



**Chinese Buddhism in Globalization: State, Communities, and Practices of Religion**  
**Seminar Series: Religions in Globalization no.4**

***Temple Heritage of a Chinese Migrant Community:  
Movement, Connectivity, and Identity in the Maritime World***

By Tansen Sen, Professor of History, NYU Shanghai and Associated Professor, NYU

January 5, 2023, 21:00 - 22:00 (Japan Standard Time)

We are inviting you to participate in the fourth webinar of the online seminar series Religions in Globalization, which is part of the project Chinese Buddhism in Globalization: States, Communities and Practices of Religion. The project is funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and based at Hitotsubashi University. For more information about the project please visit the project website at: <https://cbg.soc.hit-u.ac.jp/>

The third webinar is titled “Temple Heritage of a Chinese Migrant Community: Movement, Connectivity, and Identity in the Maritime World.” The speaker is Tansen Sen, Professor of history and director of the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai, and Associate Professor of History at NYU (see abstract and speaker bio below). It will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2023, at 21:00-22:00 (Japan Standard Time). Here is the webinar time in other zones:

- US (EDT) 8:00
- Europe (CET) 14:00
- HK, Singapore, Taiwan 20:00
- Australia, Canberra 22:00

**If you wish to participate please register online at:** <https://forms.gle/ytoj5uRLyE1SC47g6>

Sincerely,  
Yoshiko Ashiwa (Project PI), Hitotsubashi University  
David Wank (Project Co-PI), Sophia University

.....  
**Title:** Temple Heritage of a Chinese Migrant Community: Movement, Connectivity, and Identity in the Maritime World

**Speaker:** Tansen Sen, Professor of History and Director of the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai, Associated Professor of History at NYU

**Time:** Thursday, January 5, 2023, at 21:00-22:00 (Japan Standard Time)

**Talk Abstract:**

This presentation examines the spread of Chinese temples associated with the veneration of Ruan and Liang buddhas from Sihui County in Guangdong Province, China, through Southeast Asia to the Chinatown in Kolkata, India. Ruan Ziyu and Liang Cineng were followers of the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng (638–713) and are believed to have attained enlightenment and become ‘buddhas’ during the Song dynasty (960-1279). In the thirteenth century, temples dedicated to these two Chinese buddhas were established in the Sihui County. With the migration of people from the region in the nineteenth century, the belief in the two buddhas and the temples associated with them spread to present-day Malaysia and India. These Ruan-Liang temples in foreign settings functioned as religious sites as well as community spaces and heritage markers. By tracing the spread (and evolution) of the Ruan-Liang belief and examining the communal function of the temples through the use of photographic images, this presentation analyzes the relationship between migration and the diffusion of Chinese religious traditions, the role of temples in the preservation of sub-dialect identity, the mixing of Chinese and local ideas and histories, and the intimate maritime connections between China, Southeast Asia, and India in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, mimic in some ways the earlier interactions within the Buddhist world of the first millennium CE.

**Speaker Bio:**

Tansen Sen is professor of history and director of the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai, China, and Associated Professor of History at NYU. He received his MA from Peking University, China, and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA. He specializes in Asian history and religions and has special academic interest in India–China interactions, Indian Ocean connections, and Buddhism. He is the author of *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (2003, 2016) and *India, China, and the World: A Connected History* (2017). He has co-authored (with Victor H. Mair) *Traditional China in Asian and World History* (2012), edited *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Cultural and Intellectual Exchange* (2014), and co-edited (with Burkhard Schnepel) *Travelling Pasts: The Politics of Cultural Heritage in the Indian Ocean World* (2019) and (with Brian Tsui) *Beyond Pan-Asianism: Connecting China and India 1840s–1960s* (2020). He is currently working on a book about Zheng He's maritime expeditions in early fifteenth century, a monograph on Jawaharlal Nehru and China, and co-editing (with Engseng Ho) *The Cambridge History of the Indian Ocean*, Volume 1.