

Religion on Stage – Traditional South Asian Performances in New Public Spheres and Media

New forms of transnational media have radically changed the production, consumption, and content of traditional religious performances both in Asia and Europe. The documentation of such performances has become increasingly important for the people and countries concerned, and is often related to their cultural heritage, which is thought of as a kind of cultural revitalization, or used to represent or sell local culture. This process is influenced by international regulations and ideas about markets, copyright, and cultural property. Such performances are often de-contextualized, and re-appear in new contexts with remarkable additions and transformations in non-traditional spaces such as television studios, folk festivals and tourist venues. This project aims to systematically and scientifically analyze this process of asymmetrical change in the public (re)presentation and “staging” of religion in Asia and Europe, focusing on live performances, films, video and audio recordings, printed images, photographs, newspapers, magazines, internet and virtual platforms. It will further contribute to transcultural studies by identifying flows between Asia and Europe, having a close look at “third spaces” such as media, markets, tourism, and developing new tools for the storage and analysis of static and moving images.