

12 March 2014, Wednesday ✦ 4.00pm – 5.30pm ✦
CALs Meeting Room, Block B, NUS (BTC)

Two theories of religion and Indian traditions in the Western legal systems

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ABSTRACT

It is widely thought that all cultures have religion. A more challenging account, by S.N. Balagangadhara, problematizes that proposition, arguing that some cultures have religion and others do not, explaining why the former account is so widely accepted. Balagangadhara's account allows us to think about religion and cultural diversity in a more interesting way. I deal with its implications through case studies - the legislation against caste discrimination in Britain and a case on teaching yoga in state schools in California – and consider what happens when a religious culture like the West meets a pagan culture, viz. the Indian culture, in a context where Western law dominates. Western law promotes, in secularized form, the idea of Indian traditions as 'false religions'.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Dr Prakash Shah specialises in legal pluralism, religion and law, ethnic minorities and diasporas in law, immigration, refugee and nationality law, and comparative law with special reference to South Asia. He has published widely and lectured internationally in these fields. Dr Shah was Lecturer at SOAS, University of London from 1993, and Lecturer at the University of Kent at Canterbury from August 2000. He joined Queen Mary, University of London in 2002, where he is now a Reader in Culture and Law. Dr Shah is also Director of GLOCUL: The Centre for Culture and Law at Queen Mary

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Closing Date of registration : 9 March 2014