Gods in the Public Sphere: Political Deification in India and Beyond

Conveners: Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Karthick Ram Manoharan (CSSSC) and Moumita Sen (University of Oslo)

Organised jointly by the CSSSC and the University of Oslo
At the Jadunath Bhavan Museum and Resource Centre, Kolkata,
6-7 December, 2019

Day 1
Friday, 6 December

9.45 am: Welcome and introduction to the conference

1. Forging Powerful Icons: Charismatic Political Leadership

10 – 11 am
Panel I. Chair and Discussant: Professor Manas Ray, CSSSC
Speaker:
Dr. Soumyabrata Chowdhury, School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU,
"Sacred Space, Holy Land, Aesthetic Nationalism, Iconic Globalisation: Iconography and Global Domination"

11 - 11.15 am: Tea and coffee break

11.15 am – 1 pm
Panel II. Chair and Discussant: Dr. Trina Nileena Banerjee, CSSSC
Speakers:
Professor Tapati Guha-Thakurta, CSSSC, "The Goddess at her Minister's Service: Reflections on the Festival-Mode of Populist Politics in contemporary Kolkata"
Professor Arild Engelsen Ruud, University of Oslo, "Bangabandhu As Eternal Sovereign",

2. Forming Counter-Cultures: Caste, Religion, Identity

2 – 3.45 pm
Panel III. Chair and Discussant: Dr. Rajarshi Ghose, CSSSC
Speakers:
Dr. Karthick Ram Manoharan, "The Noble Asura: Periyar and Religion"
Dr. Moumita Sen, University of Oslo, “A Necessary ‘Demon’: The Political Deification of Mahishasur in Bengal"

3.45 – 4 pm: Tea and coffee break

4 – 5.45 pm
Panel IV: Chair and Discussant: Dr. Satish Chennur, CSSSC
Speakers:
Ammel Sharon, Ph.D. scholar, CSSSC, "'Collectors of Associations': Gurus and Manuscriptologists in Lingayat Communities"
Praskanva Sinha Roy, Ph.D. Scholar, CSSSC, "Harichand-Guruchand: The Emerging Icons of Dalit Politics in West Bengal"
Day 2
Saturday, 7 December

3. Claiming Spaces: Contested Sites of Devotion

10 – 11.30 am
Panel V. Chair and Discussant: Dr. Maidul Islam, CSSSC
Speakers:
Professor A. Srivathsan, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, "New Statues in Old Spaces: Politics as it played out in Chennai’s streets"
Dr. Sarover Zaidi, Jindal University, New Delhi, "Of Flyovers and Muslim Mohallas: Mapping the Political Horizons of Bombay"

11.30 -11.45 am: Tea and coffee break

11.45 am – 1.15 pm
Panel VI. Chair and Discussant: Professor Rosinka Chaudhuri, CSSSC
Speakers:
Professor Kirin Narayan, Australian National University, "Vishwakarma at Ellora: Shifting Sacred Spaces, Artisans’ Worship, and Caste Mobilization"
Sounita Mukherjee, ex-M.Phil. scholar, CSSSC, "Politics of Unending Festivities and Transforming Neighbourhoods in Contemporary Kolkata",

4: Negotiating the Public Sphere: Law, Media, Economy

2.15 - 3.45 pm
Panel VII. Chair and Discussant: Dr. Anirban Das, CSSSC
Speakers:
Kenneth George, Australian National University, "Theophany, Technophany and the Public Sphere: Some Ethnographic Notes on Vishwakarma Worship in India"
Amit Bindal, Ph.D. scholar, CSSSC, "The Sacred Cow and Constitutional Faith"

3.45 – 4.00 PM: Tea and coffee break

4 – 5.30 pm
Panel VIII. Chair and Discussant: Dr. Prachi Deshpande, CSSSC
Speakers:
Amna Majeed, ex-M.Phil.scholar, CSSSC, “Voluntary Religious Groups and Environmental Conservation: Baba Balbir Singh and his movement in Panjab”
Jigisha Bhattacharya, ex-M.Phil. scholar, CSSSC,"Bazaar, Viradari and New-Media: Understanding the New Public(s) of the Hindu-Right"