

# Aspects of Sibling Support in Medieval Japanese Local Communities: Through Analysis of the Enin Donation Document (February 29, 1377)

by  
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The “Enin Donation Document” is a rare example of a property transfer in which both a brother and sister appear on the same record. Using the document, this study examines kinship-based support systems in medieval Japanese local society through analyzing this document.

Enin was a disciple of Jakushitsu Genkō, the founder of Eigen-ji Temple. In the document, he donated his land to the head of Kōhan Hermitage, a sub temple of Eigen-ji Temple. It also specifies that the land will be managed by the Syuyū Daishi for the duration of her lifetime, and that Enin will be supporting her because she is his younger sister.

Based on an examination of related documents, it was revealed that Enin transferred multiple properties to Kōhan Hermitage, indicating his contribution to expanding the temple’s estates.

Similar patterns appear in a record from Ōhara Kannon-ji, where siblings also co-appear in a land transaction document. Notably, a sister explicitly mentioned her kinship with her brother and jointly signed with him. It was likely because the brother acted as a financial supporter of a temple.

These cases suggest that kin-based support was integrated into the religious structure of temple landholding. In Enin’s case, his donation formalized this support by specifying the period during which his sister would manage the land to fulfill his responsibility as an older brother. The document reflects a broader pattern in which familial obligations, especially between siblings, were institutionalized within religious and economic systems in medieval Japan.

Authorization of *MASU* in *Sengoku Kōtō*:  
A 1555 Joint Edict Draft from *Eigen-ji* and *Gankū-in* temple

by  
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This paper examines a 1555 draft joint edict issued by *Eigen-ji* and *Gankū-in* temples concerning the replacement of *MASU* (a rice measure) used in tax collection in *Yamakami village*, located in the *Kōtō* region of *Ōmi Province*. The edict reflects a local dispute caused by the loss of the original *MASU* and outlines procedures for certifying a replacement: the old measure was to be stored in a sealed box, and a new one, marked for authentication, was entrusted to both temple authorities and Ogura Mataji, a local warrior acting as mediator.

The case reveals the declining influence of Kyoto-based *shōen* administrators like the *Konoe* family and the growing authority of temple-based and Sengoku-affiliated local elites. Ogura's role exemplifies the shift from estate officials to *Sengoku daimyo* governance. Later records show that the *Yamada family* (one of subordinate of *Konoe*) became absorbed into the village's autonomous communal body (*Yamakami sō*).

By analyzing this edict in the context of broader institutional transformations, this study argues that the authorization of *MASU* served as a ritualized assertion of local authority. The document illustrates how technical procedures—such as measure certification—became key mechanisms in the reorganization of rural governance during Japan's late medieval period.

# Introduction to Historical Documents on the Disputes over Timber Rights in Nishigamine during the Kanbun and Enpō Era

by

Keisei Sano

In my previous paper, “A Fundamental Study on the Disputes over Timber Rights in Nishigamine, Echi District, Ōmi Province during the Kanbun and Enpō Era: Aspects of the Use of Medieval Documents in the Early Modern Period”, I examined the disputes over the timber rights in Nishigamine. In this paper and the next, I provide photographs and transcriptions of historical documents related to the disputes.

While this paper serves the general purpose of making historical documents more accessible, it also carries additional significance in the case of these particular documents.

In the 1990s, Shiga Prefectural Board of Education conducted a survey of the Eigen-ji Temple documents. Based on the catalogue created at that time, the documents related to the disputes were divided into two categories: “Medieval/1. Medieval” (“Nagabitsu Medieval Documents”) and “Sub-temples/1. Echi District/3. Echi District” (“Sub-temple Related Documents”). This division occurred because ten items classified under the Nagabitsu Medieval Documents were bundled together with paper cords and included copies of medieval documents. The importance of medieval documents is self-evident and preserving them in their current condition is a basic principle in document surveys. However, the separation of originally related documents cannot be overlooked. By introducing these documents from the perspective of dispute-related sources in this paper and the next, I hope to contribute to addressing this issue.

In this paper, I provide the documents classified under the Nagabitsu Medieval Documents. Please also refer to the catalog published in Ritsumeikan Bungaku, Issue No. 690, as well as my previous paper.