



SENDING FOR THE SĀDHŪ

JAIN MENDICANT PRESENCE OUTSIDE SOUTH ASIA, AND WHY IT MATTERS

Guest Speaker: TINE VEKEMANS (GHENT UNIVERSITY)

ROOM SR 081 - ALTES OBERSCHULAMT, KEPLERSTRASSE 2
JUNE 12 – 16:00-18:00 HRS

Sending for the Sadhu deals with Jain migration history in the 20th and 21st century and focusses on the negotiated practice of lay-mendicant interactions outside of South Asia. The differences between Jain monastic and lay codes of conduct lead to marked differences in patterns of mobility, which seem to suggest an absolute rift between the lay Jains that have settled outside of South Asia and the Jain mendicant community. Combining historical examples and observations from recent ethnographic fieldwork, this talk shows that lay-mendicant interactions outside of South Asia are more common and varied than often thought. The focus will be on mendicants and mendicant-like figures who visited Jain communities in East-Africa, South-East Asia, the UK and the US between 1940 and today, examining the process of invitation and decision making, as well as the immediate and longer term impact of such visits. Within the study of Jainism, this talk looks at often overlooked aspects of Jain practice especially relevant to Jains and Jainism outside of South Asia. On a broader level, this talk invites reflection on how to deal with the tension between academic and popular expectations based on doctrinal texts and prescriptions and a non-conforming lived reality.

Professor Tine Vekemans holds the Ācārya Mahāprajña Chair for Jain Studies at Ghent University. Additionally, she is a postdoctoral research fellow funded by Ghent University's Special Research Fund (BOF). She obtained her PhD in Languages and Cultures of South Asia in 2019 for a mixed-method research project on Jainism, migration, and digital media. The book based on her PhD research, *Digital and diaspora: intertwined frontiers of contemporary Jainism* (2022, Ergon-Nomos), won the Bhagwan Kunthunath Annual Award in 2023. Prof. Vekemans' approach to Jain studies combines ethnography with textual study, but always starts from practices and experiences of Jains. Over the past decade, her research touched upon diverse aspects of modern Jainism, including Jain migration history, changing lay-mendicant relations, Jainism in the digital age, and processes of knowledge transfer in the Jain diaspora.

