

**Panel 152 // Room no. 1402 // Tuesday 25 June 13:00-15:00**

**Social Movements Embodied: Birth Control, Fasts, and Spirit Possession in India**

The aim of this panel is to investigate the chiasmic relation between human bodies and social movements in colonial and postcolonial India. Social movements have long been the focus of social science scholarship on South Asia, but few studies have focused on bodies as not merely secondary but essential elements in these movements. This panel, with its focus on the multiple aspects of bodies critical to the formation and transformation of social movements, presents a fresh perspective from which to analyze social movements in India and beyond. Terence Turner's concept of a 'social body' is integral to this analysis of social movements in terms of bodies and corporeality. This concept indicates not the individual and autonomous aspects of the human body, but rather the body's relational or 'dividual' aspects; it signifies that each body is integrally and socially connected to other bodies. The term 'body', in the analysis of social movements, thus denotes not merely physical entities but also social bodies that work dynamically to create and transform these movements. In this sense, social movements are always already 'embodied'. Three variations of these embodied social movements comprise the discussion of this panel: birth control movements in the colonial era, fasts in ecological movements from the 1970s, and spirit possession in the anti-development movement of the 2000s. First, Matsuo's paper discusses birth control movements and the reactions they inspired in early 20th-century India. Matsuo explores the role of women's bodies as 'targets' of the national development promoted by educated high-caste men. In counterpoint, she emphasizes an ambiguity in the evaluation of the project stemming from women's bodies being simultaneously both 'objects' and 'subjects'. Next, Ishizaka's paper deals with fasts as a 'traditional' method of nonviolent social movements in India. Focusing on the environmental movements led by Sunderlal Bahuguna, Ishizaka argues that fasts have been reinvented as a useful tactic. In the process of this reinvention, Bahuguna's individual body has become a 'historical body' evoking the shared national memory of M. K. Gandhi's fasting body. Last, Ishii's paper deals with spirit possession in an anti-development movement in South India. Ishii shows how spirit worship has not only transformed into an 'icon' of this anti-development movement, but also expanded its influence within the industry. Focusing on the hybrid characteristics of the possessed body, Ishii argues that the spirit-mediums embody both 'nature' and 'the machine' at the same time.

**Convenor:** **Miho Ishii**, *Kyoto University*