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Peacebuilding, Conflict and Non-Violence in Indian Religious Traditions

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To Be or Not to be Violent: Modernity and Sikh Reticence

The paper focuses attention on the fact that the very *demand* for religions and secular movements to be *non-violent* is itself violent – and it is violently policed and enforced. I argue, following Hardt and Negri and others, that this is because the demand for non-violence arises out of the transition and transformation that European colonial modernity instigated across the globe. Thus before we can understand 'violence and non-violence' within Sikh-ism, as though they were two options between which rational individuals choose, we have to first recognize that this topic disguises a disciplinary demand that can be located within a specific historical trajectory born from the violent context of Imperial subjugation and colonization that lay the ground for a traumatic conversion to European modernity.

To begin to question how modern projects employ such metaphysical mechanisms is to begin to read a deeper layer to the crisis inherent in modernity – one that could be framed as primordial and perennial, a layer underpinning the current manifestation of it in the form of the dialectic between violence and non-violence – which is merely its latest expression. That substructure is the tension and interplay between sovereignty and subjectivity.

Peter Friedlander, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia
Buddhism beyond borders: negotiating Buddhism

How do Buddhist traditions negotiate what constitutes Buddhism? In this paper I look at the ways in which the Buddha is used as an exemplar of how to negotiate the boundaries between Buddhist teachings and the secular and spiritual worlds in Buddhist cultures. I examine how the Buddha negotiated the boundaries of Buddhism in early textual traditions in relation to issues such as cosmology, rebirth and non-violence. I argue that critical to this was the Buddhist logic of four viewpoints on an issue, true, false, both true and false and neither true nor false. This logical system allowed Buddhist traditions to negotiate with traditions and cultures in a more open way than Cartesian logic allows for. The practical applications of this I argue can be seen in the ways in which Buddhism preserves its core values and adopts elements from the diverse Asian cultures in which it came to flourish, in countries such as China, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and South East Asia. To illustrate this I examine three issues in relation to Asian Buddhism: first, the adoption of different cosmological systems; second, negotiations in relation to ideas about rebirth; and third, the interaction between Buddhist ideals for non-violence and ideas from East Asian cultures. The significance of this is, I argue, that it shows how, by carefully selecting which points really matter, Buddhist traditions have been able to negotiate with different cultures and develop distinct cultural Buddhisms which all incorporate common key teachings on the nature of liberation from suffering whilst subscribing to radically different world views. I then contrast this with Abrahamic religions and their conflicts with globalisation and argue that Buddhism offers a radically different model for how a religion can negotiate the relationship between religion and society. My conclusion is that by careful study of how Buddhism has negotiated the relationship between its core values and the cultures in which it flourishes there is much to be learned about how conflicts between religion and society can be successfully negotiated to obtain beneficial outcomes.

Elizabeth J Harris, Liverpool Hope University, UK
Religion, Space and Conflict in Post-War Sri Lanka

In May 2009, three decades of ethnic war ended in Sri Lanka, when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were defeated on a narrow strip of land near the Nanthi Kadal Lagoon in the north of the country. It is possible that up to 40,000 people died in the process.

Since the war ended, the Government of Sri Lanka has sought to consolidate victory and promote peace through large infrastructure projects to build economic prosperity. Victory monuments at Battaramulla, Killinochchi, Elephant Pass and at Puthukkudiyiruppu (close to the last battle) and sites connected with the LTTE, including a bunker used by its leader, Prabhakaran, have become tourist attractions for people from the South. Buddhist pilgrimage has also been reinvigorated, particularly to the ancient sites of Nagadipa (Tamil: Nainativu) in the north and Seruwawila in the East. New sites have also been developed, including a beach in the north claimed by the navy to be where Sanghamitta landed when she brought to Sri Lanka a sapling of the tree under which the Buddha reached awakening. In addition, several military-backed Buddhist centres are being established on the main road leading into the predominantly Hindu north and in the east.

Buddhism holds within it many resources to aid reconciliation after conflict. Some Buddhists are using these to further post-war peace-building. However, in the north and east, a controversial use of space to promote the Buddhist identity of the island is causing resentment in other religious communities. This paper will draw on field work carried out in the north and east of Sri Lanka in August/September 2012 to examine this use of space and the attitudes of Buddhists, Hindus and Christians towards it. It will explore the extent to which a Buddhist conviction that Sri Lanka was originally Sinhala and Buddhist is being expressed in spatial terms in post-war Sri Lanka, and whether this promotes or hinders the reconciliation most people in Sri Lanka urgently desire. It will, therefore, work with an ambivalence within Sri Lankan Buddhism between an ideal of non-violence, and a perceived need to promote and defend the Buddhist identity of the land.

This paper is part of a larger project on religion, space and conflict in colonial and postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Christophe Jaffrelot, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France
The uneven resilience of secularism in India

Secularism, in the political field, is defined in the West by three criteria: the state guarantees its citizens freedom of conscience, expression and worship; all religions and religious communities are on an equal footing; and the state is neutral in religious matters, which excludes a state religion. Secularism was established in post-1947 India, being written into the preamble of the Constitution in 1976. But this Western 'ism' was Indianized. First of all, the third criterion of the above definition—neutrality—was partially abandoned. While the state did not recognise an official religion, it felt free to intervene in religious practice, for instance by banning animal sacrifice or opening temples to untouchables. This bending of the standard definition of secularism could pass unnoticed, so long as the other two criteria were respected, at any rate in an Indian way. But from the 1980s this practice was progressively attacked, leading to the widespread belief that Indian secularism is in crisis.

Hindu nationalists pursue not 'desecularisation' but an ideologisation and politicisation, similar to the Islamism desribed by Olivier Roy. In India, secularisation has been uncoupled from secularism, and can be even more harmful than desecularisation to secularism as a mode of cohabitation for communities, as witness the fate of minorities.

Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, University of Michigan, USA
Virtual Sovereignty: Finitude and Sacred Violence in the Khalsa Narrative

The paper will argue that much of contemporary discourse about the emergence of democracy and political sovereignty can be traced to modern narratives linking the rise of the nation-state in Europe to the separation of church and state. Thus the idea that concept of sovereignty is the exclusive property of the modern nation-state has become part of the myth of liberal modernity. In this lecture I want to critically examine the doctrine of Guru-Khalsa (the idea that sovereignty is (jointly) located in the order of the Khalsa) by reading the event of the Khalsa's creation in 1699 as a narrative drama that deals intrinsically with the loss of the sacred (or the death of the god-king) as an essential step on the way to the achievement of a political community (imagined or otherwise). Although my talk will make reference to the deployment of the central myth at the heart of the Khalsa narrative in different time periods (specifically the 18th century and in the late 20th century) as a means for gathering the Sikh community, the crux of my argument will focus on the political theology of the event. I shall argue that the loss of the sacred enacted by the 10th Guru of the Sikhs as part of his new initiation ceremony in 1699, inverts the normative myth of the nation state and gives rise to radically different notions of sovereignty, political community and democracy.

Navdeep Mandair, SOAS, UK
Violent Religion: Revisioning the Martial Signature of Sikhism

In the popular imagination, depictions of Sikhism remain narrowly focussed on its martial heritage, a stereotype which tends not to be discouraged by Sikhs themselves. It is curious, then, given the prevalence of this ethnic cliché, that Sikh scholarship should have so little to say about the *nature* of conflict. While there exist extensive eulogistic accounts of the Sikh military tradition, a prodigious martyrology and a burgeoning debate on the ideological role of 'martial race' theory in colonial India, the interrogation of conflict itself seems to be restricted to defining the rationale for aggressive interventionism and prescribing the rules for such activity.

It has become a commonplace in Sikhism to view war as justifiable when it is undertaken to rescue *dharam* (order or righteousness) from being extinguished by tyranny. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, a notable Sikh apologist of the early C20, described this righteous war (*dharam yudh*) as 'a conflict undertaken for the protection of religious principles (*dharam deh niyman dee rakhee vasteh jeh yudh hovai)*' (p. 663, 1998 [1938]), an opinion which has been slavishly rehearsed by Sikh commentators ever since. This view of war derives its sanction from passages in the canon of the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh (1666-1708); of these, a couplet from *Zafarnama* (1704) has become particularly celebrated: 'when all other means have failed, it is right to take to arms (*che kar az humh heelthay durgzsht, halal ast burdan bashmasheer dust)*' [p19, 2003].

On the face of it the traditional definition of *dharam yudh* provides a cogent moral vindication of the act of war. However, as I aim to show, the broad thrust of Guru Gobind Singh's reflections on the nature of violence seem to conflict with this orthodox view and prompts the suspicion that it blindly testifies to another cultural discourse. Although much of Guru Gobind Singh's literary corpus seems preoccupied with effusive eulogies to a warlike God(dess) or recounting the martial aspects of the divine, it is curious that, amidst this welter of violence, violence resists thematization. Guru Gobind Singh draws attention to this opaque act of violence by placing contradiction at the heart of his theology. Thus, in the *Jap Sahib* 'God' is invoked as 'a wielder of the sword (*satarpaneh)*' and 'mother of the world (*lok mata)*' [DG, p11] is 'cruel (*kalay)*' and 'compassionate (*deealay)*' and exists in an 'excess of pleasure

(*prabhogay*)' and 'perfect austerity (*sujogay*)' [DG, p4] uncovering the intangible sense of tension constitutive of (a) being at war with itself.

In this light a more faithful interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh's view of violence ought to take into account its profoundly gratuitous nature, an intensity which is not irrational but incommensurate with a rationale. Paradoxically it is precisely this *excess* of violence, where the warrior encounters himself in his opponent, which enables the affirmation of the other's presence, an idea which I aim to develop by enlisting Pierre Clastres' rethinking of tribal warfare in his *Archaeology of Violence*.

I will attempt to trace the revision of this martial signature, the shift from an idiom of excess to a teleological account, to the insidious system of control deployed by the British in colonial India. The innovation of the term 'martial races' insinuated a racial kinship between privileged natives, such as the Sikhs, and the British, '...the Sikh knows the Englishman, and the Englishman knows the Sikh' (Doyle, p122, 1974 [1890]. Naturally, this encouraged the view among Sikhs of an ideological similarity, from which point it was a minor matter to ensure a more comfortable proximity of ideas by eliding what were alleged to be relics of thought and incursions from Hindu tradition. In this way the Sikhs went from being warlike to being warriors.

Tony Milligan, University of Aberdeen, Scotland
Civility and Politicized Love in Gandhi

Gandhi followed Tolstoy both in his understanding of religion as a carrier of universal truths and in his advocacy of a politicized conception of love for our enemies, a conception of love which he believed could be found in the *Bhagavad Gita*, with its admiration for the opponent and its reluctance to harm. But here we may wonder about just how viable this appeal was and just how much Gandhi was relying upon a thinly reworked version of Christian *agape*. I want to suggest that while there was a clear Christian influence, Gandhi's understanding of love also had a significant innovative dimension. Whereas Tolstoy based his overtly Christian 'law of love' upon no expectation of reciprocal response, Gandhi believed that the heart of the protestor which addressed the conscience of the oppressor in a spirit of love and truth would unavoidably be answered. It was Gandhi who began to shift our understanding of civil disobedience in the direction of a communicative account which has in recent decades become the dominant paradigm. Yet at the same time there was a doubling of Gandhi's discourse, a backing up of his claims about a quasi-communicative love with a much less demanding appeal to a concept of civility variously represented as action which expressed an underlying state of virtuous character and, more minimally, as action in compliance with important civil norms. I want to suggest that, as a guide to rethinking a contemporary account of civil disobedience in the aftermath of the communicative paradigm, it is the latter which is Gandhi's key legacy.

Kieko Obuse, College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand
What does Bamiyan tell us about Muslim attitudes to Buddhism?Towards understanding 'Buddhist-Muslim conflicts' in contemporary Asia

The past several months have seen a dramatic increase in the global attention paid to Buddhist-Muslim relations, through the news concerning the treatment of the Rohingya people in Burma, and reports of clashes between Buddhists and Muslims in Bangladesh. One of the grave, yet often overlooked, consequences of such local cases of conflicts is the development of religious hatred between Buddhists and Muslims outside the conflict zones, often in the form of hateful propaganda on the internet. Presenting the conflicts primarily as religious ones, this tends to paint an overly simplistic picture of antagonism between Buddhists and Muslims in general.

This paper seeks to highlight the complex nature of contemporary conflicts involving Buddhists and Muslims by revisiting the Taliban's destruction of the giant Buddhas in Bamiyan in 2001, one of the most significant incidents in contemporary Buddhist-Muslim relations.

It first discusses the developments running up to the Taliban's decision to destroy the Buddha statues. It focuses on the disagreement among Taliban members about the treatment of the statues, and argues that their political concerns ended up presented as a purely theological issue. The paper subsequently examines Muslim reactions to the destruction from different parts of the world, to highlight the diversity found among Muslim views of the event, and of Buddhism; some were focused on political aspects of the incident while others argued for or against the destruction on doctrinal grounds.

Finally, the paper provides some suggestions on the basis of these observations as to how we could better understand the on-going problems involving Buddhists and Muslims in different parts of Asia today, and prevent them from being used as an excuse for the propagation of religious hatred elsewhere.

Mark Owen, University of Winchester, UK
Religious Peacebuilding in Nepal: Problems and Potentials

In recent years religion has received much negative attention, being associated with a range of repressive and violent ideologies, and often linked with terrorism and conflict. However, at the same time there has been increasing recognition by scholars and peace practitioners of the substantial resources for peace most religions possess. There are numerous examples of faith-based organisations, religious communities, and religiously inspired individuals contributing positively to pre- and post-conflict peace processes, and increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding and development work, particularly at grassroots levels. In recognition of the growing interest in this area of work, and the possibilities that further study in this area may realise, this paper will explore the problems and potentials of more fully engaging religious leaders, groups and organisations in the peace and development processes in Nepal.

Drawing on data collected during two periods of fieldwork carried out at the end of 2011 and in June and July 2012, this paper will begin by looking briefly at the history of religious tolerance and conflict in Nepal. An assessment will be offered of the patterns and causes of intra and inter-religious conflict since the end of the recent civil war, noting the significant obstacles to participation in the peace process for certain religious groups and communities. An overview of the present state of religious peacebuilding will be given, before drawing on the work of scholars such Marc Gopin, Scott Appleby and Katrien Hertog to offer a more comprehensive analysis of the potentials for peacebuilding in Nepal today. In conclusion, it will be noted that much more work needs to be undertaken to document and evaluate religious peacebuilding initiatives in Nepal, to collect necessary and important data which could be used to help to develop a more context specific and 'elicitive' peacebuilding strategy for religious groups and communities, thereby increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of religious peacebuilding interventions.

Trey Palmisano, The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., USA
Shaping the World Behind Bars: Two Continental Perspectives Through Prison Writing

This paper surveys examples of prison writing coming out of the turbulent years of British occupation in India and National Socialism in Germany that carried within them the themes of social change, revolution, theological promise, despair, and future transformation. The focus will primarily attend to the writing of Mahatma Gandhi and the German Lutheran pastor and Nazi resistor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the latter of whom spent time in prison where he wrote until his execution. Because Bonhoeffer

expressed an interest in studying under Gandhi in the early 1930s, though he was ultimately discouraged from making the journey given the rising tide of Hitler's influence, the ways in which their reflections are shaped offer an interesting reflection in contrasts and intellectual development. Had Bonhoeffer visited Gandhi, it remains an interesting thought project to speculate on the kind of influence he would have carried back with him and how it could be applied in Germany.

Other voices I would like to incorporate include Bhagat Singh and Martin Niemöller, but also lesser known ones like the Jesuit Alfred Delp, the Austrian Franz Jägerstatter, and revolutionary Barin Ghosh.

Ronie Parciack, Ph.D. Dept. of East-Asian Studies Tel Aviv University, Israel
Brahmanic Codes and Transculturality in the Political language of Islamic Preaching in Contemporary India

This presentation examines the permeation of Sanskrit vocabulary, Brahmanic codes and religio-national conceptualizations often identified with the ideology of Hindu nationhood, into the language, rhetoric and theological worldview of popular Islamic preaching in contemporary India.

While the discourse of nationalism is universally associated with secularization, the nation-state of modern India follows a unique model, establishing nationalism on religious grounds. Hindu reform movements transformed Brahmanical models to adjust to modernity (Nandi 1970). The corner-stone of the Indian ethno-nationalist ethos is an ideology known as *Hindutva* (as framed by V.D. Savarkar, 1923). This ideology conjoins religious and national identities, acknowledges the Sanskrit culture as supremacist, and treats the Indian territory as a sacred geography seen as a divine incarnation (Bhatt 2001). Despite being formally defined as a secular democracy, Indian public and political culture are highly influenced by this ideology, whose predominance creates an exclusive discourse of citizenship from which non-Hindus are excluded (Pandey 1999).

Nevertheless, Indian Muslims are actively seeking political participation, and the dynamic arena of popular Islamic preaching (*Da'wah*) is a powerful tool for the rewriting of Islamic narratives into the nation. This presentation focuses on the preaching of Syed Muhammad Hashmi Miyan Ashrafi al-Jilani. Born in 1947 at Kichaucha, Uttar-Pradesh, and educated at the Madrassah Jamia Naeemia (Muradabad), Jamia Ashrafiya (Mubarakpur) and Jamia Arabia (Sultanpur), he is a popular public speaker whose message is widely distributed across the Hindi-Urdu belt. His unique terminology employs Sanskrit vocabulary and Brahmanic codes, acknowledging the Indian territory as pure, sacred space; these notions are re-contextualized into Islamic creedal frames, thus creating a bridging framework for Indian Muslims, and providing new interpretations of Islamic history and its significance in/for India.

Anantanand Rambachan, Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, US
The Axe and the Sandal Tree: Hindu (Advaita) *Resources for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation.*

The necessity for peacebuilding and reconciliation presupposes a condition under which relationships, such as those obtaining between individual human beings or human communities, are broken and characterized by suffering and hostility or indifference and isolation. Un-fortunately, examples of such painful and fractured relationships abound in our contemporary world. In every continent, there are relationships requiring healing and wholeness. Why should the attainment of reconciliation be a central concern of religious traditions? What resources do our religious traditions offer that may inspire and energize us to work for reconciliation? These questions become especially significant in the light of the fact that religion is a factor and a

contributory cause in many of the situations of conflict and discord, past and present, active and dormant.

Religion, admittedly, is not the sole explanation for any of these conflicts and the religious factor is intermeshed with political, economic, ethnic, racial and cultural dimensions. Yet, we cannot overlook the role of religion in intensifying narrow loyalties, providing a motivation for violence and entrenching divisiveness. We cannot explain away also the relationship between religion and violent conflict by the argument that, in all these instances, religion is being used or misused for the achievement of power in its various forms. It is too simplistic as well to attribute responsibility for conflict and violence to what we may regard as extremist and fundamentalist elements within religious traditions. The relationship between religion and violence is too ancient to be so easily explained. The boundaries of community and the relationships between communities are not determined only by geo-political factors, but also by theological considerations.. When we reflect on the role of religion as a force for reconciliation, we cannot ignore its continuing contribution to human discord and divisiveness.

In spite of the fact that the historical legacy of every world religion is a tarnished one, these religions continue to be a potent source of the visions, values and moral energies that are capable of renewing, transforming and healing human communities. Although we must never underestimate and ignore the destructive side of religion, our challenge is to discover and recover the religious and ethical insights, often ignored and forgotten, which are essential for the flourishing of the world community. We may find encouragement and hope in the fact that those religions have survived which are capable of self-correction, adaptation and change. One of the unprecedented opportunities of our present context is the possibility of growth and mutual transformation through interreligious dialogue and encounters.

My paper will identify and describe core Hindu theological resources for peacebuilding and reconciliation, with a special focus on the non-dual (Advaita) tradition. This discussion, however, will engage also historical developments, structures and understandings of Hindu identity that contribute to division and hostility and create conditions for discord and violence. Our discussion of religious ideals must be self-critically grounded in challenges of historical realities.

Kishore Kumar Reddy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, India
The Ascetic Ideal: Understanding of Gandhi's Observances

It is obvious that Gandhi is understood and perceived in a multi-faceted angle, like that of; 'Political Gandhi', 'Gandhi of the constructive work' and 'Gandhi as a being of relentless spiritual quest'. Mohandas Gandhi, the most visible figure of Indian nationalism is often hailed as a saint in the political arena. Richard G. Fox comments 'Gandhi was perceived as powerful for his ability to hold back threatened violence from the Indian masses. That power was taken as spiritual.'

I propose to argue that this 'controlling' dimension to Gandhi's character has several ramifications in the religio-political history of India and further perceive the practice of the 'ascetic ideal' during the nationalist phase that has led to a transformation of the socio-religious and economic conditions of the society. Gandhi categorically denied becoming an ascetic, but he introduced and valorized several ascetic practices like fasting and sense-mortification. By reading his extensive discourses on *brahmacharya* that he wanted to apply on the life of the householder *satyagrahis* including himself, it is proposed that it is at the heart of Gandhi's mechanism to control and deny the individual body is a micro-politics of control. It can be contended that Gandhi's selection of ascetic practices without becoming one is a political action that manipulated to wrestle the controlling power in the public sphere of British India.

I would like to further look at the connection between Gandhi's asceticism and the warrior ascetics of India. Warrior ascetics traversed a strange territory. Being ascetics they were supposed to be beyond the pale of the mundane affairs, but they participated at the highest level of statecraft. Gandhi as a charismatic champion of nonviolence is apparently the furthest person from the ideal of a warrior ascetic. However, I contend that there are certain important similarities between the two that are worth revisiting in post-colonial India's religious history.

Bindi Shah, University of Southampton, UK
Community, Compassion and Conservation: Political Values, Civic Engagement and Citizenship among Second-generation Jains in Britain and USA

Immigration flows to Britain and the United States in the second-half of the twentieth century have changed the racial landscape and transformed a mainly mono-faith (Christian) Britain and United States into a religiously plural one. In both countries, the public, some politicians and some scholars are afraid that this dynamic religious and cultural mix will destroy core values and the social fabric. Amid such concerns about declining civil society it becomes important to explore the relationship between religion, civic engagement and citizenship among immigrants and their children. In the British case, policy makers had conceived of immigrants in terms of race, though widespread acceptance of the idea of multiculturalism modified this narrow approach to include cultural identities. However, it was only in the 1990s that policymakers began to think of religion as a significant identifier for immigrant groups. Paralleling this approach to the integration of immigrants, in modern Britain politics was conducted independently of religion until the 1990s, when politicians began to view faith communities as having a pivotal role in community cohesion. In the United States, strong assimilative pressures encourage immigrants to shed their cultural heritage and integrate into middle-class America. Within this context, religion has been seen as the most acceptable marker of difference and a strategy to construct a non-threatening basis for community. Religious communities are key spaces where Americans, including new immigrant groups, form civic identities. Moreover, despite the official separation of church and state, religion has long had a higher profile in the public sphere and in influencing politics. Using the 'lived religion' approach I examine political and civic participation among second-generation Jains in Britain and the USA. Jainism is a non-institutionalised religion in which faith is a matter of individual interpretation and practice rather than a collective experience. The Jain principle of *ahimsa* and theory of *karma* provide a moral guide for everyday living and give Jains autonomy to decide on what is ethical and moral in interactions with all living beings in the social world. Drawing on qualitative data on second-generation Jains, aged 17-30, living in Britain and USA, I investigate how Jain tenets, beliefs and values provide systems of meanings that become incorporated into an individual's habitus to influence civic identities and engagement. Given the differing socio-political environments and relationships between religious and political institutions in the two countries, I find that the Jain tradition and Jain organisations influence political leanings and practices among young Jains living in the USA, but this is not as evident in the British context. However, Jain principles and values are embedded in visions of the 'perfect' society and definitions of the 'good' citizen, in ways that can strengthen civic ties among young Jains in both Britain and the USA.

Sunera Thobani, University of British Columbia, Canada
Performing Religion, Depicting Violence: Indian Cinematic Representations of Religious Identity and Gender Relations

While film scholarship has long recognized the profound impact of cinema on legitimizing particular constructs of nation and state, as well as in shaping particular forms of gendered and classed

subjectivities, the role of cinematic representations in the construction of religious identities has received relatively little attention.

This paper examines the cultural practices deployed within Indian 'popular' and 'art' cinema in their respective treatment of religious identity, communal violence and gender relations in the Gujerat massacre (2002).

The 'return' of religion and the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party have been identified as key among the legacies of the death of the Nehruvian state and the implosion of the Congress Party. Founded as the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh five years after Indira Gandhi's imposition of the state of Emergency in 1975, the BJP came to power in the states of Gujerat and Maharashtra in 1995. Deeply implicated in the Gujerat violence, the role of the BJP in instigating the violence remains the subject of legal investigations and criminal trials.

Approaching cinema as playing a vital role in the suturing of religious divides in the ongoing project of state and nation-formation, my paper studies four films that depict the Gujerat violence. These films, *Dev* (Director Govind Nihalani, 2004), *Parzania* (Director Rahul Dholakia, 2007), *Firaaq* (Director Nandita Das, 2008) and *Road to Sangam* (Director Amit Rai, 2009) feature and/or are directed by some of the film industry's most popular stars (including Amitabh Bachchan, Naseeruddin Shah, Paresh Rawal, Kareena Kapoor), as well as luminaries from the world of 'art' cinema (including Om Puri, Deepti Nawal, Govind Nihalani, Nandita Das). Whereas popular Indian cinema has often been derided as carnivalesque, with its phantasmic narrative plots and elaborate song and dance sequences, 'art' cinema has been celebrated for its stylistic privileging of 'realism' and its avowedly politically progressive and interventionist approach to cinematic expression. I interrogate such claims by focusing on the films' engagement with the religious ideology of the BJP, the depiction of Muslims and other religious minorities, as well as the portrayal of gender and class politics as they intersect with communal and religious violence. My paper concludes by identifying particular subject positions that are made available through these cinematic depictions to various religious and secular communities as they struggle to come to terms with the violence.

Unni Krishnan K, Maryland Institute College of Art, USA, and Manipal University, Bangalore Campus, India
Mother Goddess of the Nation and her beloved Daughters

This research paper investigates and reveals the overall nature of religious representations and its conflicts, identity and Peace in the social, political and cultural context of India. My research specifically focus on the case study of a south Indian regional mother goddess, who has drawn her inspiration from Hindu religious sentimental groundings and how these mother goddess evolve to become an icon for states and regions, in the close parallel to the supreme mother goddess of the nation. Investigating on the complex dynamics of a new phenomenon that emerged from the Indian culture of belief system, this research would also produce certain popular visual evidence for the further research questioning and its argument.

In the closing decade of colonial rule in India, the British Empire was uprooted by the power of the incarnated mother goddess of the nation: *Bharath Matha* and her beloved son Mahatma Gandhi, who served the purpose of uniting the country. This goddess emerges from the Hindu religious representation of goddess Durga from Bengali influence and artistic representations. Further in the parallel movement for freedom other states of Southern India represented a new incarnation as the daughter of *Bharath Matha*, which in the process of time grew to a state and regional representation. These were accepted then, as a pro-Hindu nation on the lines of gods and goddess. But later as the minority religions grew to

become larger communities, their voice of representation and identity began rejecting this goddess and initiated different icons as their symbol. These representational visual disagreements and differences have resulted in variety of conflicts.

Since the visual appearance of mother goddess was derived from Hindu godly representation, its rejection from the minority was treated seriously and as an attempt to resolve and unite, a non-visual, abstract conceptual mother was visualised by the poet Rabindranath Tagore in the national anthem. Similarly in the southern Indian state of Karnataka, the poet Kuvempu's poem was selected as the Karnataka anthem.

Irrespective of several peace-keeping efforts the dispute continues with new icons emerging from various regions, urging for the voice and rights for identity. The religious debate and harmony take a different distracted diversion with the new challenges of globalisation, the local versus global, questioning the need for cultural resistance in the time and space of twenty first century.

Juan Wu, University of Tokyo, Japan
Violence, Virtue and Spiritual Liberation:Differences between Buddhist and Jaina Soteriologies as Seen in the Stories of Śreṇika Bimbisāra and Kūṇika Ajātaśatru

Of many contemporaries of the Buddha that appear in Buddhist literature, the Magadhan king Bimbisāra and his son Ajātaśatru are among the most influential. Stories about them are told not only by Buddhists, but also by Jainas (especially Śvetāmbaras) to whom they are respectively known as Śreṇika and Kūṇika. In comparing Buddhist and Jaina sources, previous studies have generally focused on the shared episode of Kūṇika Ajātaśatru's patricide-regicide, with little attention given to other episodes—for instance, the future rebirths of the two figures, as well as Kūṇika Ajātaśatru's past life as a vengeful ascetic, which are also presented in both Buddhist and Jaina sources.

According to Jainas, the virtuous Śreṇika, after his next life in hell, will rise again and become the first Tīrthaṃkara of the coming ascending age; as for his treacherous son Kūṇika, nothing more is said than that he falls into the sixth hell after death. In contrast, in Buddhist sources, Bimbisāra is only said to be reborn as a yakṣa despite his consistent devotion; his patricidal son Ajātaśatru is nevertheless prophesied to become a pratyekabuddha or even a buddha in the future after rising from hell. Moreover, although both Buddhists and Jainas give a karmic explanation of the patricide-regicide, Buddhists interpret it as a punishment of Bimbisāra's injustice of killing an ascetic, whereas Jainas regard it as the ascetic's own revenge, without blaming Śreṇika.

In this paper, I will take a close look at the afore-mentioned episodes, to consider how ancient Buddhists and Jainas tell their stories and what their ideological motives are. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate that those hitherto neglected narrative materials provide us with good windows into the differences between the two Indian religious traditions in their attitudes towards violence and virtue, as well as into their different soteriological emphases.