

Dr. Louis Gabaude

French School of Asian Studies (Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient)

“Buddhadasa Bhikkhu Yesterday and Tomorrow: In? Out? Beyond?”

(Sub-theme: “Works and Legacy of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu” – 25 May 2017)

Abstract

During his life, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu was accused of spreading non-Thai ideologies as well as non-Buddhist beliefs. He himself actually often admitted that he did not feel comfortable with many aspects of Thai politics. He even boldly argued that some Buddhist beliefs were obstacles that prevented Thai people from understanding the Buddha's message.

This talk will invite to a reflexion upon how and why Buddhadasa was “in,” how and why he was “out,” and how and why, perhaps, he was “beyond.” The answer to these questions seems to be a prerequisite to any attempt to translate his teachings into practice for tomorrow.

About the speaker

Born in France in 1942, **Louis Gabaude** began his Asian life by volunteering for a civil service in Laos as a teacher (1964-1966), then switched to Asian and Buddhist studies at the l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE) in Paris, before coming back to Laos and Thailand where he has lived since 1973. He met Buddhadasa in Suan Mokkh for the first time in 1976. With a PhD on Buddhadasa's theory of interpretation, he has conducted research within the French School of Asian Studies since 1980 and headed the School Centre in Chiang Mai from 1998 to 2005. His main focus has been the history of Buddhist ideas in Thailand. He has been a visiting professor in several European universities. He has published books on sand stupas (*Les cetiya de sable au Laos et en Thaïlande*, 1979), on Buddhadasa (*Une Herméneutique bouddhique contemporaine de Thaïlande : Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*, 1988), and co-edited a book on Thai-French relations (*La Thaïlande: continuité du partenariat avec la France*, 2008). His last article is: “Readers in the Maze: Modern Debates About the Vessantara Story in Thailand.”