

# International Journal of Asian Christianity (IJAC)

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## *Naomi Thurston* – **A New Generation of Sino-Christian Scholars: Shifting Concerns Among Researchers of Christianity in Contemporary China**

### **Abstract:**

Considering recent developments in the emerging field of academic ‘Sino-Christian Studies’ and drawing on analysis of interviews with Chinese scholars of Christianity now in their thirties, forties, and early fifties—the paper discusses generational differences among contemporary ‘Sino-Christian’ scholars with regard to questions of identity, academic disciplinary alignments, and thematic foci so as to highlight some of their contributions to contemporary discourses in the Chinese humanities and social sciences, their openness to marginal or controversial themes, and their inclusion of perspectives outside the academy.

## *Joshua Ryo Nelson Hashimoto* - **Endō Shūsaku’s *Wonderful Fool*: Gaston, A Christ-figure For Japan**

### **Abstract:**

This article aims to identify the hidden and obvious parallels between Endō Shūsaku's Christ-figure and Gaston Bonaparte in Endō Shūsaku's novel *Wonderful Fool*. I argue that the post-war writer develops and realizes a Christ-figure that would take root in the Japanese religious landscape through the character of Gaston. Building on the late author's literary works and other scholarly reflections, this study attempts to piece together and reorganize Endō's inculcated Christ-figure in relation to the French protagonist in *Wonderful Fool*. Tracing the Catholic author's literary and theological development of Gaston enriches the research into Endō's Christology and Japanese Christianity.

## *Francis X. Clooney, SJ* – **Learning from a Medieval Hindu Theologian’s *Manual of Daily Worship*: A Counter-Intuitive Relevance**

### **Abstract**

The *Manual of Daily Worship* (*Nityagrantham*) of Rāmānuja (1017–1137) is a work of applied, liturgical theology, in a major Hindu tradition. It describes the daily worship of an advanced devotee, melding together purifications, ritual offerings, recitation of mantras, meditations, and acts of surrender to God. As such, it richly fills out the spiritual and intellectual profile of Rāmānuja as an exemplar of integral spiritual, intellectual, and practical religion. This essay argues that he thus has much to offer to our reflection on religions and religions across Asia, and more particularly, offers fruitful insights and challenges regarding how to understand, study, and practice religion even now. The author is an American Roman Catholic priest and a Jesuit, who himself has learned deeply from Hinduism and from Rāmānuja’s tradition over the decades.

## *David Emmanuel Singh* – **Reshaping Hinduism for *gharvāpasī* of Indian Christians: A case from the nineteenth century collected works of Pundit Lekhrāmjī**

### **Abstract**

I have previously focused on Pundit Lekhramjī's purpose in many of his writings contained in *kulliyāt*. I have argued against his characterization as a 'malicious Arya' responsible for communalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Punjab and have demonstrated that Lekhramjī's intent behind much of his writings was to persuade Indian Christians (and Muslims) to consider *gharvāpasī* (homecoming). I am building on this paper and here the aim is to look for more evidence for addressing the question: how did Lekhramjī seek to persuade Indian Christians to reconvert? Based on evidence from a number of primary sources, I highlight his two-fold strategy towards this end: i. A critique of Christian missionaries/Christianity (here I present new evidence particularly focussing on his notion of Jesus Christ) and importantly also the ii. Reformation of Hinduism for those reconsidering home-coming. What this meant was that there was a home to return to sans the socio-religious inequalities which may have triggered their departure in the first place.

### ***Ataullah Siddiqui – Portrayal of Christianity and use of Christian Sources in the Tafsir-i Sanai of Sanaullah Amritsari (d. 1948)***

#### **Abstract**

This article explores Christian-Muslim relations during the colonial period, with special reference to Sanaullah Amritsari. It highlights how his Quranic exegesis responded to the multi-dimensional challenges of the time with special reference to Christianity. It points out how the Charter Act 1813 opened up India to Christian missionaries, and suggests that the polemical responses provided by Amritsari were influenced by successive aggressive missions of the time. The methods deployed to respond to Islam, particularly by converts from Islam, also left a particular impact on the two communities. Amritsari responds to them in his *tafsir* but also via other publications. In this exploratory article, some of the issues discussed through such publications are also included as an example of these polemics.

### ***Daniel Jeyaraj - Maria Dorothea Ziegenbalg, the first German Lutheran female missionary to the Tamil People in South India***

#### **Abstract**

The life of Maria Dorothea Ziegenbalg (c. 1693–1722) constitutes an important aspect of Tamil Lutheranism, which has been forgotten on the Tamil side. Available works on her short life among the Tamil in the Danish colony of Tranquebar in South Eastern India from August 1716 to January 1720 highlight her missionary work; this essay, by contrast, provides a fuller picture of her life and work from the perspective of social dislocation and immigration stress. After examining the nature and interpretations of both primary and secondary sources, it explores the role of Maria Dorothea within the changing contexts of her life. Her relationships to her parents and husband remained important. Her travel from Germany to Tranquebar and life in Tranquebar demonstrate a strange mixture of joys and sorrows. Eventually, she succumbed to emotional stress. Yet her sons lived on to help other missionaries who came to serve not only in Tranquebar, but also in Serampore.