

## Lecture 08

### Politics and Society in Heian Japan

#### 1. The move to Heian and layout of the capital

- a. Buddhist patronage gone overboard
- b. **Emperor Kammu** moves the capital
- c. Introduction of new Buddhist Sects:
  - i. **Tendai** sect, est. by **Saichō** (766-822) at **Enryakuji** complex on Mt. Hiei
  - ii. **Shingon** sect, est. by **Kūkai** (744-835) at **Mt. Kōya**, 60 miles SE of Heian

#### 2. Legal, economic, landholding aspects of the *shōen* (“estate”) system

- a. *shiki* (“rights” to the produce of farmland)
- b. *menden* ([tax] “exempt-field”)
- c. *kishin-gata* (“commendation-type”)

#### 3. Married to the (Imperial) Mob

- a. Fujiwara “marriage politics”
- b. The northern branch (**hokke**) of the Fujiwara clan most important
- c. Fujiwara dominate 2 posts: **Sesshō** and **Kanpaku**  
(jointly referred to as **sekkan**, so that the Fujiwara branch family that holds these positions is referred to as “**Sekkanke**”)
- d. Peak Fujiwara power under **Michinaga** (late 10<sup>th</sup> early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries)

#### 4. Court Ranks and Familial Interest Groups

- a. About 20,000 people within aristocratic class; about 50 uji
- b. 9-rank system of courtiers
- c. **Kugyō** (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> rank) compose the highest levels

#### 5. The Emperors Strike Back

- a. Emperor Go-Sanjo (1068): a break in Fujiwara connections to throne
- b. In 1069 Go-Sanjō issued edict against the *shōen*
- c. The consolidation of the **insei** (system of retired/cloistered emperors):
  - Emperors: Shirakawa (r. 1073-87; d. 1129);
  - Toba (r. 1107-23; d.1156)
  - Go-Shirakawa (r. 1155-58; d. 1192)