

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WS 2025/26:

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“Same but Different?”

**Dance Images from 16th to 18th-Century *Vaiṣṇava* Temples in the
Tamiḷ Region and Bengal.”**

Montag, 12.01.2026, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)
<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/61556256731?pwd=03ryEyvleRTgtZGMFkcpnA3TgHSgyE.1>



Although, dance in Hindu art is today commonly associated with Śiva, i.e. Naṭeśa / Naṭarāja, *vaiṣṇava* manuals like the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* see Viṣṇu as the creator of dance and especially his *avatāra* (incarnation) Kṛṣṇa is associated with social dance. Therefore, it is not surprising that we find dance imagery in Viṣṇu temples from all over India created under varying patronage. In the Tamiḷ region several Viṣṇu temples were (re-)built or expanded under the patronage of the Vijayanagara dynasty and subsequent Nāyaka rulers. These temples feature dance relief series and sculptures inspired by the dance imagery from the Cōḷa period.

At around the same time in West Bengal, the Malla kings commissioned the famous terracotta temples in Bishnupur, dedicated to Viṣṇu and his *avatāras*. Their surfaces are adorned with terracotta tiles depicting various scenes, including frequently human

dancers and Kṛṣṇa's *rāsālīlā*, the circular dance with the cowherds. Comparing dance imagery from Viṣṇu temples in the Tamiḷ region and West Bengal from the 16th to 18th century sheds new light on pan-Indian and regional developments in dance imagery.

