

Eric Haruki Swanson

Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University

Los Angeles, CA, US

Bellarmino College of Liberal Arts

Biography

Eric Haruki Swanson is an Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. He received his B.A. in Religion from Indiana University Bloomington, his M.A. in Esoteric Buddhist Studies from Koyasan University in Japan, and Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Civilizations, with a concentration on Religion and Philosophy, from Harvard University. He is a historian of religion who studies religious traditions of Japan through the examination of literature, visual material, ritual practices, and performance arts, and considers the role of religious institutions and its actors within broader cultural patterns, political agendas, and expressions of religious identity. His current projects include a study of scholar-monk Jien (1155-1225) and his establishment of Buddhist ritual programs for the restoration of social order in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), and discourses on "peace of mind" (anjin) and the negotiation of salvation among Shingon Buddhist priests within the rapidly changing social landscape of Meiji Japan (1868-1912).

Areas of Expertise

Esoteric/Tantric Buddhism, Japanese Literature, Religions of Japan, East Asian Buddhism

Sample Talks

"Revisioning Esoteric Buddhist Practices for the Salvation of All: Shaku Unsh? (1827-1909) and Shingon Perspectives on Peace of Mind and Lay Precept Revival in Modern Japan?"

Panel: Under the Nation: Buddhist Responses to State Policy in Modern Japan. Association of Asian Studies Conference, March 18, 2023

"Animating the Compassion of the Dharma King: An Assessment of Jien's Vision of Prince Sh?toku in Exaltations of the Imperial Prince in Five Sections?"

Panel: Holy Death, People and Places: Reincarnation, Resurrection, Martyrdom, and the Ambiguity of Death. Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 21, 2022

"The Shingon Temple in the Medieval Imagination: A Re-assessment of the Depiction of Performance and the Institutional Role of Daigo-ji in the Seven Tengu Scrolls?"

Panel: Daigo Temple and the Shingon Contributions to Japan's Religious Culture. 19th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, August 16, 2022

Education

Harvard University
Ph.D. East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Koyasan University
M.A. Esoteric Buddhism

Indiana University Bloomington
B.A. Religious Studies

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