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Die Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik e.V.
in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Arbeitsbereich Thaiistik
der Abteilung Sprachen und Kulturen Südostasiens des AAI
lädt Sie zu folgendem Online-Vortrag ein:

Worldly Engagements: Buddhist Monasticism and Masculinity among the Tai Lue of Southwest China



Source: Roger Casas

Following years of repression during the Maoist period, Buddhism among the Tai Lue of Sipsòng Panna, the largest community of Theravada Buddhists in China, recovered and even thrived in the 1980s. In recent decades, however, ever-growing global connectivity and online visibility have brought increased scrutiny. The participation of Tai Lue novices and monks in practices such as eating in the afternoon, drinking alcohol, having girlfriends, or competing in sports—behaviours considered unfitting for Buddhist monastics—has been cited as evidence of this minority community's supposed inadequacy and backwardness.

Based on long-term ethnographic research in Sipsòng Panna and earlier work conducted on mainland Southeast Asia, *Worldly Engagements*, the subject matter of this presentation places such alleged misconduct at the center of its enquiry. It argues that these practices do not mark a degraded Buddhism but reflect a monasticism traditionally prevalent in the region, an amphibious technology of self-mastery inextricably embedded in the mundane and the non-religious—that is, a vernacular discipline concerned mainly with making boys into men. The result is a rich, intimate and unprejudiced portrayal of the temple experience as a site where Tai Lue youths negotiate competing demands from families, religious superiors, peer pressure, national ideals of masculinity, and the strong presence of Thai Buddhism.

Online Lecture *via Zoom & in English*



Roger Casas earned his PhD in Anthropology from the Australian National University with a thesis on male monastic discipline among the Tai Lue of Sipsòng Panna, a region where he has lived and conducted extensive research since 2004. After obtaining his PhD, his work in this region has expanded beyond Buddhist monasticism to include social memory, language politics, economic transformation, and gender relations. He has held researcher and lecturer posts in academic institutions in Austria, China, Thailand, and Japan. His PhD-based book *Worldly Engagements: Buddhist Monasticism and Masculinity among the Tai Lue of Southwest China*, was published in November 2025 by the University of Hawai'i Press. He is currently a Distinguished Researcher at Yunnan University's National Center for Studies of Borderland Ethnic Minorities in Kunming.

Friday, 13 March 2026

14:00—16:00 (CET)

20:00—22:00 (Thai time)

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