

Okayama University

Japan x SDGs Virtual Global Circuit Academic Seminar



Zoom Webinar

March 1, 2021 (Monday): 17:00 ~ 19:00 (JST), 08:00~10:00 (UTC)

What can Buddhists Teach Us about Sustainability?

Lecturer: Dr. Brian Ruppert

ABSTRACT

This presentation addresses the role of cultural efforts toward sustainability as evidenced in Japanese Buddhist traditions. Focusing on the efforts of premodern Buddhists to preserve a broad variety of scriptures and treasured implements and other objects, I explore the character of these efforts and consider how they might help us to address problems in our day. What can we learn from the Buddhists of premodern Japan about preserving not just collections of manuscripts but culture more broadly? What are the lessons that we can learn through studying the treatment of materials as wide-ranging as the presumed robe of Prince Shotoku to the depiction of playing animals (chōjū jinbutsu giga 鳥獸人物戯画), to the inscription of catalogues and the preservation of Buddhist masters' personal letters? We will see that the lessons, indeed, are extensive, vivid, and practical.

About the Speaker

Brian Ruppert, Ph.D. (Princeton), is Professor in the Department of Cross-Cultural Studies, at Kanagawa University in Yokohama. He is author of *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan* (Harvard U. Asia Center, Harvard UP), and co-author of *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (Wiley-Blackwell). He is also author of the articles "Buddhism in Japan" (Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd ed.), "Buddhism and Law in Japan" (in *Buddhism and Law*, Cambridge UP), "Religion in Medieval Japan" (in *Routledge Handbook of Premodern Japanese History*), and many other publications on premodern Japanese religions in both English and Japanese. He is currently completing articles on medieval Buddhism for the new *Cambridge History of Japan* series and the *Brill Encyclopedia of Buddhism* series as well as writing a book on the history of scripture in Japanese Buddhism.

Registration: <http://campus-asia.ccsv.okayama-u.ac.jp/en>