

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Two of the World's Greatest Archeological Finds –
The Dead Sea Scrolls and Gabriel Revelation Stone from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem
– go on display for the first time in Hong Kong from tomorrow
at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center**

Hong Kong, November 3, 2014 – Two of the world's greatest archeological finds – the Gabriel Revelation Stone often called the 'stone scroll' and a replica of the Scroll of Isaiah, the only almost complete version of any biblical book among the Dead Sea Scrolls, goes on display in Hong Kong and China for the first time at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center from tomorrow till January 25, 2015, along with some 50 key artefacts from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

In *Temple, Scrolls and Divine Messengers: Archeology of the Land of Israel in Roman Times*, the exhibition unravels the secrets and meanings behind the Gabriel Stone and Isaiah Scroll and through them, explores the significance of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE. Through films and by examining the various stone, glass, and pottery vessels on display, the exhibition also looks at the life and times of the city's inhabitants and the importance of rituals and customs that govern their everyday lives.

The lead sponsor of the exhibition is MetLife Foundation. The exhibition opens to the public tomorrow for a strictly limited 11 week season, closing on January 25, 2015. A public and educational program comprising workshops and lectures runs alongside the exhibition.

Speaking at today's opening, Ms. S Alice Mong, Executive Director of the Asia Society Hong Kong Center said, "Jerusalem was one of the largest and most beautiful cities of the ancient world; a center for learning and seat for prayer. We at the Asia Society, also with a mission of encouraging learning and understanding between peoples, are proud to be showcasing the fascinating and important history of the land of Israel in Roman Times to the people of Hong Kong."

Echoing those sentiments, Mr. Chris Townsend, President, Asia, for MetLife Inc. and a Board Member of MetLife Foundation, the lead sponsor of the exhibition, said, "The discovery of these two great artefacts enhances our knowledge of the world and in particular our understanding of one of its oldest civilizations. This exhibition is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience up-close these incredible discoveries and to understand the importance of them in shaping our shared histories. MetLife has a long tradition of supporting the communities we serve through such things as cultural and educational outreach and we are privileged to be a part of this exhibition."

Mr Lennard Yong, CEO, MetLife Hong Kong added, "MetLife is excited to share these exciting artefacts with the Hong Kong community. We believe the educational family workshops and interactive activities that form parts of this exhibition will make the community a better place by bringing people together to learn and share."

The exhibition spans 4 galleries and the Annex, and takes the visitor on a journey of life in Jerusalem; from understanding the importance of the Temple and the rituals that were held within, to getting an insight into the concepts of death, the afterlife and resurrection.

As visitors travel further into exhibition, they enter the final gallery – the Inner Sanctum of a Temple – where the three feet tall Gabriel Stone dating back to the 1st Century BC and found 13 years ago on the bed of the Dead Sea, is revealed.

Considered the most important archaeological artifact to come to light since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this cracked limestone tablet with 87 lines of barely legible ancient text proclaims an apocalyptic vision, of an attack on Jerusalem in which God appears with angels on chariots to save the city. The central character is Gabriel, the first named angel to appear in the Hebrew Bible. “I am Gabriel” the writing declares.

Mr. James S. Snyder, Anne and Jerome Fisher Director of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, said, “The Gabriel Stone is, in a way, a Dead Sea Scroll written on stone. The writing dates to the same period, and uses the same tidy calligraphic Hebrew script as some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection of documents that include the earliest known surviving manuscripts of Hebrew Bible texts. The stone relates to the emergence of Gabriel as an important prophetic figure in Jewish, Christian and Islamic biblical literature.”

"For millions of people who believe angels are heavenly beings on earth, Gabriel is not archeology but real and relevant. The Gabriel Stone is the starting point of an ongoing tradition that is still woven into many people's lives today," commented Dr. Adolfo D. Roitman, Lizbeth and George Krupp Curator of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Displayed alongside the Gabriel Stone is a replica of the War Scroll, one of the seven original scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947 and written around the same time as the Gabriel Stone. It details an apocalyptic 40-year battle between the forces of good and evil with the angel Gabriel protecting the Sons of Light (good) against the Sons of Darkness (evil).

As visitors enter the Annex, the last room in the exhibition, they encounter a facsimile of the most complete and best preserved of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Great Isaiah Scroll. The Scroll conveys the importance of the Prophet Isaiah in Jewish belief and is 1000 years older than the oldest manuscripts in the Hebrew Bible.

Other rare artefacts in the exhibition include; carved stone fragments from the Temple Mount complex, one of the most important religious sites in ancient Jerusalem; rare books such as the Latin translation of *Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, the greatest Jewish historian of ancient times; and a Chinese-language map of Jerusalem made from the imagination of an artist in late 19th-century Shanghai.

Mr. Sagi Karni, Consul-General of Israel in Hong Kong and Macau concludes, “This exhibition is the first attempt of its kind to display the Gabriel Stone in its proper cultural context, and I think it is fitting that this is happening in Hong Kong where we have long been a part of this city’s life, and where many in the Jewish community have made their home. “

- END -

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About Temple, Scrolls and Divine Messenger: Archaeology in the Land of Israel in Roman Times

Venue: Chantal Miller Gallery -- Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Address: 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong

Date: November 4, 2014 – January 25, 2015

Hours: Tuesday – Thursday: 11:00 – 18:00

Friday – Sunday: 11:00 – 20:00

Last Thursday of November: 11:00 – 20:00

Closed on Mondays, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day

30 minutes before closing

Last admission:

Admission fee:

Adult: HK\$30 | Senior (aged 60 or above) and individuals with disabilities: HK\$15

Asia Society members, full-time students, aged 18 or below, last Thursday of November: Free

Free Gallery Docent Tour Schedule:

	English	Cantonese
Fridays	14:30	15:30
Saturdays	14:30	15:30
Sundays	14:30	15:30
Last Thursday of November	19:00	

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Asia Society Hong Kong Center would like to thank the following partners and sponsors, without whom, this exhibition would not have been possible.

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About Asia Society

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in New York as a not-for-profit, non-government educational organization, The Asia Society is a leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context.

Asia Society Hong Kong Center

As one of the eleven centers of The Asia Society, Asia Society Hong Kong Center (the “Hong Kong Center”) was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders, led by Sir Q.W. Lee, the honorary chairman of Hang Seng Bank. As the leading regional knowledge-based platform for furthering the understanding of the countries and cultures of Asia and global issues that impact the region, Asia Society Hong Kong Center boasts extensive regional and international networks of leaders and scholars, and recognized expertise in business and policy, arts and culture, and educational programming for a wide range of audiences. In February 2012, the Hong Kong Center established its new permanent home in Admiralty, Hong Kong.

About MetLife

MetLife, Inc. (NYSE: MET), through its subsidiaries and affiliates (“MetLife”), is one of the largest life insurance companies in the world. Founded in 1868, MetLife is a global provider of life insurance, annuities, employee benefits and asset management. Serving approximately 100 million customers, MetLife has operations in nearly 50 countries and holds leading market positions in the United States, Japan, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. For more information, visit www.metlife.com.

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its founding through the end of 2013, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$600 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing \$200 million over the next five years to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over its first 50 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of nearly 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide. In 2010, the Museum completed a comprehensive renewal of its campus led by James Carpenter Design Associates, New York and Efrat-Kowalsky Architects, Tel Aviv, including the creation of new galleries, orientation facilities, and public spaces, and the complete reinstallation of its encyclopedic collections. The Museum also organizes and presents programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the Land of Israel; and at its historic Ticho House in downtown Jerusalem, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.