

ALTERNATIVE VOICE TO THE WORLD

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE
THROUGH THE WISDOM
OF ANCIENT JOMON

MAY 14-20



PROGRAM



Over the past 30 years, the world has faced various crises. These include widespread natural and manmade disasters (tsunamis and global warming), growing political instability (ongoing military conflicts and rampant populism), as well as an ever-increasing gap between the rich and poor. In addition, the novel Covid-19 pandemic challenged the way societies, economies, and politics are structured worldwide and posed new questions about the way humans interact. We are at a critical juncture and it is urgent to think about new solutions and new ways to tackle global problems and suggest them to policy makers.

In this conference, we will explore non-traditional solutions that may be useful to address global crises. Specifically, this project aims at rethinking ancient wisdom, including that of the Jomon period, and to examine new ways to rebuild and improve our lives and our societies. We also wish to give a platform for constructive dialogue on religious diversity by learning from Judaism, Himalayan religion, Buddhism, Mesoamerica, Jomon, Sumer, and other theological and ritual traditions. Through dialogue with thinkers and scholars specializing in different philosophical traditions, this project seeks to generate new ideas for our challenging world. We will therefore consider whether ethics and spirituality or ancient wisdom can provide insights for coping with major crises and fostering a more prosperous humanity.

Discussants will include a select number of scholars and religious thinkers specializing in ancient Japan, with emphasis on the Jomon Period, the ancient Middle East and the Himalayas, Buddhism, Mesoamerican civilization, and Judaism. As part of the program, we will visit Jomon archaeological sites and religious sites, participate in rituals, and meet with practitioners. We wish to generate an "out of the box" thinking, and discuss such themes as "outlook of the universe," "food and agriculture," "livelihood and society," and "communication among humans."

This project is sponsored by Mr. Tsutomu Uchida of the Corona Foundation, a friend of the Association for the Academic and Cultural Relations between Israel and Japan.

Nissim Otmazgin

Dean of the Faculty of East Asian Studies

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

PARTICIPANT LIST

The participants of the present workshop are religious scholars and religious leaders known from ancient civilizations around the world such as Jewish, Sumer, Himalayan, Maya, Theotiwakan, and Azteca, who gather to share their knowledge about ancient wisdom. By visiting and researching ancient Japanese civilizations sites such as sites from the Jomon period, we aim to rediscover and repropose the “wisdom of a sustainable symbiotic society”, which has been common since ancient times, serving as a compass to guide human society to the future.



Amir Fink

Amir Fink earned his PhD in Archaeology from Tel Aviv University. In addition to being associate director of the University of Chicago expedition at Zincirli (Sam'al) between 2006 and 2012, he held senior staff positions in several excavations, among them Tell Atchana (Alalakh), Tel Beth She'an, Ein Gedi, and Tel Rehov. His book on Late Bronze Tell Atchana was published in 2010. Fink published many articles in leading journals in the field of Biblical, Hittite, Hurrian and Assyrian Archaeology and Ugaritic history, language and literature.



Ken Kitatani

Ken Kitatani currently serves as an expert of the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme. He is former co-chair and current member of the advisory boards of the Center for Earth Ethics and the UN Committee of NGOs, Society for Conservation Biology, and is a Permanent Observer to the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance, and the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform of the UNFCCC. Ken is an advisor to the Yale University Religion and Ecology Forum, the Loka Initiative of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin, the Unification Fund of ICV Group, and is a senior advisor to General Russel Honore (Rt.) for Indigenous Affairs.



Maruyama Toshiaki

Since 1987, he has been a member of the Institute of RINRI Ethics, which was founded by his grandfather. He assumed the position of president in 1996 and has been responsible for overseeing the organization's membership and engaging in social education activities. In addition to his administrative duties, he conducts research and publishes works on Japanese ethics, religious thought, and spiritual culture.



Mindahi Crescencio Bastida Muñoz

Mindahi Bastida PhD, is the Director of the Original Nations Program of the Fountain and until July 2020 has been the Director of the Original Caretakers Program, Center for Earth Ethics, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York (2017-2020). Representative of the Eagle and Condor Council. He is also General Coordinator of the Otomi-Toltec Regional Council in Mexico and caretaker of the philosophy and traditions of the Otomi-Toltec peoples, and has been an Otomi-Toltec Ritual Ceremony Officer since 1988. He is consultant with UNESCO around Sacred Sites and Biocultural issues.



Nissim Otmazgin

Nissim Otmazgin is Professor of Japanese Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was also the Director of Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace. In 2000 he completed political science and East Asian regional studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2007, obtained his PhD from the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, and received the 6th Iue Memorial "Asia-Pacific Research Award" for his dissertation. His research fields include "Japanese politics and diplomacy" and "Japanese cultural diplomacy in Asia". He also has a column on Japan and Israel in Aera magazine.

<https://scholars.huji.ac.il/nissimotmazgin>



Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

Spiritual head and chairman of the Himalayan Institute, and the successor of Swami Rama of the Himalayas. He teaches worldwide for over 40 years, and wrote 19 books, including the groundbreaking commentary on the third chapter of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali—Awakening Power in the Yoga Sutra: Vibhuti Pada, 2022. He contributes regularly to the Himalayan Institute's online Wisdom Library, and leading its humanitarian projects. Pandit Tigunait holds two doctorates: one in Sanskrit from the University of Allahabad, and in Oriental studies from the University of Pennsylvania. His Family tradition gave him a vast range of spiritual wisdom preserved in both the written and oral traditions.



Rabbi Avraham Maman

Rabbi Avraham Maman is a Jewish Kabbalah rabbi who grew up in a Sufradayi family of Moroccan roots. Currently, he is a Jewish Kabbalah researcher who lives in Israel. He is familiar with the post-mortem world, which is not taught in Judaism, that God is inherent in all living things, numerology, and astrology.



Urita Michiko

Associate Professor of Contemporary Japanese Society at Kogakkan University. She is an expert on religious ceremonies, especially kagura (Shinto music and dance). Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from the University of Washington, USA, and has published extensively on the religious rituals of Japanese Imperial Palace and Ise Jingu Shrine. She is collaborating with the Hebrew University of Israel.

Special Appearance by Video



Princesse Marie-Esméralda de Belgique

Princess Marie Esmeralda is a member of the Belgian royal family, as well as a journalist, writer, and co-director of documentaries on historical and environmental topics. In addition to her work in media, she is a passionate environmental and women's rights activist, as well as an advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples.

MEETING AND TOUR SCHEDULE

Day 1 | Sunday | May 14th

Tokyo-Niigata (Nagaoka)

We will see an exhibition of various aspects of Jomon's culture (from 5000 to 15,000 years ago) from all of Japan in the Museum of History of Niigata Prefecture – one of the best in Japan. The exhibition includes daily life aspects like hunting, fishing, and plant-gathering tools. The highlight of the day would be to see Kaengatadoki – earthenware from the Jomon Period (a type of pottery) in the basin of the Shinanon River. This pottery is a national treasure.

Day 2 | Monday | May 15th

Oyu Stone Circles and Mt.Kuromata

Akita Prefecture has the largest number of stone circles found in Japan. The most famous of these is the Oyu Stone Circles, which is a world heritage center. The site is comprised of more than 8,500 river stones forming circles stretching over 250,000 sqm. In addition, there is an exhibition hall that holds a large number of excavated artifacts from the Jomon Period.

Kuromatayama is an ancient pyramid that was found by a Research Group consisting of members of the Doshisha University Museum Laboratory and other researchers. In the investigation, the research team used ground-penetrating radar, infrared photographs, and aerial photographs between 1992 to 1994, and they found that the entire mountain was turned into a 7 to a 10-floor structure. In that structure, 10 meters below the summit, they found a sarcophagus (coffin) with many tools, coins, and other artifacts.

Day 3 | Tuesday | May 16th

Lake Towada and Ooishigami Pyramid

Ooishigami is Japan's oldest pyramid ruins. In it, there is a megalith with a height of 12m, and it is said to be a 50,000-year-old pyramid with directional stones, sun stones, constellation stones, and more. Near the pyramids, there are large stones scattered around. Because of this, researchers believe that huge buildings may have once existed on this site. In addition, many stones with letter-shaped engraved lines called "character stones" were found in the surrounding forests.

Lodge Cowbell: The ancient Stones With Ccurved Patterns or Letters

In this place, we will see an exhibition of chiseled stones collected in the forests around the site.

Oirase valley to Mt. Hakkoda, then to Aomori-city

The area of the Oirase River is considered by many as one of the most beautiful sceneries in Japan. The river is a boasting 14 km of beautiful mountains and streams. In that area, we will see a place called "Ishigado" – a huge stone left by the Jomon Period civilization.

Day 4 | Wednesday | May 17th

World Heritage Site "Sannai Maruyama Ruins"

sannaimaruyama.pref.aomori.jp/english/

This site is one of Japan's best archaeological sites for studying the Jomon period (5900-4200 years ago). There we will view the relics of an entire village from that period. These relics include traces of pit houses, excavated pillars, storage pits, clay mining pits, and road traces, among others. Furthermore, there are numerous findings of Jomon pottery, stone tools, clay figurines, and tools such as digging sticks, knitted bags, lacquerware, and more.

Nanatsumori Winery

Day 5 | Thursday | May 18th

Sendai

Visit the Memorial Hall for the Great East Japan Earthquake, Disaster Memorial Hall (the site is a former school hit by the Tsunami) and other sites. We will witness the power of nature, which even our modern civilization succumb to.

A welcome party hosted by Mr. T. Maruyama At Rinri Kenkyusho at The Toshi Center Hotel

Day 6 | Friday | May 19th

Symposium Day 1

Kioi-Seido Rinri Institute: 3-1, Kioichco, Chiyodaku, Tokyo

10:00-13:00

13:00-14:00 (Lunch)

14:00-17:00

Day 7 | Saturday | May 20th

Symposium Day 2

Kioi-Seido Rinri Institute: 3-1, Kioichco, Chiyodaku, Tokyo

09:30-12:00

Symposium Day 1 | May 19th

10:00-10:10	Opening Remarks
10:10-11:15	Maruyama Toshiaki
11:15-12:20	Urita Michiko
12:20-13:00	Rabbi Avraham Maman
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Mindahi Crescencio Bastida Muñoz
15:00-16:00	Pandit Rajmani Tigunait
16:00-16:15	Princesse Marie-Esméralda de Belgique
16:15-16:50	Amir Fink
16:50-17:00	Closing Remarks

Symposium Day 2 | May 20th

09:30-12:00	Round Table: Open Discussion
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