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## Divine Demons: Wrathful Deities of Buddhist Art

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**Pasadena, CA**—The Norton Simon Museum presents *Divine Demons: Wrathful Deities of Buddhist Art*, a striking exhibition of Buddhist artworks depicting fearsome gods. A stark contrast to the smiling Buddhas and serene bodhisattvas in the Museum’s collection, these formidable figures—many of them baring fangs, drinking blood, or wearing garlands of severed heads—are embodiments of the “demonic divine” and serve as protectors and guardians of the Buddhist faith. Eighteen paintings, sculptures and ceremonial objects from the Museum’s permanent collection are presented in this small but fascinating exhibition.

Among the artworks in the exhibition is a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan bronze statue of Mahakala, an especially fierce deity who militantly tramples a figure that represents obstacles. Resplendently adorned with a crown of skulls, writhing snakes and a multitude of spiritual weapons held in his six arms, he is one of the most important protectors of the religion. In the exhibition Mahakala is also represented in a beautifully rich 19<sup>th</sup>-century watercolor, also from Tibet, where he is featured with his wife, the goddess Lhamo Remati, who is the patron goddess of the Dalai Lama and the city of Lhasa.

A 17<sup>th</sup>-century gilt bronze, from Tibet or Mongolia, depicts the deity Hayagriva. This rotund god has three faces, each with a wicked expression and crowned with skulls, and he is depicted with three horse heads emerging from his flame-like hair. A defender deity, Hayagriva is able to control snakes by his neighing; he tramples on serpents and vanquishes them.

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*Mahakala*, 15th century  
 Tibet  
 Bronze with pigment  
 6 x 5-1/4 x 2 in. (15.2 x 13.3 x 5.1 cm)  
 Norton Simon Art Foundation

Also included in the exhibition are numerous ritual implements, such as those held by many of the deities in the paintings and sculptures. A 17<sup>th</sup>-century wooden dagger known as a *phurbu*, a type of stake or peg, is a symbolic weapon wielded by priests during Buddhist rituals to expel demonic forces.

“The artworks presented in *Divine Demons* show us a different side to the Buddhist faith,” says Curator Christine Knoke. “I hope visitors to the exhibition enjoy the ferocity and beauty inherent in these delightful demons.”

*Divine Demons* is organized by Christine Knoke, Curator at the Norton Simon Museum. A spotlight talk on the exhibition is held on Saturday, September 12 at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.

### **About the Norton Simon Museum**

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, 20th-century industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum’s collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Three temporary exhibition galleries feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

**Location:** The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 West Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Blvd. in Pasadena, California, at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit [www.nortonsimon.org](http://www.nortonsimon.org). **Hours:** The Museum is open every day except Tuesday, from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday. **Admission:** General admission is \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** The City of Pasadena provides a shuttle bus to transport passengers through the Pasadena Playhouse district, the Lake Avenue shopping district and Old Pasadena. A shuttle stop is located in front of the Museum. Please visit [www.cityofpasadena.net/artsbus](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/artsbus) for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line is the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, and it is located at 125 East Holly Street at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit [www.metro.net](http://www.metro.net) for schedules.