

Professor Barbara Watson Andaya

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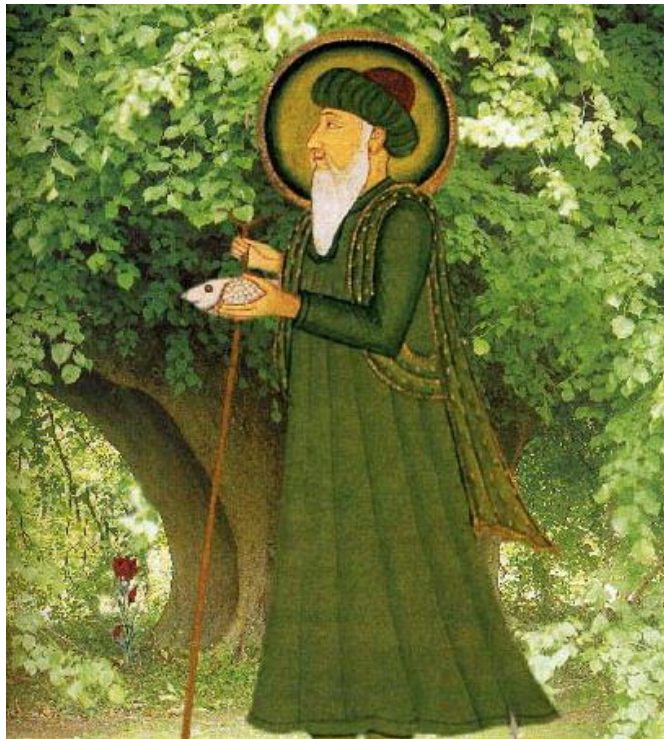
Religious Mobility and the Household : Islam and Christianity in Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period

3pm Tuesday 5 October (Melbourne)

5am Tuesday 5 October (Rome)

5pm Monday 4 October (HI, USA)

To register: MEMS.seminar@acu.edu.au



17th-century Mughal painting of al-Khidr (Wikipedia).jpg 18/08/21

Barbara Watson Andaya is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA and a former president of the American Association for Asian Studies (2005–2006). She has lived and taught in Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, the Netherlands, and the United States. Her specific area of expertise is the western Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, on which she has published widely but she maintains an active teaching and research interest across all of Southeast Asia. She is the General Editor of the Cambridge History of Southeast Asia and is working on a book on gender and sexuality in Southeast Asia.

Abstract: The spread of Islam and Christianity in early modern Southeast Asia is of particular interest because the region's cultural and geographic environments were so different from those of the Middle East and Western Europe. The mobility of both religions gathered pace during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and as a result they are often discussed together, a tendency encouraged by accounts of competition for adherents, especially in the island areas. Explanations for their movement into Southeast Asia do share many similarities, including the connections to economic goals, the penetration along trade routes, and the appeal to local rulers and leaders. On the other hand, there were distinct differences, most obviously the fact that the physical appearance of the European missionaries set them apart from indigenous populations and because Christianity was associated with ambitions for economic domination and territorial control. Against a background that recognizes parallels and contrasts, this presentation will focus on the ways in which both religions established themselves at the level of the household, giving particular attention to the reasons why women may have been attracted to adopt a new faith. In sum, it argues that the family became the foundation for the establishment of Islam and Christianity in island Southeast Asia and a prime reason for the "religious mobility" that characterizes this period.