

## **Panel Proposal:**

### **Religion in the time of Covid-19 in Asia**

Convener: Professor Jérémy Jammes

Sciences Po Lyon (IEP Lyon)

Lyons Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO, France)

#### **Format:**

A single-session panel on this topic (4 presenters, 1 discussant) seems the most appropriate format, with the opportunity for scholars to present their findings and their methodology (adapted to the pandemic situation) to other scholars and to a larger audience. My role, as a convener, will be to facilitate a stimulating debate within the panellists and the floor, while the role of the discussant (TBC) should be to elevate the subject to a more conceptual height. Last but not least, I consider this panel as a fortunate way to bring together scholars from various disciplines and research trajectories working on Asian religions, laying together a first stone of a book project on a very innovative subject that reflects major contemporary developments and changes in Asian societies and research styles.

#### **Brief description of panel:**

This panel aims to examine how the social sciences and humanities approach spiritualities and religions during the Covid-19 outbreak in (South/East/Southeast) Asia. Drawing upon original materials (ethnography, photography, digital survey, oral history, critical reflections, etc.), this panel aims to bring together pioneering scholarship on local and/or transnational responses from religious actors (individuals and institutions) to these unprecedented circumstances. In this sense, our scope extends beyond religious activities which are strictly concerned with the “religious conversion” of others, and encompasses a wide range of goal-oriented activities in the domains of social, political, cultural, and economic transformation.

In line with this perspective, panellists will interrogate how religious actors during this period have 1) adapted their rituals and communal practices; 2) developed creative measures of protection, healing and salvation; 3) participated in urgent public health and care activities; 4) renegotiated their relationships with states and societies; and/or 5) dealt with internal tensions and dissent. The questions addressed in this panel include, but are not limited to:

- What have been the roles of spiritualities, religious institutions, and religious subjects during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- What are the relationships between religions, states, and societies in Asia, and how have the dynamics of these relationships changed during the sanitary crisis?
- How have religious organisations practiced care through various health/charitable/counselling/philanthropic activities during the pandemic? How have such practices been contested among different religions and players? What role do faith-based NGOs play in times of pandemic?
- What opportunities and challenges have religious actors found regarding the impact of online media and digital technologies at various levels of their social action (including worship, healing, proselytism, and fundraising)?
- Have religious individuals and organisations created new rituals and performances, new sites of worship and spirituality, of community solidarity? How have liturgical and ritualistic practices been negotiated and adapted during the Covid-19 outbreak?