



March - April 2025

No. 2

Qi Baishi: Inspiration in Ink
Dec. 12, 2024 – Apr. 7, 2025
Asian Art Museum

Don't miss this rare opportunity to see 40 works on paper by Qi Baishi (Chinese, 1864–1957) from the Beijing Fine Art Academy on the 160th anniversary of the artist's birth. This special exhibition also features interactive experiences and a display of correspondence from the artist to his patrons.

Blending minimal brushwork with passages of abstraction, Qi changed the course of traditional Chinese painting. His ink paintings capture everyday scenes and familiar moments, evoking the essential beauty of nature and the joy of life's simple pleasures. In recent years, Qi's paintings have set multimillion-dollar records as the most expensive Chinese artworks ever sold at auction. This special exhibition is on view now through Apr. 7. So, plan a visit now!



Captions from left to right:

EX2024.4.15 Longevity Peaches (寿桃), n.d., by Qi Baishi (Chinese, 1864–1957). Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper. Lent from the Beijing Fine Art Academy Collection. Photograph © Beijing Fine Art Academy.

EX2024.4.15 Shrimp (虾), 1948, by Qi Baishi (Chinese, 1864–1957). Hanging scroll; ink on paper. Lent from the Beijing Fine Art Academy Collection. Photograph © Beijing Fine Art Academy.

EX2024.4.33 Chicks and Small Fish (雏鸡小鱼), n.d., by Qi Baishi (Chinese, 1864–1957). Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper. Lent from the Beijing Fine Art Academy Collection. Photograph © Beijing Fine Art Academy.

EX2024.4.09 Old Yet Strong (老当益壮), n.d., by Qi Baishi (Chinese, 1864–1957). Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper. Lent from the Beijing Fine Art Academy Collection. Photograph © Beijing Fine Art Academy.

Society for Asian Art Board Nominations

The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to serve on the SAA Board of Directors for 2025 - 2027. The SAA Board is a working board with all Board members expected to serve on at least one committee.

The committees plan and manage various programs each year. The committees that plan events are: Arts of Asia, Member Events, Upper Category Member Events, Literature & Culture, Study Groups and Travel.

We are also looking for volunteers with expertise to serve on Finance, Investment, Social Media & Website as well as Membership Committees.

If you would like to be considered or wish to recommend a potential candidate, please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, John Kouletsis, at john.kouletsis@gmail.com before March 7, 2025.



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Spring 2025 Literature Course - History of Heaven with Brian Baumann

Monday, Mar. 10

Annual Spring Dinner at Fang Restaurant

Thursday, Apr. 3 - Sunday, Apr. 6

Annual Book Sale

Saturday, May 10

Journey through Cambodian Buddhist & Hindu Iconography with M.L. Pattaratorn Chirapravati



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Save the Date

Thursday, May 29 3:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting & Reception



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member, who joined the Society in December and January. We are thrilled that you have decided to join us, and hope you find our programs and events interesting and engaging. Please don't hesitate to ask questions and give us feedback. Welcome!

Malou Babilonia
Vincent Covello

Joan Gingold
Sheryl Johns



SOCIAL MEDIA

The Publicity/Social Media Committee continues to work on expanding awareness of our organization amongst new people through Facebook and Instagram. Recent posts are focused on publicizing the Arts of Asia lectures.

If any participants have photos of the Island of Serenity: Sri Lanka trip, please submit them for inclusion in our social media posts. We welcome photos of all our programs. Please email to candacezks@gmail.com.

Society for Asian Art

March - April 2025, No. 2

Members' Newsletter
Edited by Janet Constantinou
and Susan Lai

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ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2025 LECTURE SERIES

Visualizing the Divine



Left: The Daoist deity Doumu, approx. 1700–1800. China; Fujian province. Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Porcelain, mold-impressed, with sculpted decoration. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B6OP1362.* Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: Goddess of Earth, 1976, by Mayumi Oda (Japanese, b. 1941). Showa period (1926–1989). Silkscreen print; ink and colors on paper. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Stephen A. Sherwin and Merrill Randol Sherwin, 2023.32.* © Mayumi Oda. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

When: Fridays from Feb. 14 to May 16, 2025

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time

Place: Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum & Zoom Webinars

Please see schedule on the next page for any exceptions.

Fee: \$225 per person Society members; \$300 per person non-members for the series.

Advance registration deadline has passed. Late registration fees are in effect.

We only accept drop-ins for individual lectures in Samsung Hall on a space available basis.

Drop-in fee is \$20 per person per lecture.

All in-person fees are after Museum admission.

Instructor of Record: Jeff Durham

Since the dawn of human experience, there has been a search to understand the mysteries that surround us. As we contend with the unseen, the unknown, and the unknowable, beliefs in spirits, demons, gods, and other divinities have emerged to help us make sense of our time on Earth.

Join us as our Instructor of Record, Asian Art Museum Associate Curator Jeff Durham, guides us through 14 lectures on Visualizing the Divine. Noted scholars will discuss traditions from different parts of Asia, exploring how both ancient and contemporary cultures have depicted visions, feelings, and beliefs relative to the metaphysical and the otherworldly.

The Arts of Asia committee welcomes comments about our lecture series. Please email comments to info@societyforasianart.org.

Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information about this lecture series.



ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2025 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

Feb. 14, 2025

Zoroastrian Art: Ancient, Medieval and Modern Perspectives

Daniel Sheffield, Associate Professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University

Feb. 21, 2025

Cycles of Shinto: Space/Time

Ken Tadashi Oshima, Professor/Director of History Theory, Department of Architecture, University of Washington

Feb. 28, 2025

Fluid Icons: The Mutability of the Sacred Image in Hinduism

Layne Little, Associate Professor of Teaching, Religious Studies Department, University of California, Davis

Mar. 7, 2025

Insights in Living with the Gods

Bradley Bailey, Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Curator of Asian Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Mar. 14, 2025

The Buddhist Wheel of Rebirth, Past and Present

Stephen F. Teiser, D.T. Suzuki Professor in Buddhist Studies and Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Princeton University

Mar. 21, 2026

There's Pagans in the Churches: Traces of Traditional Roman Religion in the Early Christian Architecture of Arabia

Sarah Wenner, Curatorial Fellow of Ancient Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Art, Cincinnati Art Museum

Mar. 28, 2025

Lives of Khmer Sculpture from Past to Present

Paul Lavy, Associate Professor of South & Southeast Asian Art History, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Apr. 4, 2025

Traditional/Contemporary Continuity in South Asia

Swosti Kayastha, Fullbright Fellow, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Apr. 11, 2025

Pure Land Buddhism as Practiced in Asia

Mark Blum, Shinjo Ito Distinguished Chair in Japanese Studies, Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures, University of California, Berkeley

Apr. 18, 2025

Light of the Valley: The Renovation of Svayambhunath

Padma Dorje Maitland, Malavalli Family Foundation Associate Curator of the Art of the Indian Subcontinent, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Apr. 25, 2025

The Lakshacaitya Paubha in the Asian Art Museum Collection

Samuel Grimes, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Fairfield University

May 2, 2025

It is Amun Who Made Me: A Tale of Two Houses

Marc Maillot, Associate Director/Chief Curator, ISAC Museum, University of Chicago

May 9, 2025

Visualizing the Divine Hands: Sutra Fragments and Imagining Deified Individuals in Japan's Early Modern Period

Akiko Walley, Maude I. Kerns Associate Professor of Japanese Art, University of Oregon

May 16, 2025 - Tentative Date

Tibetan Renaissance: Monastery Murals and the Rebirth of Buddhism

Jeffrey Durham, Curator of Himalayan Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



MEMBER EVENTS

2025 Annual Spring Dinner

When: **Monday, Mar. 10, 2025**
 Time: **5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**
 Place: **Fang Restaurant, 660 Howard Street, San Francisco**
 Fee: **\$65 per person Society members; \$75 per person non-members**

Spring is here! It's time to join fellow Society members for our Annual Spring Dinner.

We will enjoy the cuisine of chef and co-owner Kathy Fang, who stars in the Food Network show, *Chef Dynasty: House of Fang*, with her father, legendary chef Peter Fang of House of Nanking fame. Kathy puts her unique spin on classic Chinese cuisine while honoring the longstanding family traditions she grew up with.

We will meet in the upstairs private banquet space reserved for our group and mingle over wine and nibbles. Wine will also be served with dinner.

Come join your friends as we celebrate the Year of the Snake!

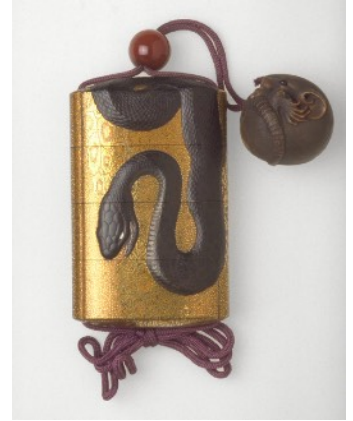
2025 Annual Book Sale

When: **Thursday, Apr. 3, 2025 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
Friday, Apr. 4, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, Apr. 5, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Sunday, Apr. 6, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Place: **Asian Art Museum Loggia**

At this year's special four-day event, thousands of books, including collector's items, will be available at bargain prices. This year's event includes both a Thursday night, when the museum remains open until 8 p.m., a Saturday when the museum is open until 10 p.m., and a Free First Sunday.

Selections include books on Asian art, history, literature, religion, culture, cooking, novels, travel, textiles, jewelry, and more. This year's rarities include a large collection of books on the arts and culture of China during the past 120 years as well as many rare books published by the Asian Art Museum, including *Later Chinese Jades* by Terese Tse Bartholomew, Michael Knight and He Li.

The Society for Asian Art Book Sale has raised more than \$140,000 for the C. Laan Chun Library, one of the most comprehensive research libraries on Asian art and culture in the country.



Inro with snake design, 1800–1900. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Lacquered wood. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B70Y1415. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.*



Logo courtesy of Fang Restaurant.



Photos courtesy of Peter Sinton.

Donations for Book Sale

We now accept books throughout the year for our annual Book Sale. So if you move, downsize or are tired of all the books collecting dust in your home, please donate them to our Book Sale. We are accepting books with Asian subjects only, be it art, culture, novels, history, travel, cooking, exhibition catalogs or others.

Due to space constraints, we are unable to accept book donations at the SAA office. You can drop off books on Fridays when the Arts of Asia lectures are in session. If you have a lot of books, we are happy to pick them up from your home within the Bay Area. Please contact the SAA office at 415-581-3701 or info@societyforasianart.org for details.



Japanese Buddhism: What You Didn't Know that You Didn't Know

When: **Saturday, Mar. 1, 2025**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (Lunch break from 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.)**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$45 per person Society members; \$55 per person non-members after museum admission**

In this talk, Dr. Robert Sharf will explore the complex history of Japanese Buddhism, from its introduction during the Asuka (538–794) and Nara (710–794) periods to the present day. The focus will be on the distinguishing features of Japanese Buddhism, including its sectarian character, the pervasive influence of tantra and esoteric ritual, and the assimilation of Shinto and kami worship.

This three-hour study group will cover the Six Nara Schools, the emergence of Shingon and Tendai Buddhism during the Heian period (794–1185), and the stunning success of the revolutionary one-practice movements during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Finally, we will turn to the transformation of Buddhist institutions under the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603–1867), the suppression of Buddhism following the Meiji Restoration, the demise of clerical celibacy, and the role that New Buddhism and Zen played in shaping global Buddhist thought.

Dr. Robert Sharf is the D. H. Chen Distinguished Professor of Buddhist Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as Chair of Berkeley's Numata Center for Buddhist Studies. He works primarily on medieval Chinese Buddhism but has also published in the areas of Japanese Buddhism, Buddhist art and archaeology, Buddhist modernism, Buddhist philosophy, and methodological issues in the study of religions.



Bodhidharma (Daruma), 1800-1900, by Nakahara Nantenbo (Japanese, 1839-1925). Ink on paper. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Museum purchase, 1994.29. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.*



Robert Sharf

Journey through Cambodian Buddhist & Hindu Iconography

When: **Saturday, May 10, 2025**

Time: **1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Optional ceremony & lunch 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)**

Place: **Wat Dhammararam Buddhist Temple, 3732 Carpenter Rd., Stockton**

Fee: **\$35 per person Society members; \$40 per person non-members**

Discover the spiritual and artistic wonders of Wat Dhammararam Buddhist Temple's Sculpture Garden in Stockton, home to over 90 life-sized sculptures depicting the key moments of Sakyamuni Buddha's life, as well as Cambodian Buddhist and Hindu deities. Led by esteemed scholar M.L. Pattaratorn Chirapravati, this study group will explore the profound symbolism and rich traditions of Cambodian Hindu and Theravāda Buddhist iconography, using these striking sculptures as a guide.



Photos courtesy of Wat Dhammararam.

For those seeking a deeper connection, an optional blessing ceremony is conducted by the head abbot/artist, Master Kong Tith. This special prayer will follow a complimentary Cambodian non-vegetarian lunch, the Buddhist tradition of *dāna*—the act of offering food to accumulate good merit. Please note: The ceremony will require attendees to be seated on the floor for about one hour.

M.L. Pattaratorn Chirapravati is an art historian who specializes in Buddhist art and Southeast Asian visual cultures. She is an emeritus professor of art history and former Director of the Asian Studies Program at California State University, Sacramento. She was also former Head of Studies, Division of Arts and Humanities at Yale-NUS College (Singapore) in 2016–2018 and was a Joint Visiting Professor at the School of Humanities and Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University (Singapore) in 2022–2024. She co-curated two major art exhibitions with Forrest McGill at the Asian Art Museum, *The Kingdom of Siam: Art from Central Thailand (1530–1800)* in 2005 and *Emerald Cities: Arts of Siam and Burma (1775–1950)* in 2009.



M.L. Pattaratorn Chirapravati



Spring 2025 Literature Course History of Heaven with Brian Baumann

When: **Sundays, Mar. 9, Mar. 16, Mar. 23 & Mar. 30, 2025**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$130 per person Society members; \$160 per person non-members for the course after museum admission**

Advance registration must be received by SAA by Mar. 2, 2025.

Higher Learning begins with the study of heaven. As the source of orientation in space and time, heaven provides humanity the foundation for its knowledge and political order. To understand what knowledge is or how politics function, we need a basic understanding of the ways of heaven.

This course examines the function heaven serves in the founding of order against the void in nature through the formation of conventional systems of time and space and the role heaven has played in the promulgation of governments. From a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary perspective, we will see heaven unfold through the developments that leave us with the world we know today.

Brian Baumann holds a PhD in Mongolian Studies from Indiana University. His pursuit of Mongolian Studies stems from a two-year tenure in Mongolia with the Peace Corps, 1991-1993. He has taught at the University of California, Berkeley since 2015.

Readings will be shared via email with registered attendees.

Course Syllabus:

March 9, 2025

For the Cosmogony session, the readings are:

1. Clagett1989_Egyptian_Cosmogony
2. Enuma elish_Pritchard1969
3. Bible_Genesis1to4
4. Huainanzi2010_Cosmogony.

March 16, 2025

For the Soteriology session, the readings are:

1. Bible_Isaiah
2. Plato2002_Timaeus

March 23, 2025

For the Allegory session, the reading is:

1. Aratus_Phenomena_Kidd1997

March 30, 2025

For the session on Time, the reading is:

1. Stcherbatsky1930_Buddhist_Logic_Time



Setting Sun on Sacramento Valley, California, U.S.A., 1930, by Chiura Obata (American, 1885–1975). Ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Stephen A. Sherwin and Merrill Randol Sherwin, 2010.12. © Estate of the artist. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Brian Baumann