



Die Abteilung für Sprachen und Kulturen Südostasiens des AAI lädt Sie im Rahmen der Ringvorlesung **Flows of Change: Rivers, Megacities, and Mobility in Southeast Asia** ein zu dem folgenden Vortrag:

## Virtual Scripts: New Technologies and the Self-fashioning of Monastic Identities in Contemporary Sipsong Panna

Sipsong Panna, in Yunnan (China), has been long part of the 'cultural region of the *tham* script' in mainland Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, *tham* texts, and with them temple education as a whole, struggle to find its relevance today. While textual knowledge is valued among village communities, the temporary nature of ordination accounts for the little interest most Lue monastics show toward the study of Buddhist and vernacular books. Since the state-led development of a reformed, simplified alphabet for Tai language in the 1950s circumscribed the use of *tham* texts to the temple, present-day Lue novices and young monks in particular seem to attach more value to the mastering of contemporary mediums of communication whose main language of communication is Mandarin.

Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork



among monastic communities in Sipsong Panna, this paper explores the role that language politics and different kinds of texts play in the configuration of contemporary monastic identities among the Tai Lue of Sipsong Panna. Without forgetting the importance of the visual and of self-display in virtual interactions, the lecture pays special attention to the recent development of a *tham* script Unicode, which has made it possible to use the script in mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Roger Casas has lived and worked in Yunnan and other areas of China for extended periods since 2001, including as local coordinator of the UNESCO project "Cultural Survival and



Revival in the Buddhist Sangha" in Sipsong Panna from 2005 to 2007. He has continued doing long-term fieldwork research in this area, especially during his MA (Chiang Mai University, 2011) and his PhD (Australian National University, 2015).

Dienstag, den 7. November 2017

Zeit: 14:00-16:00

Ort: Raum 232

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