Thinking on Popular Movements in Medieval Japan: The Process of the Formation of the Kishu-Sokoku

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In this paper, the author discusses the historical position of *tokusei* (cancellation of debts; lit: "virtuous government") (reinstatement), an aspect focused on in thinking on popular reform in Japan's medieval period. In addition to sorting through arguments presented in previous research, the author examines in detail historical materials on the Minabe-no-Sho *shoen*, which was the key *shoen* of Kongobu-ji temple on Mount Koya, that have recently come to light. Special attention is paid to the significance of the reformist group of Kenmitsu (exoteric-esoteric) Buddhism, the major point of contention in research on this topic.

In contrast to prevailing theory, although after the first half of the medieval period there were warrior uprisings across the entire Minabe-no-Sho *shoen* in Kii province ruled from Mount Koya which resulted in self-government with the tutelary Ichinomiya shrine as its base, this originated from peasants' requests for *tokusei* when a new lord took over the *shoen* or when a famine occurred. These requests by peasants for *tokusei* during the tense times of the Mongol invasion of Japan so that they could fight this foreign country were organized into a popular movement by Kanto *jito* (land stewards) and the Buddhist monk Dogyo of the Risshu reformist sect at Toshodai-ji temple. This saw the development of ports and urban centers as a result of great technological reforms, such as advanced river irrigation and the establishment of blacksmiths. The peasant movement that sought to use the Ichinomiya shrine as a base for reforms gave rise to the *sokoku* as a political force at the stage when the movement was organized by those of *ryoshu* rank (*shoen* lords) who attempted to turn *goryo* shrines into tutelary *shoen* shrines. The Kishu-sokoku created amid these struggles over *tokusei* reached its zenith after achieving self-government through these uprisings, and was ended by the military invasion known as "Hideyoshi's peace" when Hideyoshi came to power and sought to complete the unification of the country in 1585.

Key words: *tokusei*, Shrine Estate Recovery Act, Minabe-no-Sho *shoen*, the Mongol invasion of Japan, *Kanjin Hijiri*