

ONLINE WORKSHOP

28th Feb. – 1st Mar. 2024



Gender & Emotion in Asia-Pacific Catholicisms

ISAC Initiative for the
Study of Asian Catholics

RATIONAL

This workshop aims to question how the religious lives of Catholic people in the Asia-Pacific region are informed by socially and temporally specific understandings of emotions and affects, and normative ideas about gender. It thus seeks to further our understanding of perceptions, experiences, practices, beliefs of Asia-Pacific Catholic women, men, and non-binary people by using lenses of both gender and emotion. Since the inception of gender studies in the mid-twentieth century, gender remains a critical lens in studies of religion to identify the ways in which the expression of masculine and feminine spiritualities are shaped by different religious traditions and sociocultural norms.

The Asia-Pacific region has been the focus of many studies in this sense and past research has analysed the impact of gender norms on individual and group expression and how they influence relationships with religion, often focusing on colonial and post-colonial contexts and/or moments of significant religious contacts, such as Christian missions.

Recently, the emotional turn has introduced new analytical possibilities to the study of gender. Theoretical approaches from emotions studies and affect theory, for instance, have provided guidance not only on how the study of human feelings, but also on how researchers can identify and analyse how emotions, feelings, and affects inform the range of human actions and experiences, including those connected to gender. However, gender and emotion remain understudied as a joint theoretical frame to examine the role of emotion in shaping religious experiences, groups, and cultures outside Western contexts.

Among the questions that contributors are invited to respond, we suggest:

- How was/is the interconnection between gender and emotions understood in different forms of Catholicism in the Asia-Pacific world?
- What is the impact of normative gender and emotion on traditions, practices, or experiences of Asia-Pacific Catholicisms? Which kind of normative representations of gender and emotion are spread through visuals, arts, and social media?
- How are the relations between specific emotions (anger, fear, love, etc.) and gender understood in Asia-Pacific Catholic contexts?
- How do past iterations of gender and emotion influence present and future Asia-Pacific Catholicisms?
- How has the discourse on emotion promoted by the Second Vatican Council, for instance in the realm of liturgical practices, been received and adjusted within the different cultural contexts of Asia-Pacific?
- How are emotions mobilised to negotiate the ways Asia-Pacific Catholic institutions embodied gender hierarchy?
- How are Catholic norms on gender and emotion contesting and reshaping kinship structures of Asia-Pacific societies?

For more details, please visit: <https://www.isac-research.org/gender-emotion2024>

PROGRAM-AT-GLANCE

Date	Singapore Time	Session
Wednesday 28 February 2024	18:00	Opening Remarks
	18 :15	Panel 1 Japanese Emotions Through Historical Perspectives
Thursday 29 February 2024	09:00	Panel 2 Reframing the Role of Women
Friday 1 March 2024	20:00	Panel 3 Ecclesial Authority & Emotions
	22:00	Concluding Remarks

Co-organizers:

Linda Zampol D’Ortia, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Michel Chambon, Research Fellow, National University of Singapore

PANELS

WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY

Opening Remarks

18:00 in Singapore

Linda Zampol D’Ortia – Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

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PANEL 1

Japanese Emotions Through Historical Perspectives

Chair: Dr. Bubbles B. Asor

Respondent: **Dr. Hisako Omori**

Akita International University

- **Gwyn McClelland** – “The ‘*Roya no Sako*’ incident, Hisaka Island, Japan: ‘postponed grief’ and distressing memory”
- **Linda Zampol D’Ortia** – “Practices of Christian Love and Matters of Gender in the Sixteenth-century Jesuit Mission in Japan”
- **Carlo Pelliccia** – ““I can’t get over my astonishment”: the Journey to Europe of the first Japanese Embassy (1582-1590)”

THURSDAY 29TH FEBRUARY

PANEL 2

Reframing the Role of Women

09:00 in Singapore

Chair: Dr. Bernardo E. Brown

Respondent: **Dr. Sharon A. Bong**

Monash University Malaysia (09:00 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

- **Jacob Haomin Lin & Lillian Bushway**– “Did *Maliya Sajiao*? Exploring Gender Role Construction and Aspiration of Chinese Catholic Women in the Synodal Church.”
- **Julia Ong** – “Indian Women’s Tears with St Joseph at Bukit Timah Catholic Church”
- **Yulia Kristina Aron** – “*Deri Gete*, Devotion or Curse?” (09: 00 in Maumere, Indonesia)

FRIDAY 1st March

PANEL 3

Ecclesial Authority & Emotions

20:00 in Singapore

Chair: Dr. James Ponniah

Respondent: **Dr. George Baylon Radics**

National University of Singapore (20:00 in Singapore)

- **Jieun Han** – “Revisiting the WOMAD Incident in Korea: Emotions and Reactions”
- **Michel Chambon** – “Zen's Anger: Geopolitical use of a Cardinal Emotion”
- **Marie Le Thi Hoa** – “Emotions raised by the appointment of the first Vietnamese bishops in the 1930s”

&

Concluding Remarks

Michel Chambon, National University of Singapore

PANEL 1

The '*Roya no Sako*' incident, Hisaka Island, Japan: 'postponed grief' and distressing memory

Gwyn McClelland

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The Goto Kuzure was a series of religious persecutions including imprisonment and torture experienced by hundreds of peasants on the Goto Islands between 1867 and 1873, spanning the Tokugawa and Meiji periods in Japan. Among the persecutions, one of the most deadly took place on Hisaka Island, where women and children peasants died as a result of the treatment of the local Samurai. The event occurred after the villagers had made contact with French Catholic missionaries in Nagasaki, and their (male) leaders had destroyed Buddhist and Shinto material items. In 2022 and 2023, as a part of my book project examining the history of the islands in religious history, supported by the Japan Foundation, I interviewed five people on this UNESCO 'Hidden Christian' World Heritage site, Hisaka Island, and one on Fukue Island, among whom two had ancestors caught up in or killed in the *Roya no Sako* incident on Hisaka Island. While one interviewee explained that he had no choice but to learn about this distressing event as a child, another recalled that he had heard of a postponed grief that his great-grandmother experienced in response to the loss of her own children. In the communities memorialising of this event in history and memory, this presentation will consider how the Catholic descendants remember, and what emotions that memory evokes for them, as well as for other islanders.

*Dr Gwyn McClelland is Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies at the University of New England. In Gwyn's monograph, *Dangerous Memory in Nagasaki* (Routledge), he considered the Nagasaki Catholic survivors' interpretation of the atomic bombing via an oral history survey. Gwyn McClelland recently co-edited the 2023 volume, *Aromas of Asia: Exchanges, Histories, Threats* (Penn State University Press), and as a 2022 Japan Foundation Fellow he carried out more than eighteen interviews on the Gotō Archipelago, while he spent twelve weeks in residence at the National Library of Australia as a Fellow (supported by the Harold S. Williams Trust) between 2022 and 2023.*

Practices of Christian Love and Matters of Gender in the Sixteenth-century Jesuit Mission in Japan

Linda Zampol D'Ortia

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The sixteenth/seventeenth-century Catholic mission to Japan, spearheaded by the male religious order of the Society of Jesus, strove to create communities of Japanese Christians who embodied specific emotional practices. European missionaries held these emotional practices to be essential for the success of the religious practices of their communities, and in their daily lives, and overall considered them crucial for establishing if the Japanese Christians had experienced a “real” conversion. This paper will apply these considerations to the emotion of love, understood both an emotion towards other human beings and towards God. It will establish how love was understood in the early modern theological context of Catholicism; how the missionaries expounded these beliefs to the Japanese kirishitan communities; which emotional practices of love the missionaries considered fundamental; and what narratives and strategies the Jesuits used to try to obtain compliance among their flock. The analysis will focus especially on the emotional practices that the missionaries exhorted the male Christians (especially the members of the upper, warrior class) to embody, and the political outcomes they were hoping these would have; and how the category of gender impacted the knowledge created by the Jesuits on Japanese emotional practices.

Linda Zampol D'Ortia is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the Australian Catholic University, where she is developing a project on the role of emotional practices in the early modern Jesuit missions in Asia. She has held research fellowships at Ruhr Universität Bochum, the National Library of Australia, and Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice. Her research interests include Christianity in Japan, early modern Catholic missions, gender history, the history of Asia-Europe contacts, materiality, emotions, and failure studies.

“I can’t get over my astonishment”: the Journey to Europe of the first Japanese Embassy (1582-1590)

Carlo Pelliccia

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The Tenshō embassy (Tenshō shōnen shisetsu) can be considered one of the most famous events of the “Christian century” (1549-1650). It was organized by Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), Visitor of the East Indies, and supported by three daimyō of kyūshū who converted to Christianity. Valignano planned this legation for several reasons. First of all, he wanted to show to the Japanese boys the historical, political and cultural context of the “old continent” and present to the Europeans the peculiar features of the Japanese, through the journey of the four envoys. Secondly, he sent these ambassadors, chosen from the seminary of Arima, as the concrete testimony of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus in East Asia. Last but not least, he intended to request the monopoly of the Order for this mission.

The paper specifically examines the dialogue between cultures, focusing exclusively on the emotional and sensorial sphere created both in young Japanese boys and in those (Europeans) who met them. Analyzing this emotional experience (ad intra and ad extra) through the coeval accounts (printed from 1585 to 1593) and the handwritten documents, some of which preserved at the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), I will try to show that this “sensorial meeting” contributed to the dynamic of cultural interaction and mutual knowledge, which forms the basis of the missionary methodology of the visitor Valignano.

Carlo Pelliccia, trained at the University of Naples «L’Orientale», has a PhD in Early Modern history and the culture of travel and travelogues from the University of Tuscia of Viterbo. He is an adjunct professor at the Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma (UNINT) and «investigador correspondente» at CHAM - Centro de Humanidades (Universidade Nova de Lisboa e Universidade dos Açores) and at CLEPUL (Universidade de Lisboa).

PANEL 2

Did *Maliya Sajiao*? Exploring Gender Role Construction and Aspiration of Chinese Catholic Women in the Synodal Church.

Jacob Haomin Lin

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Lillian Bushway

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This study explores the construction of gender roles and aspirations among Chinese Catholic women in Mainland China within the ongoing Synod of Synodality. It contributes to ongoing scholarly analysis on the (re)shaping of female gender norms, identity, and agency through gendered language, behaviours, and social communication (Yueh, 2016), especially in the religious context (Jaschok and Shui, 2011; Jia, Kang, and Yao, 2014). The focus on women aligns with the Synod's call for increased female representation (Herman, 2023) and addresses the perceived lack of scholarly attention toward women in Chinese Catholicism (Chambon, 2019; Zhang, 2021). This study examines how discourse on the female role in Chinese Catholicism is influenced by mainstream secular culture's perceptions of gender norms and socially constructed femininity, notably in the concept of *Sajiao*. *Sajiao* involves gendered communications emphasizing traits traditionally associated with femininity, like vulnerability and cuteness (Yueh, 2016). Viewing communication as an emotional channel, the study illustrates how these women perceive their identity, roles, and practices as reflections of their femininity within both Catholic theology and mainstream Chinese culture (Yueh, 2016). This communication style, deeply entrenched within the broader Chinese social and cultural backdrop, blends with Confucian and Catholic ideals of womanhood, facilitating a distinctive expression of emotions in the Chinese Catholic church. However, it's essential to note that *Sajiao* carries a native connotation, and participants may not recognize their actions as such. The study argues that while the strategic use of *Sajiao* has empowered Catholic women to voice themselves and to play a more prominent role in the post-conciliar church, its reliance on reinforcing male actions over female agency, guided by socially constructed femininity, inadvertently limits independent female representation needed in the synodal church.

Jacob Haomin Lin, a doctoral student at the University of Otago, New Zealand, focuses on the moral dimensions of nationalism and citizenship discourse among Chinese migrants. His research spans nationalism, migration, race, religion, and citizenship, particularly within the global influence of China in the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions.

Lillian Bushway, a senior at Williams College, Massachusetts, pursues a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese studies. She studied linguistics and theology at Oxford University during her Junior year and worked as a research assistant, exploring innovative pedagogy for teaching Chinese as a second language, emphasizing improved intercultural exchange alongside language learning.

Indian Women's Tears with St Joseph at Bukit Timah Catholic Church

Julia Ong
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Using the case of the corroded toes of the statue of St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah), this paper investigates the need for greater understanding in the emotions of Catholic Indian women and Indian women of other beliefs, in the Archdiocese of Singapore.

The toes of St Joseph had been touched and rubbed by Indian women who cried and poured their hearts out before the statue since it arrived in 1861. Many claimed that it is the culture of South Indians to make offerings of salt to deities and the salt added to the corrosion of the toes. However, since 2012, the statue was fenced up to put a distance between these women and St. Joseph. Attempts were still made by women who bribed workers to hang garlands onto St. Joseph's hands. Workers were chided for such assistance as the maintenance officer fears the corrosion of the hands.

Our hypothesis is that St. Joseph has become a "felt-body" for his Indian women friends. Salt is said to ward off the evil eye as well as for the intercession of marital problems. The women have found the model husband as one they could depend on in order that they may "feel-felt". What is an alternative pastoral respond that could show consideration to the emotional needs of the women? How would the study of this case grow the Archdiocese to have a better understanding and respond to the gender dynamics present between the clergy and the laity?

*Sister **Julia Ong** belongs to the Institute of the Infant Jesus Sisters, Nicolas Barre, France. She has been a Religious for 33 years. She did her theological studies in Maryhill School of Theology at Quezon City and she has completed her Master's in Education, majoring in Religious Formation at the De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.*

Deri Gete, Devotion or Curse?

Yulia Kristina Aron

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This article discusses a group of women (who were born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s) who have chosen the way of life Deri Gete in Sikka, Flores. Flores, a small island in East Indonesia, has been a center of Catholicism since the Portuguese era. Deri Gete refers to a life-long decision by a woman to stay unmarried in order to serve the family and the church in Sikka society. Ata du'a naha nora ling welin (a woman must have a price), this value in Sikka society puts more reason to this complex decision. This article tries to see how a group of women negotiated the contested opinions on Deri Gete through these women's life stories.

Women of Deri Gete enjoy the autonomy to choose this path in life, considering several reasons such as performing their duties and roles as filial children and becoming mothers to their nephews. Dedication to their parents and families is a crucial consideration in making this choice. The support factors are forms of empathy as the main force of the female psyche, as explained by Sabina Spielrein. Through empathetic capacity, women act actively in interpersonal and social relationships. However, the women of Deri Gete are viewed as unwanted socially, labeled spinsters. Deri Gete is therefore a contested choice between woman's liberation in the patriarchal culture of Sikka society and heteronormativity by church, empathy as the main force of psychiatry, and the negative stereotype of being cursed.

***Yulia Kristina Aron** was born at Santa Elisabeth Lela Maumere hospital in 1995. She completed her Master of Contextual Theology at the Institute of Philosophy and Creative Technology Ledalero. Her thesis title was "The image of the ideal woman in the novel Mary of Nazareth by Marek Halter in relation to feminist theological discussions about Mary and its relevance for women in the Catholic Church". Yulia is interested in gender and feminism issues. She joins the KAHE community, an art community based in Maumere, Flores. She engages in the KAHE's program with PERWAKAS (Union of Trans-Women in Sikka, Flores) as program administrator.*

PANEL 3

Revisiting the WOMAD Incident in Korea: Emotions and Reactions

Jieun Han

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A member of the radical feminist group WOMAD (a combination of “woman” and “nomad”) posted an image of a burnt piece of sacramental bread with foul language written on it in red ink on its website in 2018. A message that followed the photo even condemned Jesus and the Roman Catholic Church for oppressing women and not allowing them to become priests or have an abortion. The WOMAD site also derided then President Moon Jae-in (Timothy, b. 1953-, president 2017-2022), Catholic priests, and a most respected nationalist An Chunggŭn (Thomas, 1879-1910), because they are male and Catholics. However, their emotions stirred more anger and frustration not only from the Catholic community, but also other religions. Their misandry, the hatred against men and boys, and women supremacy drove many of the moderate feminists, both male and female, to turn their back against feminism itself and instead support humanism. Subsequently, the confrontation between men and women, especially among younger generations, seems to have intensified. The Korean Catholic Church has not made any movements to improve women’s rights in the church. Against this backdrop, this paper explores the issues mentioned by the WOMAD member and the reactions of the Catholic community and others in the press. By so doing, it hopes to show what emotions do to gender issues in the Korean Catholic Community, arguing that such anger failed to open the possibility of recovery or healing in the case of the WOMAD incident.

Jieun Han is a visiting scholar at the Institute for East Asian Studies, Sogang University in Korea. Her research interests are Korean Church History, the Cold War during the Korean War, and the missionaries. She published “*Caring for an Aging Flock: The Church’s Response to the Suffering Korean Elderly in an Aged Society*” in *The Observatory* in 2023; “*Bishop Patrick Byrne and the Korean Catholic Church in Cold War Korea*” in *Korea Journal* in 2020; and “*A Christian Pacifist: An Chunggŭn’s Christian Ethics and Armed Struggle*” in *Journal of Korean Religions* in 2018.

Zen's Anger Geopolitical use of a Cardinal Emotion

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This paper explores the public display of emotions - and especially anger - by Joseph Ze-kiun Cardinal Zen, emeritus bishop of Hong Kong, and a variety of journalists, activists, and church authorities. Since the early 2000s, Joseph Zen is a public and preeminent figure of Chinese Catholicism. Born in Shanghai in 1932, he joined the Salesian order in 1948. In 1996, he was ordained co-adjutor bishop of the diocese of Hong Kong. Over the past 20 years, he became increasingly critical against the Chinese Communist Party and officials of the Vatican. In October 2011, Cardinal Zen event went on hunger strike for three days to protest about a new law impacting private schools in Hong Kong. This paper presents this public journey, its geopolitical entanglements, and its major controversies in order to identify how a set of emotions - and especially anger - were mobilized by various actors to advocate for ecclesial and political causes linked to the people in Hong Kong and the Church in China.

I argue that the way public media - in the Western and Sino spheres - interpreted this dramatic display of clerical emotions – especially anger – must be understood in relation to their own cultural background. While these emotions have been presented as being simply rooted in the injustice that the Church and the general population are facing, I suggest that their powerful significance and global impact must also be analysed in relation to the gender and ecclesial status of their performer, Joseph Cardinal Zen.

Michel Chambon is a French theologian and a cultural anthropologist researching Chinese Christianity. His Master thesis discussed how Taiwanese Catholics and Presbyterians respond to the widespread belief in ghosts. His doctoral research focused on the six Christian denominations of Nanping City, Fujian, to theorize the unity and diversity of Christianity from the perspective of social science. He is currently a Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, where he coordinates and develops ISAC.

Emotions raised by the appointment of the first Vietnamese bishops in the 1930s

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Our presentation aims at comparing the emotion aroused by the appointment of the first Vietnamese bishops to head dioceses in Việt Nam in the 1930s: that of Monsignors Jean Baptiste Nguyễn Bá Tông, Bishop of Phát Diệm in 1933; Dominic Hồ Ngọc Cẩn, Bishop of Bùi Chu in 1935; and Peter Ngô Đình Thục, Bishop of Vĩnh Long in 1938. What is the difference in the emotions that these appointments provoke in Việt Nam among Catholic authorities and Buddhist notables?

Our aim is to find out whether the promotion of the Vietnamese clergy by the Holy See during the French colonization was marked by a conflicting transformation of the missionary model and local appropriations, as well as by the Holy See's desire to take control of the missions: Was this action by the Holy See enthusiastically received everywhere by the indigenous population of Việt Nam? Of course, the appointment of Vietnamese bishops in the 1930s fills their compatriots with pride, regardless of their religion, but does the emotion aroused by the promotion of the Vietnamese episcopate in the 20th century join the Vietnamese in their national expectations? Our presentation will focus on the emotions of Vietnamese people in three areas: Catholic religious authorities, State authorities and local religions in a religious atmosphere of joy, respect, glory and honor.

Marie LE Thi Hoa is an associate researcher at IFRAE, Université Paris and Inalco, CNRS and CREDIC in Lyon. Master of Theology from the Institut Catholique de Paris in 2012, Science of Religions and Societies from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in 2013, she is a doctor of Epistemology and History of Human and Social Sciences in 2018 at Sorbonne University. After devoting her doctoral thesis to a sector of Catholic education in Vietnam, focusing on the period 1930-1990. She continues to publish, in university-level journals, and studies of Vietnamese Catholicism from a religious history and social history perspective.