

Volume 20.3 Contributor Information

Professor Maria Hsia Chang is Professor Emerita of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is the author of *Falun Gong: The End of Days* (Yale University Press, 2004), *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), *The Labors of Sisyphus: The Economic Development of Communist China* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), and *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism* (University of California, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1985).

Dr Carole M. Cusack has been associated with the University of Sydney for over twenty-five years, first as a student then as tutor, research assistant, and lecturer in Studies of Religions. Presently she is Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Department of Studies in Religions and a co-editor of the *Journal of the History of Religion*. Dr Cusack completed her BA and PhD at Sydney and also has a MEd in Educational Psychology. Her main research area is in medieval religion and her doctoral thesis was published as *Conversion of the Germanic Peoples* (London: Cassel, 1998). Dr Cusack also researches and writes on theories of conversion and contemporary religious trends in a global context, with an interest on Japan in particular.

Reverend Dr J. Gordon Melton, originally from Birmingham, graduated from Birmingham Southern College in 1964 with a BA degree then completed theological studies at Garrett Theological Seminary (MDiv) in 1968. Ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church in the same year he has since served several pastorships. J. Gordon Melton received his PhD in the History and Literature of Religions in 1975 at Northwestern University after having surveyed over 800 religious groups functioning in the United States at that time. He has authored over 25 books including *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, *Biographical Dictionary of American Cult and Sect Leaders*, *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, and the *New Age Almanac*. He is presently the director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion. As his wikipedia entry notes (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Gordon_Melton), Dr Melton's encyclopaedic

knowledge also encompasses a strong enthusiasm for vampire studies. Dr Melton has recently become fascinated with the religious life of Taiwan and has completed extensive research on the True Buddha School for a forthcoming book planned with Constance A. Jones. Dr Melton hopes to visit Australia in early 2008.

Professor Wai Lun Tam is programme coordinator in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has a BA from this university and a PhD from McMaster. He has written several books in Chinese and numerous articles and book chapters in English. He specialises in Chinese Tantric Buddhism, local religions and traditional Chinese society and Popular Buddhism in China. He has already written two articles on the True Buddha School.

Dr Christopher Hartney is a lecturer in the Department of Studies in Religions at the University of Sydney where he took his BA and PhD. His doctoral thesis focused on the new religious movement of Caodaism, Vietnam's largest indigenous faith. Chris is co-editor, with Carole Cusack, of the *Journal of Religious History*. His main teaching focus is on religion in East Asia (Confucian Spirituality, Buddhism, and East Asian Thought) and on religion and popular culture. He is an executive member of the Society for the Study of Religion, Literature and the Arts and has organized numerous conferences for that body.