



Summary of the Activities Published in CISMOR VOICE no. 32 (10/2020-3/2021)

The fall semester of 2020-2021 was entirely conducted online, and between December and the end of January, Japan was in a state of emergency, which further restricted the work on campus. In March of 2021 we seemed to be heading for some relief from the virus, but as Japan has not yet been able to vaccinate its population, fear of another surge in the number of sick people was hovering in the air as this issue was sent to print.

The period between October 2020 and March 2021 was quite productive for CISMOR, as we were able to conduct a number of public lectures and workshops online, and publish our two Journals as well as the proceedings of two previous international conferences. For the center's annual Journals see the publication page for *JISMOR* 16 (<http://www.cismor.jp/en/series/jismor/>) and *WMR* 12 (<http://www.cismor.jp/jp/series/monotheistic/>), and for the international conference proceedings see Conference on Jewish Studies (=CJS10// <http://www.cismor.jp/jp/series/judaic/>), and under other publications “International Cultural Diversity in the Ancient Near East” ([http://www.cismor.jp/uploadsimages/sites/3/2021/02/ANE International Cultural Diversity.pdf](http://www.cismor.jp/uploadsimages/sites/3/2021/02/ANE%20International%20Cultural%20Diversity.pdf)).

The lectures and workshops conducted during this period included three public forum lectures: **1) Oct. 31, 2020** – Professor Satoru Nakamura from the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Kobe University, enlightened us on the recent political developments in the Middle East. Presenting the new situation created by the agreements between Israel and the Arab countries, UAE and Bahrain and looking at the future of the relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, he discussed the possible implications on the regional influence of Iran and the place of Syria and Iraq. The comments and questions to this lecture were many and the answers were very interesting. **2) Feb. 27, 2021**– A lecture on economic developments in Arab countries from the Islamic religious perspective in Asia and Africa, was given by Professor Shinsuke Nagaoka from the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. The lecture covered Islamic economy, Islamic economic philosophy, Islamic finance, capitalism / post-capitalism. The intellectual exploration of Islamic economy began in the middle of the 20th century, and its practice began in earnest in the 1970s; it has since spread to various fields such as “Interest-Free Finance”, food, fashion, and more. He indicated that recent trends in Islamic finance are illustrated



by FinTech, donation-type cloud funding and crypto assets, which are accompanied by innovations in traditional socio-economic systems. This lecture accommodated a large number of people with vibrant Q&A. **3) March 21, 2021** – In a lecture by Associate Professor Ryuji Fujimoto of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Letters, Teikyo University, and CISMOR Research Fellow, we discovered the detailed statistics of the election that took place in the USA in November 2020, and the place of Christian religious groups therein. This lecture too prompted many questions and comments.

There were two seminars conducted in English by guest professors from the USA: **1) Oct. 17, 2020** – Professor Massimiliano Tomasi, Director of the Center for East Asian Studies at Westin Washington University, lectured on his latest research on the place of Dazai's Narrative and Christianity in Japanese Literature. **2) Feb. 13, 2021** – Professor Gina Luria Walker, Director of the New Historia and a professor of women's studies at The New School in New York, presented her research on women in history by looking at her own development as a female professor, and then presented some of the research documented in the New Historia which focuses on creating biographies of famous women in history.

The workshops held by research fellows of the center were four in number and a special one was held for young scholars who are graduate students at Doshisha. The CISMOR Research Fellows workshops included the following: **1) Nov. 7, 2020** – A conference organized by CISMOR Research Fellow Dr. Naomi Nishi, and held in cooperation with the Center for Human Dignity of Doshisha University. Its theme was “Revisiting Turkish Soft-Power: The Power of Islam or Neo-Ottomanism?”, and discussed Turkey and its Islamic approach within the republic and its relations with states in East Asia. The workshop included five research presentations with firstly Prof. Masanori Naito, of the Graduate School of Global Studies and the director of the Center for Human Dignity at Doshisha University, who opened the conference by presenting the state of recent Turkish political and economic developments; then one by one – Dr. Masako Nakaya, CISMOR Research Fellow, spoke of the diaspora of the Chinese Muslim Uighurs, who reached Turkey in recent years; Dr. Yasmin Sattar, Prince Songkla University in Thailand offered an interesting assessment of the ways Turkey is involved through foreign policy in East Asian countries, mostly through humanitarian support; Mr. Kanatbek Beishenaliev of the Graduate School of Global



Studies spoke of the political and economic involvement of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan, through the development of Islamic education and investments in human resources. Dr. Ko Iwakura of Kyoto University examined the influence Islamic Turkey has had on Azerbaijan since Turkey has been granted comparatively free religious activities in that country and explained that this influence has not changed the situation in Azerbaijan, nor has it had much effect even in areas where Shiites live. Dr. Iays Salim, Institute for Advanced Research and Education of Doshisha University, commented on each of the presentations and also summarized his view on the question cited as the title of the workshop.

2) Dec. 12, 2020 – The workshop on “Gender, Sexuality and Christianity” was organized by two CISMOR Research Fellows, Dr. Sawako Fujiwara and Dr. Tomomi Asaka. Three speakers offered interesting perspectives on the status of women in the church today. The two organizers were joined by Post-Doc fellow Dr. Marie Kudo of Rikkyo University who examined the scriptures in relation to the topic and Prof. Makoto Mizutani of the Faculty of Theology of Doshisha University commented on the three papers.

3) Dec. 12, 2020 – A workshop was organized by Dr. Kotaro Hiraoka and Dr. Anri Ishiguro both CISMOR Research Fellows. As part of a series of lectures and meetings on Judaism that they are organizing titled “Zion/Jerusalem/Holy Land - From the Biblical text to today”, Dr. Masahiro Shida, Lecturer at Tokyo University, the Department of Humanities and Social Studies, presented an overview of the concept of holiness in religions according to several scholars including Durkheim, Eliade, and Smith, and also from the Jewish point of view of Nahmanides.

4) March 6, 2020 – The last workshop of the academic year was titled “Reconciliation in Judaism” and the main speaker was Prof. Martin Leiner of Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, Germany, who is the founder and the director of the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies (JCRS). JCRS and CISMOR signed an academic MOU for cooperation a year ago. This workshop was part of this endeavor. The lecture dealt with controversial interpretation in Judaism by presenting different voices through the understanding of the Jewish Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). A comment on the lecture was made by Prof. Fumio Ono of the Faculty of Regional Studies of Doshisha University.



5) November 28, 2020 – A second workshop for young scholars (graduate students of Doshisha) was held, where students presented their research papers. Seven Graduate Students from Doshisha University participated: Shinya Tsujisaka, Keyaki Asano, Miyaki Arai, Megumi Ishiida, Tsubasa Nagasuna, Yuki Okazaki, all from the Faculty of Theology, and Riyuta Kawai from the Faculty of Letters. The students presented papers on the Ancient Near East, Hebrew Bible, Modern Judaism and Zionism, as well as Nazi period Theology. Established scholars commented on each of the presentations: Prof. Kayuya Maekawa (Kyoto University), Prof. Ritsu Ishikawa (Doshisha University), Dr. Tetsu Kitamura (Doshisha University), Prof. Etsuko Katsumata (Doshisha University), Dr. Anri Ishiguro (Kita Kyushu University), Dr. Kotaro Hiraoka (Doshisha University), Prof. Makoto Mizutani (Doshisha University). The papers and comments initiated interesting ideas, as well as new points for the young scholars to consider.

This issue is a presentation of the interdisciplinary academic activity of CISMOR for the recent half year. We hope that most people in Japan will be able to be vaccinated against the Corona virus by the fall, and that in our next issue we will be able to present more on-campus activities.

Prof. Dr. Ada Taggar Cohen

Director of CISMOR

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