



Haruko Wakabayashi:
The Seven Tengu Scrolls: Evil and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy in Medieval Japanese Buddhism,
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Reading the Tengu zōshi: Using Narrative Picture Scrolls for the Study of Medieval Japanese History

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Tuesday, July 10, 2012, 6 pm, Seminar Room 311 (3rd floor), Seminarstr. 4

In recent years, scholars of medieval Japanese history explored various approaches to the use of art, employing visual materials such as portraits, pictorial maps, and illustrated narrative scrolls (emaki) as documents that must be critically “read” and analyzed within their historical and social contexts. Critical readings of pictures allow us to better comprehend manners, behavior, and conduct reflecting social status and profession, to gain an understanding of “space” as revealed in the historical landscape, and to perceive general mentality and ways of thinking. This paper will look at Tengu zōshi, a thirteenth-century handscroll, to demonstrate the ways in which narrative scrolls can be used as primary sources to offer new insights into the period under study. The paper will focus specifically on the nature of critique against Buddhism found in the scroll, and how it reflects some of the critical issues that were faced by the Buddhist establishments of the late thirteenth century.

Haruko Wakabayashi

received her B.A. in Japanese Studies at Sophia University (Tokyo) and earned her PhD in Japanese History and Art History at Princeton University, where she currently holds the position as Departmental Guest.

Her PhD dissertation „Tengu and the Buddhist Concepts of Evil in Medieval Japan“ contributed significantly to a visual understanding of Buddhist studies. She continues to pursue the topic of Buddhist visibility, and her brand-new published monograph „The Seven Tengu Scrolls: Evil and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy in Medieval Japanese Buddhism“ synthesizes her research, which combines methods of Japanese history, art history and linguistics.