



We are pleased to announce the next Friends of the Kern Institute lecture:

The Śākadvīpiya Sun Cult from Ancient Times to the Present Day

by dr. Martina Palladino, Gonda fellow at Leiden University

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2022

Time: 16.00h

Venue: Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 3, 104 (Verbarium)

The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the basement of Matthias de Vrieshof 3.

The Śākadvīpiya (or Maga) Brāhmaṇas are Hindu sun worshippers mainly settled in Rājasthān and Bihār. They claim to have come from Iranian lands in ancient times and brought some Iranian customs and religious elements into their sun cult. According to some sections of the Sāmba- and Bhaviṣya-purāṇa, they migrated from the 'Śaka land' to North India to worship the sun god and heal Kṛṣṇa's son Sāmba from leprosy. This talk will explore their syncretistic cult, described in the Purāṇic texts and some later works: it combines Indian and Iranian features, which are also reflected in the peculiar northern iconography of the sun god. The Śākadvīpiya Brāhmaṇas are still present on Indian soil; a particular focus on the contemporary communities will point to their current religious customs and their unconventional status of brahmins having based their identity on being outsiders.



The arena of the sun temple in Rāṇakpur, in which the devotees gather for sunrise during festivals.



The golden sun god preserved at The city palace of Udaipur

Martina Palladino (Ph.D. at SOAS University of London on the Sanskrit version of the Zoroastrian Yasna liturgy) is currently a Gonda Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden University. Her research at IAS resumes the work on the Śākadvīpiya Brāhmaṇas, as carried out by her during her first Ph.D. at the University of Bologna. Her main research interests include the linguistic, cultural and religious contacts between India and Iran, especially during the first millennium CE.