

Although constructed in very different socio-political contexts, the temples built in SE Asia around 1000 CE and the large temples in the United States of the 21st century share and expound notions of piety and power. On the one hand, the architecture and rituals are exercises in reconstructing and harnessing the forces of the cosmos for the welfare of the community. On the other hand, the temples connect the Hindu heritage and past with the economic clout and political power of a promised future. My talk will explore how Hindu temples in America showcase the emerging social presence of new immigrant and religious groups; negotiate internal diversity, and construct "authentic" ways of transmitting traditions while adapting to the new cultural milieux