

AIS GENERAL RESEARCH FUND (GRF) AND EARLY CAREER SCHEME (ECS) SUCCESS ROUND 2015-16

Project Title:

Muslim Voices in Buddhist Myanmar: A Comparative Study of Indo and Sino-Burmese Islam

Brief Abstract:

The aim of this proposal is an innovative one, specifically, to investigate the construction of Muslim identity in Myanmar, something that has never been done. At a time when relations between various religious communities and Muslims are attracting such scrutiny, it is remarkable that no study of this kind has ever been undertaken in Myanmar, the Southeast Asian setting in which these relations are today most fraught. The proposed project will examine Buddhist-Muslim ethno-religious diversity at the intersection of social attitudes, historical legacies and government policies in contemporary Myanmar. It will do so by capitalising on the PI's long-term scholarly engagement with the Buddhist and Muslim traditions of Myanmar, a country currently undergoing significant upheaval and transformation as it deals with change on the political, economic and social frontiers. The country is also witnessing a marked rise in instances of religious intolerance.

Investigator: Dr Thomas PATTON

Biography:

Dr. Patton's teaching and research is attentive to religion in Southeast Asia, particularly focusing on historical and ethnographic interests engaging Buddhist phenomena in relation to Burmese cultural contexts, issues of gender and class, and politics. His current research is on lived religion in Myanmar, specifically examining local cults of saints and peoples' relationships with them, shrines, miracles, and other manifestations of religious devotion.