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sull'Asia Orientale  
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International Research Center  
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# KYOTO LECTURES

Wednesday, September 25th, 18:00h

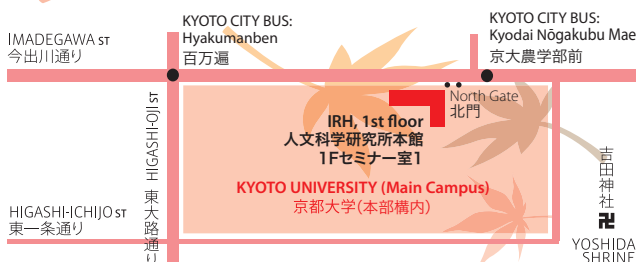
Michael Dylan Foster

SPEAKER

## Rituals of Surveillance Toshidon and the Optic Imaginary

"Koshikijima no Toshidon" is a New Year's Eve ritual performed annually on the island of Shimo-Koshikijima off the southwest coast of Kagoshima Prefecture. During the event, men masked and costumed as frightening demon-deity creatures enter individual households in order to "discipline" and "educate" young children. The ritual has been performed since at least the Edo period and in 2009 it was inscribed on UNESCO's *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. This talk will introduce Toshidon with a focus particularly on the way in which vision, and what can be called the "optic imaginary," functions within the ritual. The dynamics of surveillance and the gaze, of "seeing and being seen," inform the performance of Toshidon and to a certain extent the everyday lives of the islanders. An understanding of Toshidon through the lens of the optic imaginary provides insight into broader questions of tourism, UNESCO, and the production of heritage in Japan and elsewhere.

Michael Dylan Foster is an associate professor in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Indiana University. He is the author of *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai* (University of California Press, 2009) and numerous articles on Japanese folklore, literature, and media. His current project on ritual, festival, and tourism is entitled "Visiting Strangers: Gods, Ethnographers, and Tourists."



This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).

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