

Project Presentation

CAROLINE PLÜSS

Hong Kong Muslim Identities

Muslims in Hong Kong are characterized by a high degree of ethnic and religious diversity. They came from China, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and from further places or origins, and belong to various religious traditions, such as the Sunni, Shi'a, or Bohra groups. This project examines how the involvement, or non-involvement, of different Muslim groups into common organizations explains how Hong Kong Muslims built up their identities. In addition, the policies of different Hong Kong Muslim organizations from the 19th century to today, and the changes in these policies, are investigated as indicators of how Muslims related to one

another, to their Hong Kong surroundings, as well as to their societies of origins or of previous residences.

The principal organizations surveyed are: (1) the Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund, which is the oldest organization in charge of the administration of the mosques and cemeteries; (2) the Islamic Union, which is the second oldest organization of which also Chinese are members; and (3) the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Organisation, which has become especially important since Chinese Muslims had become the largest Muslim group in Hong Kong, and since Hong Kong has returned to Chinese sovereignty.

Methodology and funding

This study started in 1998 and uses archive research, interviews and participant observation. It is part of Dr Plüss' umbrella project researching transnational communities in Hong Kong. The Muslim project has received funding from the CRCG (the Committee for Research and Conference Grants of the University of Hong Kong), the Freemason's Fund for East Asian Studies and the Hang Seng Golden Jubilee Education Fund. ◆

Caroline Plüss obtained a PhD in the Sociology of Religion from Oxford University in 1995. Since 1996, she has been working as a post-doctoral fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, the University of Hong Kong. Her research includes the Jewish community in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Indians, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) in Hong Kong. E-mail: cbpluss@hkucc.hku.hk