

Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication

9th Roundtable Conference February 6-9, 2017

Centurion University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha (India)

Call for Papers

While one may yet be able to claim that the world has entered the digital age, as approximately half of the global population still lack access to the Internet, we can safely say that the world is well on its way towards fulfilling this term in its various dimensions including the role of digital technology in our personal, social, political, and even spiritual life.

In 2016, the Asian Research Center organized the 8th Annual Roundtable Conference entitled "Religion in Digital Asia," in which scholars in the field of religion and social communication across the region came to share the results of their investigations and reflections on different themes. The papers included both case studies as well as theoretical analysis pertaining to the effects and implications of digital technology on the religions and their adherents in Asia. Despite the rich and insightful perspectives presented at the conference, by its conclusion, the ARC board agreed that this theme has not been exhausted by any means. Many issues and questions remain for further scholarship by individuals in the field. This is the rationale for the decision to continue the discussion on the concern also as a theme for the 9th Annual ARC Roundtable Conference, which is entitled "Religion in Digital Asia II: Realities, Experiences, Visions"

We invite scholars to submit paper proposals that could consider for example the following:

How does the nature of digital technology "mesh" with the fundamental nature of Asian religious traditions? Are there any aspects of this technology that are inherently contradictory to the spiritual foundations of certain traditions in Asia?

What is the role of digital technology in the inter-religious dialogue efforts taking place in Asia? Is digital technology being employed in a positive way or is it actually contributing to creating distance and conflict among religions?

Many Asian traditions such as Taoism and Buddhism emphasize the importance of nature in its philosophy and personal self-cultivation, what kind of effects does the digital age have on the spirituality of people hailing from these religious traditions?

Violence either depicted or advocated in the name of religion on the Internet is prevalent. As a region characterized by tremendous cultural and religious diversity, what are the potential effects of this phenomenon on prospects for peace and harmony in Asia?

Asia is said to be the most digitally divided continent in the world because the region has some of the most digitally advanced countries as well as the least digitally advanced in the world. Are there any correlations between digital advancement and religiosity that can be made by studies of countries in the region?

As age old religious traditions go online and communities establish themselves in cyberspace, how does digital technology nourish their spiritual life? Can digital technology enhance personal and communal life of online communities in ways that the traditional communities are not able to respond to?

Rituals are important to religion, and especially so in the Asian traditions. How have rituals been transformed by digital technology, and what kind of qualitative impact does this transformation have on the spirituality of religious adherents?

How have Asian religious leaders employed digital technology to participate in the global discourse on important issues such as climate change, poverty, religious persecution, etc.?

How have Asian traditions/religions employed the technology as a tool of communication to propagate their messages to adherents and potential believers?

Many so called Asian values have their roots in religious and cultural inculcation. How are these values reflected and lived out in the digital age? How might the digital age challenge these values?

What is the relationship between "digital-ness" and "Asian-ness"?

Are there special ways of religion through digital means of communication for migrants and Asians in diaspora? Where, when, how and with what effect?

Are there any announcements or declarations of Asian religious bodies or leaders on digital communication or related fields?

The above questions are only suggestive of possible topics for scholars to engage in. Any other topics appropriate and related to the theme of the Round Table are welcome!

Timings:

Abstracts of about 300 words are to be submitted till *September 10, 2016*. *Final Papers* of peer reviewed accepted abstracts are expected till *December 10, 2016*.

Participation in ARC Round Tables is limited to a maximum of 25 scholars. Accepted papers will be presented at the conference but also published in the ARC Journal "*Religion and Social Communication*" of St. John's University, Bangkok

For any further information and submission kindly contact: arcstjohns.bkk@gmail.com with cc to arceilers@gmail.com and leducsvd.arc@gmail.com with the subject line: ARC 9th Roundtable