

Chinese Buddhism in Globalization: State, Communities, and Practices of Religion
Seminar Series, Religions in Globalization Webinar 7

Sanskrit vs Pāli: Buddhaghosa's Linguistic Turn and its Impacts on Mainland Southeast Asia

Norihisa BABA

Professor, The University of Tokyo

Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 21:00 - 22:15 (Japan Standard Time)

We invite you to participate in the seventh webinar of the online seminar series "Religions in Globalization," which is part of the project "Chinese Buddhism in Globalization: States, Communities, and Practices of Religion." The project is funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and based at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo. For more information about the project, please visit the project website at: <https://cbg-project.com>


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We will send you the Zoom link on the day before the seminar.

Webinar starting time in other time zones:

- Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) 12:00
- US, New York (EST) 7:00
- Europe (CET) 13:00
- HK, Singapore, Taiwan 20:00
- Australia, Canberra 23:00

Sincerely,
Yoshiko Ashiwa (Project PI), GRIPS
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Speaker: Norihisa BABA, Professor, The University of Tokyo

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Talk Abstract:

This talk examines the process by which the Sri Lankan Mahāvihāra school formed Buddhist language ideology in the 5th century. At the beginning of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis, which spanned from the 4th to the 13th centuries in South and Southeast Asia, Buddhist monks such as Buddhaghosa shaped the discourse of Pāli as the best language for transmitting “the word of the Buddha” in the Mahāvihāra school as textual community. Consequently, Pāli, instead of Sanskrit, grew to become the sacred language in both Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia, especially after the 13th century. This talk shows that Buddhaghosa's linguistic turn contributed to such a paradigm shift in sacred language.

Speaker Bio:

Norihisa Baba is a Professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo. He received his Ph.D. in 2006 from the University of Tokyo. His research interests include the history and thought of Indian Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism, and the Modern Discourse of Buddhism. His approach is comparative, using the Pāli, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese texts. He has published several English language articles and Japanese books, including *The Formation of Theravāda Buddhist Thought: From the Buddha to Buddhaghosa* (2008); *Early Buddhism: Tracing the Buddha's Thought* (2018); and *Buddhist Orthodoxy and Heresy: The Birth of the Pāli Cosmopolis* (2022). He is the recipient of several academic prizes, including the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies Prize and the Japan Science Promotion Society Prize. He serves on the editorial board of *the Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*.

