



CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS OF INDIA

Sacred Journeys and Sacred Stories

Elon University

June 19- 22, 2025

THE CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS OF INDIA (CSRI)

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Sacred Journeys and Sacred Stories

THURSDAY, JUNE 19th

3:00-4:30 Arrival, check-in, coffee (Numen Lumen Pavilion lobby)

CONFERENCE OPENING

4:30 Welcome to CSRI: Brian Pennington (Elon University)

4:45 Welcome to Elon: Amy Allocco (Elon University)

SESSION 1: Contemporary Stories and Journeys

Chair: Sufia Uddin (Connecticut College)

5:00 *Producing a Sacred Journey Online: Partnership and Re-Presentation in the Swayambhu Stories Project*
Lauren Leve (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

5:30 *Who Knows History Better?*
Shreya Maini (Duke University)

6:00 *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida and Buddhist Postmemories of Sri Lanka's Era of Terror*
Dinidu Karunanayake (Elon University)

6:30-8:30 Dinner and social time
[The Oak House](#), 112 N Williamson Ave

FRIDAY, JUNE 20th

7:30-9:00 Breakfast available in Lakeside Dining Hall

9:00-9:15 Greeting from Hilton Kelly, Dean of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Professor of Sociology

SESSION 2: Deities on the Move

Chair: Robin Rinehart (Lafayette College)

9:15-9:45 *Relocating Lineage Deity Worship in Contemporary Tamil Nadu*
Anya Fredsell (Emory University)

9:45-10:15 *Plotting a Tamil Mother: The Virgin Mary, Divine Presence and Placemaking in a Diaspora*
Vivek Joseph (Brown University)

10:15-10:45 Break

SESSION 3: Temple Image and Performance

Chair: Ashlee Andrews (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)

10:45-11:15 *Patronage and King-Making in Chidambaram's Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Imagery*
Amy-Ruth Holt (Independent Scholar)

11:15-11:45 *Dancing the Divine: Image and Performance in the Production of Living Hindu Temples*
Shriya Sridharan (Santa Clara University)
Surabi Veeraraghavan (Baylor College of Medicine)

11:45-1:00 Lunch available in Lakeside Dining Hall

SESSION 4: Materiality and Miracles

Chair: Aniket De (University of California, San Diego)

- 1:15-1:45 *Agency Matters: Objectifying Divine Will and Power in Western Himalayan Origin Myths*
Udi Halperin (Tel Aviv University)
- 1:45-2:15 *Rūparāma Cakravartī's Dharma-maṅgala and Performing Devotion from Precolonial Bengal to the 21st Century*
Rebecca Manring (Indiana University)
- 2:15-2:45 Break

SESSION 5: Gendered Movement

Chair: Gerald Carney (Hampden-Sydney College)

- 2:45-3:15 *Sacred Journeys to the Underworld: Gendered Narratives of Hell in Early Indian and Medieval Chinese Buddhist Texts*
Jonathan Laiman (University of Washington)
- 3:15-3:45 *The Goddess, By the Way*
Yasmine Singh (Missouri State University)

Conference reception and dinner

SATURDAY, JUNE 21st

7:30-9:00 Breakfast available in Lakeside Dining Hall

SESSION 6: Special Session

Chair: Brian Pennington (Elon University)

- 9:00-9:30 *A Turban and a Text: Embodiment as Resistance among the 'Shudra Vaishnavas' of North-East India*
Daisy Barman (Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management, Bangalore)
- 9:30-10:00 *The Historical Conundrum of Kundakunda: Pilgrimage and Narratives*
Anubhav Jain (School of Oriental and African Studies)
- 10:00-10:30 *The Night of the Three Knocks: The Afterlife of a Mythic Narrative*
Stephanie Duclos-King (University of Toronto)
- 10:30-11:00 Break

SESSION 7: Engaging the Divine

Chair: Reid Locklin (University of Toronto)

- 11:00-11:30 *Song, Story, and Divine Embodiment in Tamil Hinduism*
Amy Allocco (Elon University)
- 11:30-12:00 *Navigating Relations through Healing Rituals at the Mariamabad Shrine*
Kainat Bashir (University of Toronto)
- 12:00-1:15 Lunch available in Lakeside Dining Hall

SESSION 8: Narrative Theologies

Chair: Yasmine Singh (Missouri State University)

- 1:15 *Vaishnavism and the Political Theology of Federalism in Colonial India*
Aniket De (University of California, San Diego)

- 1:45 *The Mirror of the Heart Lotus: Theological Aesthetics in the Ragaḷe of Akka Mahādēvi*
Shashank Rao (University of Toronto)
- 2:15 *'Maasatra Ratham' as a Dalit Christian Affective Counter-Public*
James Ponniah (University of Madras)
- 5:00 Carpool to evening outing

SUNDAY, JUNE 22nd

7:30-9:00 Breakfast available in Lakeside Dining Hall

SESSION 9: Relational Place-Making

Chair: Rebecca Manring (Indiana University)

- 9:00-9:30 *Rethinking Homemaking Through Bengali American Hindu Women's Domestic Shrine Traditions*
Ashlee Norene Andrews (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)
- 9:30-10:00 *Divine Love and Holy Wars: The Relational Legal Personhood of Hindu Deities in India*
Esha Meher (Yale University)

SESSION 10: Concluding Discussion

10:15-11:30 Reid Locklin (University of Toronto)