

### **Religious processes and a regional tradition in Goa** (Parag D. Parobo, Goa University)

Religious processes have been persistently ignored as evidence for the reconstruction of the history of Goa. The most important trait discernible in the historiography of Goa is the unquestioned sanctity of the identities of the deities. While scholars have tended to focus on aspects of popular worship, such as village deities and festivals, they have curiously assumed overarching identities of the deities stretching back in time. How accurate is this understanding of a somewhat fluid socio-religious tradition and the process of the formation of the identities of deities? Is it correct to say that there was an absence of religious processes in Goa that do not reveal the pattern of socio-cultural interactions between pan-Indian and local levels?

Power and prestige are at the heart of religious processes which are a highly complex phenomenon that entails legitimisation of both local and non-local practices. In this lecture, I propose to investigate this problem, and in particular, examine the religious processes that are crucial for an understanding of the long-term historical processes in Goa. The focus will be on mapping the long processes of transformations of religious traditions of Goa with the aim of bringing about a larger understanding of its society and culture.

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### **Goa's Bom Jesus as Visual Culture: A Monument's Journey from Colonial Icon to Postcolonial Identity** (Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar, Goa College of Architecture)

This lecture explores the visual history of the Basilica of Bom Jesus, a monumental survivor of Goa's Portuguese colonial past. Built in the late sixteenth century as a grand Baroque emblem of Goa Dourada (Golden Goa), the Basilica was designed to enshrine the sacred relics of St. Francis Xavier. Yet its significance extends far beyond its early modern origins, shaping perceptions of Goa across centuries.

Through a rich tapestry of historical texts, illustrations, photography, film, and public spectacle, this talk traces how the image of the Basilica has been repurposed over time—from a symbol of imperial glory to a marker of Goan distinctiveness within India. Once hailed as the "Rome of the East," colonial Goa later became a postcard-perfect tourist destination, with the Basilica's architecture serving as a visual anchor for these shifting identities. By examining this single monument's evolving legacy, we uncover how Goans have negotiated colonial heritage, blending Portuguese influences with local traditions to forge a culture both uniquely South Asian and globally resonant.

Engaging with interdisciplinary perspectives—from architecture and history to anthropology and postcolonial studies—this lecture invites reflection on how monuments endure not as static relics, but as living participants in cultural reinvention. Ultimately, the Basilica's story reveals Goa's creative agency: a testament to how communities remake colonial pasts on their own terms.