

Thursday October 10

10.00 Welcome: Prof. Garth Green, Head of School

Every presentation will take 25min, 10min are reserved for questions and comments following each talk.

10.10 Keynote: **Waters, Dragons, and Mantra: Rethinking Kūkai's rainmaking legend**
Ryūichi Abe (Harvard)

This paper reinterprets the celebrated legend of Kūkai's rainmaking ritual practice at the royal Shinsen-en lake. It investigates whether the legend has any poetic and rhetorical implication to Kūkai's theory of mantra and mantric language. In doing so, it strives to illustrate the identity of "Zennyō ryū," the divinity who is said to have helped Kūkai at his Shinsen-en rain ritual.

10.45 **Visualizing Hungry Ghosts in Heian Japan: *Gaki zoshi* as a Transcultural**

13.35

15.45 **The First Sculptural Gorint": Kenshi's Reliquary at Enk"'in**
Hank Glassman (Haverford College)

Under the leadership of the prominent Daigoji cleric Gihan, an unusual interment took place in the year 1085, one hundred years before the big changes brought by the Genpei Wars. The deeply beloved consort of Emperor Shirakawa (and mother of the boy who would become Emperor Horikawa) had passed from the world a few years before her thirtieth birthday and a gilt bronze casket in the shape of a gorint was fashioned to hold her cremated remains. This paper tells the story of the seventeenth century excavation of that object and explores the religious and political ramifications.

16.20 END DAY 1

Friday October 11

9.30 **Writing through Death: Memorial Palimpsests of Medieval Japan**
Halle O'Neal (Edinburgh)

This paper explores the textuality and materiality of Buddhist memorial palimpsests written during medieval Japan. These textually layered compositions were produced at cataclysmic moments of loss: upon the death of a loved one, family members gathered the dead's letters and other remnants of handwriting and transformed them through material reconstructions, via the copying of sacred scripture as a new textual layer, into embodied palimpsests. This paper advocates for the inclusion of Buddhist examples into the wider discussion of palimpsests as an avenue for understanding the visuality and intentionality of this peculiar form. Like most medieval material culture, much of their histories have been erased or forgotten. But through an object biographical approach that traces the moments of transformation marking the manuscripts' materiality, we can come closer to understanding the afterlives of these letters through the prism of medieval reuse and recycling. Doing so also recovers the manuscripts as ritual objects and performances of mourning and prayers for salvation.

10.05 **The Pacification of Vengeful Spirits and Jien's Negotiation of Tendai Doctrine and Ritual**
Eric Swanson (Loyola Marymount University)

In 1205, Jien (1155-1225) established a new exoteric-esoteric ritual program in the proximity of the Heian capital. As rites practiced on Mt. Hiei were transported to this urban space, I argue that Jien actively re-conceptualized the purpose and theories underlying these rites to specifically address the threat of vengeful spirits.

prise that Buddhist texts regard with ambivalence. This paper shows the great pains H but-sush takes to reframe war into a “path” undertaken by the ideal renunciant.

16.15 **Tracing Yamashina dera**
Mikael Bauer (McGill)

In this presentation, I will provide a concise overview of K fukuji’s origins as portrayed in the Yamashina Ry ki 山階流記 and explore the meaning and implications of the usage of the term Yamashina dera 山階寺. I will suggest an alternative interpretation of K fukuji’s earliest beginnings in relation with its precursor Yamashina dera and analyze the relation between the occurrence of the name 'Yamashina dera' and 8th century political and religious developments.

17.30 FACULTY CLUB DINNER