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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:

Protestant Buddhism? Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Thailand



The history of Thailand in the nineteenth century is marked in many ways by the encounter with Western colonial powers, who began to dominate Mainland Southeast Asia economically and politically, while also attempting to spread their civilization and religion. Especially during the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-68), discussions on religion became a central arena of conflict between rival regimes of knowledge in Siam, confronting 'traditional' Thai Buddhist views on nature and man's existence with the ideals and practices of science and rationalist thought coming from the West. Christian doctrines played a crucial role for the transformation of Buddhism in nineteenth-century Siam, even though the Christian mission itself was a failure in terms of conversions. Protestant missionaries were important brokers of knowledge, as one of their strengths was the ability to offer religion in tandem with modern science and technology. The incorporating of Protestant modernism in Theravāda Buddhist thought has been

labeled, in the case of Sri Lanka, as "Protestant Buddhism" (Gombrich/Obeyesekere), or more generally "Buddhist Modernism" (Bechert). Although these concepts have been criticized for being essentially diffusionist in character and exhibiting a Eurocentric notion of modernity and tradition, they nonetheless address an important moment of trans-national religious and intellectual entanglement. The talk will critically reassess these notions by exploring the confrontation between Christianity and Buddhism in Siam, and locate it in the wider field of religious reform movements that in the nineteenth century evolved all over Buddhist Asia.

Online-Lecture *via Zoom & in English*

Prof. Dr. Sven Trakulhun teaches European and Southeast Asian history at the Universities of Potsdam and Hamburg. He is the author of „Siam und Europa. Das Königreich Ayutthaya in westlichen Berichten“ (2006) and „Asiatische Revolutionen. Europa und der Aufstieg und Fall asiatischer Imperien, 1600-1830“ (2017). He has published widely on European travel in Asia and on the history of early modern Thailand. His current research is in the field of religious encounters, focusing in particular on the interplay between knowledge transfer and the Christian mission in nineteenth-century Siam. His latest book is on "Confronting Christianity: The Protestant Mission and the Refashioning of Buddhist Kingship in Nineteenth-Century Thailand" and will be published in 2021 with The University of Hawai'i Press.



Monday, 5 April 2021

16h-18h (CEST)

via Zoom: *(copy the link into your webbrowser to join,
you might be asked to download the software)*

<https://uni-hamburg.zoom.us/j/99234618746>