

NG TENG KUAN

Singapore Management University
College of Integrative Studies
10 Canning Rise, Level 4 Room 24
Singapore 179873
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EDUCATION

- 2022 Ph.D., Georgetown University, Theological & Religious Studies
Exam fields: Religious pluralism and interreligious encounter, premodern Chinese religions and Buddhism, Chinese Christianity in a global context
Dissertation: “Wisdom Cinema: Buddhism and Film in Contemporary China”
Committee: Francisca Cho (chair), Erin Cline, Zhange Ni (Virginia Tech), and Andrew Hui (Yale-NUS College)
- 2013 M.T.S., Harvard Divinity School, East Asian Religions
Distinction: John E. Thayer Scholarship, awarded at Commencement to the top student in each of Harvard’s graduate and professional schools
- 2010 M.A., Fuller Theological Seminary, Theology
- 2005 A.B., Princeton University, Comparative Literature & East Asian Studies
Thesis: “The Allegorical Hermeneutics of *Honglouloumeng*”
Mentors: Andrew Plaks and Anthony Yu (University of Chicago)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2022– Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Course Coordinator for Big Questions, College of Integrative Studies, Singapore Management University
- 2021–22 Lecturer of Humanities (Faculty Development Scheme), School of Social Sciences and Office of Core Curriculum, Singapore Management University

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

- In progress *Wisdom Cinema: Buddhism, Film, and the Art of Living in Contemporary China*

Journal Special Issue

- 2024 “Celluloid Jesus: Beyond the Text-Centric Paradigm.” *Religions*.
www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/46O2I3DNHA. (Lead co-editor, with Chan Sok Park and Robyn Faith Walsh.)

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2025 “A Summoned Life: Vocation in the *Analects*.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 53 (2): 282–300.

- 2025 “Full Circle: Historiography, Missiology, and Theology in Lin Yutang’s *From Pagan to Christian*.” *The Journal of World Christianity* 15 (2): 170–200.
- 2024 “Of Light and Shadows: Buddhism, Cinema, and the Question of Diffused Religion in Modern China.” *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 34 (1): 55–98.
- 2023 “After Great Pain: The Uses of Religious Folklore in Kenji Mizoguchi’s *Sansho the Bailiff* and Kaneto Shindo’s *Onibaba*.” *Journal for Religion, Film and Media* 9 (2): 15–39.
- 2019 “Of Faith and Faithlessness: Adaptive Fidelity in Shusaku Endo’s and Martin Scorsese’s *Silence*.” *Literature and Theology* 33 (4): 434–50.
- 2018 “Pedestrian Dharma: Slowness and Seeing in Tsai Ming-liang’s *Walker*.” *Religions* 9 (7), 200.
- 2011 “‘Now My Eyes Have Seen You’: A Comparative Study of *Secret Sunshine* and the Book of Job.” *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 23 (2): 166–81.

Book Chapters

- 2026 “Buddhism.” In *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*, 2nd ed., edited by John Lyden, 244–63. Routledge.
- 2024 “Spatial Trajectories, Themes, and Topoi in the Study of Religion and Film.” In *Handbook of the Geographies of Religion*, edited by Lily Kong, Orlando Woods, and Justin Tse, 1233–47. Springer Nature.

Other Essays, Reviews, and Commentaries

- In progress “Mark 16:9–18: The Great Commission.” *Visual Commentary on Scripture*. King’s College London.
- 2025 Review of Victor Fan, *Cinema Illuminating Reality: Media Philosophy Through Buddhism*. *Journal of Religion & Film* 29 (2), 10.
- 2020 “Sino-Christian Theology.” *Database of Religious History*. University of British Columbia. religiondatabase.org/browse/908.
- 2019 “Buddhist and Christian Visions of the Environmental Crisis on Film.” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 39 (1): 315–16.

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2026 Most Promising Teacher Award Nominee (\$500), Singapore Management University
- 2026 Core Curriculum Teaching Excellence Award (\$2,000), Singapore Management University
- 2022–24 Start-Up Research Grant (\$3,000), Singapore Management University
- 2021–22 Overseas Postgraduate Scholarship (full tuition and salary), Singapore Management University and Ministry of Education
- 2021 Finalist (among more than 450 applicants), Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship
- 2020 Annual Meeting Travel Grant (US\$500), American Academy of Religion
- 2016–21 Merit Scholarship (full tuition and stipend), Georgetown University Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
- 2016 Regents, Rowny, and Graduate Center for Literary Research Fellowships,

	University of California, Santa Barbara (declined)
2013	John E. Thayer Scholarship for Meritorious Students (US\$11,000), Harvard University Committee on General Scholarships
2012	First Prize (among more than 50 students), Japanese Speech Competition, Princeton in Ishikawa
2012	Graduate Summer Language Grant (US\$6,000), Harvard University Asia Center
2011–13	Merit Scholarship (full tuition and stipend), Harvard Divinity School
2007–10	Lowell Berry & Paul E. Jewett Dean's Scholarship (full tuition), Fuller Theological Seminary

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026	"Tracing the Contours of Wisdom Cinema in Contemporary China." Buddhism in East Asian Literature & Film workshop, Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University, Germany, June 13.
2025	"Seeing Slowly: The Affective Formations of Buddhist Wisdom in Tsai Ming-liang's <i>Walker</i> ." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 23.
2025	"Buddhism, Film, and the Ways of Everyday Wisdom in Zhang Yang's <i>Paths of the Soul</i> ." International Association of Buddhist Studies Congress, Leipzig, Germany, August 13.
2024	"Home Is Where One Starts: Nostalgia and Wisdom in Tsai Ming-liang's <i>Walking on Water</i> ." Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, March 15.
2023	Commerce of Living: The Dynamics of Sincerity in Feng Xiaogang's <i>If You Are the One II</i> ." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 18.
2020	"The Open Road: Zhang Yang's <i>Paths of the Soul</i> and the Contemporary Chinese Quest for Faith." American Academy of Religion Virtual Annual Meeting, December 7.
2020	" <i>Parasite</i> as Apocalypse." Society of Biblical Literature Virtual Annual Meeting, December 3. (Co-presenter with Chan Sok Park.)
2019	"An Asian American Journey of Faith: Historiography, Missiology, and Theology in Lin Yutang's <i>From Pagan to Christian</i> ." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, November 26.
2019	"'What Other Protector Could There Be?': A Theravada Middle Way Approach to the Self in Interpersonal Ethics." Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting, College Park, MD, February 28.
2018	"Buddhist and Christian Visions of the Environmental Crisis on Film." Parliament of the World's Religions, Toronto, Canada, November 4.
2018	"Cultivating Interfaith Understanding at Georgetown University." Parliament of the World's Religions, Toronto, Canada, November 2.
2018	"Pedestrian Dharma: Slowness and Seeing in Tsai Ming-liang's <i>Walker</i> ." D.C. Buddhist Studies Colloquium, Washington, DC, February 10.

INVITED TALKS

Academic

- 2025 “Buddhist Self-Cultivation and the Commerce of Life in Zhang Yang’s *Paths of the Soul*.” Introduction to Buddhism: East Asia course, Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures, Georgetown University, Zoom talk, December 2.
- 2025 “On Misrecognition and Economic Theology in Singapore: Reflections on Devin Singh’s *Sacred Debt*.” Christian Studies Program, National University of Singapore, September 10.
- 2025 “Authenticating Wisdom: Death, Desire, and the Business of Self-Cultivation in Feng Xiaogang’s *If You Are the One II*.” Literature Program, Yale-NUS College, Singapore, February 19.
- 2021 “Buddhism, Film, and Modernity in Tsai Ming-liang’s *Walker*.” Buddhist Studies Footnotes series, Department for the Study of Religion and the Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Toronto, Zoom talk, August 18. www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G6e5CR2ahI.
- 2014 “Chinese Cinema, Fifth Generation Directors, and Zhang Yimou’s *To Live*.” Modern Chinese Literature and Film course, Yale-NUS College, Singapore, September 5.

Public

- 2026 “Global Minds: Learning from Singapore’s Diversity.” Soka Gakkai Singapore, July 23.
- 2025 “Dhamma & Diversity: Interreligious Explorations between Buddhism, Christianity, and the Study of Religion.” Lion’s Roar series, Singapore Buddhist Federation, May 25.
- 2025 “Full Circle: The Interreligious Journey of Lin Yutang.” Dharma Dialogues, Ministry of Culture, Community & Youth, Singapore, May 10.
- 2024 “Wisdom Cinema: Buddhism, Film, and the Art of Living in Contemporary China.” Lion’s Roar series, Singapore Buddhist Federation, April 28.
- 2024 “After the PhD: The Early Years.” Ideas Festival: Insights from the Humanities & Social Sciences, Ministry of Education, Singapore, April 4.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

- 2025 “Praise or Party? Viral Concert-Style Service Raises Questions on Modern Worship.” *Stomp*, December 3. <https://www.stomp.sg/big-picture/praise-or-party-viral-concert-style-service-raises-questions-modern-worship>.
- 2025 “‘Martyr’ or ‘Bigot’? Charlie Kirk’s Divisive Impact on Singapore Christians.” *The New Paper*, September 26. <https://www.tnp.sg/news/martyr-or-bigot-charlie-kirks-divisive-impact-singapore-christians>.
- 2024 “Singapore and Religious Diversity: How Religions Live Together Peacefully.” *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen*, October 5. www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/ausland/singapur-glaube-religionen-frieden-100.html.
- 2024 “Pope Warns of AI Dangers, Urges Fair Wages for Migrants on Singapore

Visit.” *Al Jazeera English*, September 12.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCvvh5MbeoA.

TEACHING

Singapore Management University

2026/27	Big Questions: Wealth & Poverty (3 sections)
2025/26	Big Questions: Wealth & Poverty (2 sections)
	Contemplative Buddhist Philosophy (Independent study)
2024/25	Big Questions: Happiness & Suffering (2 sections)
2023/24	Big Questions: Happiness & Suffering (1 section)
2022/23	Big Questions: Wealth & Poverty (4 sections)

Georgetown University

2020	Death & Eternal Life (Recurring guest lecturer)
2019	Chinese Religions (TA)
2018	Introduction to Buddhism (TA)
2018	Problem of God (Recurring guest lecturer)

Fuller Theological Seminary

2010	Medieval & Reformation Theology (TA)
2009	Patristic Theology (TA)

SERVICE

Journal Peer Review

Arts
Christianity & Literature
Contemporary Buddhism
The Journal of East Asian Philosophy
International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture
Journal of Religion & Film
Literature and Theology
Religions
Verge: Studies in Global Asia

External Examination

2025	Doctoral Thesis Examiner for Low Kwang Meng, Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies, National University of Singapore
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College & University Service

2025–	Member, CIS Seminars & Speakers Committee
2024–	Course Coordinator, Big Questions
2023–	Senator and Deputy Chair of Faculty Advancement Committee, SMU Faculty Senate
2023–	Member, CIS Social Committee
2023–25	Member, CIS Deferred Declaration of Degree (D3) Committee

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2013–15 Senior Program Manager (International Programs), Centre for International & Progressional Experience, Yale-NUS College
- 2005–07 Program Manager, Princeton in Beijing and Chinese Linguistics Project, Princeton University

LANGUAGES

Chinese (native/fluent)
Classical Chinese (proficient reading)
Japanese (intermediate)
Korean (basic)
Biblical Hebrew (basic reading with dictionary)
Koine Greek (basic reading with dictionary)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion
Association for Asian Studies
International Association of Buddhist Studies
Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

September 2026