Asian Journal of Comparative Law, 13 (2018), pp. v–vi
doi:10.1017/asjcl.2019.4
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Preface

The field of law and religion is emerging as one of the most interesting and important areas of comparative law. This is especially the case in Asia, where the diversity of religious traditions, legal systems, political arrangements, institutional designs, and historical contexts creates an ideal milieu for illuminating the salient issues in this rapidly evolving area of research. The thriving development of comparative law and religion scholarship also provides an important new lens for interrogating leading theories from comparative constitutional law in Asia, which has been one of the richest areas of comparative law research over the last decade.

However, this opportunity for impactful comparative research on law and religion in Asia presents significant challenges. Asia's unparalleled diversity makes comparing law and religion in Asia incredibly complex. The only way to even attempt to do justice to this complexity is to draw on the collective wisdom of leading scholars who share a common interest in comparative law and religion, but who have in-depth expertise on different jurisdictions and religious traditions across Asia.

It was with this view that Assistant Professor Dian A.H. Shah, from the National University of Singapore (NUS), spearheaded a successful conference in November 2017, which was co-sponsored by the NUS Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS) and the International Center for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo. The conference brought together several of the foremost experts and rising luminaries on law and religion who specialize in a variety of jurisdictions across Asia. Each of the seven articles selected from the conference published in this Special Issue provides a remarkable case study of the law and politics of religion and constitutional practices in a different Asian jurisdiction. The Special Issue also includes four analytical commentaries by seasoned law and religion scholars that provide valuable contextual and inter-jurisdictional comparisons drawing on the articles and the discussions at the conference. Professor Shah also provides a beautifully written and skillfully theorized introduction that masterfully weaves together the Special Issue by identifying the most salient crosscutting themes and comparative findings which emerged from this research project.

As Special Editor of this Special Issue, Professor Shah deserves special thanks. Her skill, dedication, and passion for scholarship were the key to the Issue's success. This Issue also significantly benefitted from the valuable double-blind peer review feedback that sharpened each of the contributions. As always, the Journal is grateful for the skill, hard work and dedication of its Executive Editors (Kevin Y.L. Tan and Wang Jiangyu), Deputy Editor (Dian A.H. Shah), Associate Editors (Lance W.P. Ang, Chong Siew Men, Alan K.Y. Koh, Muhammad Nurshazny B Ramlan, Samantha S. Tang, Bryan Dennis Gabito Tiojanco, and Ayesha Wijayalath), Assistant Editor (Nisha Rajoo), and our administrative team (Elizabeth Chua and Khairiyah Binte Abu). We are also grateful to our twenty-six Subject Editors who are primarily based in leading law

https://doi.org/10.1017/asjcl.2019.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

schools across Asia, which distinguishes the Journal in its ability to deliver an authentic Asian voice in a way that influences the leading international literature. We would also like to thank our Advisory Board, made up of prominent members of the Asian law fraternity from around the world, for their continued support and guidance. Finally, it is my pleasure to welcome Munin Pongsapan (Thammasat University) and Panthip Pruksacholavit (Chulalongkorn University) as new Subject Editors and Curtis J. Milhaupt (Stanford University) and J. Mark Ramseyer (Harvard University) as new Members of our Advisory Board.

We hope that you enjoy reading this Issue as much as we enjoyed working on it.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/asjcl.2019.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press