

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture  
Lecture Series 2016

# Immigrant Kinship Groups and the Making of the Tenjukoku Shūchō Mandara

**Dr. Chari Pradel**

Professor of Art History,  
California State Polytechnic University Pomona

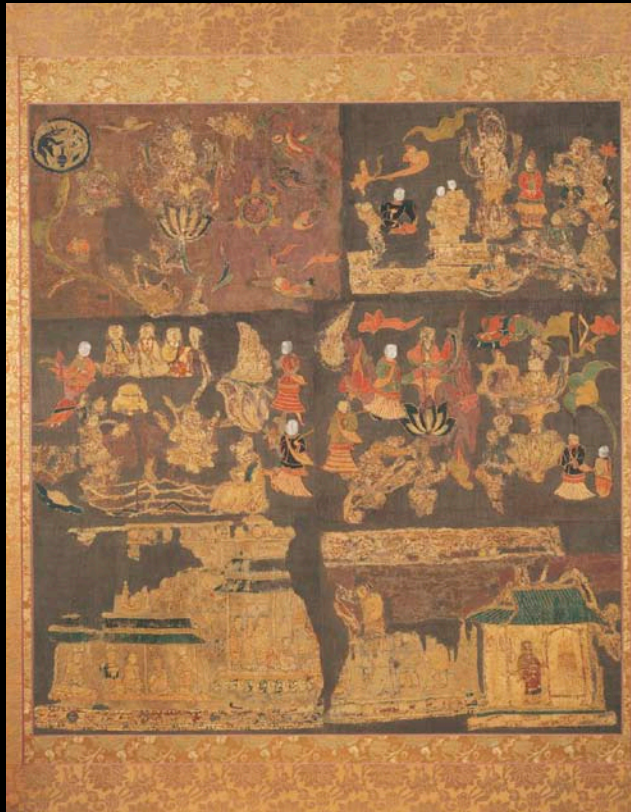
December 1, 2016、

18:30-20:00

Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University

One of Japan's most puzzling National Treasures is the assemblage of embroidered fragments known as the Tenjukoku Shūchō Mandara. Documentary evidence indicates that the fragments are the remains two artifacts: a pair of *shūchō* (embroidered curtains) representing Tenjukoku (Land of

Heavenly Lifespan) made in the seventh century, and its thirteenth century restoration, called a *mandara* (Sk. mandala). These documents also reveal that both artifacts were associated with Prince Shōtoku (574-622), traditionally acknowledged as the father of Japanese Buddhism. For this reason, the assemblage was categorized as



an example of early Buddhist art.

By analyzing the scant visual evidence, this lecture will demonstrate that the subject represented on the embroidered curtains was not Buddhist, but that included designs found in tombs and funerary

artifacts from China and Korea. The use of a common East Asian visual vocabulary might be related to the fact that the designers and the supervisor of the seventh-century artifact were members of important immigrant kinships groups that played a key role in the transmission of continental culture.

Chari Pradel is a Professor in the Department of Art at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, where she has taught since 2004. Her publications focus on Japanese religious art, especially works associated with Prince Shōtoku, such as "Shōkō Mandara and the Cult of Prince Shōtoku in the Kamakura Period," *Artibus Asiae* 68.2 (2008) and "Portrait of Prince Shōtoku and Two Princes: From Devotional Painting to Imperial Object," *Artibus Asiae* 74.1 (2014). Her book *Fabricating the Tenjukoku Shūchō Mandara and Prince Shōtoku's Afterlives* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) will be in the market soon. While an ICC Visiting Scholar, she is researching the *Hasedera engi* narrative scrolls.

No RSVP necessary / Lecture in English

Institute of Comparative Culture (ICC) Sophia University  
7-1Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554, JAPAN  
+81-3-3238-4082 / +81-3-3238-4081(fax) / Email  
diricc@sophia.ac.jp / Web: <http://icc.fla.sophia.ac.jp/>