

The Department of Religious Studies presents the Annual Religions of India Lecture

Presented by
Professor Lisa N. Owen
University of North Texas

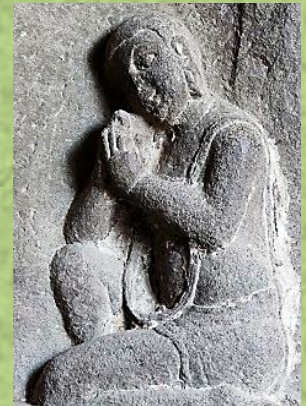
Caves, Monks, and *Brahmacarins*: Seeing Ellora through its Jain Monuments

Friday, April 18th, 2014

Reception 5:30PM

Lecture 6:00PM

Location: Putah Creek Lodge



Created during the late sixth through tenth century, the site of Ellora in Maharashtra, India, is renowned for its numerous Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain rock-cut temples. Given its scale, duration of artistic production, and multi-religious affiliation, Ellora's monuments are often considered to be the products of royal patronage. In this lecture, Dr. Owen challenges this attribution through her examinations of the visual and epigraphical evidence found in Ellora's Jain caves that indicate a diverse, non-royal group of patrons. Her work not only sheds light on issues of patronage, but also draws attention to the artistic dialogues that occurred across the site between Ellora's religious communities. Through this comparative approach — which gives primacy to the local history of the site rather than an over-arching dynastic history — we can begin to understand Ellora as a lived, religious world in medieval India.



While her teaching embraces all aspects of South Asian art, Dr. Owen's research focuses on ancient and medieval rock-cut monuments in India. She is particularly interested in the ways that sacred space is articulated in this medium and how carved imagery and space shape devotional practices. Dr. Owen's fieldwork in India has been supported by an American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Senior Short-Term Fellowship (2011) and she is currently a Fulbright-Nehru Research Scholar and recipient of the Howard Foundation Fellowship. She has presented her work at numerous venues, including Oxford University, Yale University, and the University of Toronto. Her publications include her book on Ellora, *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora* (Brill, 2012).

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