

## Prof. Dr. Ute Hüsken, CV

Head of Department  
Cultural and Religious History of South Asia (Classical Indology)  
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<http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/mitarbeiter/huesken/huesken.php>

### Positions

Since 8/2023

Head of the project “Hindu Temple Legends in South India”, funded by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, with teams in Heidelberg and Pondicherry (<https://www.hadw-bw.de/en/research/research-center/hindu-temple-legends-south-india>).

Since 4/2017

Professor and Head of Department, Cultural and Religious History of South Asia (Classical Indology), South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University.

10/2007-4/2017

Sanskrit Professor, Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo (Norway).

7/2005-12/2008

Head of the project “Ritual traditions in the South Indian Temple Town of Kāñcipuram” within the Collaborative Research Center 619 “Ritual Dynamics: Socio-Cultural Processes from a Historical and Culturally Comparative Perspective” at Heidelberg University.

1/2003-9/2007

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, project: “Ritual traditions in the South Indian Temple Town of Kāñcipuram” within the Collaborative Research Center 619 “Ritual Dynamics: Socio-Cultural Processes from a Historical and Culturally Comparative Perspective” at Heidelberg University.

8/1995-3/2002

Assistant Professor (“Wissenschaftliche Assistentin”), Department of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Göttingen University.

## Recent Grants and Projects

From 8/2023-12/2038: "Hindu Temple Legends in South India", funded by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, with teams in Heidelberg and Pondicherry (<https://www.hadw-bw.de/en/research/research-center/hindu-temple-legends-south-india>).

From 9/2022-8/2025: (with Prof. Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz, Jagiellonian University in Cracow): Beethoven CLASSIC 4 – Polish-German Funding Initiative grant, "South Indian Temples: Nodal Points in Webs of Connections".

5/2020 - 4/2021: (with Dr. Vera Lazzaretti): "Security and heritage. Alignments and collusions of two global leitmotifs", funded by the flagship initiative "Transforming Cultural Heritage" (heiCONNECT (2020)) in the context of Heidelberg University's Excellence Strategy.

10/2020-11/2020: Invitation as Global Fellow to the Centre for the Advanced Study of Religion, Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society (MF), Oslo, Norway.

3/2019-12/2023: DAAD grant „A New Passage to India“: <https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/mpi/mpi.php>

9/2019-8/2022: DFG grant (together with Dr. Jonas Buchholz): "Temple Networks in Early Modern South India: Narratives, Rituals, and Material Culture": <https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/temple/temple.php>

Ongoing: International working group "Navarātri, Navarātra and Durgāpūjā in South Asia and beyond: <https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/forschung/forschungsbereich/navaratri.php>

Ongoing: 'Perspectives on Festivity': [https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/forschung/forschungsbereich/perspectives\\_on\\_festivity.php](https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/forschung/forschungsbereich/perspectives_on_festivity.php)

8/2015-7/2016: Invitation as Visiting Professor, Max Weber Kolleg (Erfurt) in the context of the research focus *Religious Individualization* to work on the project „Changing Patterns of Female Ritual Agency in South Asian Religious Traditions.“

9/2014 bis 6/2015: Visiting Researcher, University of California, Berkeley; projects: *Temples, Priests, and Festivals in South India* and field research for the project „Western Theravāda Nuns“.

8/2012-7/2016: Grant "Partnership Program with North America" for the collaboration between the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo), and the UT College of Liberal Arts (The University of Texas at Austin), funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2 Mio NOK / £154000).

## Recent Service

8/2023-: Vice President, European Association for South Asian Studies.

10/2018-9/2023: Vice Dean, Faculty of Arts, Heidelberg University.

2017-2023: Co-Convener of The Navarātri Seminar (5-year long program) at the Annual Conferences of the American Academy of Religion.

Founder and editor of the OUP "Oxford Ritual Studies Series" (with Prof. Ronald L. Grimes and Prof. Barry Stephenson).

Regularly reviewing of manuscript submissions to academic journals and publishers (e.g. "Religion", "Orientalische Literaturzeitung", "Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens", "Journal of Ritual Studies", "Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute", "Cracow Indological Studies", "Journal of the Pali Text Society", "Anthropos", "Paragrana. The International Review of Historical Anthropology", Routledge, Oxford University Press, Brill), Journal for Transgender Studies

External Reviewer for Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation), Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Madras University, Universität Wien.

## Membership

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

American Oriental Society (AOS)

Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG)

International Association of Sanskrit Studies (IASS)

International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS)

International Association for the History of Religion (IAHR)

International Association for Religion and Gender (IARG)

European Association of South Asian Studies (EASAS)

The Kuppaswami Sastri Research Institute (KSRI, Chennai), Research Member

Pali Text Society (PTS)

## Studies and Qualifications

2.7.2003: Habilitation grade completed; *venia legendi* "Indology" (Heidelberg University); Habilitation thesis: *Übergangsrituale der Vaikhānasas. Konstruktion religiöser Identität in Südindien* (published as *Viṣṇu's Children*, Wiesbaden, 2009).

26.5.1995: PhD qualification completed (grade: "summa cum laude"; Göttingen University); thesis: *Die Regeln für die buddhistische Nonnengemeinde im Vinaya-Piṭaka der Therāvadin* (published Berlin, 1997); Göttingen University.

1991-1995: Graduate studies in Indology; Tibetan and Burmese Studies; Cultural Anthropology, Göttingen University.

1991: *Magister Artium* completed (grade: "summa cum laude"), subjects: Indology; Tibetan and Burmese Studies, Göttingen University.

1985-1991: Study of Indology, Tibetan and Burmese Studies, Sociology, Cultural Anthropology, Göttingen University.

## Selected Publications

*Laughter, Creativity, and Perseverance: Female Agency in Hinduism and Buddhism*, ed. by Ute Hüsken (Religion, Culture, and History Series of the American Academy of Religion). New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

*Temples, Texts, and Networks: South Indian Perspectives*, ed. by Malini Ambach, Jonas Buchholz, and Ute Hüsken. Heidelberg: HASP, 2022.

*Nine Nights of Power: Durgā, Dolls and Darbars*, ed. by Ute Hüsken, Vasudha Narayanan & Astrid Zotter, New York: SUNY, 2021.

"The Urban Life of South Indian Gods." In *Prayer and the Ancient City: Influences of Urban Space*, Maik Patzelt, Jörg Rüpke, and Annette Weissenrieder. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, pp. 163-180.

"Ritual Complementarity and Difference: Navarātri and Vijayadaśamī in Kāñcipuram." In: *Nine Nights of the Goddess. The Navarātri Festival in South Asia*, Caleb Simmons, Moumita Sen, and Hillary Rodrigues (eds.). New York: SUNY, 2018; pp. 179-194.

"Gods and goddesses in the ritual landscape of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Kāñcipuram". In: *Layered Landscapes: Early Modern Religious Space Across Faiths and Cultures*, ed. by Eric Nelson and Jonathan Wright, New York: Routledge, 2017; pp. 63-81.

*South Asian Festivals on the Move*, ed. by Ute Hüsken & Axel Michaels (Ethno-Indology. Heidelberg Studies in South Asian Rituals 13), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013.

*The Denial of Ritual*, ed. by Ute Hüsken & Donna L. Seamone, Special Issue of *The Journal of Ritual Studies* (2013) 27.1.

"Flag and Drum: Managing Conflicts in a South Indian Temple". In: *South Asian Festivals on the Move*, ed. by Ute Hüsken and Axel Michaels, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013; pp. 99-135.

"One Nine-Yard Sari, Two Elephants, and Ten Sips of Water. Ritual and Emotions at a South Indian Temple", in: Axel Michaels & Christoph Wulf (eds.), *Emotions in Rituals and Performances*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2012; pp. 117-139.

"Challenges to a Vaiṣṇava Initiation?", in: Astrid Zotter & Christof Zotter (eds.), *Hindu and Buddhist Initiations in India and Nepal*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010; pp. 299-306.

*Viṣṇu's Children. Prenatal life-cycle rituals in South India* (Ethno-Indology. Heidelberg Studies in South Asian Rituals 9). Translated from German by Will Sweetman. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009. Published with a DVD.

Republished in Open Access: Hüsken, Ute, Sweetman, Will (Übers.): *Viṣṇu's Children: Prenatal life-cycle rituals in South India*, Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing, 2023 (2009) (Ethno-Indology – Heidelberg Studies in South Asian Rituals, Band 9). <https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.1218>.

*Die Vorschriften für die buddhistische Nonnengemeinde im Vinaya-Piṭaka der Theravādin* (Monographien zur indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philologie, 11) Berlin: Reimer, 1997.

Republished in Open Access: Hüsken, Ute: *Die Vorschriften für die buddhistische Nonnengemeinde im Vinaya-Piṭaka der Theravādin*, Heidelberg; Berlin: CrossAsia-eBooks, 2021 (Monographien zur indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philologie, Band 11). <https://doi.org/10.11588/xabooks.899>.