



We Are Called

The Campaign for Yale Divinity School

A Chair in Asian Christianity

The greatest strengths of Yale Divinity School are the quality of our faculty and their ability to attract a critical mass of other talented people, including post-doctoral fellows, practitioners, and students. The most direct way to support distinguished faculty is through the funding of endowed chairs, or professorships.

At YDS, the establishment of endowed chairs provides enduring support year after year by supplying the necessary funds for teaching and research activities. When a current or newly recruited faculty member is appointed to a named chair, it signals a lasting commitment to that scholar as well as to their area of expertise. In sum, endowed chairs serve as the most powerful means for the YDS to attract and retain top faculty.

A focus on Asia has long been part of our effort to develop a more inclusive and global approach to theology. We currently offer concentrated M.A.R. programs in Asian Religions and World Christianity/Missions. Both tracks in the Master of Arts in Religion degree path build on our existing strengths and address key demographic, political, and social trends.

Asia is central to understanding Christianity today. With more than 40 percent of the world's population, the continent is home to vibrant Christian societies and fast-growing churches.



Dr. Chloë Starr, professor of Asian Christianity and Theology

Our program in Asian Religions signals a presence at the leading edge of theological education, and we aim to be even stronger. In this competitive field, we plan to establish an endowed chair to sustain a major academic figure in Asian Christianity. Additionally, an endowed chair will free operating funds to attract other scholars and increase our already significant programs and partnerships in this vital area.

“A greater share of the global Christian population now lives in Asia and the Pacific than North America,” notes Chloë Starr, Professor of Asian Christianity and Theology. “Our theological education needs to explore the questions animating the majority of believers and gain a much better understanding of the contribution to Christian thought of leading theologians from China, Korea, and across Asia.”

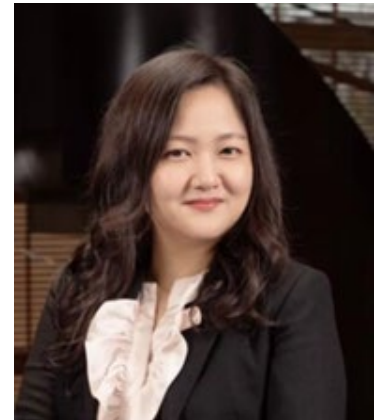
A leading scholar of Christianity in China, Professor Starr joined YDS in 2009 from Oxford University. She is the faculty coordinator of our Asian Religions Program, and her courses explore a range of approaches to East Asian theology, including theological survey, Chinese and Japanese Christian literatures, China mission, and Asian American theologies. Her books include *Chinese Theology* (Yale), *A Reader in Chinese Theology* (Baylor), and a three-volume edited series on *Modern Chinese Theologies* (Fortress). She is now at work on “A Life of Christ in Chinese Fiction.”

Professor Starr is joined in the Asian Religions Program by Bo kyung Blenda Im ’12 M.A.R., who returns to YDS as Assistant Professor of Sacred Music and Divinity. She was most recently the Global Korean Diasporas Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University’s Korea Institute.

Despite the rising importance of Asia to Christianity, tremendous knowledge gaps remain in American universities, divinity schools, and seminaries. Without a deeper understanding, students have a limited perspective on the global church and an impaired sense of their own church history and role. Languages of the Asian church, such as Chinese or Korean, are now vital sources of theological insight as we think about Christianity in global terms. Our students need a greater sense of the new theological centers of the world and access to their rich thoughts and practices.

We have the structures in place for a Chair in Asian Christianity to lead and flourish. Beyond the recognition of any individual, an endowed professorship will ensure a sustainable and lasting program that includes crucial support for Asian students at YDS, as well as for visiting faculty. Each year we host fellows and visiting students from Chinese universities whose research utilizes our Day Missions collection, the strongest archive of its kind. Additionally, an endowed chair would enhance our partnership with Yale University’s graduate program in Asian religions; and benefit more cross-cultural East Asian work in areas such as Christian ecological thinking in Japan, Korea, and China.

To establish new endowed chairs, Yale requires \$6 million in funding. We are happy to discuss how the chair will function both at the Divinity School and in the broader Yale community. We hope you will join us in our effort.



Dr. Bo kyung Blenda Im, assistant professor of Sacred Music and Divinity

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