

Shivdasani Conference 2007

**Archaeology and Text:  
The Temple in South Asia**

Danson Room, Trinity College, Oxford

Saturday 20 – Sunday 21 October 2007

## Intro

### Aims

This conference is an attempt at understanding sacred spaces as they came to be defined in the archaeological record from around the latter half of the first millennium BC onwards. It will attempt to bridge the gap that exists between textual studies and archaeology with focus on the Hindu temple. We have invited leading scholars from India, Canada, the U.S.A., Russia, France, Germany and the U.K. Our speakers will make short presentations from papers they have prepared and encourage discussion on some of these significant themes.

### Convenors

**Prof. Gavin Flood, OCHS, Oxford**  
**Prof. Himanshu Prabha Ray, JNU, New Delhi**

## Schedule

**Saturday 20th October 2007**

**9.30–10.00** **Welcome Address**  
*Prof. Gavin Flood, Director, OCHS*

**10.00–10.30** **Tea/Coffee**

**Session I: The Archaeology of the Temple**  
*Chairperson: Prof. Richard Gombrich, Oxford*

**10.30–11.00** **Creating Religious Identity: The Archaeology of Early Temples in the Malaprabha Valley”**  
*Prof. Himanshu Prabha Ray; JNU, New Delhi; (Co-Convenor)*

**11.00–11.30** **Temple Sponsorship and Money Use in Early Medieval Deccan**  
*Dr Shailendra Bhandare; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*

**11.30–12.00** **The Ambika Temple at Jagat: A Biographical Sketch**  
*Dr Parul Pandya–Dhar; National Museum Institute, New Delhi–Humboldt fellow at Berlin in 2007–8*

**12.00–1.30** **Lunch break**

**Session II: The Archaeology of the Temple**  
*Chairperson: Prof. Gavin Flood, Oxford*

**1.30–2.00** **The Social Impact of Hindu Temples in East Bengal under the Mughals**  
*Dr Sandrine Gill; Paris*

**2.00–2.30** **Money of the Gods: The Religious Tokens of India**  
*Dr Sanjay Garg; National Archives, New Delhi*

**2.30–3.00** **Sacred Space and the Making of Monuments in Colonial Orissa**  
*Dr Indra Sengupta; German Historical Institute, London*

**3.00–3.30** **Coffee break**

### **Session III: Texts and Religious Action**

*Chairperson: Prof. Alexis Sanderson, Oxford*

**3.30–4.00**

#### **Yajña and Pūjā: A Comparison of the Ritual Archetypes**

*Dr Natalia R. Lidova; Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences*

**4.00–4.30**

#### **Textual Tradition and the Temples of Khajuraho**

*Dr Devangana Desai, Mumbai*

**4.30–5.00**

#### **The Style and Aesthetics of Indian Erotic Temple Sculpture**

*Dr David Smith, Lancaster University, Lancaster*

**5.00–5.30**

#### **The Indian Temple: Production, Place, Patronage**

*Dr Adam Hardy, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff*

### **Sunday 21st October 2007**

**9.30–10.00**

#### **Tea/Coffee**

### **Session IV: Asceticism and the Bhakti Tradition**

*Prof. Christopher Minkowski, Oxford*

**10.00–10.30**

#### **The Temple in Sanskrit Legal Literature**

*Professor Patrick Olivelle; University of Texas at Austin*

**10.30–11.00**

#### **Hindu Samnyasins in the Temple Context**

*Professor T.S. Rukmani; Concordia University, Canada*

**11.00–11.30**

#### **Seeing the Bhakti Movement**

*Professor John Stratton Hawley; Barnard College, Columbia University*

**11.30–12.00**

#### **World Renouncing Monks And World Celebrating Temples And Icons: The Ritual Culture Of Temples And Icons in Jainism**

*Professor John E. Cort, Denison University, Ohio*

**12.00–1.30**

#### **Lunch break**

## **Session V: Performance and Text**

*Chairperson Prof. Patrick Olivelle, University of Texas, Austin*

**1.30–2.00**

### **Absence and Presence: Worshipping the Jina at Ellora**

*Dr Lisa Nadine Owen; University of North Texas*

**2.00–2.30**

### **The Dance Performed by the Temple: the Dynamics of Hindu Temple Architecture**

*Dr Adam Hardy; Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff*

**2.30–3.00**

### **Temple Texts and Cultural Performances in South Asia**

*Dr Avanthi Meduri; Roehampton University, London*

**3.00–3.30**

### **Coffee break**

## **Session VI: Performance and Text**

*Dr Crispin Branfoot, SOAS*

**3.30–4.00**

### **Performing Konarak, Performing Hirapur**

*Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo, Roehampton University, London*

**4.00–4.30**

### **Colonial Modernity, Memory and the Devadasi Dance Tradition of the Viralmalai Murukan Temple**

*Dr Davesh Soneji, McGill University, Montreal*

**4.30–5.00**

### **Sastra and Proyoga: Building Bridges Between Text and Performance in the Sanskritic Tradition**

*Professor Mandakranta Bose; UBC, Vancouver, Canada*

**5.00–5.30**

### **Concluding plenary session**

## Saturday 20 October

### 9.30–10.00 **Welcome Address**

*Prof. Gavin Flood, Director, OCHS*

### 10.00–10.30 **Tea/Coffee**

### **Session I: The Archaeology of the Temple**

*Chairperson: Prof. Richard Gombrich, Oxford*

### 10.30–11.00 **Creating Religious Identity: The Archaeology of Early Temples in the Malaprabha Valley”**

*Prof. Himanshu Prabha Ray; JNU, New Delhi; (Co-Convenor)*

The spectacular temple complexes of Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal located along the 25 kilometre long fertile valley of the Malaprabha river, (a tributary of the Krishna) in Bagalkot district have long been admired for their distinctive Karnāta Drāvida architectural tradition and sculptural exuberance. It was along the Malaprabha river in north Karnataka that Pulakesi I established his capital at Vatapi or present Badami and built a fort on top of the sandstone cliff in c. 543 A.D. Thus the attempt by the early Chalukya rulers to establish a base in the fertile Malaprabha valley is undeniable. It is also evident that in the 7th-8th centuries AD, the Malaprabha valley acquired an identity that has continued to mould the lives of the communities both within and outside it. This identity included the demarcation of a territorial boundary within the enclosed terrain of the valley, adoption of a new mode of worship in the temple, the use of the Kannada language on coins and inscriptions and assumption of a sculptural programme based on the Epics and the Puranas.

The larger issue that this paper raises is the disjuncture in the study of the past as a result of colonial intervention. In the colonial period, many of the standing temple structures came to be studied in terms of style, architecture and sculpture, the emphasis being on chronology and political patronage. This not only altered

our understanding of the structures from being abodes of god to objects of artistic appreciation, but it also redefined the nature of Indic religions. Religion came to be understood in terms of doctrine, which could only be comprehended through the texts rather than through practices and rituals. Once we shift the meaning of religion to its pre-Christian etymology, it is understood in terms of performing ancient ritual practices and paying homage to the gods. In keeping with this I suggest that pan-Indian religious and cultural practices, rituals and imagery formed the substratum of a self-perception and identity long before the Arab or European discovery of the term 'Hindu' in 14th-15th centuries AD and a judicious use of archaeological data provides evidence to unearth this identity.

11.00–11.30

### **Temple Sponsorship and Money Use in Early Medieval Deccan**

*Dr Shailendra Bhandare; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*

The early medieval period (c. 600 – 1200 AD) witnessed a tremendous boom in temple construction all over the Deccan. Imperial and feudatory houses such as the Rashtrakutas, the Chalukyas, the Kalachuris, the Shilaharas and the Yadavas patronised varied religious sects and endowed shrines, temples and monasteries. The main source of information are the copper plate charters, which contain a host of information about various modalities of the endowments, a prominent component of which concerns money.

This paper will address select instances of patronage with specific reference to the use of money involved in it, on circulatory and socio-economic trajectories. Emphasis will be placed on references dealing with the instrumentality of money in the enterprise of temple-building - how was money generated, disseminated and deposited to facilitate the construction and management of the temple. It will discuss what sort of coins were in use, how they circulated and what were the dynamics involving the different 'moneyed classes' in terms of using their wealth for temple-building activities.

As a broader historical end-note, the paper will shed light on the prevalent notion of 'paucity of coinage' during the early medieval period.

**11.30–12.00**

### **The Ambika Temple at Jagat: A Biographical Sketch**

*Dr Parul Pandya–Dhar; National Museum Institute, New Delhi–Humboldt fellow at Berlin in 2007–8*

The Ambika temple in Jagat village, about 50 km southeast of Udaipur in the western Indian State of Rajasthan, dates back to 961 AD. The temple has a simple but well-spelt iconological scheme. Its numerous fine sculptures are in an excellent state of preservation. Ambika temple is a Devi (goddess) temple, with images of Durga, Saptamatrikas and other female divinities sculpted on the walls and doorframes of the main temple and the adjunct halls. As the red flag on the sikhara and the congregation of devotees indicate, the temple is still being used for worship. The principal image of Devi presently placed in the garbha-griha (sanctum-sanctorum) though is not of the same date as the temple's construction and consecration but is a more recent image installed on the earlier pedestal and placed in front of the original parikara (image-frame). Since when do we have evidence of the association of this site at Jagat with Devi worship? What does archaeological evidence and the iconography of the temple sculptures reveal about the nature of goddess worship at this site? What are the textual injunctions regarding worship in a temple when the main image of the deity in the sanctum is lost, stolen or damaged? What could have been the motivating forces for the local population to continue worship to the goddess in this temple? The present paper attempts a biographical sketch of this monument to relate the received evidence to textual injunctions and the iconological programme of the temple in addressing such concerns.

**12.00–1.30**

### **Lunch break**

## **Session II: The Archaeology of the Temple**

*Chairperson: Prof. Gavin Food, Oxford*

**1.30–2.00**

### **The Social Impact of Hindu Temples in East Bengal under the Mughals**

*Dr Sandrine Gill; Paris*

Paradoxically, in Bengal, most of the standing Hindu temples postdate the arrival of the Mughals, at the end of the 16th century. What significance did these Hindu landmarks have in the social and historical context? Were they simply commemorative, vindictive or did they compromise with the “hostile” rulers? How did these Hindu temples integrate landscapes with outstanding Muslim monuments?

The archaeology of the imposing Kantanagar temple in north Bengal, and many other shrines from different parts of Bengal provide a rich matter of thought. They are particularly interesting as they incorporate the traditional skills of local terracotta artisans and brick builders into a variety of iconographical and architectural creations deeply rooted in a specific social background.

**2.00–2.30**

### **Money of the Gods: The Religious Tokens of India**

*Dr Sanjay Garg; National Archives, New Delhi*

Numismatics and archaeology have always had a close relationship. Still in the study of archaeology and archaeological concepts, the discipline of numismatics is often relegated to a secondary importance. Though the use of religious tokens in India is not embedded in antiquity, it forms a part of the living traditions. The paper aims at consolidating numismatic research done so far on this topic and analyse this data in the context of other archaeological remains such as monuments and sculptures as well as religious texts.

It also seeks to re-emphasise the importance of numismatic objects like religious tokens for studying the cultural and religious aspects of the social life of our people.

2.30–3.00

### **Sacred Space and the Making of Monuments in Colonial Orissa**

*Dr Indra Sengupta; German Historical Institute, London*

Confronting, dealing with and ‘managing’ sacred space was a task that the colonial government of India had set for itself from the early days of the rule of the English East India Company in Bengal and it continued to dominate official views of governing India down to the end of British rule in 1947. At the root of this was the understanding, derived largely from a heavily text-based European orientalist scholarship, of India as an essentially religious culture, characterised by mutually antagonistic religious groups. Thus, establishing hegemony could not, among other things, avoid negotiating space that was traditionally inhabited by religion.

The ‘modern’ (i.e. contemporary European) practice of monument-making and archaeological conservation, introduced by the colonial state in India and enshrined in the Government department of the Archaeological Survey of India (1861), by virtue of its claims as upholder of India’s heritage and history almost automatically lent itself to such negotiations. This paper will focus on archaeological practice in temple restoration in colonial Orissa as one of the best examples of the negotiation of sacred space between the claims of colonial archaeology as the final authority on the ‘monumental’ remains of India’s past and the various indigenous groups who on the one hand sought to profit from the conservation of religious architecture and on the other used sacred space to engage in confrontation and conflict, but also enter into negotiations with colonial archaeology.

3.00–3.30

### **Coffee break**

### **Session III: Texts and Religious Action**

*Chairperson: Prof. Alexis Sanderson, Oxford*

3.30–4.00

### **Yajña and Pūjā: A Comparison of the Ritual Archetypes**

*Dr Natalia R. Lidova; Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences*

The correlation between yajña and pūjā may well be one of the most complicated problems in Indology. Yajña and pūjā are known to have been mutually counterposed in the Indian tradition. At any rate, they were topical in different periods of its evolution. Yajña held pride of place as a solemn rite in the Vedic time, while pūjā became widespread in the post-Vedic era to become the central ritual of Hinduism. Many scholars cling to the idea of a Vedic origin of pūjā, regarding it as a yajña which went through specific transformations, though no substantiated explanations of these supposed changes have yet appeared. Perhaps, the only attempt of this kind was made by J.A.B. van Buitenen, who hypothetically traced pūjā to the Pravargya, a Vedic ritual, which included the soma offering. Based on a similarity of the purely external aspects of ritualism, his concept failed to win broad recognition but, on the contrary, was subject to ample and well-deserved criticisms.

Attempts to compare yajña and pūjā have either emphasised the similarities between the two, or brought out the differences. Irrespective of this, they all proceeded from comparisons between the outward aspects of the ritual practice, with extremely vague results. A comparison of rituals appears to be destined for success only if it proceeds from a specific methodological approach, which allows comparison not only of the outward aspects of rites but ritual principles underlying them. Here, our task is reduced to the identification of what we may conventionally term the “ritual archetype” at the basis of yajña and pūjā. As I see it, the most salient features of a ritual archetype are determined by three principal aspects, which can be put into the form of three queries. The first, “Where?” pertains to the arrangement of the ritual space; the second, “How?” to the type of the offering; the third, “What for?” describes the ritual goals of the worship.

To bring out the ritual archetype of yajña, I proceeded from the Brāhmanas, which characterised the principal conceptual bases of the Vedic ritualism, as well as the śrauta- and śulba-sūtras, which contained essential

technical details of the actual ritual. The ritual archetype of pūjā was reconstructed on the basis of ritualistic chapters of the Nāṭyaśāstra, the Atharvaveda Pariśistas, the Sāttvata Samhitā, which preserved testimony of the ritualism of the Pāñcharātra, and the śaiva āgamas – the Ajita, the Raurava and the Mrgendra.

4.00–4.30

### **Textual Tradition and the Temples of Khajuraho**

*Dr Devangana Desai, Mumbai*

There was a prolific temple building activity at Khajuraho in central India between CE 900-1150 under the patronage of the Candella Rajput princes and Jaina merchants. About 25 temples now survive. The master-architects (sutradharas) of Khajuraho followed the Visvakarma School of Vastu tradition, as evidenced from inscriptions. So far no actual manuscript is discovered from this site, but the texts of this School found from the neighbouring regions, and the religious texts such as the Puranas, Pancaratras and Saivagamas, dealing with ritual and religious action, help us understand and interpret the imagery of the Khajuraho temples.

The paper discusses the textual tradition followed by the Khajuraho architects in the context of the structural aspects of the temples, and the ornamentation of the wall and the door of the sanctum. It examines some important sculptural motifs such as apsaras (celestial maidens) and vyalas (griffins) in the context of texts as well as actual depiction. It presents some special features such as the juncture wall, linking the hall for devotees and the sanctum of the divinity, on which the architects expressed creative imageries. It surveys the placement of images and presents the temple as an ordered whole by showing the doctrinal unfolding in the graded iconic scheme of the Kandariya Mahadeva temple.

The paper proposes that though the Khajuraho architects stayed within the tradition of Vastu texts, they invented new images, new configurations and iconic schemes. Guided possibly by religious acaryas (preceptors), they made a creative use of traditional motifs to convey concepts in visual language.

4.30–5.00

## **The Style and Aesthetics of Indian Erotic Temple Sculpture**

*Dr David Smith, Lancaster University, Lancaster*

5.00–5.30

## **The Indian Temple: Production, Place, Patronage**

*Dr Adam Hardy, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff*

In the forms of shrine, which developed between the 7th and 13th centuries, Hindu temples, conceived as divine bodies, embodied structured patterns of movement in their architectural compositions. Shrines are invested with a sense of centrifugal dynamism that appears to originate at the tip of the finial, or a point just above it, progressing downwards from this point and outwards from the vertical axis. Compositional elements are made to appear to multiply, to emerge and expand out from the body of the shrine, and out from one another, as interpenetrating elements differentiate themselves and come apart. As well as a spatial structure, a temple has a temporal one, of which a given spatial arrangement is a momentary glimpse, or rather, a succession of such glimpses. A series of elements, or of configurations of elements, can be sensed not so much as a chain of separate entities, but as the same thing seen several times, at different stages, evolving and proliferating. This pattern of growth is conveyed through clearly identifiable architectural means.

The same pattern of emergence, expansion, and proliferation expressed in a single temple is reflected in the development of architectural forms during the course of various traditions. This unfolding takes place both in the details and at the level of the whole composition. The effect observed in a single, developed temple, of one form putting forth another, which in turn emits another and so on, is brought about by a cumulative extrapolation and successive incorporation of temple designs: a new design springing from an old one, while preserving the old one within the new.

Analogies, or homologies, are striking when dynamic temple compositions are compared with certain recurrent religious and philosophical concepts. Patterns

of emergence and growth, as if from an all-containing point, underlie a vision of creation, which is found repeatedly in many different guises. The manifestation or coming into being of the divine or of the universe is repeatedly understood as taking place through the sequential emergence, or successive bursting forth, of one form or principle from another.

This is not to say that such ideas gave rise to the architectural forms, or that the temple builders deliberately set out to embody these concepts: rather, it would seem, the forms and the ideas both spring from the same way of thinking, the same view of the world.

## Sunday 21 October

9.30–10.00 Tea/Coffee

### **Session IV: Asceticism and the Bhakti Tradition**

*Prof. Christopher Minkowski, Oxford*

10.00–10.30 **The Temple in Sanskrit Legal Literature**

*Professor Patrick Olivelle; University of Texas at Austin*

This paper will examine the relationship between temples and the ideologies and practices underlying the mainstream of the Brahmanical tradition and the ascetical institutions of ancient India. The “Hindu” temple is a relatively new institution rising in the early centuries of the common era. Brahmanical ritual both in its public and domestic expressions had existed without temples for over a millennium. Ascetic institutions both within and outside the Brahmanical tradition developed in a temple-less religious landscape, and their ideologies were anti-ritual focused on wandering and mental cultivation.

With the development of temple culture within “Hindu” traditions, accommodations and conflicts between the emergent religious culture and the older traditions were bound to occur. Focusing on the textual tradition, this paper will examine some of these conflicts and accommodations.

10.30–11.00 **Hindu Samnyasins in the Temple Context**

*Professor T.S. Rukmani; Concordia University, Canada*

The Hindu temple is a religious site and signifies some ritual activity. The general perception of a samnyasin, on the other hand, is one not associated with ritual activity as that is seen as perpetuating worldly existence or samsara. However since this polarisation is not evidenced in real life this is indeed a contested issue and this paper examines how far this relationship of a renouncer with the temples as seen in the world can be justified based on the prescriptions given in ascetic (samnyasa) manuals like the Samnyasa Upanishads, the Yatidharmasamuccaya and Jivanmuktiviveka.

**Seeing the Bhakti Movement**

*Professor John Stratton Hawley; Barnard College, Columbia University*

When attempts have been made to position bhakti in relation to the historical formation of India as a cultural, religious, and even political whole, the rubric most familiarly used has been “the bhakti movement”—or in Hindi and certain related languages, bhakti andolan. The choice of the terms movement and andolan suggests that there is something about bhakti that resists its being firmly associated with the sorts of clearly specifiable circumstances that lead to the construction of major temples, as documented in inscriptions that appear on the temples themselves or in documents that concern them.

In this paper, I would propose to ask what we can make of the “bhakti movement” picture, when we look at it more closely. Prioritising Vaishnavism—the sometimes unspoken point of reference for much “bhakti movement” thinking—I will begin by considering the text usually held to have exerted the greatest force on Hindu bhakti generally, the Bhagavata Purana. Where, if at all, can it be seen in stone? This is the question Dennis Hudson asked of the 8th-century Vaikuntha Perumal temple in Kancipuram, and one that I would also ask about narrative depictions of the life of Krishna as seen on temples throughout India up to ca. 1500. I will also consider the mention of specific temples on the part of the Alvars and other Sri Vaisnava Tamil poets.

That would serve as background to my central concern: the striking absence—or at least paucity—of such references in the Vaishnava bhakti poetry that emerged in Hindi beginning in the 15th century. Why and how is this so? What about the depiction of certain poets as having taken their inspiration from particular images of Krishna? What about the visual record that was created as Brindavan and Braj came to be constructed in the 16th century? Is this “built bhakti”? How does it relate to the official hostility to temple-building that is enshrined in

the theology of the Vallabha Sampraday? And how does it relate to a broader spectrum of “vulgate Vaishnavism” in roughly the same period that would take account of poets such as Kabir? Certainly Kabir is firmly ensconced in every influential “bhakti movement” narrative, but can he be associated in any way with a built canon?

11.30–12.00

### **World Renouncing Monks And World Celebrating Temples And Icons: The Ritual Culture Of Temples And Icons in Jainism**

*Professor John E. Cort, Denison University, Ohio*

As part of his mendicant vows, a Jain monk is committed to total non-possession.\* He owns nothing. He is dependent upon the laity for even his robes (if he is a Śvetāmbara monk), bowls, staff, and other ritual insignia and paraphernalia. These are, so to speak, “loaned” to him by the laity. In theory he should not ask even for these, and if the laity choose not to provide them, he should do without.

Jain temples are the sites of great wealth and display. Wealthy patrons vie with each other to see who can spend the most money building and renovating the most temples, and in other ways be seen as prominent supporters of Jainism. Jain temples are grand architectural creations, filled with hundreds of carved stone and cast bronze icons. In the Śvetāmbara case, many of these icons are ornamented with expensive gold and jewellery. In both Śvetāmbara and Digambara temples one sees extensive and expensive ornamentation of the temple itself, as it is understood to be the divine palace of the true king of kings, the true lord of lords.

One might expect, therefore, that mendicancy and temples are two discrete realms of Jain practice, with little to connect the two. Surely the ritual, visual, material, and devotional culture of temples and icons is a lay creation, grafted onto an original mendicant, renunciatory core of Jainism.

This is not the case, however. Mendicancy and temples are integrally intertwined, and the resistance to those few instances in Jain history when critics have attempted

to uncouple the two indicates just how strong are the ties that bind the two together for the majority of Jains.

In this paper I explore four facets of the mendicant promotion of temples and icons.

1. Some of our earliest evidence of icons in Jainism – and in South Asia in general – comes from Mathura. Most of the many Jina icons from Mathura are inscribed, telling us information about the donor. While in all cases the donor is a layperson – and in this the Mathura Jain evidence differs from the Mathura Buddhist evidence – in almost all cases we also find that a mendicant played an integral role in the dedication and installation of the icon.
2. Common to both the Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions is an ancient conception of mendicant practice as structured around six required daily ritual activities (āvaśyaka). While five of these – equanimity (sāmāyika), veneration of the mendicant superior (vandana), confession (pratikramana), vowed asceticism (pratyākhyāna), and meditative renunciation of the body (kāyotsarga) – are clearly of a more renunciatory, non-material nature, the sixth – veneration of the icons/temples (caitya-vandana) shows that icons and temples are essential to mendicant practice.
3. Ritual manuals for the consecration (añjana śalākā) and installation (pratisthā) of icons date only from the medieval period. But they show that mendicants play an essential, in many ways even irreplaceable, role in consecration.
4. Both medieval and contemporary evidence shows that mendicants have frequently promoted the ritual culture of temples and icons to their devotees. Monks preach that building temples and donating icons earns a great store of merit. Monks encourage their lay devotees to restore old and dilapidated temples. Monks organise consecration festivals, and distribute new consecrated icons to many temples as a way of spreading their institutional charisma.

Most accounts of Jainism pay attention largely to Jain

asceticism and renunciation. Temples and icons appear largely in the illustrations to the accounts, not in the text. But an accurate portrayal of Jainism needs to keep both mendicants and temples firmly in the centre of focus. Further, that accurate portrayal needs to see how mendicants have been central to the culture of temples and icons, and vice versa.

*\* While there have always been large numbers of Jain nuns, for the most part they have not played the same role in the ritual culture of temples and icons as monks, and so I intentionally use the male pronoun here.*

**12.00–1.30**

### **Lunch break**

#### **Session V: Performance and Text**

*Chairperson Prof. Patrick Olivelle, University of Texas, Austin*

**1.30–2.00**

#### **Absence and Presence: Worshipping the Jina at Ellora**

*Dr Lisa Nadine Owen; University of North Texas*

How does one worship a liberated being who is technically inaccessible? This is the fundamental question that I propose to answer within the context of Ellora's Jain cave-temples. In the early ninth through tenth century, temples with shrines containing a life-sized Jina image were hewn out of rock. Among the earliest of these temples is a monument known today as the Chota Kailasa. As its appellation suggests, this temple resembles the site's larger and more famous Kailasanatha temple in terms of its execution, architectural components, and designation of sacred space. Although Ellora's Kailasanatha temple has long been recognised as a divine residence for the Hindu god Shiva, similar ways of looking at the Chota Kailasa and its Jina image have not yet been conducted. One reason for this neglect may be the simple fact that the liberated Jina is not considered to be "present" within the main shrine image and so the temple is not thought of as a "residence" per se. Though this is technically the case, similarities between these two monuments at Ellora, especially in some of their external imagery, suggest more nuanced connections.

In this paper, I examine the similarities and differences between these two monuments and address important issues regarding “absence”, “presence” and “residence” in early medieval Hindu and Jain religious art and practice. While I highlight some of the similarities between Hindu and Jain articulations of “presence” at Ellora, I argue that Jain visual expressions of this notion are particular to its own religious tradition. Furthermore, I suggest how conceptions of a Jina’s samavasarana (as articulated in Ellora’s artistic programs and in Jinasena’s Adipurana) might serve as a framework from which to view and understand Ellora’s Jain cave-temples as powerful places of “presence” and worship.

2.00–2.30

### **The Dance Performed by the Temple: the Dynamics of Hindu Temple Architecture**

*Dr Adam Hardy; Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff*

In the forms of shrine, which developed between the 7th and 13th centuries, Hindu temples, conceived as divine bodies, embodied structured patterns of movement in their architectural compositions. Shrines are invested with a sense of centrifugal dynamism that appears to originate at the tip of the finial, or a point just above it, progressing downwards from this point and outwards from the vertical axis. Compositional elements are made to appear to multiply, to emerge and expand out from the body of the shrine, and out from one another, as interpenetrating elements differentiate themselves and come apart. As well as a spatial structure, a temple has a temporal one, of which a given spatial arrangement is a momentary glimpse, or rather, a succession of such glimpses. A series of elements, or of configurations of elements, can be sensed not so much as a chain of separate entities, but as the same thing seen several times, at different stages, evolving and proliferating. This pattern of growth is conveyed through clearly identifiable architectural means.

The same pattern of emergence, expansion, and proliferation expressed in a single temple is reflected in the development of architectural forms during the course

of various traditions. This unfolding takes place both in the details and at the level of the whole composition. The effect observed in a single, developed temple, of one form putting forth another, which in turn emits another and so on, is brought about by a cumulative extrapolation and successive incorporation of temple designs: a new design springing from an old one, while preserving the old one within the new.

Analogies, or homologies, are striking when dynamic temple compositions are compared with certain recurrent religious and philosophical concepts. Patterns of emergence and growth, as if from an all-containing point, underlie a vision of creation, which is found repeatedly in many different guises. The manifestation or coming into being of the divine or of the universe is repeatedly understood as taking place through the sequential emergence, or successive bursting forth, of one form or principle from another.

This is not to say that such ideas gave rise to the architectural forms, or that the temple builders deliberately set out to embody these concepts: rather, it would seem, the forms and the ideas both spring from the same way of thinking, the same view of the world.

### 2.30–3.00

## **Temple Texts and Cultural Performances in South Asia**

*Dr Avanthi Meduri; Roehampton University, London*

This paper will discuss the centrality of the temple text in the classical arts of South Asia, and focus specifically on the aesthetic vision of the late Dr Rukmini Devi Arundale, the celebrated revivalist of twentieth-century Bharatanatyam. For her debut recital of Bharatanatyam in 1935, Rukmini Devi allegorised the Hindu temple where the dance had been performed, prior to the articulation of the Anti-Nautch Social Reform movement of the 1890s, transformed it into a theatrical backdrop, and used it as a stage prop to present her Bharatanatyam recital. In her subsequent performances, Rukmini Devi staged the icon of Nataraja on one side of her temple stage, and seated her guru on the other. In this way, Devi created

a three-pronged, god, guru and temple stage setting for twentieth-century Bharatnatyam, worked within this symbolic stage setting for over fifty years, and constituted a modern temple, and guru-based history, aesthetics and epistemology for classical Bharatanatyam.

Although Rukmini Devi celebrated the temple history of the dance, she was aware that Bharatanatyam was reconstituted as a concert form in the nineteenth century cosmopolitan courts of King Serfoji 11 (1798-1832). Yet this court-based renaissance of the arts was perceived as being compromised by virtue of King Serfoji's subordinate status as an English educated vassal king of the Empire, and also his desire to hybridise Indian culture by combining the best of Western learning with the best of Indian traditions. Native devadasis, besides, were also sexualised and demonised as temple-dancers and temple-prostitutes in the courts of King Serfoji.

Rukmini Devi manoeuvred the twentieth century dance revival by selectively decontextualising the court dance and idealising it not as a feudal dance, but rather as a temple dance. Taking her cue from V. Raghavan, the eminent Sanskrit scholar of Indian performing arts, Rukmini Devi suggested that Bharatanatyam could be traced back to the textual tenets of the ancient *Natyasastra*, and thus proposed an alternative Sanskrit based history, and identity for Bharatanatyam. Like Raghavan, she celebrated the hereditary guru as symbol of Indian Tradition and plotted an anthropological, regional history for the dance. She then argued that both the *marga* (Sanskritic) and *desi* (regional) streams combined in the repertoire of Bharatanatyam, and were preserved in the temple traditions of the dance. Eminent performing arts scholars including A.K Commaraswamy, V. Raghavan and Kapila Vatsyayan endorsed Devi's *desi/margi* conceptualisation, and affirmed the centrality of the temple in the historical imaginary of Indian classical arts. Scholars and dancers thus crafted a selective, *marga/desi* temple-based history, aesthetics and ontology for Bharatanatyam, and this double aesthetic prevailed in the practice of Bharatanatyam until the demise of Rukmini Devi in the 1980s.

Recent critiques, however, have questioned the Orientalist assumptions inhering in Rukmini Devi's Bharatanatyam revival. But few have gone beyond this critique to grasp the interconnections between social dramas of British colonialism and socio-cultural performances such as Bharatanatyam that emerged from these dramas. Drawing on Victor Turner and Milton Singer's theories of Social Dramas and Cultural performances, I will track the overlapping connections between British Social dramas and Indian cultural performances. My aim is to explore the redemptive dimensions of the temple-stage, and to show how it helped rescue from historical oblivion the ritual based traditions of Bharatanatyam, while also enabling the articulation of an alternative theory of expressivity based on bakthi for Bharatanatyam.

**3.00-3.30**

### **Coffee break**

## **Session VI: Performance and Text**

*Dr Crispin Branfoot, SOAS*

**3.30-4.00**

### **Performing Konarak, Performing Hirapur**

*by Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo, Roehampton University, London*

My paper will consider the relationship of dance, in this case, Odissi, and archaeology, here represented by the two archaeological temple sites of Konarak and Hirapur, in Orissa, where the dance performance I will be discussing was filmed. What is foregrounded here is the use we make of archaeological sites and of dance performance in our project of re-imagining history and re-imagining the past.

Odissi is one of the recognised classical dances of contemporary India, said to have originated from the ritualistic and age old dance and singing practices of the maharis (temple dancers), attached to the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri until as late as the early 1960s. The history of Odissi is however complex. It really evolved from the 1940s theatre performances of Cuttack, in Orissa, and it incorporated different performance

streams. Turning Odissi into a classical dance form was not a unique phenomenon, it was part of a broader process of classicisation and concomitant modernisation of Indian dance, of which Odissi was only a chapter. There are different forms of Odissi, some of which are regarded as 'transgressive' – by which I mean transgressive of its reconstituted canon - and to a great extent are seen as antagonistic to the very principles of classicism invoked for Odissi as a form, such as the softness and femininity of the dance.

One of such transgressive forms is the Odissi reimagined by Guru Surendranath Jena. I was intrigued by the way he had reimagined Odissi out of his engagement with two temple sites which seem to have sustained the whole of his choreographic output: the Sun Temple at Konarak, a temple complex which is now an archaeological park, and the sixty-four yogini temple at Hirapur. The relationship with Konarak helps to situate Guru Jena's dance making within the contemporary Indian classical dance discourse but the Hirapur connection has a peculiarity of its own and it is the performance filmed at Hirapur that I interpret as being of major significance. I asked Guru Jena's eldest daughter, Pratibha, to perform there the dance piece inspired by the site, the 'Sakti Rupa Yogini'. To witness that performance was an extraordinary experience, which opens up a new understanding of the relationship between dance in India and Indian temples, going beyond stereotypical notions of sculpturesque poses. What we see in the film shows how through the choreography the site is animated, breathing life into the imagery of the powerful yoginis, reactivating the defunct practices of worship of their ancient cults. The dance performance, which took place at Hirapur was not an established ritual nor a locally recognised performative tradition; informed by the syncretic vision of the choreographer, Guru Surendranath Jena it resonated with the local villagers. What comes out of this film is the idea that choreographed movement seems to be vital to imagine the mobile forces that were at work at archaeological sites such as Hirapur, rendered still and turned into an

artefact in the present – such sites, it should be noted, are not officially in worship. Taking dance to Hirapur has showed that opening sites up to performers might be yet a further way to contextualise humanity: far from suggesting re-enactments, I am envisaging the use of choreography and performance as an interpretive tool, conducive to an intellectual, aesthetic and emotional engagement with the archaeological site. The project of re-imagining from the perspective of today enriches our lives by suggesting alternative ways of conceptualising the place of art and life activity in society and the relationship between them, avoiding the projection of the past as an immobile moment.

4.00–4.30

**Colonial Modernity, Memory and the Devadasi Dance Tradition of the Viralmalai Murukan Temple**

*Dr Davesh Soneji, McGill University, Montreal*

4.30–5.00

**Sastra and Proyoga: Sastra and Proyoga: Building Bridges Between Text and Performance in the Sanskrit Tradition**

*Professor Mandakranta Bose; UBC, Vancouver, Canada.*

While the general interest of this symposium lies in the relationships between temples, architecture, texts and performance, my presentation focuses on the relation between the formal description and analysis of dance and its practice. My discussion draws exclusively upon the primary source material for our knowledge of the performing arts of India, that is, the extensive body of Sanskrit texts on dance, drama and music. I must also clarify here that I understand the term “dance” as a hybrid performance genre that consists of non-mimetic action, natta, as well as mimetic representation, natya, and narrative action, natya. But let me first try to bring this discussion closer than it might appear to the theme of the temple in the Indian imaginary.

5.00–5.30

**Concluding plenary session**





