



Institutskolloquium Ethnologie

Dienstag, 5. Feb. 2019

17-19 Uhr,
Werkstattgebäude

Jovan Maud, Göttingen University:

Traces of Sacredness: Everyday (online) religion and place-making in Thailand.

This paper focuses on ad hoc practices of sanctification and their role in the production of sacred space in contemporary Thailand.

Taking the view that anointing and worshiping are powerful activities that create sacred spaces by sanctifying objects and places, the paper approaches these activities as part of a dialectical process in which sacredness is created by recognizing it: people see the sacred through the traces of past acts of devotion and augment its power by adding further objects or gestures of devotion.

Processes of everyday sanctification are not only evident in the physical environment but also online. This paper thus focuses on the activities of Thai Buddhists on Facebook. Not only has this social media platform been extensively utilized by religious organizations and movements, today, many Thai Buddhists also use Facebook to engage in devotional acts in which they interact with sources of sanctity in a ritualized fashion: comments, 'likes' and 'shares' are frequently used to express a devotional attitude and even to convey blessings or to transfer merit. Treating Facebook as not only a medium for circulating information but as a site of interaction and performance, the paper investigates how its affordances have been adapted by Thai users to create and sustain a field of ritual activity.