

Neena Mahadev

neena.mahadev@yale-nus.edu.sg

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Yale-NUS College, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, Social Sciences Division, July 2017 – present
Asia Research Institute, NUS, Research Associate, Religion & Globalization Cluster, July 2018 –
Max Planck Institute, Religious & Ethnic Diversity, Research Fellow, Oct 2015 – May 2017
University of Göttingen, Trans-regional Research Network, Postdoctoral Fellow, Oct 2013 – Sept 2015

EDUCATION

PhD Johns Hopkins University, Anthropology, degree conferred October 2013
MA Johns Hopkins University, Anthropology, and ABD qualified, December 2008
MA University of Chicago, Social Sciences, degree conferred, August 2003
BA Carleton College, Sociology/Anthropology, concentration in South Asian Studies, June 2000,
Academic Distinction for Baccalaureate Thesis, Recipient of the Dave Okada Memorial Prize

PUBLICATIONS

Book Manuscript Under Review

Of Karma and Grace: Mediating Religious Difference in Millennial Sri Lanka. Submitted November 2020, Columbia University Press series on Religion, Culture, and Public Life. *Under review*.

- Manuscript shortlisted for the Claremont Prize in Religion, Columbia University Press, Institute for the Study of Religion, Culture and Public Life. January 2021, *notification by Institute Director / Series Board*. Decision announced in April 2021.

Double Blind Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

“The *Charism* of the Christian Left: Political Dissidence as Religious Habit in Times of Bi-polar Theopolitics,” in “Ethnographies of Grace” special collection, McIvor and Edwards (eds). Shortlisted collection invited by the *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*. *Under review*, February 2021.

“Karma & Grace: Rivalrous Reckonings of Fortune and Misfortune.” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, Volume 9(2). 2019(a). 421-438.

“Religious Plurality, Interreligious Pluralism, and Spatialities of Religious Difference,” (Introduction on theme Siting Pluralism, co-authored with Jeremy F. Walton). *Religion & Society: Advances in Research*. Vol.10. 2019(b). 81-91.

Co-edited journal section with Jeremy F. Walton. “Siting Pluralism: Spatialities of Religious Difference,” special collection. *Religion & Society: Advances in Research*. Vol.10. 2019. 81-170.

“Postwar Blood: Sacrifice, Anti-Sacrifice, and the Rearticulations of Conflict in Sri Lanka,” special section on “Siting Pluralism,” in Walton and Mahadev (eds). *Religion & Society: Advances in Research*. Volume 10. 2019(c). 130-150.

“Economies of Conversion and Ontologies of Difference: Buddhism, Christianity, and Adversarial Political Perception in Sri Lanka.” *Current Anthropology*. December 2018(a). 59(6): 665-690.

“The Maverick Dialogics of Religious Rivalry in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Inspiration and Contestation in a New Messianic Buddhist Movement.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. March 2016, Vol. 22(1): 127-147.

Editor-Reviewed Publications

“Kuweni & Vijaya Retold: Sri Lanka’s Postwar Iconography as an Affirmation of Inter-Community Mixing.” *Innovative Religiosities in Postwar Sri Lanka*, Whitaker et al (eds). National Science Foundation (US), Wenner-Gren Foundation sponsored. Routledge. *Forthcoming*.

“Secularism and Religious Modernity in Singapore and Sri Lanka: Transregional Revivalism Considered.” In *Secularism in South, East and Southeast Asia*, Peter van der Veer and Kenneth Dean (eds). Global Diversities series, Palgrave Press. 2019(d). 289-311.

“Conversion and Anti-Conversion in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Christian Evangelism and Theravāda Buddhist Views of the Ethics of Religious Attraction,” in *Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia*, Finucane, Feener (eds). Singapore: Asia Research Institute (ARI)-Springer. 2014. p. 211-235.

Published Book Reviews

“Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance and Political Culture of Sri Lanka and Australia,” by Bruce Kapferer. New and Revised Edition, Berghahn Books 2012. For *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. September 2013 issue.

“Language, Creativity, and Charisma: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal” by Thomas Csordas. Re-release, Palgrave Press 2012. For *Anthropology News online*.

“The Golden Wave: Culture and Politics after Sri Lanka’s Tsunami Disaster” by Michele Gamburd. Indiana University Press, 2013. For *Journal of Modern Asian Studies*. May 2015 issue.

Published Project Interviews & Academic Blog posts - online

“Sonic Fields of Protection in Sri Lanka’s COVID-19 Pandemic,” co-authored with Nalika Gajaweera. *CoronAsur Religion & the Pandemic* (academic blog). February 2021.
<https://ari.nus.edu.sg/20331-76/?fbclid=IwAR1t0OIEyG0f1BO1ggaksKQDMl3C1XqQsMnjJo3g2MO31ORZi-rgz8Y0Oag>

Interviewed for the University of Toronto Connaught Initiative website, *Entangled Worlds*, on the theme of Sanctities, Sovereignty and Soil: Sacralizing New Nationalisms and Senses of Belonging. September 2019 interview, online November 2020: <https://entangledworlds.utoronto.ca/>

Articles Under Preparation

“Religious Plurality and the Continuities of Conflict: a ‘Hindu’ Temple in the Postwar ‘Sinhala South.’”

“Conversions on the Move: Trans-regional Religious Revival & the Politics of Mobility” (workshop paper on Southeast Asian “Religiously-framed State-making” presented at St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, June 2018.)

“Conversion as Contagion: Conversion, Boundaries, and Religious Purity in Sri Lanka.” Co-authored with Bart Klem, under preparation.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & AWARDS

Yap Kim Hao Memorial Fund for the Study of Comparative Religion, Yale-NUS College. Project on Religion and COVID-19 “Pandemic Innovations: Religion going Viral,” grant S\$10,000, 2020.

ARI small grant, “Pandemic Innovations: Religion going Viral,” (collaborative project partner grant, matching funds), grant S\$10,000, 2020.

1st alternate (runner-up), National Endowment for the Humanities, Senior Research Fellowship, 2020

Faculty Start-up Grant, Yale-NUS College, 2017-2021

Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, 2009-2010

Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO), Scholar Award, 2010

Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, Johns Hopkins University, Summer Grant, 2005

National Science Foundation (NSF, U.S.) Graduate Research Fellowship, \$30,000 per annum 2004-2007, for doctoral study.

William J. Fulbright Foundation Fellowship, 2000-2001, for 10 months of post-baccalaureate fieldwork in Sri Lanka

Dave Okada Memorial Prize in the Social Sciences, Carleton College, 2000, for the “most remarkable senior thesis by an undergraduate student in the social sciences.”

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

2020-present	Singapore & Sri Lanka, Yap Kim Hao Grant, remote research, Religion & the Pandemic
2019	Sri Lanka, Yale-NUS Start-up Grant, 1 month
2018	Sri Lanka, Yale-NUS Start-up Grant, 2 months
2016	Singapore, Max Planck Institute, 3 months
2016	Sri Lanka, Max Planck Institute, 2 months
2009-2011	Sri Lanka, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 24 months
2005	Sri Lanka, Johns Hopkins Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, 2 months
2000-2001	Sri Lanka, William J. Fulbright Fellowship, 2000-01, 10 months
1998	Sri Lanka, ISLE (Inter-collegiate Sri Lanka Experience) Program 1998, 4 months

INVITED LECTURES

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. Invited paper, “Buddhist-Christian Reflections on Nationalism,” at the American Academy of Religions (AAR) Annual Conference. *Upcoming* in San Antonio, TX. November 2021, upcoming.

“Ethnographies of Grace,” panelist, remote workshop organized by Cambridge and Oxford Universities. December 2020.

Centre d’études interdisciplinaire sur le Bouddhisme, Paris. (fully paid) conference, 2020. *Postponed*.

University of Toronto, Connaught Initiative, *Sovereignty, Sanctities and Soil: Sacralizing New Nationalisms and Senses of Belonging*, (fully paid) workshop participation. Paper: “Buddhist Territoriality and Pneumatic ‘Encroachment’ in Sri Lanka: Buddhist-Pentecostal Rivalries,” September 2019.

Oxford University, St. Anthony’s College, *Social Categorization & Religiously Framed State-Making in Southeast Asia*. Invited (fully paid) workshop participation, June 2018

Keynote Speaker, *New Politics* Conference, University of Melbourne. (Fully paid) Keynote Lecture, 2018. “Are the New Politics Secular?: BRI Development, Social Protest, and Religious Habit.”

Innovative Religiosities in Post-war Sri Lanka, Open University, Colombo. Invited conference presentation (fully paid).

Paper title: “Sacrifice & Anti-sacrifice in Post-war Sri Lanka: Rearticulations of Conflict,” Colombo, 2017.

Sacrifice, Vitality, and Utopia Workshop, sponsored by European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA), and University of Bergen. Invited workshop presentation, June 2016.

Augustana College, Department of Religion. Invited lecture (fully paid). 2016.

University of California, Riverside, Department of Religious Studies. Invited lecture (fully paid). 2015

University of Durham (UK), Department of Theology and Religion. Invited lecture (fully paid), 2015

NYU, Department of Anthropology and Religious Studies Program. Invited lecture (fully paid), 2014

WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED

Of Karma & Grace, book manuscript workshop, University of Edinburgh, December 2019

Siting Pluralism: Spatialities of Religious Difference, Workshop Organizer, with Jeremy F. Walton. University of Göttingen. Keynote by Winnifred F. Sullivan, January 2015.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES

Society for the Anthropology of Religion. Accepted paper. May 2021, upcoming.

Association for Social Anthropologists (UK). Invited paper. *Ethnographies of Grace* panel. March 2021.

Association for Asian Studies (AAS) US. Religion & COVID-19 in Asia. Remote panelist, December 2020

Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in Asia, Bangkok Thailand, July 2019.

Panel on Religious Networks in Asia.

Paper title: “Conversion on the Move: Trans-regional Religiosity & Revival”

Yale-NUS College, late-breaking event lecture, Saga Lecture Theatre 1. May 2019

“The Easter Sunday Bombings and Sri Lanka’s Fragile Peace.”

Madison South Asia Conference, October 2018

Panel: Under Surveillance: Women Researchers in Securitized South Asia. Paper: “Notes on fieldwork in Times of Counter-insurgency.”

American Anthropological Association Meetings, November 2016

Panel co-organizer: The Politics of Revelation

Paper title: “Revelation and Religious Futures in Singapore.”

American Anthropological Association Meetings, November 2015

Panel title: The Strange Self: Exploration of Mind through Buddhism and Christianity”

Paper title: “Conversion Economies and Ontologies of Difference: *Karma*, Grace, and Adversarial Political Perception in Postwar Sri Lanka”

Asia Research Institute, NUS, workshop sponsored by the Max Planck Institute, March 2016

Workshop: “Religious Networks in Southeast Asia II”

Paper title: “Trans-regional Economies of Religious Commitment: notes on Buddhist & Christian religious Networks in Singapore & Sri Lanka”

Max Planck Institute, “Religious Networks in Southeast Asia, part I” workshop Göttingen, June 2015

Presentation of Project Plan: “Itineraries of Arrival & Revival: Buddhism & Christianity in Singapore & Sri Lanka”

American Anthropological Association Meetings, December 2014

Chair and co-organizer for panel: Mediation, Circulation, and the Social

Paper title: “Rivalrous Circulations and Mediated Affects: the Competitive “Sting” of Evangelical Urgencies and Buddhist Nationalist Anxieties in Sri Lanka”

43rd Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, October 2014

Panel entitled: Accommodating Religious Identity, Governing Religious Difference

Paper title: “Modulating Miracles, Defending Sovereignty: Christianities and the Obligations of Sri Lankan Nationalism”

42nd Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, October 2013

Panel entitled: Spaces of Utopia Out of South Asia, organized by Dr. Smriti Srinivas

Paper title: “Christian ‘Spiritual Warfare’ and Postwar Territoriality in Sri Lanka”

Society for the Anthropology of Religion, Biennial Meeting, Pasadena, CA April, 2013

Panel entitled: Political Theologies, organized by Dr. Mayfair Yang.

Paper title: “Modulating Miracles, Defending Sovereignty: Petrine and Pauline Theologies and the Obligations of Sri Lankan Nationalism”

Association for Asian Studies, Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA March 2013

Paper title: “‘Fraudulent’ Christians: Formations in the Sinhala Buddhist Politics of Perception”

American Anthropological Association 111th Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 2012

Paper title: “An Emergent Theravāda Buddhist Millennialism?”

Panel entitled: Apocalyptic Visions: Reflections on Crossing the Ultimate Boundary

41st Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin, October, 2012

Panel Organizer for panel entitled: “Making Merit, Fortifying the Nation: Ritual Currencies of Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka”

“Sri Lanka in the World, the World in Sri Lanka,” Roundtable at University of Zurich, Department of Human Geography, November, 2011

Paper title: “Buddhist Nationalism and the Evangelical Christian ‘Gifts’ of Attraction: The Ethics and Politics of Inter-Religious Encounters”

“Christianity in the History of India,” Conference at Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, February 2011

Paper title: “National, Transnational, or Anti-National?: Perceptions of Religious and National Belonging in the Varieties of Sri Lankan Christianities.”

“Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in the Era of Globalization,” Workshop (fully paid), Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, September 2010

Paper title: “Conversion & anti-conversion: Proselytism and Politicized Religiosities in Sri Lanka”

Society for the Anthropology of Religion Conference, Phoenix, AZ, April 2007

Paper title: "Ordinary Ethics and the Problem of Conversion by way of 'Allurement': A View through the Practical-Theological Lens of Sri Lankan Buddhist and Hindu Piety."

Panel Discussant Invitations

Asia Research Institute, Conference on Urban Religion, Gender, and the Body. Discussant, January 2021

South Asian Studies Program, NUS Graduate Studies Conference, "Region as Method." 2019

Discussant for panel: "Religion in South Asia"

Max Planck Institute, Empires of Memory Research Group, "Ambivalent Legacies: Memory and Amnesia in Post-Habsburg and Post-Ottoman Cities," conference, May 2017. Discussant for panel.

41st Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin, October, 2012

Discussant for a panel: "Risking a Claim: Language, Acknowledgment and the Everyday"

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Yale-NUS College, 2017 - present

Introduction to Anthropology

Religion and the Media Turn (cross-listed, Anthropology & Global Affairs)

Anthropology of Violence (cross-listed, Anthropology & Law and Liberal Arts Program)

Christianities in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Anthropology & Global Affairs)

Modern Social Thought, Common Curriculum

Possible Course Proposals

Anthropology of South Asia

Nationalism, Populism, and Minoritized Communities in South Asia

Charity, Alms, Humanitarianism, Development: Religion & the Political Economy in (South) Asia

Asian Theologies of Liberation (Religious Studies & South Asian Studies perspectives)

Religion & Place-making in South Asia

Violence and the Sacred

'Cold' War Bi-Polarities: Inter-Religious Conflict and Peacemaking in Asia

Religious Modernism and Religious Magic (perspectives from anthropology & religious studies)

Johns Hopkins University, lectureship positions

Dean's Teaching Fellow, Johns Hopkins University, Fall Semester, 2012

Awarded a competitive fellowship to teach a one-semester undergraduate course of my design.

"Christianities in Cross-Cultural Perspective"

"Religions of the World: an Introduction," Co-Lecturer, Johns Hopkins University, Spring Semester 2007

Co-designed and co-taught course to introduce undergraduates to the anthropology of religion.

Teaching Assistantships

- “21st Century Africa,” Teaching Assistant, with Professor Jane I. Guyer, Johns Hopkins, 2007
 “Gift and Sacrifice,” Teaching Assistant, with Professor Juan Obarrio, Johns Hopkins, 2011
 “Kinship,” Teaching Assistant, with Professor Sonia Ryang, Johns Hopkins University, 2006

Other Teaching Lecture Experience

- Religion Department, Augustana College, Guest Lecture, 2015
 “Vernacular and Sacred Language in Global Christianities,”
 Study Leader, University of Chicago Alumni Association tour of India, 2011
 Delhi, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Agra, Varanasi, Sarnath. October – November 2011
 University of Chicago alumni representative and Study Leader for a small group
 tour of several northern Indian cities and villages, in association with Odysseys
 Unlimited and University of Chicago Alumni Relations Office. .

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial Board Membership

- Journal of Global Buddhism*, Editorial Board Member, May 2020 - present
HAU Journal for Ethnographic Theory, Editorial Board Member, 2017 - resigned 2018
HAU Journal for Ethnographic Theory, Associate Editor, 2015 - 2017

Advisory Board Membership

- OMNIA Institute for Contextual Leadership, Inter-Religious Peacemaker Teams (January 2021- present)

Peer Review Invitations (accepted):**Journal Reviews:**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> | <i>Nations and Nationalism</i> |
| <i>Religion and Society: Advances in Research</i> | <i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i> |
| <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> | <i>Religion</i> |
| <i>Modern Asian Studies</i> | <i>Borderlands</i> |
| <i>Religions</i> | <i>Asian Ethnicity</i> |
| <i>HAU Journal</i> | <i>Contemporary South Asia</i> |
| <i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i> | |

Grant Proposal Evaluator:

- European Research Council*. Starting Grant Proposal Evaluator. Invited as remote reviewer, 2017, 2019.
 Committee for Research, Grant Selection (Ad-Hoc committee), Social Sciences, Yale-NUS College, 2019

Media Features

Expert radio interview, APEX (Asia Pacific Express), KPEX 94.1 (California), on the state of affairs in Sri Lanka after the Easter Sunday Bombings. April 2019.

Quoted in *The Straits Times*, as an expert on New Religious Movements, October 20, 2019.

OTHER WORK & SERVICE

Service to Yale-NUS College

Faculty Candidate Search Committee, Anthropology, Yale-NUS College, 2019-2020

Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Yale-NUS College, January 2018 - May 2019

Advisor to Yale-NUS Student Club, Humanism Study Group, Yale-NUS College, 2020-present

Convener, Speaker Series, Yale-NUS College Anthropology program, 2018-2019

Social Media Overseer, Yale-NUS College Anthropology program, 2019-2020

Keynote Speaker, Peace Studies Conference, Yale-NUS College, 2017

Other Service to Academic Community

Chair, Graduate Representative Organization (GRO), Johns Hopkins University, 2006-07

Elected to serve as the Chair of the Graduate Representative Organization, which advocates for graduate student concerns at Johns Hopkins University.

Academic Policy Coordinator, Graduate Organization (GRO), Johns Hopkins, 2007-08

Coordinated Graduate Students' advocacy work on academic policy. Liaised between Graduate students and Deans of the University to formulate effective policies. Elected to the position by other graduate students involved in the organization.

Other Employment (non-academic)

South Asia Outreach, Outreach Coordinator, University of Chicago, 2003-2004

Scholars At-Risk Network Case Manager, Human Rights Program, University of Chicago, 2002-2003

Managed confidential case files of international scholars who were subject to harassment, violence, and threats to their academic freedom. Work entailed identifying fellowship exchanges for scholars, offering them temporary refuge and possibilities for academic growth, with the aim of allowing them to return to their home countries when safe to do so.

The Association House of Chicago, Grant Writer, for social service agency, Chicago 2000-2001

Raised several thousands of dollars for non-profit organization which assists migrant families.

RESEARCH NETWORKS AND AFFILIATIONS

Professional Association Memberships

Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR)
American Academy of Religion (AAR)
American Anthropological Association (AAA)
European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA)
American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies (AISLS)
Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

Active Research Collaborations and Networks

The Theravada Civilizations Project, Association for Asia Studies (U.S., U.K., Asia)
Omnia Institute for Contextual Leadership, Inter-Religious Peace-makers
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Religion and Globalization Cluster, Singapore
The Buddhist Studies Working Group, National University of Singapore
Centre for Contemporary Art (NTU, Singapore), working collaboration on art, environment, and religion in Southeast Asia, with Dr. Karin Oen, Magdalena Magiera, and Arahmaiani Feisal.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES

English – Native; Sinhala – Advanced; Tamil – Intermediate/Advanced; French – Intermediate (written); German – Beginner (spoken).