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InterAsian Contexts and Connections

How do we compare Global Slaveries?
War Captives and Cultural Exchange in Southeast Asia

Abstract
Systems of slavery and captivity differed widely across cultures and time, and the comparative study of slavery can reveal surprising histories of cultural transformation and exchange. Unlike American slavery, in many parts of the world systems of slavery were more “open”, containing means by which slaves could be incorporated into the society of their captors. In these more “open” systems, slavery was an important conduit for the exchange of culture between two societies. Southeast Asia was one such region. My talk will explore the ways that foreign war captives taken to upper Burma from Thailand and Manipur in the 18th-19th c. introduced new artistic, theatrical, and religious traditions to that kingdom.