

CALL FOR ESSAY PROPOSALS FOR
Sacred Intelligence: Southeast Asian Perspectives on AI

Edited by

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To be published in 2026 as an open-access volume by the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (St. John's College, Thailand)

Premise of the Book

"Sacred Intelligence: Southeast Asian Perspectives on AI" will provide a necessary introduction to interdisciplinary research and perspectives regarding the social, cultural, and spiritual impact of Artificial Intelligence in Southeast Asia and the broader region. As a nexus of rapid technological acceleration and enduring spiritual pluralism, Southeast Asia serves as a critical laboratory for observing how ancient wisdom negotiates with algorithmic modernity. While much of the global discourse on AI ethics is dominated by Western secular or monotheistic perspectives, this book argues that Asia's distinct religious and cultural contexts offer vital, missing frameworks for understanding our technological future. These traditions challenge dominant Euro-American narratives by reframing the definitions of consciousness, community, and the "sacred" in the face of automation.

The central purpose of the book is to move the conversation beyond the polarizing extremes of dystopian fear or uncritical acceptance. Instead, it offers a curated dialogue in which scholars draw on deep disciplinary knowledge and lived religious experience to engage critically with AI. It explores how specific religious practices—from meditation to ritual prayer—might coexist with or be disrupted by generative technologies. By illuminating these alternative perspectives, the book aims to broaden the public imagination regarding what an ethical relationship with AI can look like.

Format and Approach

Although written by academics, this is not a collection of dense theoretical papers. Each chapter is written as a personal essay (1,000–3,000 words) and is designed to be accessible to a broad public audience. Authors—ranging from established scholars to emerging voices—step out of the detached observer role to reflect personally on how current-generation AI impacts the scholarship they engage in, the communities they study, and the faiths they may practice.

Structure

The book is divided into two distinct, but complementary, sections. Each is composed of 7-10 essays.:

- **Part I: Reflections from Research on AI & Religion**

This section grounds the reader in the current landscape of the field. Scholars summarize specific research projects while engaging in self-reflection. These essays bridge the gap between data and personal concern, exploring how researching AI in religious contexts raises urgent social and cultural questions that objective data alone cannot answer.

- **Part II: Thinking Tools from Religion on AI**

This section shifts from observation to application. Here, scholars of religion offer "thinking tools" derived from the religious traditions they study or adhere to, to help others consider the wisdom they offer for navigating the AI age. Contributors reflect on how religious beliefs shape individuals' and communities' approaches to technology and on the theological or philosophical resources they offer for responding to the challenges AI poses to human agency, community, and solidarity.

Scope and Contributors

The collection features voices from scholars and students engaged with religion and technology in Southeast Asia and the surrounding region. It will represent a rich diversity of geography—including India, Indonesia, China, Singapore, and Australia—and tradition, offering perspectives from Chinese Religions, Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity.

Essays should be 1000 words minimum to 3000 words maximum, excluding references.

Selected essays will be due by June 1, 2026.

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Essay proposals must include an (1) essay title, (2) an abstract of up to 300 words that describes your central claim/argument and what evidence/examples/research you will draw on, (3) a short bio statement of up to 50 words that includes details of your affiliation and position, (4) a contact email, and (5) whether your essay is aimed at Part 1 or 2 of the book.

To be considered, please send your proposal to heidic@tamu.edu by February 28, 2026.