

The Challenges and Benefits of Teaching *Shōen* to American Undergraduates

# アメリカの大学生に荘園を教える： その課題と利点

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# Shōen are important

- Span 800 years
- Key to economy, samurai, judicial courts, etc.
- Made possible luxuriant lifestyle of the capital, religious rituals, art, etc.
- Home to significant % of population
- 800年間続いた
- 中世の経済、武士、裁判制度、等を理解する上で重要
- 貴族階級の優雅な生活様式、豪壮な自社仏閣の実現
- 人々の大部分の居住地

## Yet difficult to teach...

- The shōen was the fundamental economic, social, and political institution in Japan for nearly a millenium. Despite this fact, survey histories and college textbooks slight this subject, especially its economic aspects. The shōen also is a difficult subject to teach or research, even for specialists of premodern Japanese history.

荘園は千年余、経済的、社会的、政治的な基盤であった。それにも関わらず、アメリカの教科書の中には、あまり取り上げられていない。とりわけ、経済的側面についての記載は少ない。さらに、荘園は日本前近代史家にとっても、教えるにしても、研究するにしても、難しいテーマである。

# Do our students know?

- Graduate students
- Undergraduates

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# Questions about shōen education

- **Q1:** How can we best convey the importance of shōen?  
どのようにして荘園の重要性を学生に伝えるか。
- **Q2:** How can we best explain their workings and how they changed over time?  
荘園の機能と変遷をどのように教えるか。
- **Q3:** Should we even try?  
荘園について、教えるべきか否か。

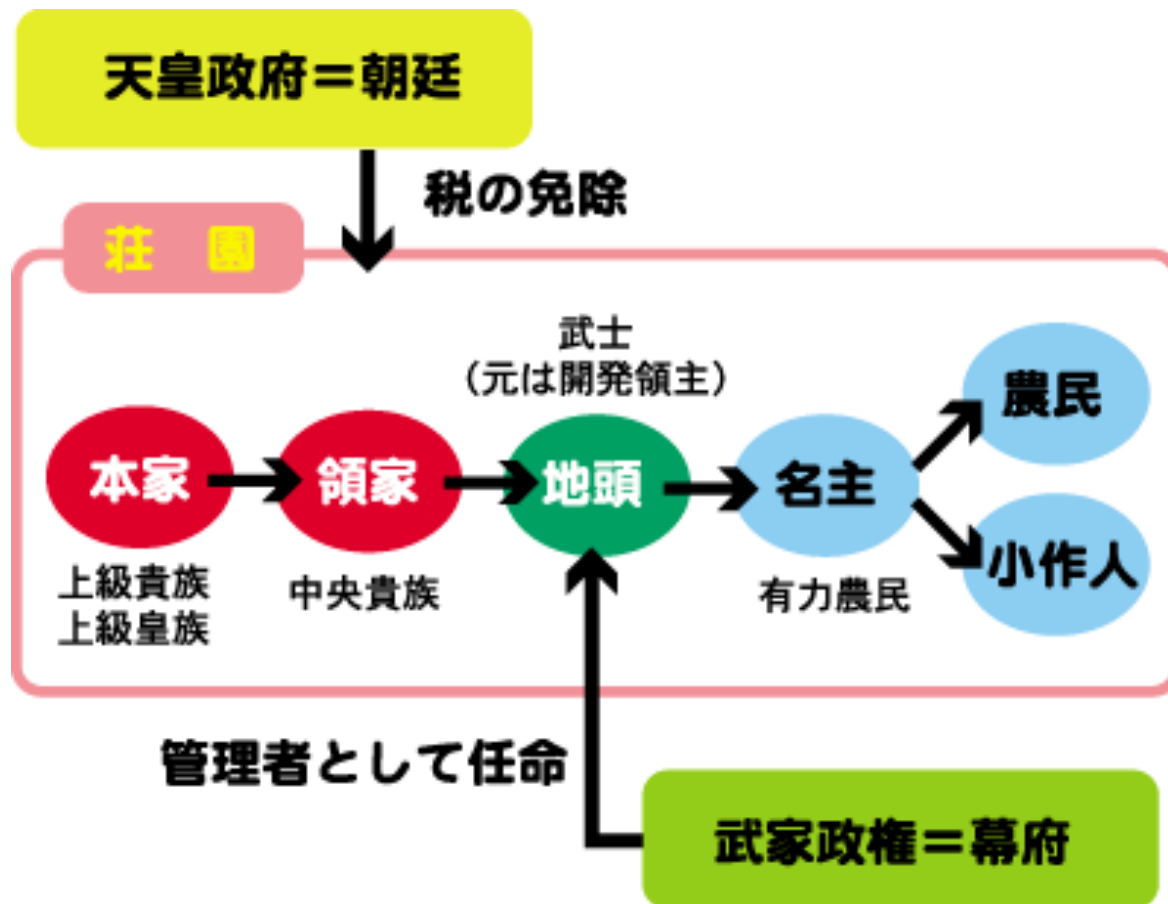
# Today's Presentation

- ① Explore challenges of teaching shōen in U.S. classrooms  
アメリカでの荘園の教授法を探る
- ② Highlight some approaches taken by scholars publishing in English  
英語で書かれた荘園研究の紹介
- ③ Offer some alternatives for improved teaching  
いくつかの提言

# Challenges to Teaching

① Shōen and shiki are complex

① 荘園の仕組みや職が複雑で分かりにくい



# Challenges to Teaching

① Shōen and shiki are complex

② Students find shōen documents boring

- Lack protagonists, personalities
- Bureaucratic language frustrating
- Even images not very engaging

① 荘園の仕組みや職が複雑で分かりにくい

② 学生にとって荘園の文書は魅力がない

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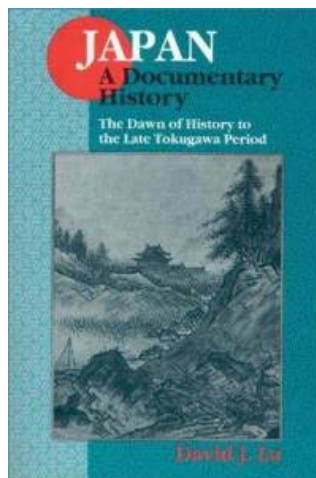
## Even scholars of Japan...

- I'll be honest--I thought the literature on shōen was incredibly dry when I was in grad school. I understood why shōen mattered from the perspective of institutional history but that was it! I couldn't imagine assigning anything to undergrads at that time.
- I have yet to read anything by a historian that has convinced me that I should care about shōen... I remember a book with what I thought was a very provocative title about shōen... that thoroughly killed the subject for me. There was nothing in the book of interest to a scholar who cares deeply about medieval Japan. I am certainly not expecting historians to write for (scholars in other disciplines), but when it comes to shōen and land policy it seems to me that most historians are writing for the narrowest of audiences.

# Challenges to Teaching

- ① Shōen and shiki are complex
- ② Students find shōen documents boring
- ③ Few good materials in translation

- ① 荘園の仕組みや職が複雑で分かりにくい
- ② 学生にとって荘園の文書は魅力がない
- ③ 英訳された史料が非常に少ない



# What are instructors using?

- Uses Souyri as textbook, *Tale of Heike* and “Foundations of the Modern Japanese Daimyo” as supplements.
- I spend a week in the PreModern Japan course having the students read Friday’s “Valorous Butchers” and Tonomura’s “Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society” as well as the section in Hane’s PreModern book (pp. 46-69).
- I teach the shōen mostly using my notes from (advisor’s) class. The first time I taught the course, I used “Sanshō the Bailiff” so that students could get an appreciation of what life might have been like for peasants during this period. Reactions were mixed. I tried assigning some work by Keirstead a few years ago but got complaints because it was so dense. That said, it looks like the new edited volume by Karl Friday will go along way toward making it easier for students to understand shōen and other aspects of premodern Japanese history.

# Challenges to Teaching

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| ③ Few good materials in translation    | ③ 英訳された史料が非常に少ない     |
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| ⑤ Instructors lack confidence          | ⑤ 消極的なインストラクター       |

# Asakawa Kan'ichi

- Wonderful scholar, but not much success as teacher  
医大な学者は良い先生？

What expectations Asakawa had as a teacher we do not know. His approach to history from a fairly early period had turned to institutional analysis and feudalism in particular, and this was not the most conducive to undergraduate appeal... Undoubtedly after giving it a try, Asakawa found it difficult to reach a general audience, especially an undergraduate one.... the failure to arouse student interest was perhaps the first disappointment in Asakawa's hitherto successful career.

He wrote no textbook or popular history, and so it was Murdoch and Sansom who “fed the student mind on Japanese history”

Hall, “Kan'ichi Asakawa: Comparative Historian,” pp. 9-10

# Asakawa Kan'ichi

- Sought to highlight parallels between shōen and medieval European manors  
荘園と中世ヨーロッパの土地制度との共通点を探れ

These differences, however, important as they clearly are, should not blind us to the similarity that is obvious in many respects between the domainal systems of East and West.

“Ushigahara sho,” p. 59

When it made its appearance in the eighth century, the shō was seen to possess these three characteristics: it contained, as its chief original element, a recently cultivated area of rice-field; was under private possession and private management; and enjoyed or claimed a degree of fiscal immunity.

“The Origin of Feudal Land Tenure in Japan,” p. 5

- Western Europe and Japan, with no mutual relation between them, independently evolved in the course of a long time those peculiarly definite and exhaustive social adjustments that are known as feudal, under conditions and upon principles which were, if significant in their minor differences, also striking in their extraordinary similarity in the main features. Human history... becomes, under such circumstances, nearly comparable...

“The Origin of Feudal Land Tenure in Japan,” p. 1



# Kozo Yamamura

- Tried to explain shōen system by analyzing participants as rational economic thinkers  
合理的な経済理論を中世経済に適用

myō grew smaller because the man:land ratio increased (more people than land), so labor inputs increased, so productivity increased and led to more secure myōshu managing smaller holdings because they could supervise people better .

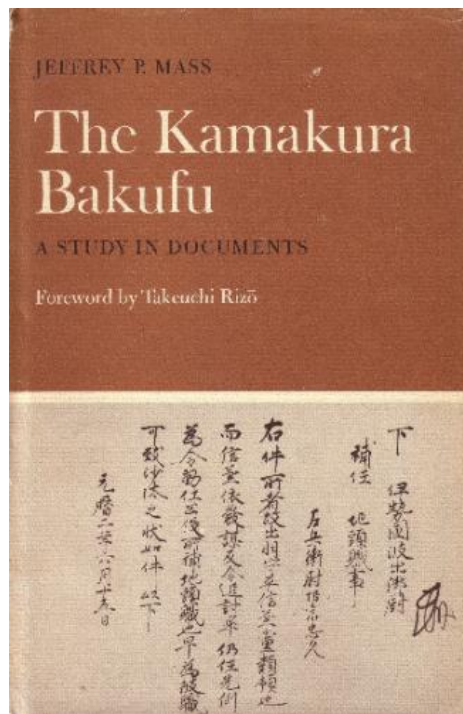
“Tara in Transition,” p. 361

by late thirteenth century, ryōke losing power to buke so desperate for secure income, and buke distracted by conflicts among gokenin, defending against Mongols, etc., so they also desperate for secure income. Both ryōke and buke willing to make concessions to myōshu for more secure income. .

“Tara in Transition,” p. 363

# Jeffrey P. Mass

- Shōen as passive sites of conflict  
対立などに関する傍証として荘園史料を使用



“Most Kamakura documents deal instead with the mundane matters of shōen administration—local appointments, tax collection, and the improvement of agriculture.”

Mass, *Kamakura Bakufu*, p. 10

**So what can we do to  
improve shōen education?**

## Suggestions 提言

# Force students to think “big picture” 土地制度を全時代的に考えさせる

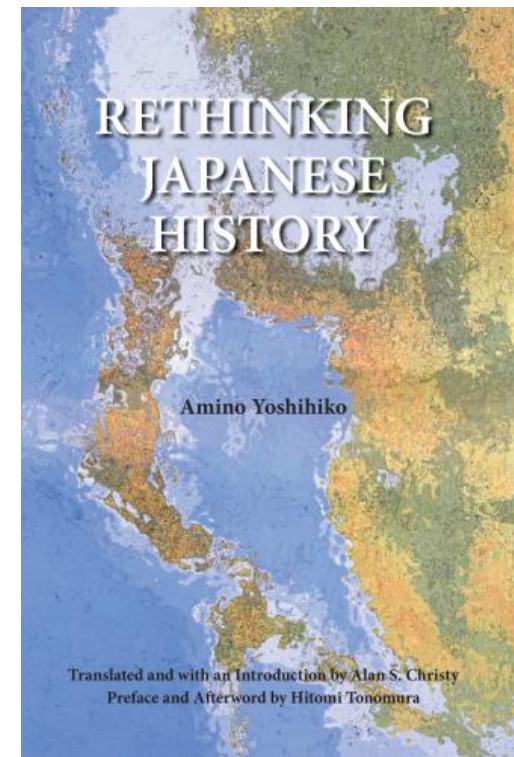
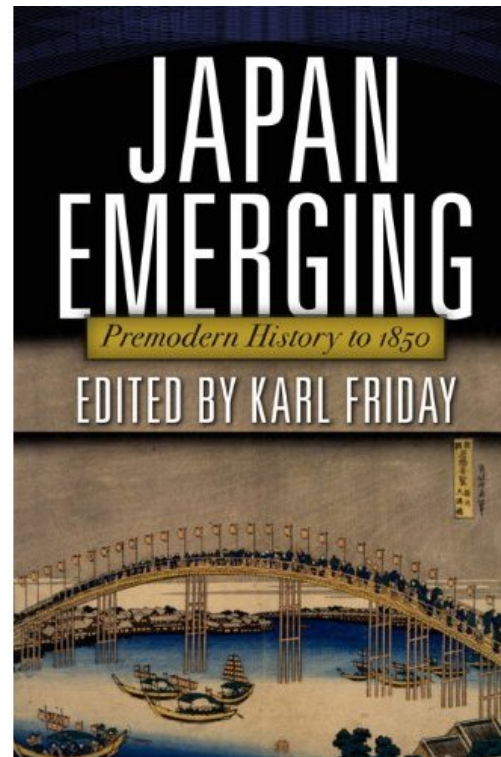
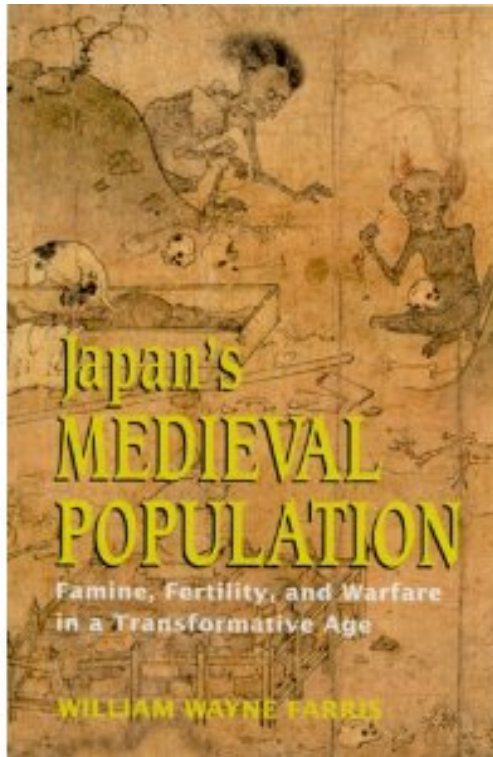
How did inheritance and land holding practices change (or not change) over the course of the medieval period? Why did they change (or not change)?

Identify and analyze major changes in the way people “owned” and managed land over the period from the eighth to the twelfth centuries.

What changes can we see in land holding from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries? How were shōen estates the “battleground” between warriors and civilian proprietors?

Suggestions 提言

Recent Secondary Scholarship  
最近出版された研究



## Suggestions 提言



*An International Conference*

**REASSESSING THE SHOEN SYSTEM:**

**SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN MEDIEVAL JAPAN**

Ôyama Kyôhei, Sakurai Eiji, Endô Motoo, Hirota Kôji, Kimura Shigemitsu

Nagamura Makoto, Nishida Takeshi, Noda Taizô, Takahashi Toshiko

Lee Butler, David Eason, Ethan Segal, Jan Goodwin, Joan Piggott

Yoshiko Kainuma, Rieko Kamei-Dyche, Sachiko Kawai

Dan Sherer, Michelle Damian, Philip Garrett

*June 4-6, 2012, 10:00 to 5:30*

SOS 250, University of Southern California

Presented by the Project for Premodern Japan Studies &

the Center for Japanese Religions and Culture

<http://dornsife.usc.edu/ppjs/>

## New Document Translations 莊園関係文書の新訳



## Active Learning Techniques 能動学習

- Debate  
討論
- Puzzle out system  
推理ゲーム
- Role play  
ロール・プレイ

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## 終わりに

(でも、これから皆で議論しよう)

- What has worked (or not worked) in your experience teaching shōen ?  
自分の教える経験で、どのアプローチを使って教えたか。成功か不成功？
- What about shōen education in Japan?  
日本では荘園教育はどのように行われているか。