



CHARITABLE FAITHS

NGOs and Religion in Asia

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Institute on Culture, Religion & World Affairs (CURA)
Pardee School of Global Affairs, Boston University

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In many parts of Asia, NGOs influenced by diverse religious traditions play significant roles in service delivery, community organization, advocacy and mediating flows of information and resources. Their religious inflections can both enhance the effective reach of particular projects and complicate the already fraught policy environment in which NGOs operate. Policy frameworks influence the kinds of activities that religious NGOs are able to undertake, but they rarely dictate practice. Religious NGOs depend on their ability to elude, enrol, and subvert the state – while states themselves adjust to the impact of these new actors in turn. These complications and negotiations are the focus of this conference.

Among the factors that impact on the policy frameworks for religious NGOs, at local, national, or transnational levels, the notions of 'religious freedom' have held a prominent place, particularly in American legislation and foreign policy where 'religious freedom' is conventionally posited as a fundamental good and has been promoted as necessary for stable democracy, vibrant civil society, economic growth, and social harmony (Farr & Hoover 2009). But, as Winnifred Fallers Sullivan (2014) has recently argued, the idea of religious freedom, even in the United States, is a politically-charged "fiction", while the project of expanding religious freedom is not an apolitical endeavour. As Elizabeth Shakman-Hurd (2013) has demonstrated, despite the intended purpose of securing "human flourishing and peaceful co-existence", the actual implementation of 'religious freedom' can "enact the opposite." In a similar vein, Zhong Yijiang (2014) argues that 'religious freedom' has historically been deployed in some parts of Asia as a tool of imperialist influence. Yet, 'religious freedom' is not enshrined in the policy and regulatory frameworks of many governments in contemporary Asia. Indeed, the idea of religious freedom remains deeply contested across the region. This is apparent, for example, in attempts to pass laws restricting religious conversion in Sri Lanka and in Bhutan's constitutional ban on the public observance of 'foreign' religions, as well as the proliferation of high-profile legal cases over allegations of blasphemy in Indonesia and apostasy in Malaysia.

Given the complexity of this terrain, it is all the more regrettable that so little research has been done on how religious actors in Asia approach the issue of 'religious freedom'. In order to better understand the role of religion and religious NGOs in contemporary Asia and to inform related policy, some crucial questions need to be explored. For instance, how, if at all, is 'religious freedom' an advocacy priority in particular Asian contexts? What are the regulatory constraints or incentives enacted by states or international actors with regard to religious freedom? What are the global networks that religious NGOs engage with around issues of religious freedom? How do policies regulating religious freedom impact the activities of religious NGOs? Such questions can help to open new windows onto the ways in which policy frameworks affect the every-day activities of religious NGOs in fields including poverty alleviation, social development, and public health.

Beyond 'religious freedom' – both as an ideologically constructed ideal and as a matter of regulation and policy – we need to better understand the political dimensions of religious NGO operations within particular legislative and policy frameworks. In some cases the service provision activities of religious NGOs complement and enhance systems of low state capacity, in others they compete with state services and in still others service delivery by religious NGOs is associated with political parties and forms part of their electoral strategies. In Kerala, for example, palliative care provided by Salafist Islamic groups has not only filled an unmet need and further enhanced the success of the well-known "Kerala model of development", but has also successfully pressured the state to include an item for palliative care in its public budget. In Indonesia, some observers have credited the relative success of the Islamist Justice and Welfare Party (PKS) in the legislative elections in part to its service delivery activities. These kinds of political dynamics are often speculated upon, but there is still precious little scholarship critically exploring causes and effects, or even providing rigorous empirical data on such developments.

The work of international religious NGOs is also influenced by a humanitarian code that precludes differentiation among races, religions, etc., as described by ICRC and the UN system. This ‘neutrality’ complicates the work of organizations, such as Islamic Relief, who claim that “cultural proximity” gives them advantages over ‘secular’ aid providers, because their religious identity gives them access to communities that for security or other reasons are difficult for non-Islamic groups to access, and accords them with a high level of trust from these communities (Benthall 2012). World Vision similarly treads a delicate balance on these issues – asserting that its Christian faith substantively informs its programming, but also saying that it provides services according to the humanitarian code. Further complicating questions concerning the definition of ‘neutrality’ is the issue of proselytization and the ways in which discourse around it are diversely configured in relation to both the legal provisions and demographic realities of diverse nations in contemporary Asia (Finucane & Feener 2013). Indeed, as Philip Fountain (2015) argues, exactly what constitutes ‘proselytizing’ is not always as clear as it at first seems. The ‘problem’ that mainstream development has with proselytizing is revealing for the ways in which religious groups are marked out as peculiarly dangerous *vis-à-vis* their secular counterparts. The imperative among many Western donors to clearly differentiate between ‘proselytizing’ and ‘development’ is problematic because in practice the distinction between the two is often blurred, as interventions into debates over religious freedom and the regulation of Faith-Based Organizations are coming to both inform and reflect reconfigurations of working conceptions of both ‘religion’ and ‘development’ work.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore the legal and policy frameworks that inform the work of NGOs, how these organizations engage with religion in diverse Asian contexts, and the ways in which particular NGOs navigate these diverse and complex policy frameworks. Papers will approach the issue from a variety of perspectives and scales of analysis – organizational, local, national, and international. The conference will include critical, ethnographic and policy perspectives, while the regional mandate will be broad ranging, as we will seek a particular concentration of papers on East Asia and South East Asia.

Convenors

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15 MAY 2017 (MONDAY)	
08:30 – 09:30	REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST
09:30 – 10:00	WELCOME REMARKS
	Robert W. Hefner Boston University, USA
	INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	R. Michael Feener University of Oxford, UK Philip Fountain Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
10:00 – 10:30	TEA BREAK
10:30 – 12:00	PANEL 1
	<i>Chairperson</i> Philip Fountain Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
10:30	Catholic Schools Teaching Buddhism, Secular NGOs Enforcing Religion: Catholicism in Buddhist Thailand Giuseppe Bolotta National University of Singapore
10:50	Religious Liberty and Nonprofit Regulation: Reflections on the US and India Erica Bornstein University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA
11:10	Uncivil NGOs: Mabatha and Confessional Communalism in Myanmar Keiko Tosa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan
11:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
12:00 – 13:00	LUNCH
13:00 – 14:30	PANEL 2
	<i>Chairperson</i> R. Michael Feener University of Oxford, UK
13:00	Christian Policy-shapers at the UN: Building Networks through Multilingual Education in Southeast Asia Catherine Scheer National University of Singapore
13:20	The Disconnect: Hindu and Buddhist NGOs and the United Nations Jeremy Carrette University of Kent, UK
13:40	Funding an Islamic Reformation: The Ford Foundation and the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs Megan Brankley Abbas State University of New York-Geneseo, USA
14:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
14:30 – 15:00	TEA BREAK
15:00 – 16:30	PANEL 3
	<i>Chairperson</i> Robert W. Hefner Boston University, USA
15:00	Evangelizing Entrepreneurship: Techno-politics of Vocational Training in the Global Anti-Human Trafficking Movement Elena Shih Brown University, USA
15:20	From Fields of Blessings to Political Merit-Making: Forms of Religious Charity in China Robert P. Weller Boston University, USA
15:40	Religion in the Age of Development Philip Fountain Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand R. Michael Feener University of Oxford, UK
16:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
16:30 – 16:40	BREAK
16:40 – 17:40	CONCLUDING DISCUSSION
	Robert W. Hefner Boston University, USA
17:40	END OF WORKSHOP

Catholic Schools Teaching Buddhism, Secular NGOs Enforcing Religion: Catholicism in Buddhist Thailand

Giuseppe Bolotta

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In Thailand, Catholicism represents an exceedingly small religious group within a primarily Buddhist context. This paper examines two settings of Catholic engagement in the country: scholastic education and humanitarian work. Religious freedom is constitutionally recognized in the country. However, since the early 20th century, Buddhism has not only been publicly embraced as the majority religion, but also become a fundamental cultural dimension of the Thai national identity ('Thainess') that each citizen is expected to embody, regardless of 'private' confessional orientation. The national school system is one of the main channels through which the sacred trinity of 'nation, Buddhism and monarchy' is propagated across the ethno-linguistically diverse regions of the country. Not only in state schools, but also in private Catholic schools, students learn Buddhism and are taught how to become proper Thais, that is to say: good citizens, loyal to the (Buddhist) King and the Thai nation. Beginning in the 1970s, however, the purportedly 'secular' aid sector has also offered Catholic missionaries an alternative pathway to Catholicism that facilitates their engagement with particular sectors of Thai society: in the form of NGOs. While private schools headed by priests or nuns can be formally labeled 'Catholic,' according to Thai policy NGOs are officially designated as 'non-religious' and 'apolitical entities'. This paper presents the case of a Catholic NGO working with children in the slums of Bangkok. Missionaries leading the organization have designed pedagogical projects for ethnic minority children which contain subversive religious views with respect to the dominant socio-political order. I argue that the official qualification of an institution as religious ('Catholic') makes it paradoxically more difficult for missionaries to advance proselytising strategies in Thailand through missionaries schools. Conversely, the officially secular framing of the NGO system allows them wider religious liberties, especially outside state contexts (such as schools) where the (Buddhist) national culture is constitutionally imperative. By formally removing their religious vestments, and by donning the caps of children's rights activists, they gain a 'purely secular' space of action that, as such, is less monitored by the Thai state, and can thus be more easily infused with counter-hegemonic religious and political elements.

Religious Liberty and Nonprofit Regulation: Reflections on the US and India

Erica Bornstein

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This paper uses two settings, situated worlds apart, to think through how the defense of religious freedom is strategically deployed in philanthropic regulation. In India and the United States, charitable groups are dependent on donors for their existence, and philanthropic donations are regulated by the state. The basis for regulating nonprofits in both national settings relies upon key assumptions behind constitutional freedoms regarding religion, association, speech, and assembly. The paper examines two instances where the concept of religious liberty is invoked for regulatory purposes: (1) in a series of supreme court amicus briefs filed by conservative political groups in the United States to defend anonymous philanthropy to nonprofits and (2) the use of an anti-conversion clause in a law governing foreign philanthropy to cancel the licenses of Christian NGOs in India. What is it about the category of the nonprofit that inspires such efforts to wrestle control over its affairs? I argue that the regulation of philanthropy is a unique arena where religion is used to protect the political sovereignty of the nation and the individual liberties of the powerful. Whether deployed by wealthy political groups in the US or by the Hindu majority in India, these efforts occur at the expense of those living in the margins.

Uncivil NGOs: Mabatha and Confessional Communalism in Myanmar

Keiko Tosa

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In Myanmar, civil society had once disappeared in the period of Burma Socialist Programme Party, according to Steinberg (1999). Many scholars and activists focused on the activities of NGOs, especially INGOs as a factor of strengthening civil society. Although I share the view that NGOs are relevant for strengthening civil society, I would rather inquire how local Buddhist associations have been developing as local NGOs and what the difference between local associations and local NGOs is (cf. Tosa, Kyoto Conference). During the former military government's reign, especially after the 2000s, many religious associations worked as local NGOs. Likewise, people engaged in welfare activism in various fields, including education, environmental protection, and medical treatment of the poor, as though they were compensating for what the government was lacking. However the negative aspect of local religious NGOs should also be focused on. In Myanmar, after the serious conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in 2012-13, an association called Mabatha was formed to "promote the protection of nationality, race, and religion". The paper shows how Mabatha mobilized monks and nuns as well as lay people. Based on the research on the local NGOs that promoted religious education in the childhood, the paper demonstrates how the members were actively involved in the political movement that tried to exclude others. I also consider the difficulties faced by the religious organizations when they were required to focus on the issue of conversion.

Christian Policy-Shapers at the UN: Building Networks through Multilingual Education in Southeast Asia

Catherine Scheer

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One way of approaching so-called Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) is by analysing how they are shaped and constrained by specific national policy frameworks. Drawing on ethnographical fieldwork among actors of various Southeast Asia-based international and national organisations, I will shift the focus to look at how FBOs can shape policy and influence the institutional contexts in which they are working. Such efforts are far from being constrained to the regulation of religion. Specifically, I propose to examine how members of a Protestant NGO that works with minority language communities have carved out space at the regional office of a UN agency in Bangkok to advocate for multilingual education policies across Southeast Asia. I will then use the case of Cambodia, often presented as a model of "good practice" in the region, to explore how multilingual education projects are connecting Christian NGO members to a diverse range of actors involved in the crafting and dissemination of policy—government officials, NGO representatives and academic experts. These connections create a powerful network of education-specialists, all involved in the circulation of a 'moral economy' of multilingual education that is used and reappropriated in various and sometimes conflicting ways.

The Disconnect: Hindu and Buddhist NGOs and the United Nations

Jeremy Carrette

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The paper explores the neglected area of the relationship between Hindu and Buddhist traditions and representation of religious NGOs at the UN by exploring the “constraining” and “facilitating” dynamics. It seeks to understand a “disconnect” and show how some “connections” to the UN have been made by Hindu and Buddhist traditions. It argues that the problem relates to three “constraining” factors: first, the colonial legacy of the UN; second, economic and in-country politics and, third, the historical shape of Asian global civil society. The paper then explores two “facilitating” mechanisms: the development of the “spiritual” UN through UN Secretary Generals Dag Hammarskjold and U Thant and the politic of “visibility” in the work of inter-faith NGOs, such as Temple of Understanding (Special Consultative Status 1995) and the United Religions Initiative (Special Consultative Status 2007). While arguing that the symbolic interfaith events, such as World Interfaith Harmony Week, provide points of access they are seen to cover up the lack of policy specific engagements. Through a brief set of case studies of Hindu and Buddhist NGOs at the UN the final part of the paper will offer evidence of a bridging of Hindu and Buddhist visions and the UN.

Funding an Islamic Reformation: The Ford Foundation and the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs

Megan Brankley Abbas

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As one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the world, the Ford Foundation has cultivated a long and productive relationship with Indonesia since the 1950s. Accordingly, scholars of Indonesian history and international development alike have examined how Ford helped to train the country’s leading economists and hence strengthened Suharto’s New Order regime. While this research highlighted the intersections between American developmentalist projects and anti-communist authoritarianism, there is another part of the Ford Foundation’s story in Indonesia. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Foundation decided to fund two high-profile Muslim organizations: *Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat* (Association for the Development of Pesantren and Society or P3M) and *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (Liberal Islam Network or JIL). When and why did Ford become interested in reformist Islamic organizations? How did this purportedly secular NGO frame its intervention into Indonesian Islamic politics and activism? In order to address these questions, this conference paper examines the Ford Foundation’s early engagement with Indonesian projects of Islamic reform and with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in particular during the 1970s and 1980s. I argue that Ford’s own secularist and developmentalist logic led the Foundation to venture into decidedly religious and even theological territory.

Evangelizing Entrepreneurship: Techno-politics of Vocational Training in the Global Anti-Human Trafficking Movement

Elena Shih

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Since the passage of the 2000 United Nations Palermo Protocol, development goals concerning labor, migration, sex work, poverty, and gender equality, have been streamlined into the relatively new framework of trafficking in persons. American evangelical Christian organizations comprise a significant contingent of the global anti-trafficking movement, and mobilize considerable financial resources around a moral objection to prostitution, which equates all sex work with sex trafficking. Looking at development through the analytical framework of techno-politics, this presentation examines how vocational training serves as a legible technical objective to espouse long-standing goals of Christian missionary work in Asian and the abolition of prostitution globally. As its case, this presentation explores two American Christian missionary vocational training rehabilitation projects that train sex workers in Beijing and Bangkok to make jewelry. This jewelry is sold through the bustling anti-trafficking movement in the United States as a proxy commodity for freedom from enslavement and a dignified wage. Drawing on 40 months of ethnographic field work as a participant observer and volunteer with these organizations and the broader secular and faith-based anti-trafficking movement in China and Thailand, I will examine the mission of anti-trafficking rescue as it is enacted through the corollary motives of salvific evangelism and social entrepreneurship.

From Fields of Blessings to Political Merit-Making: Forms of Religious Charity in China

Robert P. Weller

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In Buddhism one make merit by planting a seed in the field of blessings, for instance by building a stupa. The idea reminds us that neither the institutional form of NGOs nor the usual scope of religious charity should be taken for granted, even in contemporary life. This presentation will discuss the fields of religious action in China with two goals in mind. First, I hope to move beyond the limits of the NGO as a way of understanding the forms of institutionalization of religious charity. In China today, the NGO is a highly limited form, and still very difficult for religious groups to use directly without becoming almost purely secular. For that reason, however, many alternatives exist, from personal forms of charity to various kinds of alternate organizations. Policy aimed only at formal religious NGOs will miss most of what is happening. Second, the presentation will contribute to our understanding of how various religious traditions may conceive of "charity" in ways unlike its usual uses in current global contexts. On the one hand, the state encourages just such globalized and "modern" forms of charity; many religions comply in order to make what we might call political merit. On the other hand, religions also continue to shape images of what counts as "the good" in ways that do not fit the state's modernist goals: building stupas, saving souls, performing rituals for the dead after natural disasters, or healing through religious means.

Religion in the Age of Development

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Religion has been profoundly reconfigured in the age of development. The past half-century has witnessed broad transformations in the understandings and experiences of 'religion' across traditions in communities in many parts of the world. In this paper, we explore some these transformations along the course of deepening entanglements of religious ideas and institutions with the sphere of 'development'. This is pursued through case studies from the trans-regional traditions of Buddhism and Islam - with particular attention to new forms of socially engaged practice among 'development monks' and lay Buddhist organizations in Thailand, and the implementation of Islamic law within dramatic contexts of interventionist reconstruction in post-conflict/post-disaster Aceh, Indonesia. Both of these cases reveal marked commitments to the establishment of a new, reformed social order. Over the course of these projects, the very idea of religion comes to be re-thought by diverse parties who draw selectively on and dynamically interpret canonical texts and traditions as they engage with a host of other ideas and influences that manifest themselves through contemporary humanitarian and development encounters. Through these two case studies of entanglements, we examine specific ways in which 'religion' and 'development' interact and mutually inform each other. Our work thus attempts to push beyond the established academic approaches of both genealogy and instrumentalism toward a more conceptual level of interpretation that facilitates better understanding of the implications of contemporary entanglements across diverse discourses and experiences of religion and development.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS & CHAIRPERSONS

Robert W. HEFNER is Director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) and Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Boston University. He has directed CURA's international program on Islam and modern society. Although an anthropologist by training long involved in the study of Muslim Southeast Asia, Hefner is an interdisciplinary scholar and comparativist. Although he has long worked on Muslim politics, ethics, and law, Hefner has also carried out research on Christianity, Hinduism, and political secularism. In his role at CURA, he has coordinated interdisciplinary research and public policy programs on varied topics, including religious diversity and civic co-existence in plural societies; Islamic education, socialization, and ethical subjectivity; capitalism and economic ethics across cultures; and the changing nature of religion and citizenship in Western societies. His current research centers on two broad issues: Islamic ethics, law, and subjectivity in a pluralist age; and the challenge of religious diversity and pluralist coexistence in the global south and late-modern West.

R. Michael FEENER is the Sultan of Oman Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, and Islamic Centre Lecturer in the History Faculty at the University of Oxford. He was formerly Research Leader of the Religion and Globalisation Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, and Associate Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. He has also taught at Reed College and the University of California, Riverside, and held visiting professor positions and research fellowships at Harvard, Kyoto University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Copenhagen, The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (Honolulu), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands. He has published extensively in the fields of Islamic studies and Southeast Asian history, as well as on post-disaster reconstruction, religion and development.

Philip FOUNTAIN is a Teaching Fellow in Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. Prior to this he was a Senior Research Fellow in the Religion Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He received his doctorate in anthropology from the Australian National University. He has published extensively on religion and development, religion and disaster relief, the anthropology of Christianity and anthropological theologies. With Robin Bush and R. Michael Feener he edited *Religion and the Politics of Development* (Palgrave, 2015).

Giuseppe BOLOTTA is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He is a psychologist and socio-cultural anthropologist. He earned his PhD in Anthropology from University Bicocca of Milan, and his Master's in Psychology from University San Raffaele of Milan. In 2013, while on a PhD exchange program in Bangkok, he also undertook political science training at Chulalongkorn University. His doctoral research is a multi-situated ethnography of religious, humanitarian and state institutional policies for poor children living in the slums of Bangkok (Thailand). He is currently working on a monograph with the working title "Slum Children: Cultural Politics of Marginal Childhood in Bangkok". He co-founded the scholarly network "Sciences de l'Enfance, Enfants des Sciences" (SEES, <http://sciences-enfances.org>) and has worked with Psychologists without Frontiers (PSF).

Erica BORNSTEIN is Associate Professor of anthropology at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is the author of two ethnographic monographs: *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi* (Stanford 2012) and *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe* (Stanford 2005), and the co-editor (with Peter Redfield) of *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism between Ethics and Politics* (School for Advanced Research Press 2011). She is currently writing a book on civil society and its regulation in New Delhi.

Keiko TOSA is a Professor of Burmese Studies and Anthropology of Southeast Asian Countries, Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan. Her recent interest covers topics such as the movement of Promotion of Buddhism outside and within Myanmar, Buddhist Public or Counterpublics under the military regime and religious conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar. Recent publications include “The possibility to create religious plural society in Myanmar” (in Japanese), in Asomura Kuniaki and Okudaira Ryuji eds. *Myanmar: the Nation and the people*. Tokyo: Kokon Shoin, 2016, pp.578-594. “Pagoda Construction and “Propagation of Sasana”: Thathana pyu in Myanmar” (in Japanese) *CSEAS Journal, Southeast Asian Studies* 53(1):137-164, 2015, and “The Sangha and Political Acts: Secularization in a Theravada Buddhist Society” *Internationales Asienforum* (International Quarterly for Asian Studies) 44(3-4):271-297, 2013.

Catherine SCHEER is a post-doctoral fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in anthropology from the École des Hautes Études, Paris and her Masters from Paris West University. In her doctoral thesis, she examined the multifaceted encounters between the Bunong inhabitants of a highland commune in Cambodia, and different waves of Protestant development actors, reflecting on questions of indigeneity, morality and personhood. Her post-doctoral research at ARI explores how international organisations, including Christian NGOs, produce knowledge to inform policy recommendations on multilingual education in Southeast Asia.

Jeremy CARRETTE is Professor of Philosophy, Religion and Culture at the University of Kent, UK. He was principal researcher for the UK based project “Religious NGOs and the United Nations in New York and Geneva” (2009-2012) and joint editor of its findings report. He has written on aspects of religious NGOs at the UN and is joint editor of *Religion, NGOs and the United Nations* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

Megan Brankley ABBAS is an Assistant Professor of History at SUNY Geneseo specializing in modern Islamic intellectual history with a particular focus on Indonesia. She is currently revising a book manuscript on the entangled history of Western academia and modern Islamic thought in Indonesia. The project re-positions the Western university as a significant site for Muslim education and the production of Islamic religious authority in the 20th century. She plans to devote her second book project to writing an intellectual history of Clifford Geertz. Megan earned her Ph.D. in History from Princeton University in May 2015.

Elena Shih is an Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University, where she is also a Faculty Fellow directing the human trafficking research cluster at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. Her research has appeared in *Sociological Perspectives, Contexts, Social Politics*, and *positions: Asia Critique*. She serves on the editorial boards of *The Anti-Trafficking Review*, a peer-reviewed journal run through the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, and *openDemocracy's Beyond Trafficking and Slavery* editorial platform.

Robert P. WELLER is Professor of Anthropology and Research Associate at the Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs at Boston University. His recent writing includes *Rethinking Pluralism: Ritual, Experience, and Ambiguity* (with Adam Seligman, 2012), which focuses on ambiguity and the problem of how we can live with difference. Earlier books include *Alternate Civilities: Chinese Culture and the Prospects for Democracy*, *Discovering Nature: Globalization and Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan*, and *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (co-author). Supported by Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, his present research examines the role of religion in creating public benefits in Chinese communities in China, Malaysia, and Taiwan. It is currently in press (co-authored with Julia Huang and Keping Wu), as *Religion & Charity: The Social Construction of Goodness in Chinese Societies*.