

# Contributor Biographies

**Timothy BROOK**

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Timothy Brook is a historian of China whose writings reach out to embrace world history. A graduate of Harvard University, he has taught at Toronto, Stanford, and Oxford, and has held the Republic of China Chair at the University of British Columbia since 2004, where he graduated to professor emeritus in 2022. Brook has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Getty Fellow, a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, and a visiting professor at the Villa I Tatti in Florence. A historian of China since the thirteenth century, he writes on a range of political, social, and cultural topics, though with a focus on China's engagements with the world. Brook has published thirteen books, which have been translated into many Asian and European languages. In addition, he was editor-in-chief of Harvard University Press's six-volume history of imperial China, which became a bestseller in China. Among his more popular books are *Vermeer's Hat* (Bloomsbury), *Mr. Selden's Map of China* (Penguin), and *Great State: China and the World* (HarperCollins).

**Noga GANANY**

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Noga Ganany is an Assistant Professor in the Study of Late Imperial China at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, and a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. Her main research interests are Chinese cultural history, religious practice in China, premodern Chinese literature, print culture and history of the book, travel and pilgrimage, and popular culture. She is currently working on two book projects. Her first monograph, *Origin Narratives: Hagiographic Literature*

*and Religious Practice in Late Ming China*, examines the role of commercial publishing in propagating cultic reverence of saints, gods, and immortals among lay readers. Her second book project, *King Yama: Afterlife Judgments in Chinese Conceptions of the Netherworld*, explores lay moral discourses in the last millennium by tracing the history of King Yama in Chinese religious practice, literature, and art. Her most recent publications include ‘Writing and Worship in Deng Zhimo’s Saints Trilogy’ (*Religions*, 2022) and ‘Journeys Through the Netherworld in Late Ming Hagiographic Narratives’ (*Late Imperial China*, 2021). Before assuming her current position at Cambridge, Dr. Ganany taught briefly at Boston University (2018–2019), after receiving her Ph.D. from Columbia University in New York (2018). Dr. Ganany is a member of the board of directors of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions (SSCR) and a board member of the Society for Ming Studies.

### Luke GIBSON

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Luke Gibson holds a Master’s degree in Religious Studies from the Dharma Drum Buddhist College in Taiwan, where he received training in Classical Chinese, Sanskrit, and Pāli. Driven by his passion for language teaching, Buddhism, and South Asian culture, he currently works as a Sanskrit instructor, offering introductory grammar classes and advanced reading courses taught in Chinese via his online teaching platform, the Śabda-vidyā Sanskrit Institute (聲明梵語學院).

### Bo HUANG 黃勃

Bo Huang After receiving his M.A. from Columbia University’s East Asian Languages and Culture Department, he started taking an interest in Sino-Tibetan history. He then spent a year at the Northwest University for Nationalities to learn Tibetan. Afterwards, he studied Mongolia and Tibet at Indiana University’s Central Eurasian Studies department. While writing his Ph.D. dissertation, he also

studied Tibetan and Tibetan Buddhism at Beita Falun Monastery at Shenyang, China. After receiving his Ph.D., he came to Tsinghua University to continue his post doctoral research on Tibetan Buddhism in China during the Qing dynasty.

### Johanna LIDÉN

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Johanna Lidén is a postdoctoral researcher at Stockholm University and University of Hamburg. She wrote her thesis on the Taizhou movement in the Ming dynasty, focusing on the social and religious dynamism of the Ming period. As a postdoctoral researcher she combines her knowledge of late imperial China with her interest in education and pedagogy in a project titled ‘Neo-Confucianism as ritual and educational praxis’. Her knowledge about education comes from her long experience of teaching Chinese and religion as a high school (and university) teacher in Sweden. Her recent publications include ‘Charitable Schools as a Social Welfare Project in the Ming Dynasty’, *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 26 (2022) 1–29; ‘The Taizhou Movement’ entry in *The Database of Religious History*, University of British Columbia (Published September 27, 2021); and her 2018 dissertation, ‘The Taizhou Movement: Being Mindful in Sixteenth Century China’.

### Thierry MEYNARD 梅謙立

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Thierry Meynard S.J., is professor and Ph.D. director at the philosophy department of Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, where he teaches Western Philosophy and Latin Classics. He is the vice-director of the Archive for the Introduction of Western Knowledge, at Sun Yat-Sen University. He recently co-edited with Philippe Major, *The Dao Companion to Liang Shuming's Philosophy* (Springer, 2023), and with Daniel Canaris, *From Confucius to Zhu Xi: The First Treatise on God in François Noël's Chinese Philosophy* (Brepols, 2013), and *A Brief Response on the Controversies over Shangdi, Tianshen and Linghun*, by Niccolò Longobardo (Palgrave, 2021).

**Matthew ORSBORN**

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Matthew Orsborn is a Buddhist studies scholar originally from New Zealand. He was an ordained monastic with the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order from 2000 to 2017, and received his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Hong Kong, graduating in 2012. His dissertation on inverted parallel structures in the Perfection of Wisdom literature was later published as *The Structure and Interpretation of Early Prajñāpāramitā: An Analysis via Chiasmic Theory*, and he has several other journal articles on chiasmus in Buddhist texts. Working with Pāli, Sanskrit and Chinese literature, Matthew's other main work is *Old School Emptiness: Hermeneutics, Criticism and Tradition in the Narrative of Śūnyatā*, which challenges the standard narrative of emptiness in Indian Buddhism. Along with such writings on Indian Buddhist literature and philosophy, Matthew's experience in contemporary Chinese/Taiwanese Buddhist traditions has inspired him to recently turn his research attention to Chinese Buddhist monastic ordination, education, and the lived experience of monastic life. He has taught Buddhist studies in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Australia, Thailand and UK. He is presently teaching at Dharma Drum College.

**Alessandro POLETTO**

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Alessandro Poletto specialises in the social and religious history of premodern Japan, with an emphasis on Buddhism in the early medieval period (approx. tenth to the thirteenth century). He earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2020 with a dissertation entitled 'The Culture of Healing in Early Medieval Japan: A Microhistorical Study in Premodern Epistemology', in which he examined discourses and practices concerning healing and disease, with particular attention to the relationship between Buddhist healers and other technicians involved in the treatment of illness, namely court physicians and onmyōji. Before joining Washington University in St. Louis as a lecturer in East Asian religions, he was a JSPS postdoctoral fellow at Kyoto University.

**Barend J. TER HAAR**

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Barend ter Haar teaches Chinese studies at the University of Hamburg, with a strong focus on cultural and religious history. Although first of all a social and cultural historian, the religious dimension is so central to Chinese traditional life that much of his research up to now has dealt with religious phenomena. In addition, he has worked extensively on issues of ethnic identity, violence and fear, and social organisation. An important concern of his is to demonstrate that traditional culture and cultural patterns are still relevant today, as becomes visible for instance in the case of the Falun Gong or the ongoing role of exorcist violence in political contexts throughout the twentieth century. Amongst other things, he published a book on a lay Buddhist group called the Non-Action Teachings (late sixteenth century to the present), which came out in 2014 with Hawai'i University Press as *Practicing Scripture: A Lay Buddhist Movement in Late Imperial China*. More recently he published *Guan Yu: The Religious Afterlife of a Failed Hero* in 2017 with Oxford University Press, and *Religious Culture and Violence in Traditional China* in 2019 with Cambridge University Press. He has just finished a monograph on Chinese fears and accusations of witches and witchcraft.

**Bin WEI 魏斌**

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Bin Wei is Professor of the School of History, Wuhan University. From 1994 to 2004, he studied in the Department of Library and the Department of History of Wuhan University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Ph.D. in History. He studied in the Faculty of Integrated Science, University of Tokushima, Japan, from 2007 to 2009, and was a visiting scholar at Harvard-Yenching Institute from 2015 to 2016. He has also conducted research at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of Peking University, the Centre d'Etudes Interdisciplinaires sur le Bouddhisme at Inalco, France, and the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. His main research interests include the history of the Wei

and Jin dynasties and the history of the Middle Ages. He has published a monograph titled *'Shanzhong' de Liuchao shi* '山中'的六朝史 [The History of the Six Dynasties 'at the Mountains'] (SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2019), and a number of articles.

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Guo Wu earned his Ph.D. in Chinese history from the State University of New York at Albany in 2006. He currently holds the position of Associate Professor of Chinese History at Allegheny College, USA. His research interests include Confucianism, China's late Qing reform and modern revolution, and the question of ethnic minorities, and he has authored three monographs and one collection of published essays.

**Ru ZHAN 湛如**

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Ru ZHAN 湛如 is a professor in Peking University's School of Foreign Languages. Additionally, he is the Vice President of the Buddhist Association of China and Vice President of the Peking University Orientalism Research Institute. His areas of research include: Buddhist and Buddhist literature, the Indian Ministry of Buddhism, Dunhuang Buddhism, and Buddhist system.