



THAILAND@HU LECTURE SERIES

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PHRA RUP OF 1876?

When: Wednesday, April 17th 2013 / **18:00 - 20:00**

Where: IAAW – Invalidenstr. 118 – room 117 (1st floor)

Abstract:

During the fall term 2012 Baas Terwiel was invited to teach Thai Buddhism in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania. During one of his outings he found, among other things, in the old Exhibition grounds, a spectacular Japanese pavilion. This was one of the remnants of the 1876 International Exhibition, which the American government had organized to celebrate 100 years independence. Since Japan obviously had played a major role, Terwiel checked whether or not Siam had been represented.

Indeed: it had been. In this lecture we will first note an American publication revealing prejudices towards Siam (when it was announced it would be represented), then (as a possible reaction on that publication) how a massive Siamese exhibit was prepared, no less than 218 crates full were sent to Philadelphia. Then we look carefully at contemporary photographs of the Siamese exhibit, and note that one of the central, almost sacred objects, now held in the Smithsonian collections, has been drastically modified. Terwiel developed a hypothesis why this modification may have taken place, but is open for alternative suggestions.

Organized and presented by the “Thailand Research Group”

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