

Dr. Deborah L. Stein, Ph.D.

Keynote Speaker

Plenary Session II – *Rethinking Temples: Agamshastra, Shilpshastra and everyday Indian experiences.*

Parampara, Perspective, and Praxis: Rethinking Living Heritage in Mewar and Beyond

Loosely translated as tradition, parampara, was the single most common answer for any fieldwork question that touched on why in relation to ritual. Why do we pour flour over Shri Eklingji during Mahashivratri—parampara. Why do we make bread-dough ornaments for Dasha Mata before dawn in the shadow of her tree—parampara. Within these traditions, there was always room for change as well, the Jagat Mata ki Katha was no longer only sung out loud live, but was also sold on cassette tape at the local bus stand and disseminated far and wide in recordings. And sometimes, people in Rajasthan told me I was looking at the wrong thing in the first place. Why, asked Adivasi people on Navaratri in Jagat, are you sitting around at this one-thousand-year-old stone temple waiting for a goat sacrifice or a buffalo sacrifice, when you should be filming our transgender performance art of Gavri theatre? Why are you sitting there trying to photograph an inscription of c. 971 C.E. at the Lakulisha temple describing the relationship between the Guhila Dynasty and their sponsorship of multi-sectarian Pashupata Shaiva, Jain, and Buddhist debate in the tenth century, when you could be climbing up to have darshan with Rastrasena Mata on a mountaintop with resounding drumming for all to hear?

This keynote address will examine what Living Heritage means for each of us beyond the surface differences we might imagine. As we explore Approaches to Living Heritage, Agamashastra and the Everyday, and Kahani, Parampara, and Bhavishva, how do our own subjective positions impact our understanding of the relationship between built and intangible heritage? Finally, the roll of materiality, ephemera, permanence, and impermanence will shed light on the politics of our many different and overlapping positions as we delve deeper into traditional perspectives in **Re-thinking Temples: Shastras and everyday Indian experiences.**