



Chinese Buddhism in Globalization: State, Communities, and Practices of Religion

Seminar Series: Religions in Globalization no.4

China's New Civil Religion

Ian Johnson, Pulitzer Prize-winning Writer and Researcher

Monday, February 13, 2023, 21:00 - 22:00 (Japan Standard Time)

We invite 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 please visit the project website at: <https://cbg.soc.hit-u.ac.jp/>

If you wish to participate please register online at: <https://forms.gle/tT5mPRGfM7Z7D5ZG6>

Here is the time for other zones;

- Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) 12:00
- US, New York (EST) 7:00
- Europe (CET) 13:00
- HK, Singapore, Taiwan 20:00
- Australia, Canberra 23:00

Sincerely,

Yoshiko Ashiwa (Project PI), Hitotsubashi University

David Wank (Project Co-PI), Sophia University

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Title: China's New Civil Religion

Speaker: Ian Johnson, writer, researcher, and senior fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations

Time: Monday, February 13, 2023, at 21:00-22:00 (Japan Standard Time)

Talk Abstract:

When outsiders think of religion in China, they tend to focus on persecution--for example Muslims in Xinjiang or Christians in many big Chinese cities. While that is true for some faiths, China is also in the midst of a religious boom, which the government is trying to use to further its grip on power. That includes rebuilding ancient temples, subsidizing pilgrimages to holy mountains, and endorsing Confucian philosophers. But can authoritarianism and religious life coexist? What are the risks as the government in Beijing embraces some religions while opposing others?



Speaker Bio:

Ian Johnson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, researcher, and senior fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. He is currently writing a book about how history is used to legitimize and challenge Communist Party rule in China, and closely follows China's efforts to bolster its soft power around the globe.

He first went to China as a student in Beijing from 1984 to 1985, and then studied in Taipei from 1986 to 1988. He later worked as a newspaper correspondent in China, from 1994 to 1996 with Baltimore's *The Sun*, and from 1997 to 2001 with *The Wall Street Journal*, where he covered macro economics, China's WTO accession and social issues. In 2009, Johnson returned to China, living there until 2020 when he was expelled from China as part of worsening tensions between China and the United States. He wrote regularly for *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, and other publications. He taught undergraduates at The Beijing Center for Chinese Studies, and served as an advisor to *The Journal of Asian Studies*. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Leipzig on Chinese religious associations.

He has worked in Germany twice. From 1988 to 1992 he attended graduate school in West Berlin and covered the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification. In 2001 he moved back to Berlin, working until 2009 as *The Wall Street Journal*'s Germany bureau chief and senior writer. He managed reporters covering EU fiscal policy and macro-economics, and wrote about social issues such as Islamist terrorism.

Johnson won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of China, two awards from the Overseas Press Club, an award from the Society of Professional Journalists, and Stanford University's Shorenstein Journalism Award for his body of work covering Asia. In 2019 he won the American Academy of Religion's "best in-depth newswriting" award. In 2006-07 he spent a year as a Nieman fellow at Harvard University, and later received research and writing grants from the Open Society Foundation, the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, and the Alicia Patterson Foundation. In 2020, he was an inaugural grantee of the Robert B. Silvers Foundation for work-in-progress. He was also awarded a 2020-2021 National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholars fellowship for a new book he is writing on China's unofficial history.

Johnson has published three books and contributed chapters to four others. His newest book, *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion After Mao*, describes China's religious revival and its implications for politics and society. His other books are on civil society and grassroots protest in China (*Wild Grass*, 2004) and Islamism and the Cold War in Europe (*A Mosque in Munich*, 2010). He has also contributed chapters to: *My First Trip to China* (2011), *Chinese Characters* (2012), the *Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China* (2016), and *The Forbidden City: The Palace at the Heart of Chinese Culture* (2021).

Johnson was born in Montréal, Canada. He holds Canadian and U.S. citizenship. He is a permanent resident of Germany but currently lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York.