Twelfth-Century Innovations in the Formative Processes of the Shoen System

ABSTRACT:
As studies of the estate system have advanced since the 1990s, it has become apparent that the system went through significant changes in the twelfth century. While medieval estates developed from the earlier system, they were not simply expansions of earlier estates. Rather new medieval estates were created through reorganization of earlier estates under an entirely new landholding system. In this presentation I will explore how retired monarchs and their housemen promoted this reorganization process, although their policies were sometimes inconsistent and even contradictory. I will also examine the roles that warriors played in the new estate system, which came into being in the midst of political upheavals that began with the era of the Taira family’s political dominance at court, and eventually resulted in a civil war that led to the establishment of the Kamakura Bakufu in the 1180s.
**Presenter**
Professor **Saho Kamakura** received her Ph.D. in Japanese Classical and Medieval History from Meiji University in 2008. She is now Associate Professor of History at Tokyo Metropolitan University (Shuto Daigaku Tokyo). She is particularly interested in the organization of the medieval state, and the role of the estate system and warriors in it.

She will present a lecture in Japanese on “Twelfth-century Innovations in the Formative Process of the Shôen System” on Thursday November 5 from 4:15 to 6:00 in Doheny Library 110c. She will explore the reorganization of early estates into a new system of landholding during the 12th century, and the role of retired monarchs and their housemen in that important process.

And on the following day, Friday November 6 from 11 to 1 in Doheny 110c, Professor Kamakura will lead a workshop for those interested in reading and interpreting historical sources concerning Kagato Estate in Bizen Province during the era of Taira hegemony in the later 12th century.

**Discussants**
**Dr. Suzanne Gay** is Professor of East Asian Studies and History at Oberlin College. Her research and publications concern commercial groups and their activities in late medieval Japan. She has spent years living and studying in Japan, particularly in Kyoto. She is the author of *The Moneylenders of Late Medieval Kyoto* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001) and “The Lamp-Oil Merchants of Iwashimizu Shrine: Transregional Commerce in Medieval Japan” (*Monumenta Nipponica* 64.1, 2009).

**Dr. Sachiko Kawai** received her Ph.D. from USC (History Department) in 2014. She is now a postdoctoral teaching fellow at Harvard University, in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. Her research concerns the households and proprietary holdings, especially estates, of retired royal ladies (*nyoin*) in early medieval times. She is now working on a monograph devoted to the life of the royal lady Senyômon’in (1181-1252), whose life spanned late Heian to Kamakura times.

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