



# Midwest Japan Seminar

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Saturday, November 9, 2019  
1:30 – 6:00 PM

Carleton College  
Sayles-Hill Campus Center 251  
1 North College Street  
Northfield, MN 55057

## PAPER TITLES AND ABSTRACTS:

### **Noell Wilson, University of Mississippi, “Hakodate and the Navigation of Maritime Knowledge in the 1860s North Pacific”**

My paper will examine bakumatsu Ezo’s role in linking Japan at large to the North Pacific through Hakodate’s navigation academy and the creation of knowledge of the deep sea. The core of this presentation examines two separate logs of the 1861 roundtrip voyage of the Western style sailing vessel, Kameda-maru, from the southern Ezo port of Hakodate to the Russian city of Nikolayevsk on Amur, just west of the northern tip of Sakhalin. These sources, one a compendium of memos of the captain, Takeda Ayasaburo, and the second a journal submitted by a sailor to the Hakodate Magistrate, record a journey of Hakodate navigation school students, the majority on their first deep sea voyage, through the Japan Sea. Their trip, in addition to honing navigation skills, exposed them to shipbuilding techniques in the Russian Far East which prompted the hiring of American consultants to guide trials of steamship construction in Hakodate.

This journey was but the first in a series of training voyages out of Hakodate, following the journey of the Kanrin-maru to the US in the 1860, that repositioned Hokkaido as a core site for nurturing sailors confident cruising the deep sea, a set of skills previously framed as developing primarily in the port cities of Yokohama and Nagasaki. Cultivating sailors with this technical expertise not only enabled Japan’s independent interaction with surrounding cultures and economies but also helped launch the Meiji state as a Pacific nation.

**Charo D’Etcheverry, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Politics in Disguise: A Peek Inside *Sagoromo’s Undersash*”**

*The Tale of Sagoromo* (*Sagoromo monogatari*, ca. 1070) narrates twelve years of loneliness (*sagoromo* or “narrow robes” suggest frustrated desire), combined with unprecedented political success. As the tale starts in spring, the hero—a courtier—longs for his foster-sister; she is meant for the crown prince. When it ends in autumn, Sagoromo—now emperor—remains wretched. Married to his sister’s doppelganger, he remains fixated on his first love, now Kamo Priestess. He also pines for two other women: a dead commoner and a tonsured princess. The tale’s bookends mark Sagoromo’s growing disappointment; in court verse, autumn points to winter: the death of romance. The tale’s span, meanwhile—one round of the court zodiac—sets off the hero’s essential stasis. At thirty, even as emperor, he still wants the impossible: to regain his lost youth or, abstractly, the freedom to act without fear of consequence.

My new book discusses the first commentary on this complex and highly intertextual work. *Sagoromo’s Undersash* (*Sagoromo no shitahimo*, ca. 1590) begins conventionally. *Renga* poet Satomura Jōha (1525-1602) justifies his efforts, claiming that divine and human patrons directed him. He then places himself in a pedagogical lineage, noting earlier poets who also taught *Sagoromo* and attempted to collate its texts. Finally, before turning to individual phrases, Jōha gives a genealogy of the characters. This is the first hint that *Undersash* is unusual. Unlike earlier writers, Jōha mixes fiction and history here. He makes the hero part of the real imperial line—while defending Sagoromo’s highly fictional path to enthronement.

Having workshopped a chapter on Jōha’s poetics this May, I’ll ask MJS to consider a draft on his politics. How exactly does Jōha place Sagoromo within the imperial family? How does his portrait of the tale’s fictional court compare to that seen in *Sagoromo* itself? By answering these questions, I hope to clarify Jōha’s reading of the tale’s political themes as well as its value to his own patrons: warriors who also hoped to be welcomed at court.

**Catherine Phipps, University of Memphis, “From Failure to Primacy in the Pursuit of Commerce: The Port of Osaka and Its Reliance on Kobe, 1868-1945.”**

At the turn of the twentieth century, maritime East Asia was a place where risk and opportunity could be found in equal measure. Japan’s international port system generated a vigorous exchange of goods, people, and ideas, but its success required key infrastructural development and support. By looking at Osaka’s position at home and in broader East Asian port systems, it becomes clear that although the port was opened to modern international trade as a direct result of Western imperialism (with the intent of opening Japanese markets to the Western nations), the port only became successful through the connections it created to East Asia and Japan’s growing empire there. Examining the port itself, its crucial relationship to the neighboring port of Kobe, its immediate hinterland, and its extensive riverine and coastal shipping reveals that Osaka’s relatively poor performance as a treaty port for Western trade helped launch its role as the primary maritime hub in Japan’s empire.

**HOTEL:** A block of rooms is being held (under the name Midwest Japan Seminar) at the Fairfield Inn and Suites until October 9<sup>th</sup>, for the rate of \$118 for a single king or \$135 for two queens. <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/mspnf-fairfield-inn-and-suites-northfield/>

**TRANSPORTATION:** Located approximately 45 miles south of Minneapolis, Carleton College is served best by Minneapolis-St. Paul International (MSP), a drive of approximately 45 minutes from the college. Shuttle information from MSP can be found at:

<https://apps.carleton.edu/transportation/options/shuttles/>

**CAMPUS MAP:** <https://apps.carleton.edu/map/>

**LOCAL CONTACT:** Noboru Tomonari ([ntomonar@carleton.edu](mailto:ntomonar@carleton.edu)). (507) 222-5955 office  
(507) 291-4547 cell.

**DINNER ON SATURDAY NIGHT:** The MJS dinner will take place on Saturday evening at Chapati Cuisine of India. <http://places.singleplatform.com/chapati-cuisine-of-india/menu?ref=google>

To receive electronic copies of the papers, please e-mail Michael Bathgate ([bathgate@sxu.edu](mailto:bathgate@sxu.edu)) by October 19. And please indicate if you would like to join for dinner on Saturday night.

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## REMAINING SCHEDULE FOR 2019-2020

### **Feb. 15, 2020    University of Missouri-St. Louis**

Malia McAndrew, John Carroll University, History  
Eric Cunningham, Earlham College, Anthropology  
Tyler Walker, Kalamazoo College, Literature

### **April 4, 2020    University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

Hilary Snow, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Art History  
Robert Tierney, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Literature  
Elizabeth Lublin, Wayne State University, History

**MJS Website:** <http://www.wmich.edu/japancenter/seminar>