

SHERRY FOWLER

Associate Professor of Japanese Art History
University of Kansas



KANNON IMAGERY IN THE LIFE OF A SEVEN- TEENTH-CENTURY MANUAL



Wednesday, 19 June, 2013, 6 pm c.t.
Seminar Room 311, Seminarstr. 4, Heidelberg

As the quantity of published materials grew exponentially in Edo-period Japan, Buddhist material culture became accessible to a diverse audience and the Japanese iconographic manual titled *Butsuzô zui* (Collection of Buddhist image illustrations) came to be the most widely distributed source for information on Buddhist and Shinto deities. Popular expanded versions were republished every few decades up into the early twentieth century.

The German doctor Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1822) published the first foreign-language version of *Butsuzô zui* in 1852 within his book *Nippon*. Other European collectors were eager to learn about the mysterious religions of Japan and greeted *Butsuzô zui* with enthusiasm. These same illustrations were later published in German, French and English.

The particular focus of this talk is to consider the role of *Butsuzô zui* in the distribution of the representations of Kannon, who has the most frequent presence among all the deities in the work. As *Butsuzô zui* introduced the various representations of Kannon and other deities to new audiences throughout the world, how did its distribution affect the popularity as well as codification of sets of multiple Kannon images?