

Panel 1: Rethinking Bhakti in North India

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Abstract: The panel proposes to rethink the commonly held assumptions about 'the bhakti movement' in North India. It focuses on the formation on early modern literary/religious cultures in North India and the complex interchange between religious, social, and regionally bound communities that went into the making of what is often seen as a homogenous movement. We investigate the fluidity of identities, analyzing strategies of identity formation in paramparas and sampradayas and the overflow of 'bhakti' sensibilities in/from what are now considered different religions, such as Sikhism, Jainism and Islam, and exchange between different regions, such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bengal and the North. We are specially interested in the social implications of the circulation of new ideas, and the political patronage that the newly forming bhakti movements sought and enjoyed. We pay special attention to the issue of genre and vehicles of expression for discourses related to bhakti.

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