



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RESEARCH ON RELIGION COLLOQUIUM

In the Ruins of the Ancestors: Shugendo, Counterculture, and DIY Archaeology



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Day/Date: Monday, March 27, 2023

Location: M-1030 (Markin Hall)

Time: 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

In a small farming village, high in the mountains of Western Japan, oral history tells that a nearby summit is a dyad of the womb and diamond realms in esoteric Buddhism. Yet, no one, not even the oldest living resident, know what this means or where, exactly, the realms might be. In July 2022, a mountain ascetic discovered the realm sites while wandering by intuition through the trees. He then organized a community excavation, finding unusual rock formations that soon became new sites of worship. In this presentation, I consider how the archaeological discovery of the realm sites has affected religion in the community, intensifying their felt connection to the ancestral past as well as inspiring waking visions of an imminent spiritual revolution.

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