Beyond Missionary Studies: New Approaches Toward Using Missionary Archives for the Study of Asia

Organizer: Gal Gvili, East-Asian Languages and Cultures Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Columbia University

April 8, 2016 9:00–5:30
Location: Harriman Institute Conference Room
Columbia University
New York

This conference brings together scholars working in history, literature, anthropology, art and cinema of East and South Asia to introduce new ways of using missionary archives, private and public. During the past decade missionary sources have increasingly been used for the study of wide-ranging topics in modern Asia beyond the history of missionaries as such, including nation-building, gender and family, the rise of public sentiments, language and literature reforms. Drawing upon visual and textual materials from China, Japan, Korea, India and Indonesia, the conference puts individual case studies across Asia in conversation in order to investigate the legacies of religious modernity.

9:00: Opening Words

Panel I: The Literary Arsenal 9:15–11:00
Discussant: Chloë Starr, Associate Professor of Asian Christianity and Theology, Yale Divinity School, Yale University

• Zhangge Ni, Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech. "The Catholic Circle Around Su Xuelin’s Jixin (Thorny Heart)"
• Parna Sengupta, Senior Associate Director, Stanford Introductory Studies, Stanford University. “Was the first Bengali novel missionary?”
• Gal Gvili, East Asian Languages and Cultures Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Columbia University, “Sympathetic Resonance: Missionary Essay Contests and Literary Effectiveness in Modern China”

• Discussion: 10:15–11:00

11:00–11:15: coffee break

Panel II: Multimedia Missions 11:15–1:00
Discussant: Gil Anidjar, Professor, Department of Religion, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University
• David Morgan, Professor & Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Duke University. “Technologies of the Sacred: Situation and Recalcitrance in the Production & Destruction of Sacrality”
• Yurou Zhong, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto. “Sacred, the Laborers: Writing Chinese in the First World War”
• Joseph W. Ho, PhD Candidate, History Department, University of Michigan. “Framing Mission: Visual Practices, Material Afterlives, and American Missionary Imaging in 20th Century China”

• Discussion: 12:15–1:00

Panel III: Remapping the Archive 2:00–5:30
Discussant: Janet Chen, Associate Professor of History and East Asian Studies, Princeton University

• Hyaeweol Choi, Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Studies, Australian National University. “Crossing the Lines: Korean Women, Christianity, and the Impulse to Claim New Space”
• Shing-ting Lin, Visiting Scholar in History, UC Berkeley, ‘Records of Practice’: Hospital Reports and Missionary Medical Training for Women in China, 1915–1930”
• Elisheva Perelman, Assistant Professor, Department of History, College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University, “Pawns of Immortality: The Consequences of Soteriological Care in Japan’s Modern Tuberculosis Epidemic”

Coffee Break 3:00–3:30

• Jack Neubauer, PhD Candidate, Columbia University, “Adopted by the World: the American-Oriental Friendship Association and the Chinese Origins of International Adoption and Child Sponsorship”
• Margaret Tillman, Assistant Professor, History/UNIV, Purdue, “Children of the Lone Island: Christian Child Welfare Relief in Shanghai, 1938-1941”
• Discussion: 4:10–5:30