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Religion and Society

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Todd Klaiman



Buddhist Relics and Beauty Pageant Winners in Cold War Asia

In the shadow of the Cold War and decolonization, Buddhist monks, nuns, and lay leaders moved across Asia as unexpected actors in a global political struggle. This talk traces how the Republic of China on Taiwan used Buddhist networks as a form of cultural diplomacy to compete with the rising influence of the People's Republic of China's communist regime. By following these religious actors, we see how politics, religion, and gender became deeply entangled in Asia's twentieth-century geopolitical transformations.

Todd Klaiman is the CSRS Program and Research Coordinator. He studies how the movement of people, goods, ideas, and symbols shapes identity, place, and space in East and Southeast Asia.

Jan 15, 2026
5:00–6:00pm
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