

An Art for Everyone: The *Rāmāyaṇa* Scrolls of Bengal

By Prof. Mandakranta Bose,

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APRIL 6TH, 2017 | 5PM TO 7PM | ROOM 120,
C.K. CHOI BUILDING, 1855 WEST MALL

Followed by a reception honouring Prof. Bose's service to CISAR

For hundreds of years India's villages have been sites of rich cultural production, especially paintings of varied forms, representing the imaginative, spiritual and historical experience of common people. A particularly fascinating art tradition is that of the painted scrolls of Bengal in eastern India. These paintings on fabric mainly depict mythical subjects but often contemporary ones as well. What is remarkable about these is that they are sequentially painted frames, somewhat like the modern comic strip, the whole scroll building up to a story. My special interest lies in the depiction of India's great epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This ancient story appears in many versions all over India and even outside India. The scroll paintings from Bengal have their very special, often very original way of shaping and telling the story. That is what I'll be talking about with illustrations of the paintings.



Mandakranta Bose, MA (Cal et UBC), MLitt, DPhil (Oxon), is Professor Emerita and Director of the Centre for India and South Asia Research at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Dr. Bose is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and the Royal Society of Canada. Her research interests comprise the textual tradition of performing arts of India, Sanskrit literature, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and gender studies.

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