

Religious diversity in Asia

Workshop: 7.-8. December 2015. Organised by the Centre for Contemporary Religion, Aarhus University, funded by the Danish Research Council.

Applications are invited for a limited number of people to participate in the two days' workshop in Aarhus, Denmark. Expenses for travel, food, and accommodation will be covered.

The study of religious diversity has in recent years been rising on the agenda. Focus has almost exclusively been on North America, Europe and Australia and issues concerned with maintaining cohesion in these societies. It is however obvious that religious diversity is not a phenomenon confined to the west. Especially in Asia religious diversity at both individual and institutional level has a long history with many examples of both syncretic traditions and religious divisions of labour. Yet the concepts associated with research on religious diversity are clearly drafted in a Western context. This means that they are constructed upon concepts of membership and adherence, with a strong Christian and Western bias not necessarily fitting Eastern models of multiple and contextual affiliations.

Previously, the Critical Analyses of Religious Diversity (CARD) have met for two workshops in Denmark (<http://cardnetwork.au.dk/>). This network explores ways in which research could proceed in order to craft concepts and models of understanding religious diversity which will allow fitting representations of religious diversity in Asia, and in a broader sense create new perspectives for understanding religious diversity globally.

A workshop on the topic was held in Delhi in May 2015, and the network will have two more workshops in Kyoto and Nagoya in October before this final one in Aarhus in December, where a limited number of Asian scholars are invited to continue the scholarly discussions and make strategic plans for future cooperation and publication of an anthology on religious diversity. The network is led by Jørn Borup, Lene Kühle, and Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger, Aarhus University.

Invitees are expected to present a paper and be prepared to engage in a critical discussion of their work. In addition, we want our participants to think critically about the assumptions that have been made about religious diversity in their research methods/context.

Some of the topics that we hope to have included in the workshop are:

- Terminology; do you (your colleagues) use “religious diversity”, “religious pluralism” and/or other concepts?
- Methods; Are you using quantitative data, qualitative data, census data, or micro, macro?
- Empirical data; Is your research focused on specific geographical areas, or do you engage in comparative work? Are there specific points about religious diversity in Asia compared to the West?
- Specific topics; do you investigate religious diversity in relation to demography, ethnicity, nationality, gender, human rights, diaspora, media, law, politics?

If interested in joining the workshop, please send a 250 word abstract by Oct 1st 2015 to Jørn Borup, JB@cas.au.dk