

Gustav Heldt

Associate Professor

Ph.D. Columbia University, 2000

My area of specialization is in the language, literature, and cultural history of Japan prior to contact with the West. I favor a comparative approach to these topics, emphasizing their connections with classical Chinese in particular. Although I am a literature specialist by training, I am interested in the ways in which literary texts circulate within their larger historical contexts and intersect with non-literary texts.

I became interested in classical Japanese literature when I had an opportunity to study noh theater performance traditions during my junior year abroad at the Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies. I was struck by the unique beauty of the language, and because much of noh's rhetoric is derived from classical poetics, I was inspired to pursue graduate study of the latter.

Most of my research has been in the area of early Heian and medieval Japanese poetry. My interest in traditional theater has also led me to help produce performance guides for the National Noh Theater in Tokyo. I have also translated research by Japanese scholars in the areas of gender, history, and poetics in order to augment English-language resources in premodern Japanese studies.

I am currently pursuing research on early Japanese song and hope in the near future to develop my ongoing interest in medieval Japan.

Specializations

Early and Medieval Japanese Poetry, Gender Studies, Early and Medieval Japanese Cultural History, Classical Chinese Poetry and Poetics, East Asian Cultural History.

Courses

East Asian Canons and Cultures, Introduction to Classical Japanese, Introduction to Classical Japanese Literature, The Tale of Genji.

Selected Publications

- *The Pursuit of Harmony: Poetry and Power in Early Heian Japan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Series, 2008.
- "Between Followers and Friends: Male Homosocial Desire in Heian Court Poetry," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 33: 1-32.
- 2006. "The Tosa Diary." *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 204-213.
- 2005. "Writing Like a Man: Poetic Literacy, Textual Property, and Gender in the *Tosa Diary*." *Journal of Asian Studies* 64(1): 7-34.
- 1997. "Saigyō's Traveling Tale." *Monumenta Nipponica* 52(4): 467-521.