

## CISMOR VOICE 30

Introduction by the Director Prof. Ada Taggar Cohen

July 2020

This issue has been delayed for a couple of months, and is published while the COVID19 pandemic is still ravaging the world, and although Japan is gradually lifting the restrictions imposed several months ago, no one can yet tell what the future of academic life will look like. The current issue reflects the activities conducted by CISMOR between October 2019 and January 2020, since from late February all activities have been stopped, and planned seminars, workshops and public lectures were unfortunately cancelled. At the moment the Center is trying to hold some of its workshops online, and we hope to report on these activities in the next issue of CISMOR Voice.

During the said period the Center has managed to conduct several seminars by visiting scholars from the United States and from Israel, as well as several workshops, among which three that were organized by research fellows of CISMOR under the categories of 1) Ancient Near Eastern history, archaeology and religious beliefs; 2) on Judaism from Medieval times to the Modern era; and lastly 3) a workshop that was also open to the public on Islamic minorities in East Asia (in general, the workshops are for the benefit of the center's research fellows and are closed to the public).

During this period the center held several successful public lectures with comparatively large audiences, as well as a public lecture and a workshop in cooperation with two academic associations: the Japanese Biblical Institute and the Japan Society for Jewish Studies.

The themes of the different activities during this period viewed the monotheistic religions in social, cultural and political perspectives world-wide, while offering a wide-ranging interpretative focus.

The last public lecture and workshop conducted in mid-January was dedicated to the memory of our colleague Professor Samir Abdel Hamid Nouh, who passed in April of 2019. At the start of the lecture Professor Junya Shinohe, the previous director of CISMOR and who knew Prof. Nouh for several decades, as well as Professor Nakanishi Hisae, said words in his memory.

The activities of this semester included the final publication and printing of our yearly journals *JISMOR* no. 15 and *World Monotheistic Religions* no. 11. The next volumes for this academic year are in process of editing.

As the pandemic is still disrupting the lives of many of us, we hope to be able to offer some of our planned activities for this academic year online. May you all take care and keep healthy.

Ada Taggar Cohen  
Director of CISMOR  
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