

ARCHANA VENKATESAN

Department of Religious Studies
St. Lawrence University
Richardson Hall
Canton, NY 13617

315-229-5083 (O)
315-261-4153 (H)

avenkatesan@stlawu.edu
nacciyar@gmail.com

EDUCATION

➤ **2004**

Ph.D. in South Asian Studies [Tamil], University of California, Berkeley

Dissertation: *Āṅṭāl and Her Magic Mirror: Her Life as a Poet in the Guises of the Goddess. The Exegetical Strategies of Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the Apotheosis of Āṅṭāl*

➤ **2000**

M.A. in South Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

➤ **1997**

B.A. (Highest Honors) in English Literature, University of California, Berkeley.

➤ **1995**

A.A. in Language Arts (Highest Honors), De-Anza College, Cupertino, California.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

➤ **2004-Present**

Assistant Professor (Tenure-track), South Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies, St Lawrence University

➤ **2003-2004**

Jeffrey Campbell Fellow, Department of Religious Studies, St. Lawrence University

➤ **Summer 2000 & 2001**

Faculty Assistant, Summer Language Program [Tamil], University of Wisconsin, Madison

➤ **1998-2002**

Graduate Student Instructor, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley

HONORS AND AWARDS

Fall 2006

- *American Academy of Religion Research Grant*
- *American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship*

Fall 2005

- *Faculty Large Grant Research Award, St. Lawrence University*

Fall 2003-Spring 2004

- *Jeffrey Campbell Dissertation Writing Fellowship*, St. Lawrence University

Fall 2002

- *U.C. Berkeley, Dean's Normative Time Grant*

Spring 2002-Spring 2003

- *Tamil Chair Endowment Scholar*

Spring 2001

- *The Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award*
- *Departmental Fellowship*
- *Tamil Chair Research Grant*

Fall 2000-Spring 2001

- *Graduate Student Representative*

Spring 2000

- *Artsbridge Fellowship*
- *Departmental Fellowship*

Fall 1998-Spring 1999

- *Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Tamil (FLAS)*
- *Regents Fellowship*

Summer 1998

- *Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Tamil (FLAS)*
- *Regents Fellowship*

Fall 1997-Spring 1998

- *Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Tamil (FLAS)*
- *Regents Fellowship*

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

“Virtual Hinduism: Online Sources for the Study of Hinduism.” *Religious Studies Review* 32.4. 2007.

“How to Love God Like a Woman: Some Thoughts on Loving God in the Śrīvaiṣṇava Sampradāya.” (Invited Paper) *Journal of Hindu Christian Studies*. June 2007

“Why abandon a lovely rabbit to chase after a crow?” The *talaivi* in the *maṭal* poems of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār. *Tropes, Territories and Competing Realities*. Toronto: The Toronto South Asian Review. 2007.

Kōyil: Invention, Imagination, Transmission and the Temples of Tamil Nadu. Essays in Honor of George L. Hart. Pondicherry: French Institute of Pondicherry, December 2006. (editor)

“Divining the Future of A Goddess: The Araiyaṅ Cēvai as commentary at the Śrīvilliputtūr Āṅṅāl Temple.” *Nidan: The International Journal of Hinduism*. December 2005

Āṅṅāl's Secret Garland: Translations of Tiruppāvai and Nācciyār Tirumōḷi. Under Review.
American Academy Texts and Translations Series, (Oxford University Press)

BOOK REVIEWS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Fuller, C.J. *The Revival of the Priesthood*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. in *Journal of Religion*. March 2007

Raj Selva and William Harman.eds. *Dealing with Deities*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2006. in *International Journal of Hinduism*. March 2007.

Parameswaran, Mangalam R. *Studies in Srivaishnavism*. *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies*. 2006.

“Aesthetics,” “Drama” and “Television and Radio” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. eds. Denise Cush, Catherine Robinson and Lynn Foulston. New York: Routledge Press, 2007.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER PREPARATION

Āṅṅāl and Her Magic Mirror. Manuscript under preparation for submission to Oxford University Press.

“Of Decoration and Disguise: On Āṅṅāl's Iconography” in preparation for submission to *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies*

INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Spring 2007

- “How to Love God Like a Woman: Women's Voices in the Tamil Bhakti Traditions.” *University of Michigan*, Ann Arbor, April 2007
- “Embodying Memory: Ritual Performance at the Vishnu Temple of Alvar Tirunagari.” at *Palam*: 3rd Annual UC Berkeley Tamil Conference. April 2007
- “Of Decoration and Disguise: Iconography, Ornamentation and Commentary at the Antal Temple in Srivilliputtur. *University of Florida*, January 2007.

Spring 2006

- “Why abandon a lovely rabbit to chase after a crow?” The *talai*vi in the *maṭal* poems of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār. University of Toronto Tamil Conference, May 2006
- Riding a Horse for Love: A Comparative Look at the Maṭal Poems of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār and Jayaṅkoṅṭār. 2nd Annual U.C. Berkeley Tamil Conference, April 2006
- Ritual Performances as Commentary in Śrīvaiṣṇava Temples in Tamil Nadu. Religious Studies Colloquium, Bard College, March 2006

Fall 2005

- Āṅṅāl's Magic Mirror. McGill University, Montreal, Canada, September 2005

Spring 2005

- *Krishna in Spring*. Evans-Wentz Lectureship, Stanford University, March 2005

Fall 2004

- Theatre Traditions of South India. SUNY, Potsdam, November 2003

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (All Conferences are Refereed)**Spring 2007**

- Discussant: “Sacred Songs of the Saints: Medieval and Modern Perspectives on the Tamil Hymns” at the *Association of Asian Studies*, Boston. April 2007.

Fall 2005

- “Loving God Like a Woman: Some Thoughts on Loving God in the Śrīvaiṣṇava Sampradāya” at the Hindu Christian Studies Meeting, American Academy of Religion, Philadelphia.
- “The Home of the Goddess: Procession & Architectural Space in the Āṇṭāl Temple in Śrīvilliputtūr” at the 34th Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Discussant. “Discursive Practices in South India” at the 34th Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Spring 2005

- Principal Organizer of the U.C.Berkeley Tamil conference: *Kōyil: Invention, Imagination, Transmission and the Temples of Tamil Nadu*
- “Embodying the Devotee and Entertaining the Goddess: The Araiyaṅ Cēvai as Commentary at the Śrīvilliputtūr Āṇṭāl Temple” at the Association of Asian Studies, Chicago.

Fall 2004

- “‘If that lord should come to me, fall together’: The Araiyaṅ Cēvai as commentary at the Śrīvilliputtūr Āṇṭāl Temple” at the 33rd Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Spring 2004

- “Who Attended the Wedding? A Paper on the Miraculous Marriage of Āṇṭāl and Raṅganātha as recounted in the *Guruparamparabhāvam 6000* and the *Dīvyasūricaritam*” at the 17th Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley.

Winter 2003

- Discussant for a panel on “Performance and Ritual in South India” at the IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions) Regional Conference, New Delhi, India.

Fall 2003

- “Of Decoration and Disguise: Enjoying the Body of God at the Āṇṭāl temple in Śrīvilliputtūr,” at the 32nd Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Fall 2001

- “Āṇṭāl’s Literary Snares: The Poetic Structures of *Nācciyār Tirumoli* at the Āṇṭāl Conference, Chennai, India

Spring 2001

- “Casting a Goddess: The Transformations of Āṇṭāḷ as examined through Visual Representations” at the 15th Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley
- “In the Long, White Moonlight” A collaborative Indian classical music and dance performance with Chitravina N. Ravikiran, exploring translation of Tamil poetry into music and dance. Performed at the Gershwin Theater, San Francisco under the auspices of the non-profit organization, Center for Art in Translation (CAT)

Fall 2000

- “The Canonization of Āṇṭāḷ” at the 29th Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Spring 2000.

- “Caste and Canonization: The Performance Traditions of the Araiyaṛs and the Ōtuvāṛs.” at the 14th Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley
- “Performance as Interpretation: The Dance and Song of the Araiyaṛs and the Ōtuvāṛs” at a special conference on Tamil Literature organized by the Bay Area Tamil Sangam

Spring 1999

- “Regarding Ritual: Ritual, Space and Repertoire in the Performance Traditions of the South Indian Temple” at the Graduate Student Colloquium, University of California, Berkeley
- “Āṇṭāḷ Re-considered: Stringing Kōtai’s Garlands of Ecstasy” at the 13^h Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley

MEMBERSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion

Association of Asian Studies

Advisory Board for the Mangala Initiative an India based non-profit NGO that works toward providing sustained economic support to disenfranchised families of hereditary performing artists from various parts of South India.

The Lost and Endangered Religions Project (LERP).

LANGUAGES

Tamil (Caṅkam, Medieval and Modern), Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṇipravāla, Hindi, and Sanskrit