

CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE IN ASIA

Complicity and Conflict

An International Conference

Organized by

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

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Block AS7, The Shaw Foundation Building,
Level 1, 5 Arts Link
National University of Singapore
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Christianity and the State: Complicity and Conflict
An International Conference organized by
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Christianity boasts one of the largest and most rapidly growing religious followings in Asia. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent Asian economic liberalisation has encouraged both the flourishing of Christian evangelism and the rising prominence of Christianity in the public sphere. This conference seeks to bring Christianity in Asia into sharper focus by exploring local and regional experiences and perceptions of the faith today. In brief, two key questions define the conference agenda: In an increasingly globalised world, what does it mean to be Christian in contemporary Asia? And, what social and political position does Christianity occupy in regional perspective?

Since its founding, Christianity has been 'global' in its orientation, engendering diverse forms of responses as its adherents seek converts around the world (cf. Hefner 1993, 1998; Kaplan 1995; Horton 1971). In this conference, the manner in which Christians in contemporary Asia – in communities and as individuals – negotiate their positions within the state will be used as a key to understanding expressions of Christianity in the region. In recent years, Christian communities in countries such as South Korea, the Philippines and Singapore have become important sources for overseas mission work. Meanwhile, critical questions are raised about the relationship between Christianity and the changing state in Asia through incidents such as the significant increase in converts to unofficial churches in China and Vietnam, Christian advocacy in public debates on casinos and AIDS in Singapore, and mission expansion in Nepal. In such negotiations the state may well enact institutional technologies of control and regulation over religious discourse and practice. But despite the challenges of political marginalisation, church organisations throughout much of the region continue to promote activities – such as charity, education and commentary on public morality – that overlap with the state's authority. The conference seeks to understand how Christians comply with, coopt, resist or circumvent governmental authorities in their respective local contexts.

Developments in information communication technology (ICT) such as the Internet have had an enormous impact on Christianity in the region. In some cases, ICT has facilitated new forms of globalised religious associations that do not easily come under the surveillance and regulation of state authorities. These changes have given rise to new expressions of faith such as the megachurch and new religious networks such as online evangelism. On the other hand, the 'localisation' of Christian theologies and rituals draws attention to local agency in the expression of faith. As with the Dayak in Borneo or the *samahans* of the rural Philippines, indigenous Christianity has often exceeded the orthodoxies prescribed by their mission 'sources,' in turn creating highly contextualised forms of religious expression (e.g. Keyes 1996: 290; Goh 2005). This ongoing and complex interplay between the global and the local in Asian Christianities will constitute an important focus of this conference.

While the nation-state aims to produce citizens for the sake of its own long-term survival, Christian morality sees individuals as 'temples of God' to be disciplined for ultimate salvation. By bringing together scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the conference seeks to shed light on how Christian churches and followers negotiate their public roles and identities vis-à-vis the state (cf. Leung 1996; Gifford 1998). How do Asian states react to this 'Christianising' trend in the context of nation-building, globalisation and socio-economic development? What are the social and political ramifications of Christian conversions in Asia? In what ways does Christian conversion impact on state policies pertaining to religion and ethnic relations? Conversely, how do state policies affect missionary efforts and people's experience of conversion? Under what circumstances do Christian values either converge with, or diverge from, the state's agenda? This broad theme of complicity and conflict is what the conference wishes to address.

Themes that will be focused during the conference includes:

1. Christian groups and civil society
2. Christian morality, sexuality and public health
3. State policies on religious and ethnic boundaries
4. Conversion to Christianity and social change
5. Christianity, technology and social control
6. The localisation of Christian doctrine
7. Interfaith dialogue between Christianity and other religious groups.

While the conference wishes to provide up-to-date, comprehensive analyses of the various social and political experiences of Christianity in Asia, it also hopes to contribute to the wider literature on religious globalisation and politics in the modern world. It is anticipated that the conference proceedings will be published as an edited volume.

Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict

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10 JANUARY 2007 (WEDNESDAY)

09:00 – 09:30	REGISTRATION	
09:30 – 09:45	WELCOME REMARKS	
	WELCOME REMARKS Professor Anthony Reid, Director, Asia Research Institute, NUS	
09:45 – 11:00	SETTING THE AGENDA	
	CHAIRPERSON: JULIUS BAUTISTA	
09:45 – 10:30	BRYAN TURNER Research Leader, Religion and Globalisation Cluster, Asia Research Institute	
10:30 – 11:00	Discussion & Q&A Session	
11:00 – 11:30	TEA BREAK	
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 1 CHRISTIANITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY	
	CHAIRPERSON: GREG PETERSEN	
11:30	JULIETTE KONING Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Contested Identities? Christianity, Ethnicity and Citizenship in Indonesia
12:00	OSCAR SALEMINK Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands	Is Protestant Conversion a Form of Protest? Urban and Upland Protestants in Southeast Asia
12:30 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 2 BELONGING AND IDENTITY	
	CHAIRPERSON: BHAGWAN JOSH	
14:00	JOSE MARIO FRANCISCO Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines	<i>Katoliko Sarado</i> and Beyond the Cultural Dynamics and Social Consequences of Religious Belonging in the Philippines
14:30	NGÔ THỊ THANH TÂM Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Protestant Conversion, Social Relation and the Dilemma of the Hmong in Contemporary Vietnam
15:00	STEPHEN C HEADLEY Groupe de Sociologie des Religion et de la Laïcité, France	Orthodox Christianity and Javanese Adat
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK	
16:00 – 17:30	PANEL 3 HISTORY AND COLONIALISM	
	CHAIRPERSON: KYLE SWAN	
16:00	GREGORY VANDERBILT University of California, USA	Postwar Japanese Christian Historians, Democracy, and the Problem of Wartime "Christianity on Japanese Terms"
16:30	KU KUN-HUI National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan	Christianities and the quest for Identities in post WWII Taiwan
17:00	P SANAL MOHAN Mahatma Gandhi University, India	Missionary Discourses and Slave Narratives in Colonial Kerala: An Ethnographic Encounter
17:30	END OF DAY ONE	

Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict

An International Conference Organized by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

11 JANUARY 2007 (THURSDAY)

09:00 – 09:30	REGISTRATION	
09:30 – 10:00	PANEL 4 RITUAL AND PRACTICE	
	CHAIRPERSON: NGÔ THỊ THANH TÂM	
09:30	WENDY LEE Kyoto University, Japan	Practicing and Speaking of Faith: In a Catholic Village in Rural North China
10:00	GREG DEAN PETERSEN National University of Singapore, Singapore	"Subject to Kings, Presidents, Rulers and Magistrates": Latter-day Saint Doctrine and Practice
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 – 12:30	PANEL 5 CONVERSION AND LOCALISATION	
	CHAIRPERSON: P SANAL MOHAN	
11:00	BHAGWAN JOSH Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	The Indian State and Religious Conversion
11:30	ZHAO DONG Beijing Foreign Studies University, China	Sinicization and Localization of Christianity in China under the Context of Cultural Globalization
12:00	CHRIS EIPPER La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia	Dialogue and Diversity, Blurring and Blending: Religious Syncretism from Palestine to Vietnam
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 15:00	PANEL 6 CHRISTIANITY AS DISCOURSE	
	CHAIRPERSON: STEPHEN HEADLEY	
13:30	BRYAN TURNER Asia Research Institute, NUS, Singapore	Max Weber on the Sociology of Christianity and Confucianism
14:00	COELI BARRY Mahidol University, Thailand	From Philosophy to Social Science: An Overview of the Development of Catholic Social Doctrine in Asian Catholic Churches
14:30	KYLE SWAN National University of Singapore, Singapore	Toleration of Belief and Toleration of Conduct
15:00 – 15:30	TEA BREAK	
15:30 – 17:00	PANEL 7 ETHICS AND MORALITY	
	CHAIRPERSON: JULIETTE KONING	
15:30	JIEXIA ELISA ZHAI University of Texas, Austin, USA	Religion, Son Preference, and Sex-Selection Abortion in Taiwan
16:00	DIGNA B. APILADO University of the Philippines, Philippines	The Roman Catholic Church and the Philippine Government: The Issue of HIV/AIDS
16:30	MATHEW MATHEWS National University of Singapore, Singapore	Christianity in Singapore: The Voice of Conscience?
17:00	END OF DAY ONE	
18:00	TRANSFER TO DINNER	

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12 JANUARY 2007 (FRIDAY)

10:00 – 10:30	REGISTRATION	
10:30 – 12:30	ROUNDTABLE	
	CHAIRPERSON: BRYAN TURNER	
	ROBBIE GOH National University of Singapore, Singapore	
	MICHAEL POON Trinity Theological College, Singapore	
	OSCAR SALEMINK Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands	
	DIGNA B. APILADO University of the Philippines, Philippines	
12:30 – 13:00	ENDING NOTE	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00	END OF CONFERENCE	

ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1
CHRISTIANITY AND
CIVIL SOCIETY

Panel 1: Christianity and the Civil Society

Contested Identities? Christianity, Ethnicity and Citizenship in Indonesia

Juliette Koning

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The current upsurge of charismatic Christianity in various Southeast Asian countries and the participation of in particular ethnic Chinese therein, raise the question whether the adherence to charismatic belief has become part of ethnic Chinese 'identity'. In the context of a more general discussion on Charismatic Christianity as a global "culture", state formation, and ethnicity and citizenship questions in Southeast Asia/Indonesia, this paper discusses one particular case namely that of the ethnic Chinese in Yogyakarta/Indonesia. Based on research carried out in 2004, this paper focuses on the reasons middle class ethnic Chinese in Yogyakarta convert to charismatic Christianity. By exploring the ins and outs of two charismatic groups and interviews with converted ethnic Chinese (in the form of conversion narratives) this paper tries to come to an understanding of the appeal of this "dynamic" religion for an ethnic minority that holds an ambivalent position in the Indonesian nation state, a country where almost 90% of the population is Muslim. In all this, the specific Indonesian context should be taken into consideration, such as the socio-political domination of Islam (most pronounced on the island of Java), the history of persecution of Christians and churches (with Pentecostal churches being the main target in the attacks of the late 1990s and early 2000s), and the fact that many Christians come from ethnic (minority) communities (Goh 2005: 60-62). Is the "experience-oriented" and globalness of the charismatic movement especially appealing for people who have contested citizenship, economic and religious positions?

Keywords: charismatic Christianity, citizenship, identity, Indonesian nation state, ethnic Chinese, conversion narratives, charismatic movement Yogyakarta

Personal Biography

Juliette Koning is senior lecturer in the Department of Culture, Organization and Management at the Vrije University Amsterdam and coordinator of the Southeast Asia programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences. She holds a PhD in social anthropology from the University of Amsterdam (1997) on rural-urban youth migration in central Java. Her main research interests focus on enterprise culture, ethnic Chinese entrepreneurship & charismatic Christianity, social security, and gender, migration & identity questions in Southeast Asia. Books and edited volumes include *Women and Households in Indonesia, Cultural Notions and Social Practices* (2000), *Natural Resources and Social Security* (2001) and *Generations of Change: Migration, Family Life and Identity Formation a Javanese Village during the New Order* (2004) and *Ropewalking and Safety Nets. Local Ways of Managing Insecurity in Indonesia* (with Frans Husken 2006).

Panel 1: Christianity and the Civil Society

Is Protestant Conversion a Form of Protest? Urban and Upland Protestants in Southeast Asia

Oscar Salemink

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Over the past decade, a fast-growing scholarly literature on the conversion of ethnic minority groups to Protestantism (see, for instance, Aragon, the Comaroffs, Hefner, Kammerer, Keane, Keyes, Kipp, Salemink, Van der Veer, Zehner) tends to perceive the conversion to Protestantism as a reassertion of identity and agency on the part of groups that are marginalized through the various manifestations of modernization and globalization. Few attempts are made to connect the Protestant conversion of marginal ethnic groups with cases where urban, middle-class groups (in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, or Vietnam) convert to Protestantism. In this paper I would like to draw a distinction between the conversion during the colonial era (when the Christianity propagated by the missions was often the religion of the colonizing power) and during the postcolonial era (when Christianity was seen as alien and even antagonistic by the Buddhist, Muslim, Confucian/Taoist and Roman-Catholic majorities in the independent states). By focusing my attention on the contemporary period I propose to look at how the linked processes of state formation, market integration and transnationalization/globalization privilege the expression of cultural (ethnic, religious) difference in ways that facilitate integration into global networks of meaning and market-led transformation in a Weberian sense. The impression that emerges from this overview is that even in situation where Protestant conversion can be interpreted as religious profiling of ethnic boundaries, new webs of connections and interaction emerge between marginal Protestant groups in remote uplands and urban Protestant communities in cities. In other words, even when the Protestant religion serves as a sometimes antagonistic ethnic boundary marker in the relation with dominant ethnic groups, I shall argue that the process of conversion incorporates these marginal groups into national and transnational religious networks, and thus integrates them more firmly into the state.

Personal Biography

Oscar Salemink is Professor of Anthropology at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. His current research concerns the revival of local religion in Southeast Asia in a transnational context. Recent books include *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology* (1999); *Viet Nam's Cultural Diversity* (2001); *The Ethnography of Vietnam's Central Highlanders* (2003); and *The Development of Religion, the Religion of Development* (2004).

PANEL 2
BELONGING
AND IDENTITY

Panel 2: Belonging and Identity

***Katoliko Sarado* and Beyond: The Cultural Dynamics and Social Consequences of Religious Belonging in the Philippines**

Jose Mario C. Francisco S.J.

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This essay presents an overview of the changing dynamics of religious, especially Christian, belonging/identity and their socio-political consequences in Philippine society. Because of the extensive colonial history and continuing majority of Catholicism in the Philippines, Filipino Catholics have traditionally referred to themselves as *Katoliko sarado* ['closed Catholics'], and to their nation as "the only Catholic country in Asia." Thus they became Catholic through socialization in the church and the nation, unaware of any contradiction in this self-identification and unmindful of its implied 'other'. Moreover, this identification has resulted in and at the same time, has been strengthened by the multi-faceted dominance of Catholicism in the public sphere during the Spanish colonial period and beyond. Hence, the marginal status of Muslims who resisted becoming Christians.

Today however, the dynamics of religious belonging in Philippine society have radically changed due to profound social forces such as globalization and migration, and to developments within Christianity itself. Not only do Filipinos encounter other religious traditions and practices but they also see different ways of being Christian. Choice then and all other factors affecting it, not simply socialization, take part in the construction of religious identity. Boundaries between Christianity and other religious traditions as well as between different Christian denominations and groups are more fluid. Analysis of these changes reveals a more complex interaction between religion and politics in Philippine society and raises fundamental questions about our presuppositions regarding religious identity and religion itself

Panel 2: Belonging and Identity

Protestant Conversion, Social Relation and the Dilemma of the Hmong in Contemporary Vietnam

Ngô Thị Thanh Tâm

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This study surveys the impacts of the mass conversion to Protestantism, which has emerged since the early 1990s, on the social process of the Hmong in Northern Vietnam. Drawing on ethnographic findings, it addresses the way Protestant conversion is perceived differently by the converted and the unconverted Hmong. Conversion, for the converts, is seen as a refuge from their socio-economic, cultural, political, and ethnical crises, as much as a way to achieve a better life, a higher religious authority, and access to cultural and political power resources. For the unconverted Hmong, in contrast, conversion is seen as an act of betrayal. Consequently, social and cultural conflicts arise among both the converted and the unconverted Hmong. Based on an analysis of the Hmong's tradition of ethnic belonging and identity, the study argues that, besides social conflict and division, conversion also results in a dilemma for the Hmong. The unconverted Hmong do not share the converts' positive view that Christianity is the solution for the Hmong's current problems that would enhance and empower Hmong unity. A commitment to traditional Hmong belief and practice, let alone the government's pressure to discriminate against the converts, makes it difficult for the unconverted Hmong to associate practically and spiritually with the converts. Yet, breaking away totally from the converts is virtually impossible for many unconverted Hmong, as they still rely on clan-based relationship as a crucial back-up social survival resource. This study concludes with a general observation of the link between the Hmong conversion and a global religious revival. It notices that unlike ever before, the Hmong are increasingly aware of their place in today's world, which encompasses not only the national but also the transnational sphere. Converting to Christianity is just one of the ways of acting accordingly to this awareness.

Personal Biography

Studied Philosophy in Vietnam, Ngo T.T. Tam studied Comparative Asian Studies at University of Amsterdam (Msc. 2004), and Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University (MA, 2006, Cum laude). Currently, under the supervision of Prof. Salemink, Prof. Van Der Veer, and Prof. Nguyen V. Huy she is carrying out a Ph.D research on "Transnational Religious Network and the Protestant conversion of the Hmong in Northern Vietnam" which involves field research among the Hmong in Vietnam and America.

Panel 2: Belonging and Identity

Orthodox Christianity and Javanese Adat

Stephen C. Headley

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The creation of a Javanese Orthodox church in 1990 was the result of a purely indigenous process of Conversion; no foreign missionaries were involved. Although this new church was accepted conically into the Greek Ecumenical Patriarcate (Constantinople) , it maintained a very "insular" Indonesian cultural outlook while it attempted to become part of a very foreign liturgical and theological tradition. Initially this seemed to bypass the issue of globalisation, but did not solve its insertion into the "Christian" department of the Ministry of Religion in Jakarta. Eventually the Javanese Orthodox church was taken in under the umbrella of Indonesian Protestant Churches. The some ten years this nascent body experienced the impact of the international divisions of the Orthodox into some twenty separate Patriarcates each representing a separate cultural and linguistic entity when the first Russian Orthodox prish was opened in Jakarta by a Toraja priest trained in Belgorod (south-east Russia).

This latecomer to Indonesian Christianity can hardly pretend to grow to a size rivalling that of the Protestants and Catholics in central Java. The best analytical approach focuses on the trade off between the localisation of a specific Orthodox type of holisms (what the Slavophiles called *sobornost*) and the revival of local Javanese *adat* in the last years of the Soeharto dictatorship. After having experienced an centrifugal triangulation in which *adat* broke apart into "religion" (*agama*) , ethnicity (*sukuisme*) and clanism (*kekeluargaan*), tin the 1990's after the renewal of Javanism Islam that took place during the 1980's, *adat* also provided a way to rediscover a certain inclusivism already exemplified by major tendencies in the Nahdlatul Ulama. These two developments both favoured tolerance and mutual acceptance. Complicity with the Soeharto apparatus as well as its opposite, direct conflict, were surpassed in the ideals of the *reformasi* movement after May 1998, yet this construction of a certain inter-religious civility was not based on the ideology of imported secular pluralism. Faced with the massacres in central Sulawasi , southern Kalimantan and the Ambon, in central Java (*non obstant* the terrorism propagated by the Ngruki *pesantrèn* under Ba'ashir), there occurred a collective effort to "raise the canopy of heaven" to such a height that praxis of religion could not be manipulated towards faith-based voting. This certainly represents a new kind of internal conversion that cuts across stereotyped religious "belonging" and brings the Javanese Christians together with Muslims not on the basis of religion, but of culture and its *adat*. The Jakarta based Ministry of Religion in this instance proved itself largely irrelevant to the needs of inter-religious dialogue.

PANEL 3
HISTORY AND
COLONIALISM

Panel 3: History and Colonialism

Postwar Japanese Christian Historians, Democracy, and the Problem of Wartime “Christianity on Japanese Terms”

Gregory Vanderbilt

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As a “pre-history” to the concerns of the conference, I propose an examination of how the postwar generation of Protestant historians grappled with the history of the wartime church in Japan as their means of envisioning Japanese democracy. Japan is, of course, notorious as a “failure” of evangelism and yet from Japan have come not only such distinctive Asian Christians as Uchimura Kanzō but also the first articulations of what a non-Western Protestantism might look like. I will focus my examination on the attempt to articulate a “Christianity on Japanese terms” (*Nihonteki Kirisutokyō*) during Japan’s war of aggression in Asia and to “overcome” the modernity of the West. First, I will show how this effort has been understood by Dohi Akio as capitulation within the “Emperor system” (a Communist conceptualization now used most forcefully by Christians), by his student Hara Makoto as collaboration with fascism, and by Miyata Mitsuo as failure of a Christian responsibility of *conscientious* submission (as called for in Romans 13: 1-7) as well as its absence in discussions of “indigenization” and “Asian Christianity” by Takeda Kiyoko and Takenaka Masao. Second, I will place this troubled endeavor alongside the problem of defining religion in relation to the nation, which took its sharpest form in the question of State Shinto as a national (non-) religion. I will do this by relating this postwar generation of historians (most of whom became Christians in the immediate wake of the 1945 defeat) to their immediate predecessors like Hiyane Antei, who attempted to balance writing objective history with appeasing ideological demands in “Christianity’s development on Japanese terms.” Just as resolution of what constituted a religion came only through state fiat (the Religious Bodies Law of 1939), Christianity’s significance for contemporary democracy has remained largely in the hopes of these self-consciously postwar intellectuals

Personal Biography

I finished a Ph.D. in History at UCLA in 2005 with a dissertation looking at Protestantism and modernity in Japan during the first half of the 20th century through the experience of one independent mission (the Omi Brotherhood). I am at present translating Miyata Mitsuo’s *Ken’i to Fukujū: Kindai Nihon ni okeru Rōma-sho 13-shō* [Authority and Obedience: Romans 13 in Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2003).

Panel 3: History and Colonialism

Christianities and the quest for Identities in post WWII Taiwan

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Anthropological literature on Christian conversion and missionization has followed the following themes: Christianization as a process of colonization; syncretism; nativization of Christian ideas and symbols as an embodiment of indigenous agency or as a form of identity; Christian identity as a source of counter-hegemonic (resistance) discourse. These lines of inquiry, often intersecting with one another, continue to emerge in the current literature. Recent developments on this topic share a common commitment to examining 'conversion' in terms of the experiences and interpretation of indigenous Christians and to approach it with more historical depth. This emphasis on colonization (or missionary imperialism) draws our attention to the political economy aspects of proselytisation and power relations associated with Christian missions. This approach, however, tends to deny the agency of the natives and views them as passive actors. The erosion of colonial empire has challenged the validity of this continuing confrontational picture, as Christianity has not been rejected in many post-colonial societies. By portraying missions as embodiments of Western colonialism, this approach says little about the cases where Christian missionaries worked within the framework of other dominant states than Western powers, such as in Taiwan, where the relations of domination and resistance are more ambiguous than those theorists have proposed.

This paper will focus on the relation between state and missions (mainly Presbyterians and Catholic) in Taiwan during and thereafter the transition of Japanese rule to Chinese rule after WWII. Furthermore, it examines the differential positions of different missions to the state in the early nation building project and post-authoritarian era when the quest for new national identity looms large.

Personal Biography

Kun-hui Ku has taught at the Institute of Anthropology National Tsing Hua University since 2001 after graduating from Cambridge, UK and currently is a visiting scholar at Harvard Yenching Institute (2005-06). Her main interests include religion and modernity, material culture, historical anthropology and legal anthropology.

Panel 3: History and Colonialism

Missionary Discourses and Slave Narratives in Colonial Kerala: An Ethnographic Encounter

P. Sanal Mohan

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In 1853, two years before the legal abolition of slavery in Travancore, a unique document was produced from an encounter between a Christian missionary and members of the slave castes of Travancore. This document provides a powerful lens into the experiential dimensions of slavery in the words of the slaves themselves, though the context itself was constructed by the missionary. It was a site for the negotiation between missionary perceptions of slavery and those of the slaves themselves. This paper, emerging out of a larger study of social movements that originated amongst the slave castes of Travancore around the same time and that continue today, will explore these perceptions and the intricate relationship between them drawing on this document and other contemporary documents, treating them as the products of an unusual ethnographic encounter. Anticipating ethnographic practices embodied in such manuals as *Notes and Queries* the structure of questions and the recorded responses give an insight into both missionary discourse and slave life. More than this, however, by providing the slaves with the opportunity to reflect and articulate their experiences of social suffering, it signaled a new way of conceiving of themselves as human beings. Though providing the space for a discourse of equality, notions of sin, repentance and the transforming power of the "word" also emerged. In other words, the ethnographic encounter itself was a significant part of the processes of transformation. The paper proposes to analyze the empirical material on Kerala with sensitivity to the theoretical sophistication of studies on modernity and consciousness in other parts of the world.

PANEL 4
RITUAL AND
PRACTICE

Panel 4: Ritual and Practice

Practicing and Speaking of Faith: In a Catholic Village in Rural North China

Wendy Lee

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Modern transformation in religious life has been observed all over the world. Even in traditional religious community, it is reported that religion has ceased to be a driving force in the constitution of individual and group identities (Hervieu-Leger 1997). Could we see the same phenomenon of secularization among the rural Chinese Catholics, who are baptized as infants, and inherit their faith from their ancestors,? Based on an ethnographic research in a village in rural Shaanxi, a province in northwestern China, the purpose of this paper is to answer this question. This paper explores everyday religious practice and religious consciousness through the interviews of 113 villagers.

In this paper, the meaning of "being Catholic" is explored through two dimensions, one is practical level, that is, how the villagers live their religious life, for instance, church attendance, confession, praying, as well as receiving the holy communion. The other is how the villagers see the distinction of their own village and others, how they interpret the meaning of their faith.

Scholars of Chinese Christianity have largely ignored the popular manifestations of Christianity in rural China. And Chinese Catholics are tended to be described as the opponents against the state. This study aims not only to broaden and alter the scope of Chinese Christianity from the bottom, but challenge the normative scholarly and religious understanding. The villagers live within the bonds of the conventional family, clan and community, however, the process of identity formation is also deeply influenced by the interference of the state, as well as the wave of modernization. The meaning of "being a Catholic" is not homogenous for each villager. The manner of practice and participation in the Church is also different. Moreover, even for the same person, the way of participation changes along the life course.

Personal Biography

2002-Now PhD Course of Cultural Anthropology in Department of Human & Environmental Studies in Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
2000-2002 M.A. Course in Kyoto University
1993-1997 Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China

Panel 4: Ritual and Practice

“Subject to Kings, Presidents, Rulers and Magistrates”: Latter-day Saint Doctrine and Practice

Greg Dean Petersen

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Most researchers studying Christianity in Asia focus on the Catholic and Protestant movements. Very few include The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) even though it is among the world’s fastest growing world religions.

While this group is similar to other Christian groups, it also has some unique differences. They use the same Bible as the Protestant sects, but also follow additional scripture. Like the Catholics, they have a central religious leader, a “prophet,” but they also have and follow “modern day apostles.” To understand LDS political doctrine and practices, one needs to understand these unique LDS sources.

Among its most fundamental beliefs influencing its relationships with governments are two “Articles of Faith.” From one I borrow the title of this presentation: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the laws of the land.” Another reads “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship, how, where, or what they may.” One purpose of this presentation is to overview these and other LDS doctrines. More important than the doctrine is its implementation. The LDS Church has shown repeatedly in Asia that they are willing to put some of their most fundamental values and principles on hold, including proselyting, while being subject to governmental rulers. So under what conditions does the LDS Church operate voluntarily in a restricted manner in places like China and Pakistan, and under which conditions do they voluntarily withdraw from such subjectivity, like their historical withdrawals from China, Japan, and Vietnam? What happens when being subject to one country collides with subjectivity to another? The other purpose of the presentation is to exemplify the application of these doctrines.

Personal Biography

Greg Petersen is an Assistant Professor of Humanities at the National University of Singapore. His articles and conference presentations reflect his diverse interests in the humanities and the human condition. He holds a doctorate in Humanities Studies from the University at Albany, State University of New York, USA.

PANEL 5
CONVERSION AND
LOCALISATION

Panel 5: Conversion and Localisation

The Indian State and Religious Conversion

Bhagwan Josh

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Democracy in India in the last fifty years has unleashed historical processes awakening millions at the lower rungs of the social hierarchy. The entire Indian society is passing through a turbulent churning process. The power relations between the castes are in the process of being restructured. Yet there is a method in the madness of this functional anarchy.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, individuals and groups have sought escape from oppressive conditions of Hindu society by converting to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. To stop the flow of such conversions was central to the agendas of all the social reform movements invariably led by Hindu nationalist reformists. Simultaneously, they were also busy trying to construct Hinduism a sort of "national religion".

Large sections of the population as well as a sizeable section of the nationalist leadership came to be influenced by these views. This is clear from the Constituent Assembly debates (1947), especially on the clause regarding the "Rights relating to religion." Even when it was made clear that the "right to propagate one's religion" also included in its ambit the "right to convert", a powerful right-wing force within the state as well as society refused to accept it.

In April 1953, the Home Minister made a statement in Parliament that "for a long time he had been in possession of information about questionable proselytizing activities of missionaries in central India." The Congress Government appointed the Niyogi Committee to look into these activities. Its' Report was published in 1956 and this was followed by the passing of an anti-conversion law by the state Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Since then, anti-conversion laws have been passed in other States such as Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Orissa. The BJP-ruled Rajasthan, however, had not been able to convince Governor Pratibha Patil to give her assent to the Religious Conversion Bill. As I write, the news papers report that Rajasthan Cabinet has decided to send the Bill again to the Governor for her assent.(Hindustan Times, June 13, 2006).

In order to understand these bills, especially the ones enacted by the BJP-ruled states we need to look at the ongoing complex interplay between the forces active at the global, national and the provincial levels.

Panel 5: Conversion and Localisation

Sinicization and Localization of Christianity in China Under the Context of Cultural Globalization

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Since its inception, the Christian movement has undergone a series of pulsations, first conflict and then convergence, in its world evangelization. Its encounter with China and Chinese culture characteristically mirrors this pulsating pattern. How is it possible for Bishop Fu Tieshan, a monsignor in the Catholic Church of China, to have made the bold statement that "Christianity today has been an integral part of Chinese culture?" What are the special characteristics of the indigenization of Christian doctrines in a communist country that is said to be atheist in western media? What should be done for Christianity to be better adapted to a Marxist state with long and substantial cultural roots in Confucianism, Taoism, Zen Buddhism and various ethnic traditions? In what way can Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian concepts help the enculturation and assimilation of Christianity in China? These above-mentioned questions will be addressed in this paper from a Chinese perspective and under a Chinese evaluation. Though some articles have already touched upon this topic, the true strength of my article is to focus on a larger historical context from the arrival of the first Christians in China to the flourishing of Christianity in present-day China, so as to offer constructive suggestions for this imported religion to put down roots and burgeon on the Chinese soil. What's more, by referring to original Chinese documents, some tentative solutions are provided as to how Christian tenets can be perceived and integrated into the Chinese social, political, religious and ethnic context. In a word, this paper demonstrates how the Chinese traditions react to Christian doctrines and how cultural globalization helps the spread of Christianity in China.

Personal Biography

Dong Zhao was born 8 December, 1972, in Liao Ning Province, China. He got his doctoral degree in literature (with a dissertation entitled "The Bible and *The Faerie Queene*") from Beijing Foreign Studies University and has been teaching there since 2000. He takes great pride in his two courses: Christianity and Western Culture and Bible as Literature (in progress).

Panel 5: Conversion and Localisation

Dialogue and Diversity, Blurring and Blending: Religious Syncretism from Palestine to Vietnam

Chris Eipper

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Can a connection be drawn between inter-faith dialogue and religious syncretism? Syncretism is not usually thought of as an example of inter-faith dialogue, though it could, in fact, be said to be the most far-reaching and all-embracing example of it. Syncretism is the attempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposed beliefs, tenets and practices. It seeks to bring these into some kind of agreement or accord. Syncretism, from the perspective being proposed here, exemplifies not only religious pluralism, but cultural pluralism also; not only religious, but cultural tolerance – to the point of actual acceptance. Syncretism is also expressive of cultural creativity, of the blending and blurring, invention and re-invention, making and re-making of the religious imaginary and the civility of society. Syncretists may be accepting of others, their beliefs and images, but others are not always so accepting of them and what they do with the symbols, ideas and images that they embrace and make over as their own. In the eyes of the true believer, syncretism warrants censure no less than other kinds of promiscuity. This paper seeks to raise and address these and related issues by drawing upon (with the help of my co-researcher Dr Pham Quynh Phuong) examples of Vietnamese religious syncretism of relevance to the acceptance of Christianity not only in that country, but elsewhere in Asia as well – whether as one belief system amongst others; as a colonial and colonising doctrine; as a minority religion that proselytises amongst minorities; as a source of authority independent of, or opposed, to the state; or as a begetter of indigenous alternatives.

Personal Biography

Chris Eipper has for some years been researching the counter-currents to secularisation in the Irish Republic, focusing on the Marian movement as it has developed over the last twenty years. In collaboration with Pham Quynh Phuong, he has recently begun researching Vietnamese Marianism and its relationship to Mother Goddess worship

PANEL 6
CHRISTIANITY
AS DISCOURSE

Panel 6: Christianity as Discourse

Max Weber on the Sociology of Christianity and Confucianism

Bryan Turner

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Max Weber has remained famous for his short essay on 'the Protestant Ethic' in his analysis of modernisation. This article from 1905 was however part of a broader inquiry into 'the economic ethics of the world religions'. The larger project is controversial, but it continues to inform western views of 'Asian religions'. My paper explores the background to Weber's contrasted views of Protestantism and Catholicism in the modernisation of Germany in the period of Otto von Bismarck and the 'cultural struggle' with Catholicism. Because Weber's perspective was heavily dependent on Kant's Enlightenment view of religion, he was implicitly critical of ritual over belief in religious traditions. Confucianism raised significant problems for Weber, because it throws doubt on the notion of 'religion' in western sociology of religion. The paper concludes with some reflections on the impact of Weber's views and current debates about the place of religion in the modernisation of China.

Personal Biography

Professor Bryan Turner joins the Asia Research Institute as a Research Team Leader for the Religion Cluster. He has come to ARI from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge.

Over the next six years, he will direct research on globalisation and religion concentrating on such issues as religious conflict and the modern state, religious authority and electronic information, religious, consumerism and youth cultures, human rights and religion, the human body, medical change and religious cosmologies. These research foci will be explored through various religious traditions. The general aim is to develop a comprehensive overview of the impact of globalisation on religions, and the consequences of religion on global processes.

Panel 6: Christianity as Discourse

From Philosophy to Social Science: An Overview of the Development of Catholic Social Doctrine in Asian Catholic Churches

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Beginning in the late 19th century, the Catholic Church began to embrace social science, reluctantly abandoning philosophy as the area of knowledge from which it developed its teachings on state and society. Philosophy in general and Natural Law theory in particular lost pride of place in Catholic thought when the social sciences came to be regarded as the most important instruments for identifying and solving social problems. It was not until the middle decades of the 20th century that social science became legitimized in Catholic intellectual life, but its ascendance signaled and encouraged profound shifts in Catholic teaching about liberal democracy, human rights and social justice. These intellectual changes took on political significance when Church resources could be directed into areas of 'social action', as they were from the late 1960s on.

This paper traces the intellectual foundations of Catholic social doctrine and outlines the ways Catholic Churches in Southeast Asia localized these doctrines. At some key moments in the last quarter of the 20th century individuals and groups within the Catholic Churches of Southeast Asia took up the promotion of human rights and embraced social and economic development work, an especially noteworthy development in the countries of Asia where the minority status of Catholics (with the exception of the Philippines) generally encouraged more conservative positions in matters political and social. Lastly this paper examines some of the theoretical implications of the increasing importance of social science in modern religious thought.

Panel 6: Christianity as Discourse

Toleration of Belief and Toleration of Conduct

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An issue that arises frequently in the context of discussions of the influence of Christianity on public life is that of morals legislation. I am interested in how this issue highlights an odd asymmetry that seems to be prevalent among Christian believers: while most Christians have come to accept that there should be no attempt on the part of the state to coerce strict matters of conscience, they actively support the state coercively interfering with certain modes of conduct that violate God's moral law. The development of this stance occurred during the English toleration debates in the 17th century. Then, tolerationists argued that there should be toleration for dissenting Christian denominations, and eventually for Catholics, atheists, and heretics, too. But very few strict biblical Christians, even today, endorse extending legal toleration, for example, to homosexual conduct or same-sex marriage. It's one thing to support liberty of conscience, and so the state has no business rooting out blasphemy, idolatry and heresy, or promoting the Christian gospel, but it is quite another to permit all sorts of immorality. I examine a number of ways to justify this asymmetry, most of which are based on ways belief is supposed to be distinguished from conduct, and argue that they all fail. The asymmetry is indefensible.

Personal Biography

I am an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy, NUS. I have held previous appointments at University of Minnesota Duluth and College of Charleston, in the United States. I received my PhD in philosophy in 2003 from Bowling Green State University. I publish in the area of moral and political philosophy. Staff profile: <http://profile.nus.edu.sg/fass/phisk/>

PANEL 7
ETHICS AND
MORALITY

Panel 7: Ethics and Morality

Religion, Son Preference, and Sex-Selective Abortion in Taiwan

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Abortion is widely practiced in densely populated Asian societies like Taiwan. Not only men but also many women prefer to have sons due to the beliefs of ancestor worship and male inheritance of family lineage. Sex-selective abortion seems to be conducted according to the skewed sex ratio at birth particularly for higher-order births. Drawing on data from two large scale nationally representative samples from Taiwan, I will examine whether and how do religious beliefs and practices affect son preference and sex-selective abortions among married women in Taiwan. Comparing Chinese traditional religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and various Folk religions) with Christian religions, I will explore the difference of religious beliefs on their provision of moral support or compromise toward son preference and abortion issues, and their willingness to use sex selective abortion because of son preference. I propose that Christians are less likely to prefer sons, and thus might also less likely to use sex-selective abortion in Taiwan.

Personal Biography

Jiexia Elisa Zhai is currently a PH.D student in the Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation examines the impact of religion on gender (in)equality in the contemporary Taiwan, by exploring how religion traditions and practices influence gender role attitudes, education, and sex-selective abortion.

Panel 7: Ethics and Morality

The Roman Catholic Church and the Philippine Government: The Issue of HIV/AIDS

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The Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines has an image of conservatism, particularly in issues of public morals and sexuality. In its stand regarding the human immune deficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS (Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome), the Catholic Church enters the area of public health, and has therefore brought itself into an adversarial position with the Philippine government. The government has a number of agencies and institutions that are connected to and deal with the issues and problems of HIV/AIDS, and therefore has an articulated and established policy regarding the disease, ranging from education, prevention as well as care of those who have been infected.

Although HIV/AIDS is regarded as a public health issue, the Catholic Church has involved itself in a policy on debate, mainly because of the aspects of sexuality and public morals that are inherent in HIV/Aids. This paper would examine the role of the Catholic in the Philippines in policy-making, and the status of its stand on HIV/AIDS. It would examine the possible direction of the Church in near future, particularly the factors which could possibly lead to a change. The involvement of the Catholic Church in public debate is to be expected, given that the major mode of HIV/AIDS transmission is through sexual contact. The majority of Filipinos claim to be Catholics, and many still seek guidance from the Church on sexual matters. Other factors, however, magnify the influence of the Catholic Church on public issues. These include the personal influence exerted by the Church on political leaders such as the incumbent president, the legal courts and the legislature; the significant role of Catholic schools in the educational system; and the emergence of some Church officials as public personalities in the political field.

The involvement of the Church in public debate goes beyond matters of sexuality. The disease has such devastating effects on sick individuals as well as their families, because of its highly ineffective character, and the fact that there is no preventive vaccine or effective cure at present. The huge economic cost of infection on a large scale, as has happened in some nations of Africa, includes lost of human potential as well as expenditure for social services for affected individuals and their families. Moreover, the large number of Filipino overseas migrant workers increases the potential for the spread of the disease, while the government's economic programs lead to rapid urbanization of regions targeted for rapid development. Thus, the Church itself would have to consider these social, economic and political conditions even as it chooses to defend its moral stand on human sexuality.

There are some developments which indicate that the stand of the Catholic Church might soon be in a state of flux. One is the stand of the Vatican and the Pope on human sexuality in the real world. Another is the fact that the Catholic Church is not an absolutely monolithic structure but shows flexibility in its interaction with the laity.

A third is the emerging possibility of cooperation between the Church and State where this is possible, given the complexity of HIV/AIDS in clinical terms, and of the various issues involved. By examining these three aspects, the Church-State debate on public health policy is shown as less simplistic pro-con issue but more of an evolving and dynamic interaction of public policy, public morality and social reality

Personal Biography

I am an Associate Professor of History in the University of the Philippines. I was a recipient of the Rockefeller University of Michigan – University of the Philippines exchange-faculty grant. I am a board member of the Philippine National Historical Society and the Manila Studies Association. I have a number of local and international publications. I had read research papers in Singapore, Japan, Italy, England and twice in Spain.

Panel 7: Ethics and Morality

Christianity in Singapore: The Voice of Conscience?

Mathew Mathews

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The Singaporean state has since its inception looked to religious groups to provide morality to its population. Policy makers co-opted religious institutions in their fight against societal problems defined in the early days of independence as drugs, individualism, and other "decadent"

Western values. Under such conditions Christian organizations have thrived since their moralizing of social problems and their support for conservative values have resonated well with state policies. Moreover their ability to mobilize large numbers of committed church adherents to help with societal projects and their overseas networks have increased their visibility within the nation state and placed them in a favored position with state players.

However in more recent years, pragmatic policy makers in their attempt to re-mould Singapore to make it attractive to foreign investment and talent have discarded formerly cherished conservative stances. This has been greeted with some concern by Singaporean Christians who understand this as a degradation of values and the opening of the "floodgates of hell". Acting as the voice of conscience to the state they have attempted to raise their objections to various state initiatives such as the building of casinos and the prominence of homosexuals in the public sphere.

In the first part of this paper, I discuss how Christian groups have become intricately involved in the production and policing of morality in Singapore and how this attempt enjoys state patronage. I do this through examining state support for various Christian based initiatives focused on the family and sexuality. On the same token I examine the recent sites of discord produced through the state's increased tolerance of homosexuality and gambling. I show through the use of interview data, public speeches and sermons how the "well disciplined" population of Singaporean Christian leaders while opposing such measures have carefully negotiated their strategies and have tried to avoid being labeled by the state as undesirable voices of conscience

Personal Biography

Mathew is completing his doctoral thesis which investigates the relationship between the professional mental health sector and Christian clergymen in Singapore. Mathew's research interests have focused on Christianity and its relation to other social institutions primarily health care, ethnicity, organizations, and other religious groups.

Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict
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