



Title	Well-being and Religion in Hong Kong : From the Perspectives of Welfare, Social Capital, and Subjective Well-being [an abstract of entire text]
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Citation	北海道大学. 博士(文学) 甲第12383号
Issue Date	2016-09-26
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/63447
Type	theses (doctoral - abstract of entire text)
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**Well-being and Religion in Hong Kong:
From the Perspectives of Welfare, Social Capital, and Subjective Well-being**

NG KA SHING

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the role of religion in well-being using Hong Kong as a case study. Hong Kong is one of the fastest ageing Asian societies with one of the most conservative public welfare systems, and elderly people in particular are experiencing a decline of traditional family-based support. The question of how religion may contribute to the well-being of Hong Kong society is of high importance to the studies of religion and well-being in Asia. Does religion play any parts in the well-being of Hong Kong citizens? What are the political, social, and personal factors that affect the role of religion in well-being? This dissertation addresses these questions by critically examining the relationship between religion and well-being in Hong Kong. I suggest a theoretical model for a comprehensive understanding of the role of religion in well-being using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Based on various case studies conducted in Hong Kong, I argue that religion has an effect on the livability, life-ability, and appreciation of life at three levels: welfare system, community (social capital), and personal religious belief and practices. The conditions under which religion can contribute to well-being is also clarified. At the level of welfare system, the welfare ideology of government, generosity of subvention system, organizational resources of religious groups, and religion-state relationships determine to what extent religion is able to develop their welfare services and facilities. At the level of religious community, a high level of participation in religious community and the existence of a culture of trust and reciprocity significantly affect the formation of social capital among members. At the level of personal level, belief in the religious beliefs and practices is related to subjective well-being only when one strongly committed to the religion and truly believes it can offer a sense of protection and help in times of crisis. This model represents an important step for a systemic investigation of the role of religion in well-being in the future.