herself at an angle facing sideways? We consider this to be related to the second aspect of this behavior: its symbolic meaning. By facing away from the space shared with other persons and toward an empty space, the actor seems to be creating his or her own exclusive space. Actually, two of the three actors who turned their faces toward the hand holding the *keitai* changed their lines of vision greatly, even though they changed the direction in which they were facing only slightly. This indicates that this behavior in which the actor positions him or herself at an angle facing sideways seems to have a symbolic meaning in creating the actor's own exclusive space, in addition to the functional meaning of making it easier to speak on the *keitai*.

Next, let's look at the text-messaging function. A total of 14 actors used this function. First of all, it is apparent that 13 of these 14 actors positioned themselves at an angle, facing down. In

order to read and write text messages on the *keitai*, the user must face the monitor and keyboard of the *keitai* held in his or her hand. As one's hand is usually positioned below one's head, the user must position him or herself at an angle and face downward in order to operate the *keitai* easily. However, in the case in which there were no other persons in the vicinity, the actor faced forward, looking at the *keitai* held directly in front of the face. In the cases in which actors checked schedules using the *keitai* instead of using text messaging, both actors faced the *keitai* directly in front of their face instead of facing downward. These behaviors seem to imply a functional meaning to this behavior of ensuring that others cannot see the content of the text messages. This also appears to have the symbolic meaning of creating one's own exclusive space, particularly in a space suited to personal *keitai* operation in the space between the hands and face created when the user bends forward.

In addition to these behaviors, there were several other cases in which the actors positioned themselves at an angle and faced sideways, in order to distance themselves from others, similarly to when using the voice-calling function. Although the functional meaning of ensuring that others cannot read the text message is probably most important in these cases, for the most part this goal should be able to be achieved by positioning oneself at an angle and facing downward. Three of the four actors who positioned themselves at an angle facing sideways appeared, by taking such explicit behavior above and beyond that required for this purpose, to be attempting to separate their own actions from the space shared with others. Again, this second aspect of this behavior seems to have a symbolic meaning in creating the actor's own exclusive space.

Another behavior visible in the cases of both voice calling and text messaging was crossing the legs. This was particularly characteristic in scene four, acted by team T5. After two friends had faced each other and chatted for one hour, each became consumed in his or her own communication, one using the voice-calling function and one using the text-messaging function. When the scene was changed, each of these two actors separated him or herself from others and positioned him or herself at an angle facing sideways, with legs crossed. Although there are several conceivable functional meanings to this behavior, such as making it easy to speak, ensuring that others cannot hear the content of calls, and ensuring that others cannot read the content of their text messages, it is difficult in this case to conceive of any functional meaning to this leg-crossing behavior. However, this behavior may have the symbolic meaning of distancing one's behavior from others, creating an exclusive personal space in which one can relax.

Finally, let's look at use of the camera function. A total of 11 actors used this function. The act of using the camera function can be broken down into two major categories. One is photographing an object other than oneself, and the other is photographing a group including oneself⁽¹²⁾. The characteristic behavior also varies in accordance with these types of actions. When photographing an object other than oneself, the actor must face the object being photographed and hold the *keitai* so as to point it in the direction of that object. On the other hand, when taking a group photograph including oneself, the actor must hold the *keitai* in front

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of the group including him or herself, and look at it. In such a case, the *keitai* is held above one's own line of vision and the actor positions him or herself at an angle and faces upward to look at the *keitai*. Why do the actors position themselves at an angle and face upward in this case? It is difficult to conceive of a functional meaning for this behavior. Perhaps the persons included in the group photograph are explicitly sharing a single space focused on the *keitai* held in the air at an angle and above them. To put it another way, this behavior of positioning themselves at an angle and facing upward may have a symbolic meaning of creating a shared space for the group.

Table 3.7 shows the functional and symbolic meanings of the key characteristic behaviors that appear when *keitai* is used, based on the above considerations.

Table 3.7 Meanings of characteristic behaviors

Characteristic behavior	Functional meaning	Symbolic meaning
Positioned at an angle, facing sideways	Making it easier to speak Ensuring that others cannot read the content of one's text messages	Creating one's own exclusive space
Positioned at an angle, facing down	Making it easier to operate the <i>keitai</i> Ensuring that others cannot read the content of one's text messages	Creating one's own exclusive space
Distancing oneself from others	Making it easier to speak Ensuring that others cannot hear the content of one's calls Ensuring that others cannot read the content of one's text messages	Creating one's own exclusive space
Crossing the legs		Creating one's own exclusive space
Positioned at an angle, facing up		Creating a space shared with other group members

According to Yi-Fu Tuan, although human beings create spaces within certain frameworks simply by existing, they are normally not aware of this framework. As such, the human body does not simply occupy space, it also supports and controls this space. The first fundamental principle when human beings organize space is the form and structure of the human body. This leads, for example, to the meaning of space in which the center represents the highest rank, and the opposite is also true⁽¹³⁾. For example, the meaning of creating a shared space focused on a *keitai* held in the air when using the camera function is likely to result from one of these fundamental principles.

If the spatial environment brought about by mobile media including *keitai*, such as directly sensed spaces in eating or drinking establishments or on trains, is composed of a combination of abstract spaces created through use of *keitai*, it is also the human body that composes this space. While distancing ourselves from others by, for example, positioning oneself at an angle

and facing sideways or down while holding the *keitai* in our hands in eating or drinking establishments or on trains, or by crossing our legs occasionally, we are attempting to create our own exclusive abstract space within the direct space shared with others. In addition, by sometimes looking up at the *keitai* camera, we are attempting to create an abstract space shared with others in our group.

According to Tuan, ceremony is an opportunity for human beings to recognize various values in their lifestyles, including those values involving space by separating our everyday life from the ordinary⁽¹⁴⁾. These typical *keitai* use scenes in our performing ethnography served as an opportunity for us to recognize the values involving the spatial environment brought about by mobile media, showing clearly how we live in the mobile-media space. Our next step is likely to involve thinking about how we should live in this mobile-media space, by treating this recognition as one part of mobile-media literacy.

3.4 Topics

First of all, it must be noted that although this program involved workshops conducted in locations that differed culturally — Tokyo and Helsinki — it was inadequate for considering cases from both locales for cultural comparison purposes, partly because there were so few cases from Helsinki. On the other hand, we believe that by examining fundamental factors shared between Tokyo and Helsinki, we were able to pinpoint some extremely fundamental aspects as basic principles by which human beings organize space through mobile media. As Tuan points out, although methods of separating space vary by culture, a significant similarity between different cultures lies in the fact that the form and structure of the human body serves as a measure for various things⁽¹⁵⁾. In the future, we would also like to consider the cultural aspects, which are likely to exist on top of such physical aspects.

Secondly, in this experiment we were unable to provide sufficient feedback to workshop participants concerning the knowledge gained through observation and consideration of these cases. An original goal of conducting our mobile-media literacy program through performing ethnography was to enhance understanding on the part of workshop participants, as well as to increase the knowledge of the directors of the program. If participants could treat the basic elements of these fundamental principles for organization of space by human beings through mobile media as aspects of mobile-media literacy, they would have opportunities to join us in becoming conscious in a critical way of the relationship between human beings and mobile media. From this perspective, we would like to develop this program as a more comprehensive mobile-media literacy program in the future.

4. Toward the fundamental layer of media literacy

Although this practical research conducted through the performance of typical *keitai* use scenes was developed as one program for learning about mobile-media literacy, at the same time we used it as a kind of “probe” for seeking the meaning of mobile-media literacy. Although our pursuit has only just begun, we believe the difference between mass-media and mobile-media literacy pointed out at the beginning of this paper has become clear.

Finally, we would like to make one important point. We have provisionally treated mass-media and mobile-media literacy as if they consisted of separate factors and had a parallel relationship with each other. In other words, we have assumed that the media subject to the concept of literacy can be easily attached and removed, and that there would be as many different types of literacy as there are types of media.

However, the nature of the media handled in this study, the relationship between media and the human body, and the resulting organizational space may be considered fundamental layer of media literacy applicable to mass media as well as to mobile media. Furthermore, we believe that this fundamental media literacy may be present in relationships between human beings and not only the mass media but various other types of media involved in our day-to-day living as well, including transportation media such as railways and automobiles.

Viewed in this way, addressing mobile-media literacy is not restricted solely to pointing out the limitations of discussing media literacy centered on the mass media. Both mobile media and mass media are merely the tip of the iceberg of a new research area that can be developed by anticipating and investigating the state of more fundamental media literacy and basic media-literacy structures.

The field of mass-media literacy has developed in a manner influenced strongly by cultural studies. Based on knowledge developed to this point, the basic structure of medial literacy discovered in this study should be developed into a more expansive research field, such as by linking it with the social history of the Ecole des Annales, affordance theory in performance psychology, spatial theory, spatial geography, kinesiology, performance theory, and other fields.

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Notes:

(1) For examples, refer to Tomoyuki Okada and Misa Matsuda, ed., *Keitai-gaku Nyumon: Media Communication kara Yomitoku Gendai Shakai* ("Introduction to Keitai Studies: Understanding Today's Society through Media Communication"), Yuhikaku Publishing, 2002/Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe and Misa Matsuda, ed., *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life*, MIT Press, 2005.

(2) This split image is causing significant problems for carriers. Japan's top carrier, NTT DoCoMo, established the Mobile Society Research Institute in 2004 to conduct social-science research into the "light" and "shadows" of mobile society. NTT DoCoMo recognizes that the image of *keitai* in Japan has elements of negativity, as a subversive type of media. Refer to the following website for information on the NTT DoCoMo Mobile Society Research Institute: <http://www.moba-ken.jp>.

(3) Refer to the following for information on communal, public forms of *keitai*. Shin Mizukoshi, "Critical Media Practice" on Culture and Literacy of Mobile Media in Japan, Mobile Communication and Social Change: 2004 International Conference on Mobile Communication, October 2004.

(4) This research is based on the results of the project Socio Media Studies on Culture and Literacy of Mobile Media ("MoDe Project: Mobilizing Designing Project"), a core research project of the NTT DoCoMo Mobile Society Research Institute, represented by Shin Mizukoshi. This essay was written by (1) Mizukoshi, (2) Hayashida, and (3) Ito, and its editing was supervised by Ito and Mizukoshi.

(5). For example, the Japan Association for Educational Media Study (JAEMS) is strengthening its ties with South Korean education technology and media education associations. Japan's MELL (Media Expression, Learning, and Literacy) Project, of which the authors are members, is another research group that is actively seeking ties with other organizations in Asia. JAEMS was formed through the merger of the Japan Association for Educational Broadcasting and the Japan Association for Audiovisual Education.

The University of Tokyo's MELL Project began in 2001 for the purpose of practical research into the public's media expression activities and media literacy. While placing importance on the media-literacy concepts developed in English-speaking nations and on the history of such concepts, the MELL Project also attempts to construct a concept of media literacy that stresses the importance of the information society in East Asia and is suitable for corresponding circumstances. Refer to the following concerning the MELL Project: Shin Mizukoshi, Yuhei Yamauchi, Perspectives on Japan's Media Environment and the MELL Project, Visions/Revisions (Barry Duncan and Catherine Tynar), National Telemedia Council, Canada, 2003, pp. 159-178. <<http://mell.jp>>

(6) Shunya Yoshimi, Mikio Wakabayashi, and Shin Mizukoshi, *Media to shite no Denwa* ("The Telephone as Media"), Koubundou Publishers, 1992.

(7) Turner, Victor, *The Anthropology of Performance*, PAJ Publications, 1987.

(8) One survey showed that the primary *keitai* functions used in Japan were voice calling (100%), Internet e-mail (96.1%), Web-based information services (73.6%), taking and viewing photographs and videos (65.3%), non-Internet e-mail (44.4%), games and other applications (41.9%), and personal-data management functions such as schedules (37.3%) (the subjects of the survey were permitted to select multiple functions). Mobile Content Forum, ed. *Keitai Hakusho 2005* ("Keitai White Paper 2005"), Impress, 2004.

(9) Goffman, Erving, *Behavior in Public Places*, Free Press, 1963.

(10) Relph, Edward, *Place and Placelessness*, Pion, 1976.

(11) Goffman, *ibid.*

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(12) Naturally, users sometimes take photographs of themselves alone as well. However, this action did not appear in the scenes performed in this experiment.

(13) Tuan, Yi-Fu, *Space and Place*, University of Minnesota, 1977.

(14) Tuan, *ibid.*

(15) Tuan, *ibid.*

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Photographs of “Playing Typical *Keitai* Scenes”



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