

Call for Papers

The First International Conference of “Making Korea a Religiously Plural Society? Historical, Legal, and Social Approaches” (PRIN Project)

Echoes of Time: A Historical Inquiry into Religious Practices in Korea

17-18 October 2024

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 15 April 2024

Notification of acceptance: 1 May 2024

The Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice invites applicants for the First International Conference of “Making Korea a Religiously Plural Society? Historical, Legal, and Social Approaches” Project (2023-2024) to be held at Ca' Foscari University from 17 to 18 October 2024.

Over the past few decades, religious plurality in South Korea has garnered considerable attention as a distinctive social phenomenon of Korean society. While scholarly inquiry has delved into this subject within the context of Korean social and historical frameworks, the question of religious plurality has often been viewed as peripheral, with a balanced distribution of adherents across both religious and non-religious demographics.

Christianity, Buddhism, and, in certain instances, Confucianism, persist in shaping individuals' beliefs and lifestyles. Also, a multitude of new religions have surfaced over time. However, beneath this diversity, an implicit structural hierarchy between mainstream religions and what is often labeled as "*saibi*" remains deeply embedded in the people's minds. To comprehensively grasp this intricate religious dynamic, it is important to examine the multi-dimensional shape of religion within the historical context of South Korea; A critical exploration of political and social transformations spanning from the late 19th century to the early to mid-20th century; an exploration of the evolving definition of religion during this period and the diverse belief systems that coexisted both within and outside established frameworks.

This conference aims to present new insights and dialogue under the overarching theme of this two-year project. As a primary step, we would retrospective analysis of the religious landscape of Korea preceding the mid-20th century, and the second international conference (2024, Turin) will focus on discussing the present and future of religion in Korea.

We call for submissions on a range of subjects that may include, but are not limited to:

- Religious legacy in modern Korea
- Law and regulations on religion in modern Korea

- Shamanism in modern and contemporary Korea
- Syncretic transformations in the modern Korean religious landscape
- Buddhist tradition in modern Korean history
- Western influences on modern Korean Buddhism
- Confucian organizations and their activities in modern Korea
- Korean religions in the colonial and post-war period
- Transnational Korean religiosity
- Korean diaspora and religious practices
- New religious movements in modern and contemporary Korea
- Comparative studies between Korea and other Asian countries

Submission guidelines

Submissions should include: abstracts of 300 words; up to 5 keywords; a short biographical note (up to 100 words); and personal details (e.g., occupation, affiliation and contact information [address, telephone number, email]). Proposals in MS-Word format should be submitted by 15 April 2024. Applicants will be notified by 1 May 2024. The conference will be conducted in English. For more information and/or to submit an abstract, please contact: shalon.park@unive.it. A full paper for a 20-minute presentation should be submitted by 15 September 2024. Selected papers will be published in 2026 in an edited volume.

Logistical Information

Funding for travel and accommodations up to 2 nights is available for confirmed speakers, with a maximum limit.

Organized by

Hyojin Lee (Assistant Professor, Ca' Foscari University)

Shalon Park (Postdoctoral Fellow, Ca' Foscari University)

PRIN project members

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Originally established as Italy's first business school in 1868, Ca' Foscari University of Venice is now a multidisciplinary institution with 22,000 students offering a wide range of study programs in economics and management, modern languages, the humanities and the sciences. This conference is supported by PRIN (Progetti di Ricerca di Interesse Nazionale) project (2022S23SZZ), "Making Korea a Religiously Plural Society? Historical, Legal, and Social Approaches," funded by the Italian Ministry for Universities and Research.



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