

# Legal History in Asia and Beyond: Lessons from the Past for the Present

*Hong Kong, 17 & 18 March 2026*

*Oxford, 23 March 2026*

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Transnational Legal History Group, part of the Centre for Comparative and Transnational Law within the Faculty of Law at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Oxford Programme in Asian Laws of the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford and the Asian Legal History Association are jointly hosting a conference on “Legal History in Asia and Beyond: Lessons from the Past for the Present.” The conference will take place in two parts: first on 17 and 18 March 2026 in Hong Kong, and then on 23 March 2026 in Oxford. Applicants should specify at which venue they would prefer to present when making their application. There is no obligation or expectation to attend both sessions, but participants are welcome to do so.

This unique cross-jurisdictional event will also serve to mark the institutionalization of the Asian Legal History Association (ALHA). The ALHA, which has its Secretariat at CUHK, brings together faculties and institutes from more than a dozen jurisdictions, collectively committed to promoting the study and knowledge of transnational legal history generally, enhancing the status and role of Asia as a generator and hub of global legal history knowledge, and developing collaborative relationships between universities in Asia and around the world.

## Theme

Studying legal history requires a great deal of time and knowledge, and sensitivity to context. Care is necessary to minimize the extent to which our interpretations are overly influenced by contemporary concerns and modes of understanding. At the same time, history is one of the most fertile and productive arenas in which we can come to a better understanding concerning the complex dynamics of human society, different modes of organization and their relationship to individual and collective wellbeing and equality (or their absence).

We welcome papers on the history of law that carry lessons relative to the future. Among other topics, papers might address issues such as:

- Past laws, institutions and practices structuring public governance and state capacity in general;
- Private law regimes, their formation, evolution and impacts;
- The laws and institutions structuring economic life;
- The history of the welfare state, of employment and labor, of development and of socio-economic rights;
- Environmental law histories;
- The evolution of criminal laws, institutions and punishments over time;
- Family law systems and laws governing gender and sexuality;
- The development of judicial decision-making systems and of legal communities, including lawyers and law schools;

- Legal pluralism and the encounter between and interaction of multiple legal orders, including indigenous legal regimes;
- The history of international law.

We also welcome papers that challenge the frame and grapple with the complexities involved in seeking lessons for the present in the past, or which address (legal) history methodologies as such.

### **Publication**

The organizers hope to assemble a selection of the papers from the conference for publication, potentially via a special edition of a journal, an edited volume, or both. Participants who wish for their piece to be considered for publication should submit a draft of at least 5,000 words (including footnotes) by 28 February 2026.

### **Travel and Accommodation**

- The conference will be in person.
- Applicants will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodation costs.
- We will suggest hotels in due course.

### **Timeline**

- Submission of Abstract: midnight (Hong Kong time) on 31 October 2025
- Notification of selection: 1 December 2025
- Conference Days: 17 & 18 March 2026 (Hong Kong), 23 March 2026 (Oxford)
- Draft paper submission (for participants interested in publication in a special issue or edited volume): 28 February 2026

### **Application**

- Proposals may be for individual papers or panels.
- Individual paper proposals should include a 150-300 word abstract.
- Panel proposals should include a brief description of the panel as well as 150-300 word abstracts of three to five individual papers.
- Applicants should specify at which venue they would like to present their papers.
- Applicants should indicate their academic affiliations on their applications.
- Applications should be submitted via the following link:  
<https://cloud.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/webform/view.php?id=13715426>
- Inquires may be addressed to: [alha@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:alha@cuhk.edu.hk)