

Study Group on Religion and the Contemporary World

Subject & Overview

This study group is a joint project launched in October 2023 by the Kajima Institute of International Peace and PHP Research Institute, a policy thinktank, with the aim of deepening a multifaceted understanding of the role played by religions in politics, economies, and societies.

The countries of North America and Western Europe that have formed the core of world systems since the start of the modern period are no longer as preeminent as they once were, and civilizational powers with a cultural background different from the Judeo-Christian tradition are rising to prominence. This underscores the importance of understanding religions that form the foundations of each civilization when considering a functional international order.

Despite this significance, however, understanding of religions in Japan remains insufficient, particularly in politics and management. It can hardly be claimed that there exists an adequate appreciation of the role that religions play in politics, economies, and societies. To address this problem and related issues, we will invite guest lecturers to speak on subjects including the interplay between religion and trends in contemporary society, the influence of religion on politics and societies in major countries, and the global development of particular religions.

Through a series of focused discussions, we aim to clarify the significance of religion for international politics and socioeconomic activities.

Subject & Overview The findings of the study group will be made widely available to society mainly through publication in the monthly magazine *Voice* (published by PHP Institute), and we will proactively work to build awareness in the sectors of politics, government, business, and academia.

In fiscal year 2023, we ran three study sessions that focused on the interplay between religion and the contemporary world, including international politics.

Period October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024

Meetings held (FY2023) Three case study meetings were held by members and guest speakers.

- First Case Study Meeting

Date and time: November 21, 2023 (Tues.), 16:00 to 18:00

Topic: Global Religious Revival and the Pandemic

Guest Speaker(member): Tadashi Ogawa (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Atomi University)

*Published in *Voice*, April 2024 as “Interpreting the Contemporary World from the Perspective of the Religious Revival”

- Second Case Study Meeting

Date and time: February 5, 2024 (Mon.), 13:00 to 15:00

Topic: The Vatican and Its International Influence

Guest speaker: Saho Matsumoto (Professor, College of International Relations, Nihon University)

*To be published in *Voice*, forthcoming

Meetings held • Third Case Study Meeting

(FY2023)

Date and time: March 15, 2024 (Fri.) 16:00 to 18:00

Topic: The Emergence of Hindu Supremacism in India

Guest speaker: Kazuya Nakamizo (Professor, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University)

*To be published in *Voice*, forthcoming

Members

Masafumi Kaneko (Leader)

Chief Research Officer, PHP Research Institute

Director, Member of the Board Managing Executive Officer,
PHP Institute, Inc.

Nobuyuki Hiraizumi

President, Kajima Institute of International Peace

Advisor, Kajima Corporation

Advisor, Avant Associates, Inc.

Director, The Board Director Training Institute of Japan

Tadashi Ogawa

Professor, Faculty of Letters, Atomi University

Hisa Oiwa

Research Fellow, Policy Research Division, PHP Institute, Inc.