“The Cremation of King Norodom Sihanouk”

Dr. Supeena Insee Adler and Christopher Adler

In February 2014, King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia was cremated in an elaborate and spectacular week-long ceremony in Phnom Penh. Cambodian scholars reconstructed and royal cremation rituals from archival evidence and adapted these to a modern, urban, multi-media context for consumption by common Cambodians. Supeena Insee Adler, Christopher Adler, and Deborah Wong visited Phnom Penh to witness and document the events at the ground level. We survey the events of the cremation ceremony through image and sound, exploring the civic and royal rituals and the ways common people were variously invited to gaze upon them or to be excluded from them, and we present the ritual activities conducted by common people surrounding the ceremony.

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