

PANEL

Faith and Humanitarianism in Myanmar

Convener

Ashley South

Panel Description

Love for our and service to our fellow humans is a key message of all faiths – although religion can also be mobilised towards violence (Appleby's *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 2000). Most but not all people in Myanmar are members of faith-based communities, which together ethno-linguistic identities and network actors are key to the resilience of communities, and survival of ethnic nations amid the horrors of war. Faith-based approaches also introduce important principles and practises (or assemblages) of care. However, the mainstream aid industry is notably secular, despite the range of activities undertaken by faith-based (not just Christian missionary) aid agencies across the world.

This panel includes participants from different faith-based and humanitarian backgrounds who will explore understandings of and engagement with humanitarian principles, practice and issues, including International Humanitarian Law (the 'law of war'). Given the ongoing conflict in Myanmar, and massive human rights abuses and protection crises, these discussions and the subsequent publication are relevant to the empirical situation on the ground, addressing the suffering of individuals and communities, as well as issues of humanitarian principle, policy, practice and positionality, and religious doctrines.

Participants are five-to-ten individuals, from Myanmar and beyond, representing varieties of Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and other (including 'traditional religion/ Animist') traditions. The panel draws particularly on the CMU/RCSD-hosted Dhammarakkhita Buddhism and IHL project; on Dr AS' work on Daoism, Christianity and humanitarianism; and on a range of Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and others in these domains.

Double or single panel, depending on availability in the schedule. The panel chairs will encourage participants to develop their contributions into short articles, to be collected in an edited CMU Press volume.

- If there is interest (and ideally some financial support), we would like to undertake primary research in these topics.