

Women and vernacularity in Medieval India

Abstract

Although the process of vernacularization began in India in the X/XI century, some signs of this process can be found already during the first millennium. It is interesting to note that these signs are closely linked to the role that women also had in the affirmation of this process. In the talk we will have therefore the opportunity to see that the role of women was fundamental for the affirmation of those non-Sanskrit traditions which, in the case of South Asia, are at the basis of the vernacularization process. In fact, if the Sanskrit language is at the basis of what Sheldon Pollock defines as the "Sanskrit Cosmopolis", the various Indian traditions not linked to the Sanskrit tradition, in some cases in open contrast with it, have offered a creative space for expression and affirmation of all those social components excluded from the aforementioned Sanskrit tradition, first of all the female gender component.