

Japanese Visual Culture Series

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Chōgen. Ca. 1206. Tōdaiji, Shunjōdō.
National Treasure.



Dainichi (the Nara Daibutsu). 1704.
Tōdaiji: Daibutsuden. National Treasure

Japanese Visual Culture is a new academic series devoted to Japan's visual culture: art, decorative arts, performing arts, architecture, cinema, manga and anime, and other manifestations of visual and material culture of all eras. Produced in an attractive format and richly-illustrated, this series will present both object-focused studies, and studies on the history and methodology of art history and art sociology in the Japanese context.

The *Japanese Visual Culture* series recognizes the crucial need for continued research on individual Japanese artists, or previously-neglected categories of art, to build the foundation for further development of the field. It will also actively seek interdisciplinary or theoretical approaches to archaeology, religion, literature, and the social sciences. Though all volumes will be published in English, the series will encourage submission by scholars based in Europe.

The series will be highly visual, providing copious illustrative material, using the latest technology for high-quality color reproduction. While the primary readership will be specialists and students of Japanese art history and related fields, we expect the attractively designed format will attract wider audiences. The series will appeal to Japanologists, art historians, art sociologists, literary scholars, theatre/film scholars and scholars of cultural history. Brill also aims to reach a wider audience of specialist collectors and interested laymen alike.

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The first title in the series is:
Chōgen and the Restoration of Buddhist Art
in Early Medieval Japan



By John M. Rosenfield,
*Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor
of East Asian Art, Emeritus, and Curator
of Asian Art in the Harvard University
Art Museums, Emeritus.*

- July 2010
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- Japanese Visual Culture, 1

John Rosenfield vividly describes the efforts of the Japanese monk Shunjōbō Chōgen (1121–1206) to restore major buildings and works of art lost in the brutal civil conflict of 1180. Chōgen is best known for his role in the recasting of the Great Buddha (Daibutsu) and the reconstructing of the South Great Gate (Nandaimon) of Tōdaiji in Nara and its huge, dramatic wooden guardian figures. This study concentrates on these, and other replacement statues and buildings associated with Chōgen, and situates the visual arts of Japan into the spiritual and socio-political context of their times. Through meticulous study of dedicatory material, Rosenfield is able to place the splendid Buddhist statues made for Chōgen in vivid new light.

The volume also explores how Japan's rulers employed the visual arts as instruments of government policy – a recurrent tactic throughout the nation's history. It includes an annotated translation of Chōgen's memoir, completed near the end of his life, in which he recounts his many achievements. In chapters on East Asian portraiture, Rosenfield claims that surviving statues of Chōgen, carved with mordant realism, rank among the world's most eloquent portraits, and herald the great changes that were to permeate Japanese religious and secular arts in the centuries to come. While Chōgen has been the subject of major art exhibitions and extensive research in Japan; this is the first book-length study to appear in the West.

John M. Rosenfield is Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of East Asian Art, Emeritus, and Curator of Asian Art in the Harvard University Art Museums, Emeritus. After teaching at Harvard for 25 years until his retirement in 1991, Professor Rosenfield has continued to lecture and publish widely on Japanese Buddhist painting and sculpture and early modern Japanese artists. In 1988, he received the Order of the Rising Sun from the Japanese government for services to mutual understanding between Japan and USA, and in 2001 he was awarded the Yamagata Banto prize for his contributions to the understanding of Japanese culture abroad.

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