The University of Cambridge Department of East Asian Studies is pleased to announce the 2012 Chuan Lyu Lectures in Taiwan Studies.

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception in the Common Room in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

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**2012 Chuan Lyu Lectures in Taiwan Studies**

**Lecture Two: The Gender of Charisma: Notes from a Taiwanese Buddhist NGO**

Professor C. Julia Huang 黃倩玉教授

Professor of Anthropology, Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

Wednesday, 16th May 2012, Rooms 8 and 9, Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, 5:00pm

This talk is about a Buddhist charismatic group, Tzu Chi (Ciji, literally, compassion relief), which emerged in Taiwan and became transnational in over one hundred countries in the last two decades. It functions as a formal nongovernmental organization which controls millions of dollars in funds, claims over ten million members worldwide, has earned an array of international peace awards, and is recognized by the United Nations as an NGO. Its practice is non-esoteric and focuses less on scripture chanting rituals than on concrete contribution to social welfare, such as building hospitals providing Western medicine and running secular universities.

Based on my fieldwork of this savvy, public-sphere player, I argue that the relationship of embodiment, emotion, and religious charisma provides the groundwork for the success of Tzu Chi’s mission of charity. In my book *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009), I propose a three-body model for the study of charisma: the leader’s body, the follower’s body, and the musical/collective body. In this presentation, I will highlight the gender aspects in the three bodies of charisma. As the movement expands, the emotion for the mission becomes formalized. Meanwhile, the gender of the three-body charisma shifts towards the androgynous ideal.

Dr. Huang is Professor of Anthropology at National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan. She had been a junior fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, a senior fellow at Harvard’s Center for the Study of World Religions, a visiting scholar at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, an affiliated scholar at the International Institute for Asia Studies in the Netherlands and a visiting senior research fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Her research interests include religion, culture and globalization. She has conducted fieldwork on religion in Taiwan and among the Chinese in Malaysia and the United States, and on transnational marriage in southern Vietnam.

Professor Huang’s award-winning book, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009), examines the development and organization of a transnational Buddhist non-governmental organization (NGO) that originated in Taiwan. She has also published numerous articles in edited volumes and refereed journals, including *Journal of Asian Studies, Ethnology, Nova Religio*, and *positions*. She is currently working on an ethnography of engaged religions among the Chinese in Malacca, Malaysia.

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