

JF-GJS Fellow Talk Series #10

By Japan Foundation-Global Japan Studies (JF-GJS) Initiative
Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, UTokyo

The Laws of the Buddha and the Laws of the Land: Buddhist Legal Pluralism in Sri Lanka and Beyond

5 JUNE 2026 FRI.
15:00-16:30 JST

@ Conference Room 1,
Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Utokyo



By Prof. Benjamin Schonthal
University of Otago



Discussant

Prof. Kuramoto Ryosuke

Institute for Advanced Studies on
Asia, UTokyo



Moderator

Dr. Tony Scott

JF-GJS Fellow at Institute for
Advanced Studies on Asia,
UTokyo

Although rarely acknowledged, Buddhist monastics are among the most active lawmakers and jurists in Asia, operating sophisticated networks of courts and constitutions while also navigating—and shaping—secular legal systems. How do Buddhist monastics deal with this situation of legal pluralism? And what can the lives of Buddhist monks tell us about managing multi-legality in other contexts? Drawing on his new book, *Courts, Constitutions and Karma*, Schonthal explores these questions in the context of Sri Lanka, while also offering broader reflections on the intersections of Buddhism and law across Asia.



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Inquiries: gas@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp



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