

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IN ASIA, C. 1890S-1930S



Photo Credit: Lantern Slide Collection, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota

25-26 AUGUST 2016

ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE



This conference is jointly organized by National University of Singapore, ETH Zurich, and the University of Toronto; and funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

The conference will examine an understudied but important topic of the emergence of modern Asia and of relations between Asia and the West: the impact of the Protestant “Social Gospel” on anti-colonial nationalism, internationalism, and modernization schemes between the 1890s and the 1930s. This period saw an increasing degree of “scientificity” and professionalization in approaches to social reform work, which was an outcome of developments during the American Progressive Era and was defined to a large extent by Protestant notions of the “Social Gospel”. This trend was initiated and supported by an emerging group of North American philanthropists and was substantiated and developed by Protestant missionaries and their local Asian recruits, who gained access to substantial funding. Besides catalyzing processes of “scientification” and professionalization in the region, the spreading of the “Social Gospel” also influenced international mobility and collaboration. As Western religious reformers moved between locales, Asian recruits underwent training abroad and usually returned home with renewed expertise. Quite often, this included modifying Western expertise and adjusting it to local situations. Collectively, the reformers spread the spirit of the “Social Gospel” in an array of fields, such as health, education, literature, sports, citizenship training, and rural reconstruction. As a consequence, our conference addresses an important political, social, cultural, economic, and religious topic of Asia’s transformation during a period characterized by struggles for self-government, calls for a more egalitarian world order, and what Michael Adas termed the “assault on the civilizing mission ideology”. While the imperial “civilizing missions” of the colonial powers were challenged, reformers promoted a more liberal one that sought to make Asian societies ready for self-government.

Convenors

Stefan Huebner (Hübner)

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THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 2016

09:45 – 10:00 REGISTRATION

10:00 – 10:30 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Jonathan Rigg, National University of Singapore

Harald Fischer-Tiné, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

Stefan Huebner, National University of Singapore

Yurou Zhong, University of Toronto, Canada

10:30 – 12:30 PANEL 1 | THE MISSION OF EDUCATION

CHAIRPERSON **Jonathan Rigg**, National University of Singapore

10:30 **The Child's Rights and the Chinese Social Gospel**
Margaret M. Tillman, Purdue University, USA

11:00 **"The Physical Evangelization of the many Nations of the World": The International YMCA College in Springfield, MA, and Sportive Citizenship Training in Asia**
Stefan Huebner, National University of Singapore

11:30 **Chinese-Arab Laborers in the American Expeditionary Forces in WWI France**
Shuang Wen, National University of Singapore

12:00 Questions & Answers

12:30 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 – 16:00 PANEL 2 | FROM LITERACY TO LITERATURE

CHAIRPERSON **Robbie Goh**, National University of Singapore

14:00 **From National Theology to National Salvation: The Christian Literature Society in Republican China**
Gal Gvili, Columbia University, USA

14:30 **"Can the Bible Woman Speak?"**
Yurou Zhong, University of Toronto, Canada

15:00 **The Influence of Christianity and the Western Perspective in the Construction of Classics of Modern Chinese Folk Literature and Art: A Study on the Translation of *Ting Hsien Yang Ke Hsuan***
Ji Jiang, Renmin University, China

15:30 Questions & Answers

16:00 – 16:30 TEA BREAK

16:30 – 18:00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

CHAIRPERSON **Stefan Huebner**, National University of Singapore

16:30 **Vectors of Practicality: The Social Gospel, the YMCA and the Evangelical Missionary Movement in the United States and Asia. C. 1890s-1930s**
Ian Tyrrell, University of New South Wales, Australia

17:30 Questions & Answers

18:00 END OF DAY ONE

18:30 – 20:15 CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 2016

10:00 – 12:00 PANEL 3 | BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

CHAIRPERSON **Kenneth Dean**, National University of Singapore

10:00 **From Social Gospel to Class Revolution: The YMCA and the Transformation of Civil Society in Revolutionary China**

Xiaohong Xu, National University of Singapore

10:30 **From Imperialism to Internationalism: Conversion, Social Gospel, and the YMCA in Asia, 1900-1930**

Lou Antolihao, National University of Singapore

11:00 **Civilizing the Peasant: The American YMCA and “Rural Reconstruction” Schemes in South Asia and Beyond (C.1920-1960)**

Harald Fischer-Tiné, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

11:30 Questions & Answers

12:00 – 13:30 LUNCH

13:30 – 15:30 PANEL 4 | HUMANITARIANISM AND BIOPLITICS

CHAIRPERSON **Nurfadzilah Yahaya**, National University of Singapore

13:30 **Experiments in Gospel and Society: The London Missionary Society in North China**

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, University of Auckland, New Zealand

14:00 **The Indian St John Ambulance Association: Social Work and Humanitarian Relief in Colonial South Asia and Beyond, 1900- 1920**

Maria Framke, University of Rostock, Germany

14:30 **Pawns of Immortality: The Consequences of Soteriological Care in Japan’s Modern Tuberculosis Epidemic**

Elisheva A. Perelman, College of Saint Benedict & Saint John’s University, USA

15:00 Questions & Answers

15:30 – 16:00 TEA BREAK

16:00 – 16:40 PANEL 5 | THE END OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL?

CHAIRPERSON **Harald Fischer-Tiné**, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

16:00 **The Niebuhrs, the Social Gospel and the Myth of Progress: A Theological, Philosophical and Political Critique**

Sam Han, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

16:30 Questions & Answers

16:40 – 17:45 GROUP DISCUSSION & PUBLICATION PLANS

CHAIRPERSON **Yurou Zhong**, University of Toronto, Canada

17:45 – 18:00 CLOSING REMARKS

18:00 **END OF WORKSHOP**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Vectors of Practicality: The Social Gospel, the YMCA and the Evangelical Missionary Movement in the United States and Asia. C. 1890s-1930s

Ian TYRRELL

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This paper concerns the cross-national and trans-cultural exchanges that occurred between Asian societies and cultures on the one hand and American missionaries and reformers in Asia from the 1890s to the 1930s on the other. A central part of the paper sets the Social Gospel in the context of this multilateral and reciprocal process. It interrogates and contextualizes the concept of a Social Gospel in U.S. historiography, concentrating on the role of the Social Gospel as a concept informing this missionary and modernizing reform work through certain vectors.

The paper argues that the YMCA was a crucial vector for the transnational transmission of Social Gospel ideas and practice, due to organizational and practical characteristics, especially the non-denominational and international focus of “Y” work and the activities of travelling and national secretaries. Whereas even recent revisionist discussion of the Social Gospel still concerns mainly its internal gestation and impact, through the YMCA there was a substantial transnational engagement. While this Social Gospel work was transnational and international in many multilateral directions, the focus was very much on Asia because of the imperatives of American evangelical missions. This work opened spaces of social and economic innovation, particularly in the sector of agriculture where Americans and their allies in China and India started innovative programs to combat famine and promote agrarian development before World War I. Though paternalist in certain ways, these programs made central the roles of indigenous workers, and were able because of the breadth and depth of missionary contacts to draw upon a wider range of influences than the churches and missionaries themselves. In turn, this transnational work spurred reciprocal flows to the United States. The work had impacts on the entire structure and strategy of mission activity in the United States by the early 1930s, underlining and reinforcing ecumenism and an internationalist ideology. The nature of the Social Gospel ideology facilitated these transfers of knowledge and helped to push the ideology in the direction of secularism.

Ian TYRRELL retired as Scientia Professor of History at the University of New South Wales (Sydney) and is now an emeritus professor of history. He has been a visiting professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has served as the Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Professor of American History in the University of Oxford for 2010-11, and was appointed a professorial fellow of the Queen’s College, Oxford. He has published many books and articles on U.S. transnational history, missionaries, and related topics: *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991; *True Gardens of the Gods: Californian-Australian Environmental Reform, 1860-1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999; *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010; *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt’s America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

The Child's Rights and the Chinese Social Gospel

Margaret M. TILLMAN

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As the Social Gospel encouraged greater social activism among Protestants around the world, converts began to engage with communities and governments outside of the Western tradition. Although generally receptive to Western knowledge, for example, the Guomindang government imposed national standards for party education that effectively curtailed the influence of religious education and mission schools in China. Mission schools were also losing some of their Christian character, as Chinese elites willingly paid tuition for (secular) Western education and thus increasingly replaced poor converts. In the 1930s, missionaries and converts responded to these new pressures by intensifying their engagement in non-educational social services for children. In 1931, Frank Rawlinson, an early missionary proponent of kindergartens in China, went so far as to re-frame debates about parental vs. governmental authority over children's education in terms of a child's own right to select his or her faith. This paper will examine the ways in which Christians articulated the rights of the child in relationship to the Social Gospel and the Chinese state.

Margaret Mih TILLMAN received her PhD from UC Berkeley in 2013 and is now an assistant professor of at Purdue University. She is currently revising her book manuscript, "Precocious Politics," about childhood education and welfare in the first half of the twentieth century, and her work includes the importation, often through missionaries and U.S.-educated Chinese students, of Western ideas about kindergartens and childrearing. Her most recent publications are: "Engendering Children of the Resistance: Models of Gender and Scouting in China, 1919-1937." In: *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 13 (2014), 134-173; with Hoyt Tillman: "Remodeling Confucian Wedding Rituals to Address China's Youth Culture Today: A Case of Using the Classics to Respond to Recalcitrant Problems." In: *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies* 10,2 (2013), 221-246.

“The Physical Evangelization of the many Nations of the World”: The International YMCA College in Springfield, MA, and Sportive Citizenship Training in Asia

Stefan HUEBNER

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During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, physical education and public health experienced a scientific boom in the US. One important institution was the International YMCA College in Springfield, MA. Inspired by the vision to bring Protestant American ideas of Christian internationalism, Christian egalitarianism, and a ‘Protestant Work Ethic’ to the rest of the world, YMCA physical (education) directors, many of them graduates of the International YMCA College, moved to Asian countries, where they engaged in Christian social work. As a consequence of the First World War, when the medical examinations of US recruits had revealed serious physical deficits caused by the negative impact of urbanization and industrialization, improving public health and fitness became even more important. Simultaneously, sportive character building, another dimension of “muscular Christianity”, should shape democratic citizens and support the transformation of societies. Fulfilling the rising demand for physical education and public health experts in countries or colonies experiencing “modernization” processes contributed to a large-scale circulation of YMCA personnel and of scientific knowledge about sportive citizenship training. For example, American YMCA officials moved to new settings, foreign YMCA leaders were trained in the US, and the YMCA founded colleges abroad. My presentation addresses these circulations and especially the role of sports events, transnational sports exchanges, and academic institutions. I am particularly interested in how more scientific approaches to physical education influenced the YMCA’s social transformation plans.

Stefan HUEBNER (HÜBNER) is a research fellow at National University of Singapore’s Asia Research Institute. He was awarded a visiting scholarship at Harvard University’s Center for European Studies, a public policy fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars (Washington, DC), a postdoc fellowship at the German Historical Institute Washington, DC, and a fellowship in a SIAS Summer Institute on “Cultural Encounters” (Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin and National Humanities Center, NC). He received his Ph.D. in history from Jacobs University Bremen (Germany) in 2014. His book—*Pan-Asian Sports and the Emergence of Modern Asia, 1913-1974*—was recently published by National University of Singapore Press.

Chinese-Arab Laborers in the American Expeditionary Forces in WWI France

Shuang WEN

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In 1917, about ten thousand Chinese contracted laborers and three thousand Arab colonial laborers encountered each other in the construction fields of WWI France. These two groups of peoples, from two far ends of the “eastern” world worked side by side, building roads and railways, digging trenches as well as unloading ammunition and cleaning up the battlefields after the war for the western great powers. Although both known as sturdy and valuable workers, they did not get along with each other. As most of them were unlettered peasants, they were not familiar with each other’s cultural customs and languages. As a result, they often got into fights due to mundane grievances, such as competition for bread and gambling. To facilitate communication and education for the Chinese laborers, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) sent Chinese student intellectuals to work as interpreters and teachers of basic knowledge such as geography, mathematics, English, and even written Chinese. By examining the unexpected encounters of Chinese and Arab laborers in WWI France, this paper can shed light on the cross-racial tensions among subaltern laborers in the throes of the Great War, and the roles of the YMCA in enriching the lived experiences of Chinese laborers in places far away from their homeland.

Shuang WEN is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in History from Georgetown University and an MA in Middle East Studies from the American University in Cairo. Her publications include “Muslim Activist Encounters in Meiji Japan.” In: *Middle East Report 270: China in the Middle East*. Washington, DC: Middle East Research and Information Project, 2014.

From National Theology to National Salvation: The Christian Literature Society in Republican China

Gal GVILI

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This paper examines new ideas on reading and writing in the works of the Christian Literary Society (*wen she* 1924-1930), an organ of the Chinese Christian Indigenization Movement (*Zhongguo jidujiao bensehua yundong* 1922-1941). Based in Yenching University in Beijing, this group of writers and intellectuals — many of which members trained in American universities — took part in a Republican era widespread rhetoric of national salvation (*jiuguo zhuyi*), by offering a particular vision of how to transform members of society and save the country from impending calamity by and through religion.

The paper traces two main theological principles raised by the leaders of the Indigenization Movement, Zhao Zichen (1888-1979) and Liu Tingfang (1891-1947), in order to devise an original form of Chinese Christianity: “Experience” (*jingyan*) and “Personality” (*rengex*). Focused on the individual believer’s religious sensibility rather than on doctrine or ritual, the Movement drew upon American Protestant thinkers such as William James and Borden Parker Bowne to locate the centrality of religious experience in envisioning a national revival. This proposition, which was raised in an almost global context of reevaluating religion in modernity, was unique in the way these Chinese thinkers located literature, both fiction and poetry, as a central agent, working through and with religion, to cultivate personal experience and bind together self and society.

Gal GVILI received her PhD in Modern Chinese Literature with a concentration in Comparative Literature and Society from Columbia University in 2015. She works and teaches in early modern, modern, and contemporary Chinese literature, Chinese cinema of all periods, and literary and cultural theory. Her current research investigates how modern literature became a vehicle for social change during the late Qing and the Republican era, with an emphasis on interactions between religious thought and literary realism.

“Can the Bible Woman Speak?”

Yurou ZHONG

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This paper examines the production of the Chinese Alphabetic Dialect Bible and its fraught relationship with the establishment of Chinese dialectology in the 1920s, as well as the Chinese Latinization Movement in the 1930s. Although Jesuits missionaries such as Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault pioneered in the alphabetization of Chinese writing as early as the seventeenth century, it was the protestant missionaries who conceived the bulk of the schemes that alphabetized Chinese — both mandarin and dialects — and later inspired the Chinese dialectologists, script reformers and literary talents at the turn of the twentieth century. The major appeal of the Alphabetic Dialect Bible — its proselytizing power aside — was its promise to grant the subaltern voice, which resonated with the ambitions of the twentieth century Chinese script reformers. Xu Dishan — a writer and proponent of the script reform, himself also a Christian — offers a rare occasion in his novella “Yu Guan” where the Alphabetic Dialect Bible meets the Latinization Movement. While the protagonist Yu Guan, an illiterate Bible Woman from rural Fujian learns to read the Minnanese Alphabetic Bible, the readers ponder the question “Can the Bible Woman really speak”? This paper, by exploring the case of Yu Guan and her Minnanese Alphabetic Bible, examines how the missionaries’ experiment with the alphabetic Chinese is brought to bear on the politically charged Chinese Latinization Movement that redefined orality and literacy in modern China.

Yurou ZHONG is an Assistant Professor at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto. She was trained in comparative literature at Tsinghua University, Beijing, and obtained her PhD from Columbia University. Her primary research interests include modern Chinese literature, literary and cultural history of modern China, history of linguistic thought, and history of writing systems. She is completing her first book *Script Crisis and Literary Modernity in China, 1916-1958*.

The Influence of Christianity and the Western Perspective in the Construction of Classics of Modern Chinese Folk Literature and Art: A Study on the Translation of *Ting Hsien Yang Ke Hsuan*

Ji JIANG

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From the May 4th Movement to the “Mass Education Movement”, drama played a significant role in the mass enlightenment in China. Besides the creation of the modern form of drama, the re-evaluation of traditional form of theatre and folk plays also became an important task for the modern Chinese intellectuals who had gradually entered into the grassroots society then. Through the collection, reorganization, adaptation and publication of folk literature and art, the intellectuals found a method to understand the village life better and to facilitate the literacy and art education among villagers as well. *Ting Hsien Yang Ke Hsuan* is such a collection edited by Y.C. James Yen and his associates of the Chinese National Association of the Mass Education in the famous Ting Hsien Experiment in the 1930's. Ever since its birth, the collection has been regarded as a milestone in the construction and development of Chinese modern folklore studies. However, the object of this collection — Yang Ke, a form of folk play prevalent in Ting Hsien, Hebei Province — was a relatively new folk art at that time, which was formed in the late Qing and became popular in 1920's. One possible reason for the classic-orientation of Ting Hsien Yang Ke is the long-term existence of western perspective on this subject. The different attitudes towards Christianity have also involved in the overseas interpretation of *Ting Hsien Yang Ke Hsuan*, which made this western influence more visible and complicated.

Ji JIANG is Assistant Professor at Renmin University, Beijing, as well as vice secretary-general of the China Nuo Opera Research Institute and a member of the China Society for Anthropology of Art. She undertook her undergraduate and postgraduate study in Comparative Literature and Culture at Tsinghua University, Beijing, and received her PhD from the China Art Academy with a dissertation on *Chinese Traditional Theatre Arts in the Cross-cultural Context and Discourse (1919-1937)*. Her main research area is the comparative study of theatre and literature and now her research interest centers on the issue of the Mass Education Drama and the folk art (village plays) in modern China.

From Social Gospel to Class Revolution: The YMCA and the Transformation of Civil Society in Revolutionary China

Xiaohong XU

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This paper takes the Chinese YMCA, the largest civil services organization in revolutionary China, as a prism to investigate the transformation of a burgeoning civil society beset by a failed democracy building and by emerging class politics. I examine two mechanisms through which the YMCA transformed from social capital provision to token representation of civil society under an authoritarian revolutionary vanguard: first, cross-cutting social ties were replaced by social cleavages; second, ethical activism in the form of social gospel was superseded by politicized ethics that attempted to synthesize social gospel with Marxism. The YMCA, therefore, first emerged as an organizational model in the early twentieth century and ended up being coopted by the Communists. Through this case, the paper adjudicates competing sociological theories about civil society, party politics, and state institutions.

Xiaohong XU is Assistant Professor of Sociology at National University of Singapore. A comparative historical sociologist by training, his intellectual agenda centers on creating the cross-fertilization between sociological theory and historical inquiry, with a broad interest in politics, culture, political economy, organizational theory, and philosophy of social sciences. He received his PhD from Yale University in 2013, where he completed a dissertation on the cultural and organizational dynamics of the Communist Revolution in China. Part of his dissertation research, which explored how the Chinese Communist Movement emerged by taking over existing activist organizations, has appeared in *American Sociological Review*. He has also published on theories of state formation and the making of collective memory.

From Imperialism to Internationalism: Conversion, Social Gospel, and the YMCA in Asia, 1900-1930

Lou ANTOLIHAI

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The arrival of the YMCA in Asia at the turn of the 20th-century has coincided with a period of immense political transformation and social upheaval. This crucial period has allowed for the association to pursue its religious and humanitarian missions in an environment that is in dire need of new spiritual and social catalyst. The YMCA in China, Japan, and the Philippines, in particular, are recognized not only for their humanitarian work and for introducing modern sports but also for advancing the ideals of cosmopolitanism, modernization, and liberalism that helped change the course of history in the Asian region. However, the same contributions have also been criticized as a form of Western imperialism making the analysis of its ideological standpoint, operational strategy, and long-term legacy interesting for its potential insights on the study of religious developmentalism, Americanization, and globalization.

Using archival data from the Kautz Family YMCA Archives and secondary sources, this paper explores how the YMCA negotiates with various religious, cultural, and political forces in carrying out its mission in Asia. Comparing data from China, Japan, and the Philippines, it argues that YMCA's influence and long-term legacy were influenced by its ability to "convert" its linkage to imperialism into the more inclusive paradigm of internationalism. While pursuing to convert the local population into Christians, the YMCA had also converted itself and had taken on a more Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino identity and outlook. From a Christian institution that stood as a symbol of Western expansionism and domination, the YMCA's work in Asia was generally embraced for its liberal principle and inclusive strategy that puts emphasis on transnational cooperation and community development. However, its embodiment of the spirit of internationalism while very successful in some areas was questioned and criticized in others as various religious, social, and political factors shaped how the YMCA's principle and programs were "converted" into something that is consistent with the respective country's goals of nation-building and social reconstruction.

Lou ANTOLIHAI is a lecturer at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He received his PhD from the National University of Singapore in 2010. He is the author of *Playing with the Big Boys: Basketball, American Imperialism, and Subaltern Discourse in the Philippines*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015.

Civilizing the Peasant: The American YMCA and “Rural Reconstruction” Schemes in South Asia and Beyond (C. 1920-1960)

Harald FISCHER-TINÉ

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The paper is reconstructing an important chapter in the pre-history of post WW II development schemes by looking at the global career of Duane Spencer Hatch (1888-1963). In the 1940 and 1950s Hatch was a leading international specialist of “community development”, working, among others, for the UNESCO as well as the national Governments of the United States and India. It is often overlooked, however, that the expertise of the small epistemic community of development experts that constituted itself in the 1940s often had deep roots in the late colonial era. In Hatch's case his specific knowledge on peasants and villages was deeply enmeshed in the twin civilizing mission of colonialism on the one hand and the Christian missionary endeavour on the other. For more than two decades (1921-1942), he worked for the YMCA in South India and pursued a primarily missionary agenda while at the same time closely cooperating with the colonial state as well as with Indian aristocrats. The paper addresses the question as to what extent his “rural reconstruction” schemes were influenced by these affiliations.

Harald FISCHER-TINÉ is full Professor of modern global history at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH-Zürich). He holds a PhD in South Asian history from the University of Heidelberg and has published extensively on global history, South Asian colonial history, and the history of the British Empire. From 2010-15 he has directed a research group on the global history of the anti-alcohol movement. Currently, he is doing research on the history of the YMCA in South Asia (1890–1964). His most recent monographs are: *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism*. London and New Delhi: Routledge, 2014; *“Pidgin-Knowledge”: Wissen und Kolonialismus*. Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013; *“Low and Licentious Europeans”: Race, Class and White Subalternity in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009.

Experiments in Gospel and Society: The London Missionary Society in North China

Melissa Wei-Tsing INOUYE

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Western missionary activities in China have often been viewed through the lens of colonialism and imperialism. The privilege and cultural condescension that characterized LMS missionaries' position vis-à-vis many aspects of Chinese society cannot be denied, especially with regard to native customs or religious practices. And yet by 1900, the missionaries of the London Missionary Society in North China had developed into a community that had undergone considerable personal sacrifice in order to remain in China. They had spent decades immersing themselves in a linguistic, cultural, and political environment in which they were heavily dependent upon their Chinese hosts. As a result, they occupied an in-between space that was simultaneously at the fringes of society, on the edges of empires, and at the heart of local communities. In the course of negotiating this in-betweenness, the missionaries developed versatile tools and systems originally intended to achieve a particular proselytizing purpose but that quickly took on independent meanings and usages in the lives of their Chinese hosts.

This paper draws upon North China LMS missionary correspondence and reports from 1900-1930 to examine the three kinds of missionary social projects: local church self-governance, phonetic script, and work among women. In their imperfect but consistent attempts to spread their Christian faith by addressing themselves to some of the most formidable problems in Chinese society, the missionaries enlarged an experimental space-in-between wherein they, Chinese Christians, and other ordinary citizens explored new ways of organizing and interacting.

Melissa Wei-Tsing INOUYE is Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Auckland. She received her PhD from Harvard University and has taught at California State University, Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount University, and the University of Hong Kong. Her areas of research interest include the history of Protestant Christianity in China, native Chinese Pentecostal movements, and charisma in global religious movements. Her latest publication is: "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories within Chinese Protestant Christianity." In: John Lagerwey / Vincent Goossaert / Jan Kiely (eds.), *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850-2015*. Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2016, 884-919.

The Indian St John Ambulance Association: Social Work and Humanitarian Relief in Colonial South Asia and Beyond, 1900-1920

Maria FRAMKE

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The increasing interest in philanthropic and charitable work of the Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem led to the foundation of St John Ambulance Association in London in 1877. In the next decades the newly established organization expanded throughout the country and empire, including British India. Here, the Indian branches became mainly involved in the areas of health education and citizenship training by teaching practices of civil ambulance work and offering first aid and hygiene courses. During WWI, when extensive Indian humanitarian initiatives emerged to help wounded military and civilian victims of the war, the Indian St John Ambulance Association was at the forefront of relief work in India, Mesopotamia and Europe.

The presentation seeks to investigate how national and international objectives shaped the charitable and the humanitarian work of the Indian St John Ambulance Association in early 20th century. It asks, if the association's activities became a tool for advancing and legitimizing Indian nationalism or if its initiatives were used for imperial purposes. Furthermore, knowing that the British-Indian state incorporated humanitarian relief work within its own military structures during WWI, the cooperation of the Indian St John Ambulance with the state raises a number of important questions. Did the cooperation limit or change the work carried out by this civil society organization? Did it imply a reorientation of St John Ambulance's objectives and motives? And finally, did involvement of Indian actors enhance their moral authority in the eyes of the British rulers?

Maria FRAMKE is a historian of modern South Asia working at the University of Rostock, Germany. She has researched and published on the history of international organizations, imperial and nationalist politics, humanitarianism, and international relations and ideologies in the 20th century. Her current research project focuses on 'South Asian humanitarianism in armed conflicts, 1899-1949'. Maria received her doctorate from Jacobs University Bremen in 2011. Her book on the *Engagement with Italian Fascism and German National Socialism in India, 1922-1939* was published in 2013 with the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt. Together with Joel Glasman she has edited a special issue on 'Humanitarianism' in *WerkstattGeschichte*.

Pawns of Immortality: The Consequences of Soteriological Care in Japan's Modern Tuberculosis Epidemic

Elisheva A. PERELMAN

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The tuberculosis epidemic of Meiji and Taishō helped to define the relationship between Japan's government and foreign evangelical organizations that had recently arrived on the archipelago. For those willing to undertake medical missionary work, particularly concerning public health issues that the government chose to ignore, tuberculosis provided an arena in which to prove both utility to the nation and enthusiasm for Japan's industrial modernization. But without the antibiotics that would later come to conquer the scourge, medical work, evangelical or otherwise, remained primarily palliative. There was also a utilitarian mission—more converts would mean more funds for the mission, either from the pockets of the recently converted or from foreign supporters who were bolstered by promising statistics. Yet evangelists who tended the tubercular offered another form of care, the soteriological. While the body, ravaged by illness, declined, evangelists endeavored to heal the soul, in the hope that, should death follow, the patient would live on, spiritually. For some patients, the promise of immortality provided comfort, despite the fact that their existence (physical and spiritual) was often used to mediate the relationship between their government and their caretakers.

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The Niebuhrs, the Social Gospel and the Myth of Progress: A Theological, Philosophical and Political Critique

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The work of brothers Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Richard Niebuhr in establishing the neo-orthodox tradition in American Christian theology is already well known and has been commented upon by a multitude of scholars. Their articulation of what has been called “Christian Realism,” and especially certain political works by Reinhold Niebuhr, has also become the topic of great debate in American foreign policy circles in recent years due to the reported appreciation and influence of his thinking on President Barack Obama. What is less discussed is the way in which Christian Realism was theologically, philosophically and politically conceptualized by both Niebuhrs, primarily against the Social Gospel, which was the predominant liberal Christian intellectual tradition of the first-half of the 20th century. In order to more fully understand Christian Realism, and its potential impact on US foreign policy, both now and then, its ideas must be viewed in relation to the theological, philosophical and political aspects of the Social Gospel, its primary “interlocutor” in the sphere of American liberal Christianity. In this paper, I attempt to sketch a first step towards this task by offering a reading of the Niebuhrs specifically focused on their explicitly *theological* and *philosophical* works, which recent (neo-)conservative commentators of Niebuhr do not mention, to ultimately suggest that Christian Realism offers a liberalism that differs from the Social Gospel because of the commitment to the doctrine of sin and its skepticism toward the idea of progress.

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Jonathan RIGG is Director of the Asia Research Institute and Professor in the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore. Prior to that, he was Head of the Geography Department at Durham University in the UK. He was also based at the School of Oriental & African Studies, London University where he was a Lecturer, British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, and PhD student. He is a development geographer interested in illuminating and explaining patterns and processes of social, economic and environmental change in the Asian region and the impacts of such changes on ordinary people and everyday life. In his work, he has tried to give a “face” to the individuals buffeted by modernisation and ascribe to them an agency which is sometimes absent in higher level interpretations of change. He has been concerned to treat ordinary people as special and the geographical contexts in which they live—and which they help to shape—as distinctive. He is currently working on three projects: an international, interdisciplinary study of resilience to earthquake risk in the continental interior of Asia; a study of the role of land in agrarian change in Thailand; and a project on the survival of the smallholder in East and Southeast Asia. His latest book *Challenging Southeast Asian Development: The Shadows of Success* was published in August 2015.

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