CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA,
R-1 BAISHNABGHATA PATULI,
KOLKATA 700094

GENERAL SEMINAR

Prof. Rebecca J. Manring
Professor of India Studies and Religious Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington

will give a talk titled:

“Unity in Diversity in Premodern Bengal: Rūparāma Cakravartī’s Dharma-maṅgala”

Abstract

Rūparāma Cakravartī’s Dharma-maṅgala has much to teach us about precolonial Bengali society and their environment. As our heroes move around the countryside, we learn about premodern ecology, and its flora and fauna. We see how people travelled. We learn about their concerns. Reading these texts can help us learn a lot about regional history. They also illustrate how religious traditions in South Asia build upon their predecessors and foreground certain aspects of previous cosmologies while backgrounding others; here that backgrounding is literal as the older epic tales are embroidered onto clothing or etched onto weapons. While people from all around South Asia appear in the text, the main characters are Bengali. And Dharma Ṭhākura, Lord Dharma, is a uniquely Bengali deity. He is popular primarily in the Rāḥ area of West Bengal, particularly around the towns of Barddhaman and Birbhum. How did his worship come to be established on earth? The fantastic tales woven throughout the maṅgala-kāvya entertain as they describe his worship.

Date: Wednesday, 22 January, 2020; Time: 3 – 5 pm

Venue: CSSSC Seminar Room 2, Patuli Campus

Maidul Islam
(Convener, Seminar Committee)
All are welcome to attend.