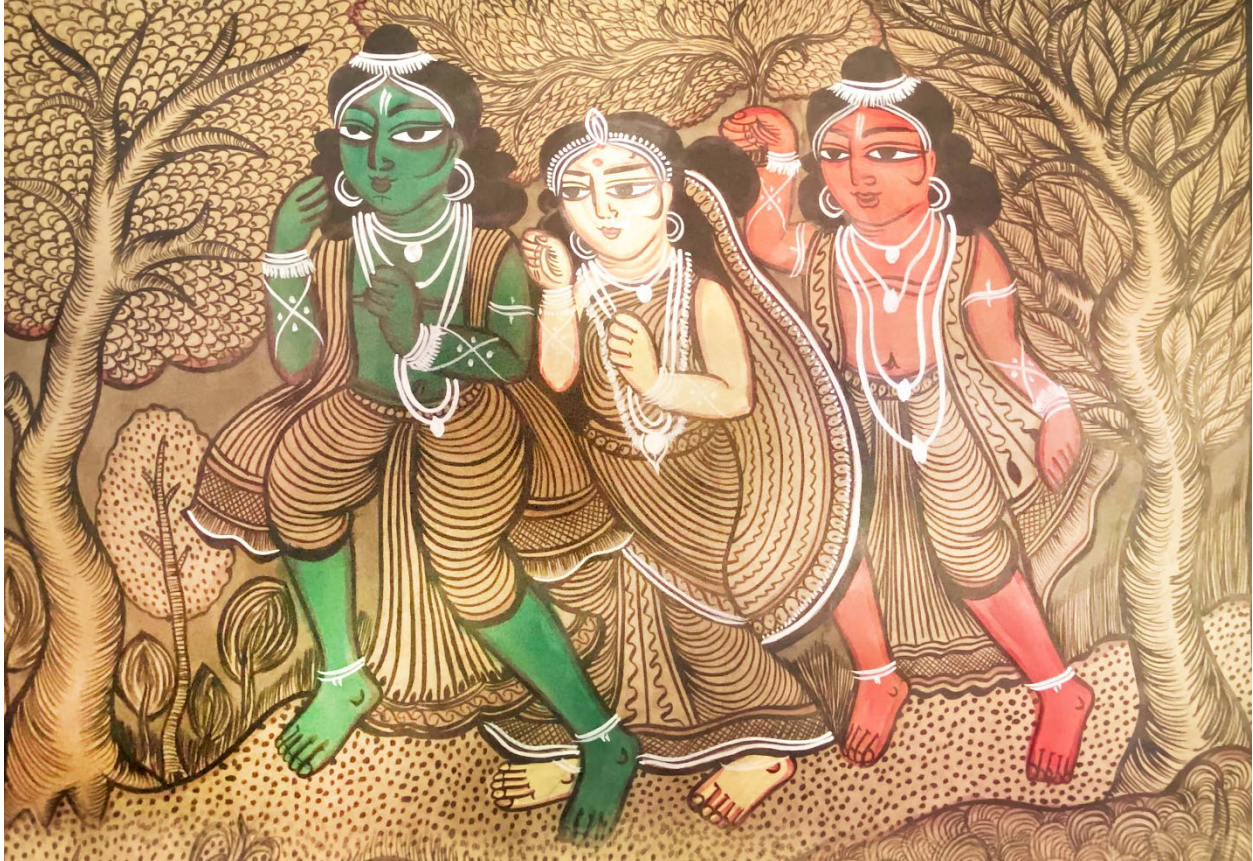


The IHC South Asian Religions and Cultures Research Focus Group Presents

Bhakti and Its Place in Subaltern India Maharshi Vyas

Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara



Ramayana Painting, Bhasha Museum, Tejgadh, Gujarat

Thursday, March 14 / 4:00 pm / 3041 Humanities and Social Sciences Building

In this talk Maharshi Vyas will explore the intersection of studies of Adivasis, Indigenous tribal communities in India, and theorizations of the category of *bhakti* (devotion) in South Asian Studies. Drawing on archival materials and ethnographic research, he will seek to provide hermeneutical space to the subaltern voices of the Adivasis themselves by providing an analysis of *bhajans*, devotional songs, originating from the Bhil Adivasi community in the language of Bhili, an Adivasi language spoken in the mountainous borderlands of the Indian state of Gujarat. These songs offer insights into the self-understandings and aspirations of the Bhils, the nature of the local deities worshiped by them, and the oral-performative methods deployed by this Adivasi community to fashion a distinctive regimen of religiocultural practices that sets them apart from the institutionalized forms of *bhakti* discourse developed by transnational devotional movements such as the Swaminarayan Sampradāya.

Maharshi Vyas is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research interests focus on the religious and cultural practices of subaltern Indigenous communities in India, with a particular focus on the Adivasis of Gujarat.



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