

NAMAHAGE: SACRED (AND SCARY) VISITORS AT NEW YEAR'S

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13 DECEMBER 2022 (TUESDAY), 5:00 PM~6:30 PM
ONLINE ([PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE](#))

事前登録先: <https://forms.gle/TGeQWDFcTkJ6UfQv8>

A Plenary Talk Open to All

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Award-winning author of *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Folklore and the Culture of Yokai* (2009) and *The Book of Yokai* (2015), Dr. Michael Dylan Foster will introduce Namahage of Akita Prefecture, a ritual in which masked demon figures acting as deities visit households on New Year's Eve. There they frighten children, admonishing them not to be lazy, and then bless the family for the upcoming year. How has this ritual, which has been celebrated for more than two centuries, been maintained into the present? How have its performances and meanings changed? In contemporary Japan, what happens when an intimate and local ritual like this becomes a global tourist attraction, particularly after UNESCO added it to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in 2018? How does outside interest affect the ways a community understands and performs its own traditions? As we approach the New Year in 2023, this talk will take up these and other questions about Japanese folklore and festival culture and include ample time for discussion and the sharing of ideas.

Dr. Michael Dylan Foster graduated with a B.A. in English from Wesleyan University, and went on to do his graduate work at UC Berkeley (M.A. in Asian Studies) and Stanford University (Japanese). He taught Japanese language, literature, and culture at UC Riverside, later joined the Folklore and Ethnomusicology Department at Indiana University, and now teaches at UC Davis in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. In addition to the two volumes mentioned above, he has co-edited numerous interdisciplinary volumes with other scholars, including *We Are All Survivors: Verbal, Ritual, and Material Ways of Narrating Disaster and Recovery* (2022) with Carl Lindahl and Kate Horigan Parker.