

## PANEL 4

### Religion, Democracy and State-Control

#### 1. Unification and Split of Buddhist Associations in the Republic of Vietnam: Buddhist Movements under Diem's Religious Persecution

**Jioon Kim**, PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University

This paper explores the unification and split of Buddhist associations in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) by analyzing the 1963 Buddhist Movement against the religious persecution of President Ngo Dinh Diem. The RVN predominantly consisted of three Buddhist associations: the Mahanaya associations of Viet, the Theravada associations of Viet, and the Theravada associations of Khmer. During the 1963 Buddhist Movement against Diem's religious persecution, Buddhist associations in RVN formed the Intersect Committee for the Defense of Buddhism (Ủy Ban Liên Phái Bảo Vệ Phật Giáo). They formally united as the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (Giáo Hội Phật Giáo Việt Nam Thống Nhất) following the collapse of the Diem regime. However, the organization fractured during the Junta period (November 1963 – September 1967) due to differing perceptions of Vietnamese Buddhism among its member associations. The Mahanaya associations of Viet considered Vietnamese Buddhism narrowly, seeing themselves at its center; the Theravada associations of Viet considered themselves to be members of Vietnamese Buddhism while retaining a vital relationship with Cambodian Buddhism; and the Theravada associations of Khmer, having a completely different historical background than the Viet, did not consider themselves to be members of Vietnamese Buddhism. In summary, the 1963 Buddhist Movement brought associations together to fight the religious persecution of the regime, provided an opportunity to temporarily conceal their differences, and ultimately led to their unification; however, this unification occurred unexpectedly and its splintering was therefore quick and inevitable.

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Main research topic: History of Vietnamese Buddhism

#### 2. Making Democracy Uncertain: Declining democratic commitment of Indonesian Political Elites

**Jung Hoon Park**, Research Professor, Institute for East Asian Studies at Sogang University

This paper seeks to find a sign of democratic backsliding in Indonesia in the sphere of the political behavior of the country's national political elites. It argues that backsliding has become more visible recently, as elites have been seemingly less committed to democratic norms and values. Their acceptance of political dynastization and passing of illiberal legislation, notably the new criminal code, exemplifies such a tendency. This tendency renders the future of Indonesian democracy uncertain for the following two reasons. First, it confirms that regardless of their ideological brands, most Indonesian political elites, including President Joko

Widodo, are unanimously driven by unprincipled and opportunistic decision making, which in turn plays a negative role in democratic development. Second, the ongoing trend in Indonesian politics increasingly resembles previous experiences in neighboring countries, particularly the Philippines and Thailand, where elites' maneuvers increased political instability and ultimately rendered democratic systems imperiled.

**Jung Hoon Park** is a research professor at the Institute of East Asian Studies, Sogang University. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the National University of Singapore in 2021. His research interests include not only comparative democratization, political party systems, and political Islam in Asian developing democracies, but also South Korea-ASEAN relations. His research has appeared *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *Asian Studies Review*, and *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*.

### **Discussant**

**Yong Kyun Kim**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Seoul National University

**Yong Kyun Kim** is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations currently teaching at Seoul National University. He was previously an Associate Professor at Ewha Womans University and the School of International Studies at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Kim graduated with a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research interests include comparative politics, comparative/international political economy, electronics industry policy, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Vietnam, experimental methods, and network analysis. Dr. Kim has published numerous peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and non-peer-reviewed publications on various topics related to his research interests.

### **Discussant and Moderator**

**Masaaki Okamoto**, Professor, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

**Masaaki Okamoto:** His main research topics are local politics in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, the socio-political impacts of digitalization and the smart city boom in Southeast Asia. Recent publication includes Okamoto Masaaki and Kameda Akihiro (2022) *Politics of New Tools in Post-truth Indonesia: Big Data, AI and Micro Targeting*, Made Supriatma and Hui Yew-Foong eds., *The Jokowi-Prabowo Elections 2.0* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing), 293p. pp. 67-89, Okamoto Masaaki and Jafar Suryomenggolo (2023) *Indonesia at the Crossroads: Transformation and Challenges*. (Yogyakarta and Kyoto: UGM Press, Kyoto University Press and Pacific Press), 420p, Takamasa Osawa, Wahyu Prasetyawan, Akhwan Binawan, and Masaaki Okamoto (2023), *Local Governance of Peatland Restoration in Riau, Indonesia: A Transdisciplinary Analysis*. (Springer: New York). 335p.