

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)  
announces a Lecture

by

**Prof. Dr. Mikael S. Adolphson**  
**University of Cambridge**

### **The Written Word in Early Medieval Japan**

Japan's early medieval age (ca. 1100-1400) saw the rise of warriors to national prominence and a gradual transition to warrior rule. It also signified an increased tendency to resolve disputes with arms, as exemplified by both a dramatic rise in local violence and several civil wars. The first major figure to emerge was Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181), a militarized aristocrat who took control of the imperial court and nearly established a new imperial line around 1180. The second agent was the Kamakura shogunate (1185-1333), Japan's first warrior government, which paved the way for another two shogunates and centuries of warrior rule. What is notable about these warrior leaders is that despite their reliance on arms, they also adopted, and in some cases adapted, the imperial court's traditions of using a variety of textual strategies to legitimize their positions. By examining their strategies, we will not just learn about how warriors navigated their way to leadership, but we will also gain insights into medieval textual practices and their socio-political importance in Japan.

**Thursday, 29 June 2017 at 6 pm**  
**Room 0001, CSMC**