

The Asian Sphere: Trans-Cultural Flows

An Inter-University Graduate Program

The University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Call for Papers for an International Conference:

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN ASIA

CULTURAL CONTACTS IN HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Dear colleagues!

We are delighted to announce that the third annual conference of the Asian Sphere Program will take place on Monday-Wednesday, 23-25 April 2018, at the University of Haifa, Israel.

The Asian Sphere Program takes a fresh look at the continent of Asia as a concept and as a reality. It aims at exploring and analyzing the numerous interconnections that have tied its people, cities, and nations. Our third conference is devoted to a critical examination of Jewish communities in the Asian Sphere (exclusive of the Middle East region); their emergence and development; common and idiosyncratic characteristics; mutual connections; cultural contacts with host societies; similarities and differences with other foreign communities in the Asian Sphere; and relevance to broader theories with regards to minorities.

We invite paper proposals in one of the following thematic domains:

- **(A) Case Studies on a Single Community:** Overviews (with priority to cutting-edge research) on specific Jewish community in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, or Central Asia. The overview should include brief description on the origins and history of the community, group size throughout time, and sources of income and typical professions; and then focus on its cultural characteristics and uniqueness, contacts with the host societies, and political involvement.
- **(B) Jewish Migration in the Asian Sphere:** What were the motives and mechanisms of Jewish immigration to and internal migration within the Asian Sphere? What did enable or prevent interconnectivity between the various communities in the sphere? Why did certain communities flourish while others failed?

- **(C) Cultural Contacts:** What was the form of cultural contacts between the Jewish communities and their host societies? What was the attitude of members of the communities toward the surrounding culture?
- **(D) Comparison with Other Foreign Communities in the Asian Sphere:** How did other foreign communities (rather than ethnic or religious minorities) fare in the Asian Sphere in the long run? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between these and Jewish communities in the region?
- **(E) Attitude to Jewish and Foreign Communities in Host Societies:** Historically speaking, what were the attitudes to foreign communities within the Asian Sphere in general and in a specific host country in particular (e.g., China, India, Japan)? Were the Jews meted a different treatment than that of other communities?
- **(F) Antisemitism and Philosemitism:** What are the general characteristics of antisemitism and philosemitism in the Asian Sphere? In which way are they different from the attitudes prevalent in Europe and the Middle East?
- **(G) Recent Trends in Jewish Communities in the Asian Sphere:** What are main trends of Jewish communities in the Asian Sphere in the recent decade or so? What are the prospects for these communities?
- **(H) Political Implications:** the role of Jewish Communities within political systems and processes. This may include international politics on a global scale, regional cross-national, national level or local/municipal; Individual and communal Jewish contributions to local/regional politics and to the society at large.
- **(I) Religious Dialogue and Adaptations:** Religious relations and dialogue between Jews in Asia and other religions and belief systems, in terms of both theology and praxis. Are there religious adaptations to Judaism unique to the Asian sphere or to specific locations within Asia?
- **(J) Cultural Sphere:** Involvement and contribution of Jews to developments in local or national cultures, including arts, music, literature etc. Should such contributions be viewed as individual or communal? What influence did Jews' encounter with local cultures in Asia have not only on local Jews but on world Jewry in general?

Proposals for papers, as well as further enquiries, should be sent by email to the conference secretariat (TheAsianSphere@gmail.com). Proposals should include:

1. Title of the presentation
2. Abstract (150-200 words)
3. Bio-note (150-200 words) with details about affiliation, education, and major relevant publications.
4. Explicit statement to which of the above domains the proposal relates.

The deadline for submitting proposals is 15 October 2017.

Accepted proposals will be notified by 15 November 2017.

Full papers (5,000-7,000 words) should be submitted to the Conference's secretariat by 31 March 2017. We plan to publish an edited volume based on the conference papers.

The organizers will cover three-night stay in Haifa and the transportation costs from Europe (up to US\$600) and beyond (up to US\$1000) for scholars whose proposals will be accepted.

The conference will be conducted in English. It is open to the public and participation is free of charge. We would be grateful if you could distribute this call for papers among your colleagues. Please save the dates!

Conference steering committee:

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