

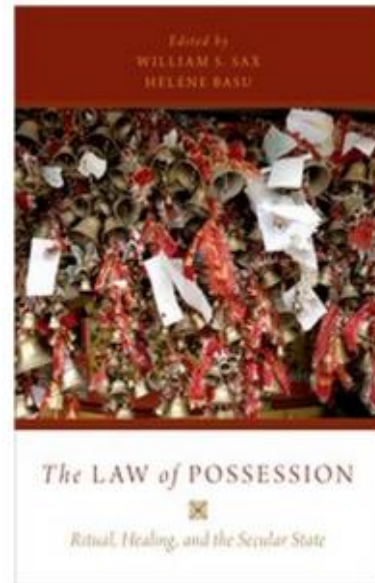
Spirit Possession in the Modern World

three events at the South Asia Institute on **Tuesday, 10 November 2015**

I. Public Lecture by Prof. Heléne Basu, University of Münster:
“Voices of Possession: Dialogical Selves”, Room Z10, 13:15 – 14:45

II. **Book Launch: William S. Sax and Heléne Basu, eds.,**
“The Law of Possession: Ritual, Healing, and the Secular State”
 (New York: Oxford University Press, November 2015)
 Room Z10, 15:15 – 15:45


Rituals combining healing with spirit possession and court-like proceedings are found around the world and throughout history. Such practices seem to be the very antithesis of modernity and many modern, secular states have systematically attempted to eliminate them. Why are such rituals largely absent from modern societies, and what happens to them when the state attempts to expunge them from their health and justice systems, or even to criminalize them? *The Law of Possession* brings together historical and contemporary case studies from East Asia, South Asia, and Africa, and argues that, despite consistent attempts by states to discourage, eliminate, and criminalize them, such rituals persist and even thrive because they meet widespread human needs.



III. Film Screening of **“Drugs and Prayers”** by Heléne Basu
 Room 316, 16:15 – 17:30

All interested are welcome!

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> Drugs and Prayers

The soft shine of film Dattar in Math Grijanti is a large pilgrimage centre specialising in healing possession madness/mental illness. Recently, it has also become a site of experimenting with new forms of community care in the mental health sector. The NGO 'Alinoid' facilitates communication between the mental health department, shrine dignitaries, psychiatrists and patients suffering from diverse kinds of mental troubles who seek help from the saint. Under the heading of "Dava & Dava" Alinoid promotes psychiatric services at the shrine parallel to the cures of possession illnesses offered by ritual specialists. The film documents exchanges between different actors at the shrine (patients-psychiatrists, psychiatrists-ritual specialists, patients-ritual specialists), ledens to the stories of afflicted persons and persons disease-wise on the presumed causes of mental illness as well on the benefit or non benefit of medicine and/or ritual practices as perceived by patients and their relatives.

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A film production of the Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics"

> Drugs and Prayers

by Heléne Basu

A film by: Heléne Basu
 author | Heléne Basu
 camera | Philipp Offmann and Heléne Basu
 editing | Ingrida Schönhoff, Andreas Sankland, Heléne Basu
 subtitles translations | Susann Srinivasan and Masadeo Paribhai
 layout | Verena Figer
 photos | Heléne Basu
 running time | approx. 55 min.
 subtitle version | English

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