

Einladung zum Gastvortrag

Dr. Lindsey E. DeWitt

Kyushu University

Entering the Peaks: The Visual Culture of Shugendō

Dienstag, 12. Dezember 2017, 16–18 Uhr ct, Hörsaal B
Kunsthistorisches Institut, Ostasiatische Kunstgeschichte
Koserstr. 20, 14195 Berlin

This presentation offers an introduction to mountain religion in Japan, or Shugendō (lit. “the way of attaining signs”), with a focus on visual culture. Shugendō denotes an eclectic blend of mountain-centric religious practices and beliefs that embrace Japanese esoteric Buddhism, Shintō (kami cults), Chinese Daoism, and Korean shamanism, as well as local lore and legend centered around an elusive seventh-century figure, En no Gyōja. First, I provide an overview of key concepts and themes in Shugendō. This will serve as the backdrop for exploring the tradition’s rich visual culture, which spans more than one thousand years. Topics to be covered include devotional objects interred in the sacred peaks, icons and iconography, and visual and artistic strategies related to legendary founder En no Gyōja. The final part of the presentation will draw attention to Shugendō in the modern period through a discussion of ongoing ritual practices, festivals, and the 2004 designation of Mt. Ōmine, the celebrated heartland of Shugendō, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Lindsey E. DeWitt is a Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (JSPS) Postdoctoral Fellow and a Visiting Researcher at Kyushu University. She received her doctorate in 2015 from the University of California, Los Angeles in Asian Languages & Cultures (Buddhist Studies Program). DeWitt is presently researching religion, gender, and cultural heritage in Japan and other parts of Asia. Other research interests include Shugendō, transcultural religious networks in Asia, and the relationship between religion and the state.