

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



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### **Issue of repatriation of cultural objects to be discussed at Laurier**

*Waterloo (July 8)* -- The issue of repatriation of cultural objects will be highlighted during a public lecture at Wilfrid Laurier University on Wednesday, July 13.

R. Nagaswamy, an expert witness in an international suit over the repatriation of a 12th-century icon from Canada to India, will present "The Nataraja Case: Religious Icons, Cultural Heritage, and Repatriation."

The bronze of the Dancing Siva or Nataraja, unearthed in India in the 1980s and smuggled out of the country, was repatriated after the Indian government successfully sued a London art dealer who had sold the piece to a Canadian collector.

Nagaswamy testified about the religious and cultural value of the icon. Based on an examination of the sand taken from the crevices of the icon and other dating methods, he dated it to the 12th century.

Nagaswamy is the former director of the Tamilnadu State Government Department of Archeology. He is now a research member of L'Ecole Francaise Etreme Orient in Pondichery and the Indira Gandhi National Centre of the Arts in New Delhi.

Kay Koppedrayar, a professor of religion and culture at Laurier, says the issue of repatriation is currently being debated in the cultural community. "Museums and private collectors in North America and abroad are increasingly faced with demands that the religious and cultural objects they house be returned to the original owners or places of origin."

Nagaswamy will speak from 2 to 4 p.m. in Rm. 2-112 on the second floor of the Central Teaching Building at Laurier.

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