



**SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES**  
**DEITIES IN JAPANESE ART**  
**SESSION 1: SHINTO**

in collaboration with [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#)



Pair of Sacred Monkeys , Heian Period, 12th century, Gift of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr., Margaret and David Barry, the Louis Y. Kado Trust, Mrs. Charlene S. Kornblum and Dr. S. Sanford Kornblum, Murray Smith, and Grace Tsao, Photo © Museum Associates/ LACMA

Date & Time:

Tuesday, September 19, 7pm

Venue:

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles  
(5700 Wilshire Blvd., #100 Los Angeles, CA 90036)

Street parking is available near JFLA. [Click here for parking info.](#)

Admission Free  
Registration is Full

Rather than a purely academic approach to Japanese religious art, the purpose of this lecture series is to help participants' locate visual clues by which the deities can be identified and differentiated. The figures will be contextualized within Japanese religious history and connected to their iconographical antecedents in the arts of India, China, and Korea.

The first talk will introduce the indigenous religion of Shinto and the deities within; the following four will look at Buddhist deities from four distinct classes: buddhas, bodhisattvas, wisdom kings, and celestial beings.

This lecture series is the product of a special collaboration with the Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA), Japanese Art Department.

### **SCHEDULED LECTURES:**



#### **SESSION 1: SHINTO (SEPTEMBER 19)**

Before Buddhism entered the archipelago in the 6th century CE, Japanese people adhered to the naturalistic religion Shinto, in which they worshipped the kami, spirits believed to inhabit natural elements that inspired awe. These ranged from the sun goddess Amaterasu to the mischievous celestial dogs known as Tengu.



#### **SESSION 2: BUDDHAS (\*OCTOBER 10)**

For many, saying the name "Buddha" evokes the image of a serene ascetic or of a portly, laughing soul. However, the Buddhist pantheon is occupied by many different figures associated with the title 'buddha'; the most prominent being Shakamuni, the historical Buddha; Amida, the Buddha of the Western Paradise; and Yakushi, the Medicine Buddha.

#### **SESSION 3: BODHISATTVAS (\*NOVEMBER 14)**

The bodhisattvas are deities who have achieved enlightenment themselves but have delayed their own exit from the cycle of rebirth to guide others to enlightenment. Japanese Buddhism is full of these strange yet wonderfully virtuous attendant deities, from the monk-like bodhisattva of the hells to the horse-headed bodhisattva of compassion.



**SESSION 4: WISDOM KINGS (\*DECEMBER 19)**

With their wrathful visages and weapons, the Wisdom Kings protect the buddhas and intimidate wayward Buddhist practitioners back into devotion. Rather than a proclivity to violence, however, this class of deity embodies the buddha’s compassion and grace, in their unfaltering dedication to returning lost souls into his presence.



**SESSION 5: CELESTIAL BEINGS (\*JANUARY 16, 2018)**

The final class of deities - known collectively as the celestial beings - primarily serve as guardians and protectors of the Buddhist cosmos. The most prominent are the Four Celestial Guardian Kings who oversee the cardinal directions, the chief of whom came to be worshiped alone as a Buddhist deity; other examples include the Temple Guardians and Twelve Celestial Generals.

\*Date are subject to change

**ABOUT LECTURER**



**Michael VanHartingsveldt** graduated in 2017 with a Master’s Degree in East Asian Art Business from Sotheby’s Institute of Art and Claremont Graduate University. His work as a research and curatorial intern with the Pavilion for Japanese Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art has culminated in several notable projects, including a detailed analysis of LACMA’s sculpture of Fudō Myōō and an exhibition with Hollis Goodall entitled “Japanese Paintings: A Walk in Nature” on themes in Edo-period paintings of the landscape.

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JAPANEMA = Japanese Cinema

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Annual Report

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