



The afterlife of repatriation

Heritage and violence in Hindu nationalist India

Thursday, May 16, 2024, 10:15–12:00

University of Zurich, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Room RAA E-12, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich

Lecture by Dr. Vera Lazzaretti, Centre for Research in Anthropology, Lisbon

This lecture unpacks some of the the (ill)logics of heritage in Hindu nationalist India by questioning the ways in which global heritage and emancipatory concepts and processes, normally associated with struggles for social justice, mutate and are refashioned on the ground in diverse geographical and political contexts. The lecture looks at the 2021 repatriation of a statuette of the Hindu goddess Annapurna from Canada to India, by combining interpretative analysis of media and legal discourses with a longitudinal ethnography of the site in which Annapurna was eventually installed at the heart of Banaras, or Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh, India).

Vera Lazzaretti is Senior Researcher at the Centre for Research in Anthropology in Lisbon, currently working on the politics of heritage and security in urban South Asia and southern Europe. Vera studied Philosophy and Cultural Anthropology in Italy and holds a Ph.D. in Indian and Tibetan Studies from the University of Turin (2013). Before joining CRIA, she worked at the University of Milan, the University of Oslo and the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University. Her broader research interests include the anthropology of space and place; religion and politics; heritage; securitisation and policing; violence; religious offence; pilgrimage; Hindu nationalism; and urban ethnography.