



Writing Margins: The Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan

Terry Kawashima

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In texts from the mid-Heian to the early Kamakura periods, certain figures appear to be "marginal" or removed from "centers" of power. But why do we see these figures in this way?

This study first seeks to answer this question by examining the details of the marginalizing discourse found in these texts. Who is portraying whom as marginal? For what reason? Is the discourse consistent? The author next considers these texts in terms of the predilection of modern scholarship, both Japanese and Western, to label certain figures "marginal." She then poses the question: Is this predilection a helpful tool or does it inscribe modern biases and misconceptions onto these texts?

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