

ASIEN 81 (Oktober 2001)

Abstract

Die Repräsentation von nationaler Identität im Laotischen Nationalmuseum

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The author presents an analysis of the exhibitions of the Lao National Museum in Vientiane, Lao PDR. He argues that the exhibitions are representations of the Lao nation, especially the version propagated by the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party. The museum can be regarded as a selection of items of national relevance which compose a coherent image of the nation as an encompassing whole in relation to all citizens of the Lao nation, a relation called 'national identity'. One of the main factors in this context is the reconstruction of history, displayed by a carefully selected arrangement of photos, artefacts, maps, etc. Moreover, political and sociocultural changes might be reflected in the development of different stages of the exhibition. In sum, the Lao National Museum tells us a lot of the current tendencies of official Lao historiography. It is an attempt to write a continuous Lao history despite all discontinuities and vicissitudes - and stresses the idea of a Lao national identity based on a rich cultural heritage and a socialist political present.