

South Asia: Challenges and Transformations

15th Annual Conference of the
South Asian Studies Association



Hosted by Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Friday, March 11th to Sunday, March 13th

Join in person at LMU or virtually via Zoom.



15th Annual Conference of the South Asian Studies Association

Brought to you by the SASA Board of Directors 2020–2024

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Special Thanks to:

Amy Osborne, Program Administrator for Graduate Yoga Studies, LMU
David Rogoff, Sr. Administrative Coordinator, LMU
Katie Davidson, Heather Romanowski, Gayatri Sehgal, Shuo Wang, Laine Wherritt, Graduate Student Coordinators, LMU

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Program Schedule at a Glance

(all times in PST)

Friday, March 11th

5:00–7:45pm:

Awards and Musical Performance

Saturday, March 12th

8:00–9:25am: Panel 1

(four concurrent sessions)

9:35–11:00am: Panel 2

(four concurrent sessions)

5:00–7:00pm: Plenary Session

Sunday, March 13th

8:00–9:25am: Panel 3

(four concurrent sessions)

9:35–11:00am: Panel 4

(three concurrent sessions)

11:00am–12:15pm:

Closing Ceremony & Musical Performance
Lunch

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Friday, March 11th 5:00–7:15pm PST: Awards and Musical Performance

Awards for the Exemplar Honorees

UHALL 1000

Zoom Link:

Romila Thapar



Historian Romila Thapar, author of more than 20 books, is Professor Emerita at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her work insightfully elucidates the complex interface of cultures and communities throughout India history, highlighting change and continuity. Her study of Emperor Ashoka examines the role of Buddhist Dharma in establishing a harmonious social order. She received her doctorate from the School for Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

Deepa Mehta



Filmmaker Deepa Mehta directed several award-winning and Oscar nominated films, including *Fire*, *Earth*, and *Water*, dramatic reflections on sexuality, politics, women's rights, and human dignity. Her recent Apple TV film for the *Little America* series, *The Manager*, chronicles the life of a brilliant youngster who, despite the deportation of his parents, competes in the finals of the National Spelling Bee. A native of Amritsar, she studied philosophy at Delhi University.

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Musical Performance



The Los Angeles–based world fusion trio Keenar bridges their vast influences from around world to form a unique sound at the edge of various styles. The group consists of sitarist Rajib Karmakar, multi–instrumentalist James Waterman, and percussionist Neel Agrawal.

Rajib Karmakar is a Los Angeles–based performance artist, composer, and educator. Rajib has performed in many countries including India, USA, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland. He has played and has been featured in various movies and T.V. shows for Disney, Warner Bros., Sony, Universal, A&E Network, and has been an artist–in–residence for various colleges and universities all over the world. Rajib's versatility and ability has allowed him to adapt his skills and knowledge to various world music projects by utilizing his own creation, “Mayur Tantri” – the world’s first double–neck sitar. Rajib received his MFA in Music from California Institute of the Arts and is the Artistic director of Los Angeles International Music and Arts Academy (LAIMA).

James Waterman is a multifaceted percussionist, composer, and teaching artist based in Los Angeles. James has extensively studied West African drumming, Western Classical percussion, Middle Eastern drumming, Trinidadian Steel Drums, jazz vibraphone, Latin percussion, and Indian Classical music. As a composer, James's works span from the stage to the screen, and include the original score for Sharine Atif's award–winning film *Jebel Banat* (Festival de Cannes and Tribeca Film Festival). James has performed at such venues and events as SFJAZZ, The Getty Villa, Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, NBC's Today Show, and Boston Court Pasadena.

Neel Agrawal is a world percussionist performing with leading musicians across a wide range of genres. Neel received the 2021 COLA Individual Artist Fellowship and was recognized as an inaugural 2018 "Cultural Trailblazer" by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. He also participated in “Celebrate the Connections,” an urban arts and education tour of India sponsored by the U.S. State Department, and completed a fellowship at the Harvard Library Innovation Lab for his groundbreaking research on African Drumming Laws. Additionally, Neel was the section leader of the Michigan State University Drumline, where he received two national tenor drumming awards from the Percussive Arts Society. He currently teaches at the Los Angeles International Music and Arts Academy (LAIMA).

UHALL 1000

Zoom Link:

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Saturday, March 12th, 8:00–9:25am PST: Panel 1

Simultaneous Sessions: One

1a. Sacred Goddess Traditions of Nepal:

Many Faces of the Goddess

Deepak Shimkhada, Chaffey College

Sthaneshwar Timilsina, San Diego State University,

Sarvamanaya Goddess Tradition in Nepal

Jeffrey Lidke, Barry College,

The Goddess of the Upper Revelation: The Centrality of

Tripurasundari and the Sri Vidya within the Sarvamnaya Tantric

System of Nepal

Miroj Shakya, University of the West,

The Cult of Vasudhārā in Nepal

University Hall 1222

Zoom Link:

1c. Politics in South Asia:

Kashmir and Human Rights

Bhavna Misri, University of Johannesburg,

The Loss of Home and Habitation for the Displaced Kashmiri Pandits

Kanika Bhalla, Department of Asian and Middle Eastern

Studies, UNC Chapel Hill,

Evolution of the Kashmiri Arms Movement: Jihad in Vikram

Chandra's The Srinagar Conspiracy

Suparna Soni, SUNY Buffalo State,

Gender Representation in Bureaucracy and Human Rights in India

University Hall 1401

Zoom Link:

1b. Literature:

Maryam Khan, Lahore University of Management Sciences,

Exploring Horney's 'womb envy' in Saddat Hassan Manto's

"Mummy" and and Ismat Chughtai's "Jungli Kabootar"

Neeti Shetty, Nitte University,

"Pound her well, turn by turn": Examining Female Agency in Select

Tulu Kabitas

Komal Phuyal, Tribhuvan University,

Rebel as the Creative Anarchist: Modes of Resistance in Nazrul

Islam and Bairagi Kainla

Abhishek Jain, Independent scholar,

Emplotment and Historicity in the Prabandha of Haribhadra Sūri

University Hall 1226

Zoom Link:

1d. Educational Innovation and Embodied Philosophy: Round Table

Marcy Braverman Goldstein, Founder, Sanskrit Revolution

Stephanie Corigliano, Humboldt State University

Kiesha Battles, Bennett College

Raj Balkaran, Founder, School of Indian Wisdom

*Educational Innovation at Embodied Philosophy, an Online Certificate
Program for Yoga Studies*

University Hall 1403

Zoom Link:

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Saturday, March 12th, 9:35–11:00am PST: Panel 2

Simultaneous Sessions: Two

2a. Jain Goddess Padmavati: Literature and Practices

Venu Mehta, Claremont School of Theology,

Constructing Jain Goddess Padmāvati in Gujarati Literature

Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University,

Worship of Padmavati at Vallabh Smarak Jain Mandir, Alipur, Delhi

Caleb Simmons, University of Arizona,

The Goddess's Domain: Kingship and the Authority of the Jain Goddess Padmavati

Choodamani Nandagopal, Jain University,

PADMAVATHI The Jaina Goddess – Significance of Imagery and Rituals

Robert Zydenbos, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München,

The Jaina Goddess Padmavati in Karnataka: Literature and Practices

University Hall 1222

Zoom Link:

2c. Teaching in Times of Covid:

Mayuri Deka, The University of the Bahamas,

The virtual classroom of the pandemic: Effective online learning and South Asian Literature

Gunindu Abeysekara, University of California, Irvine,

Translating and Transforming Our Diaspora: A Sri Lankan American's Experiences Curating the Language-Learning Blog @SpeakInSinhala

V.P. Sagimaynonathan, The American College, Madurai,
Educational injustices in South Asian classes: Mute cry of Indian internal migrant children

University Hall 1401

Zoom Link:

2b. Politics: Belt Road, Pakistan, Security:

Murad Ali, University of Malakand,

China's Belt and Road Initiative and US policy options: is the US doing too little, too late?

Mohammed Athar, Syracuse University,

Third World Solidarities: Pakistan's Relationship with Iran and Saudi Arabia during the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Period

Iram Naseer, Forman Christian University,

South Asia in pursuit of human security; Challenges and Concerns in 21st Century

University Hall 1226

Zoom Link:

2d. Material Culture:

Painting Durga, Embroidery, Circus:

Deepak Shimkhada, Chaffey College,

Born from a Ball of Fire

Natasha Narain, Queensland University of Technology,

ReKalibrating Kantha: historical and contemporary perspectives of a creative practitioner

Nisha Poyyaprath Rayaroth, Yale University,

Caste and Resistance: A Social History of Indian Circus

University Hall 1403

Zoom Link:



SASA

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
Understanding South Asia's Cultures, Histories, Issues, and Opportunities



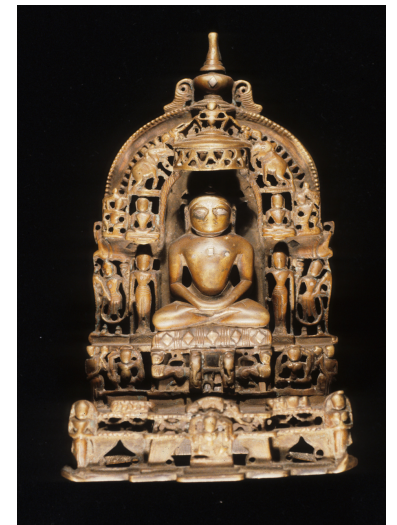
Loyola
Marymount
University

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Saturday, March 12th, 4:00–4:55pm PST: Exhibit of LMU Special Collections and Archaeology Museum Treasures of South Asia

Von der Ahe Library, Third Floor

Special Collections at LMU's Hannon Library and LMU's Archaeology Museum have created a display of many treasures from South Asia. A special SASA exhibit will be open for viewing for one hour that will include clay lamps, seals, and votive images from the Indus Valley Civilization (ca. 3000 B.C.E.) South Asia; early European lithographs of Hindu Temples from the colonial era; household shrines from the Pieper Collection; and bronze images of gods and goddesses.



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Saturday, March 12th, 5:00–7:00pm PST: Plenary Session

Plenary Session Von der Ahe Family Suite Zoom Link:

Launch of *Monsoon: Journal of the South Asian Studies Association*

Monsoon Journal, Volume One, Issue One

Igor Sitnikov, Ryasan College of Fine Arts, Russia and

David Blundell, University of California, Los Angeles,

Digital and Spatial Humanities Mapping: Eurasia-Pacific Early Trade and Belief Linkages

Nalini Rao, Soka University,

Ganges in Indian Sculpture and Literature: Mythology and Personification

Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University,

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Perspectives from Contemporary India and 6th Century Jain Yoga

Debashish Banerji, California Institute of Integral Studies,

Vedantic Basis and Praxis of the Integral Advaita of Sri Aurobindo

Deepak Shimkhada, Chaffey College,

Tushā Hiti: A Stepwell in Nepal

Auroville: The City the Earth Needs, Cult or Utopia?

Discussion with author of the book *Better to Have Gone: Love, Death and the Quest for Utopia in Auroville*

Akash Kapur in conversation with:

Debashish Banerji, California Institute for Integral Studies

Eliza Kent, Skidmore College

Robert McDermott, California Institute for Integral Studies

Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University



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Sunday, March 13th, 8:00–9:25am PST: Panel 3

Simultaneous Sessions: Three

3a. Comparative Religion:

Edward Ulrich, University Of St. Thomas,
Aurobindo Ghose's Early Approaches to Hindu-Muslim Relations (1906–1909)

Adam Pave, San Bernardino Valley College,
Jesus in Hinduism

Rohini Pragya Samani, Jain Vishva Bharti Institute, India,
"Merit" (Punya) Revisiting: Offerings to Śvetāmbara Terapanthi Jain Ascetics in Pandemic Covid-19

University Hall 1222

Zoom Link:

3c. Temple and Monumental Art:

Punam Madhok, East Carolina University,
The Multifarious Temple Art of Jayavarman VII and the French Orientalist Interest in Cambodia

Choodamani Nandagopal, Former DEAN School of Humanities & Social Sciences Art Historian UNESCO Fellow,
Rudreshvara (Ramaṅga) Glorious Kakatiya Living Temple

Michael Calabria, St. Bonaventure University,
The Language of the Taj Mahal: Islam, Prayer and the Religion of Shah Jahan

University Hall 1401

Zoom Link:

3b. Kashmir Shaivism:

Vikram Zutshi, Independent Researcher,
Harmohan Mishra, Bhubhaneshwar University,
Shri Sunil Raina, Delhi,
1000 Years of Kashmir Shaivism: A Historical Survey

This round table proposes to discuss the evolution of Kashmir Shaivism from its early origins to present day and seeks to understand the place of this venerable tradition in contemporary academy settings as well as in traditional Sampradayas.

University Hall 1226

Zoom Link:

3d. Buddhism:

Sirnanda Unaleeye, University of the West,
Bodhi Pūjā, The practice of worshipping the Bodhi tree in Sri Lanka
Jamie Mills, University of the West,
Śūnyatā and Quantum Physics: Voidness and Dark Matter in the Cosmic Womb of Creation

Nalini Rao, Soka University,
Role of Trade, Royalty, and Ideology in the Spread of Buddhism in Deccan India

Vaishali Gaidhani, University of the West,
Understanding the concept of 'khanti' = 'patience' in the path towards liberation with reference to some of the Buddha's foremost disciples as seen in the Theravāda Pāli texts

University Hall 1402

Zoom Link:



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Sunday, March 13th, 9:35–11:00am PST: Panel 4

Simultaneous Sessions: Four

4a. Digital Archives / Caste Confusion / Radio and the Raj:

Neel Agrawal, Loyola Marymount University,
Leveraging Digital Archives for South Asian Studies
Stephen Christopher, University of Copenhagen,
Priestly Purity: Tribal Claims Near the Touchability Line
Chandrika Kaul, University of St. Andrews,
All India Radio and the British Raj, 1927-47

University Hall 1222
Zoom Link:

4b. New Trends in Yoga Therapy Research:

Christine Gabaly, Loyola Marymount University,
The Senses: Cease & Desist or a Doorway to the Soul through the Heart? Sensing your way to Spirituality
Heather Romanowski, Loyola Marymount University,
Yoga and Disability: Redefining yoga for every body and mind
Francesca Gold, Loyola Marymount University,
The Pañcamayakośa Model: From Upaniṣhadic Philosophy to Modern Yoga Therapy Assessment followed by an update of *Breathe Ojai: a newly founded Accessible, Trauma Informed, Yoga Therapy Studio in Ojai, CA*

University Hall 1226
Zoom Link:

4c. Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) and South Asian Studies:

David Blundell, Moderator, ECAI and South Asian Studies,
Alex Ames, ECAI Maritime Buddhism and South Asia,
Miroj Shakya, Buddhist Canon in South Asia
Gauthama Prabhu, Eco-Temple and Buddhist Development of in Tamil Nadu, India,

This panel is based on the contributions of ECAI and its initiator Prof Lewis Lancaster. It explores historical GIS in terms of South Asian research for mapping trade and religious networks. Its outcome is a time map showing Indian Ocean navigation, trade ports, and related religious data in history and why it's relevant today. As Buddhism is an important component to the research, each panelist will present on an aspect of its canon, historical networks, and contemporary development.

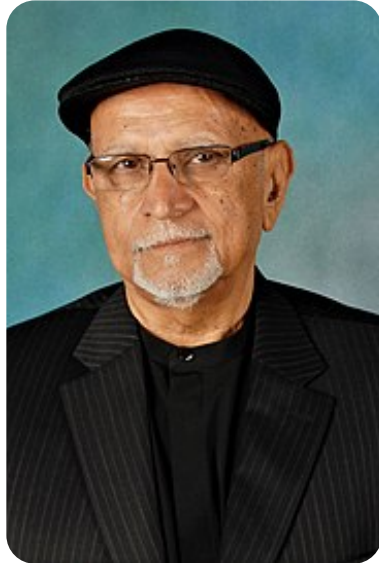
University Hall 1401
Zoom Link:

15th Annual Conference of the South Asian Studies Association

Sunday, March 13th 11:00am–12:15pm PST: Closing Session and Musical Performance

Closing Session

Appreciations from Members of the South Asian Studies Association Board of Directors



Closing Address: Navin Doshi

"The South Asian Experience in the United States: A 50 Year Retrospective"

Navin and Pratima Doshi endowed the Doshi Chair of Indian History at UCLA and founded the Sardar Patel Award. In 2006, Doshi endowed a professorship for Indic traditions at LMU which also gives a Bridgebuilder Award annually, jointly with Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Theological Studies. In 2012, Doshi established the Haridas Chaudhuri Chair in Indian Philosophies and Cultures and a Doshi professorship in Asian Art at California Institute for Integral Studies in San Francisco. In 2019, he established a chair on water and sanitation research at the Indian Institute of Technology in Gandhinagar and received the Doctorate of Peace from Maharishi International University in Iowa. In 2020, Doshi created an endowment to support academic works of SASA.

Musical Performance

Since its establishment in 2015, Los Angeles International Music and Arts Academy has been providing music education, and instruction through various workshops, seminars and performances about the traditional heritage of Indian classical art forms and other forms of Global Music. Our mission statement is that of inclusion and exploration of rich cultures from across the globe. It is our hope to increase awareness and appreciation of our roots.



Rajib Karmakar

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Theological Studies Village

Zoom Link:

