

Joint Research Group

Manuscriptology and Digital Humanities

## Transforming Text into Image: A Study of an Illustrated Traditional Kammaṭṭhāna (Meditation) Manuscript from 19th-Century Thailand



**09:15-10:45 Hrs**  
(CET Germany)

= 13:45-15:15 pm (IST India)  
= 17:15-18:45 pm (JST Japan)



**Friday 24.10.2025**



**Meeting's Link:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81265977257?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81265977257?pwd=XsdtHxz90bU6ajtzykmFEoJkZAU9b.1)  
[pwd=XsdtHxz90bU6ajtzykmFEoJkZAU9b.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81265977257?pwd=XsdtHxz90bU6ajtzykmFEoJkZAU9b.1)



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It is often assumed that meditation traditions in Southeast Asia are primarily preserved and transmitted through direct, embodied practice and close teacher–disciple relationships, rather than through written texts. As a result, the role of manuscripts in sustaining and shaping meditative knowledge remains largely overlooked in the study of Theravāda meditation, particularly in Southeast Asian context. In the recent decades, a significant number of traditional meditation manuscripts have been discovered in countries such as Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. Among these, there exists a corpus of manuscripts that are primarily visual in nature, containing rich illustrations rather than extensive textual content—yet these have so far received comparatively little scholarly attention.

This talk examines one of the most refined and complete illustrated kammaṭṭhāna manuscripts uncovered in Thailand, dating to the 19th century CE. He argues that this manuscript—and others of its kind—marks a significant shift in the transmission of the Tai-Khmer kammaṭṭhāna textual tradition during the 18th to 19th centuries. More specifically, it demonstrates how textual descriptions of meditation methods were visually rendered through pictorial representation, thereby making kammaṭṭhāna practices more accessible to a wider audience beyond the monastic community.

**Speaker: Dr. Woramat Malasart**  
(JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow –  
Otani University, Kyoto)

