



11TH DANAM CONFERENCE - 2013

Baltimore, Maryland
22-23 November 2013

PROGRAM and ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2013
HILTON HOTEL, Key Ballroom 1

9:00 – 9:05 a.m. **Opening Remarks**

SESSION 1 (M22-101) 9:05 – 11:00 a.m.

Theme: Charisma and Controversy: Gurus of the Jain Tradition

Convener and Presider: Anne Vallely, University of Ottawa

Samani Unnata Prejna, Florida International University

The Sacred & the Secular in the Life of Acharya Tulsi

Acharya Tulsi led the Terapanth Congregation from 1936 to 1997. During his life he was treated as a sacred, sanctified being, and this has continued in many ways following his death. Within Jainism, what components lead to this ideation? In what way is one person “more sacred” than another? Is reverence to the Guru simply a traditional practice or does it find its basis within Jain doctrine? Some acts of reverence are themselves expressions of the sacred, such as prayer. Yet, other expressions of reverence do not evoke sacredness – such as the naming a school or a building in memory and reverence of a Guru, or naming a journal in his name.

This paper will explore the idea of the sacred within Jainism and, more particularly, it will examine the sacred and secular forms of reverence toward Acharya Tulsi in history (which are particularly fitting now given the celebration of the centennial.)

Pankaj Jain, University of North Texas

and Dr. Vasant Joshi (Swami Satya Vedant), Osho World Foundation, New Delhi

Osho: The Ultra-modern Trans-Jain Guru of 20th century

In her review of Cort’s article on Taran Svami sect of Digambar Jainism, Anne Vallely called Osho “one of the spiritual superstars of the 20th century”. John Cort himself called Osho “one of the most famous religious figures of the late 20th century”. Osho’s parents were followers of a small Digambar Jain sect called Taran Panth. The sect was founded in the sixteenth century by a saint named Taran Taran Swami. Although Osho began speaking about Jainism, he eventually included several world philosophies and religions

even as he maintained his Jain roots of meditation in all his discourses. In this paper, we revisit Osho and his interpretation of Jain philosophy, non-violence, and their potential ecological impact.

Kamini Gogri, University of Mumbai

Bhakti and Panca Parmesthi in the Thought of Srimad Rajacandra (1867–1901 A.D)

Srimad Rajacandra introduced a concept of sadguru within Jainism's traditional devotional structure. Traditional Jainism holds that only the Panca Parmesthis are worship-worthy: namely the Arihanta (Liberated but Embodied), Siddha (Completely Liberated), Acarya (In charge of the Jain Monastic order), Upadhyaya (Highly intellectual Ascetic), Sadhu (renouncer). These categories of beings alone are to be venerated and worshipped. By contrast, Srimad, who lived only for thirty-three years, and who attained great spiritual heights while performing the duties of a householder, claimed that spiritual progress required total submission to the Sadguru – a fully realized teacher who need not be a renouncer. Srimad Rajchandra's challenging new path will be the focus of my talk.

Samani Ramaniya Pragya, Florida International University; Jain Vishva Bharati Institute
Acharya Tulsi: Processor of Deconstruction and Reconstruction

SESSION 2 (M22-105) 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Theme: Buddhist Women Masters

Convener and Presider: Karma Lekshe Tsomo, University of San Diego

Nona Olivia, Sati Institute of Theravada Studies

The Women Masters of the Therigatha

Until recently there were very few women masters to act as teachers, mentors, or role models for younger practitioners. This did not stop people from needing female role models and the small but rich collection of verses of the *Therigatha* provide much evidence that women masters indeed existed.

Interesting work has been done by Stewart (*On Longing*), Brown and others on the use of cultural artifacts signifying that which is lost yet remains essential to a society. Texts from antiquity are often imbued with significance in order to stand in as representations of the ideal when the material reality no longer exists. The *bhikkhunis* of the *Therigatha* are a case in point.

In actuality, we know very little about the *bhikkhunis* in the *Therigatha*. Their biographies come from Dhammapala's fourth-century commentary, written some eight hundred years after the verses' original composition. Nonetheless, the *bhikkhunis* of the Pali canon, the majority of whom come to us via the *Therigatha*, are essential to many people. It does not matter how little information we have about these women disciples of the Buddha; in fact, for many of us, less is more. It does not shock us that these women's lives remain in obscurity, because even today so many Buddhist women still live in obscurity. Through the stories of the sufferings they endured before ordination, the obstacles they encountered

along the path, their gratitude to their own female teachers, and their eventual enlightenment, the verses of the *Therīgatha* tell stories that are relevant and inspirational to people today. In this way, they are our women masters.

In this talk, I will discuss how these ancient *bhikkhunis* act as contemporary women masters to women today, building bridges for us to them through their verses.

Victoria Kennick, University of Maryland University College

Wherefore the Tears, Prajāpatī? Moving Gautama Buddha's Aunt from the Page into Cultural Context

Prajāpatī the Great (Mahā-Prajāpatī) may be the most famous Buddhist woman. She was the first *bhik?unī*, and headed the order for nuns. She was also the younger sister of Gautama's mother. The two were co-wives of a Sakyan clan leader; and Prajāpatī suckled the "future Buddha" after her sister passed away. As the surviving "queen," Prajāpatī became an influential leader in her own right, counsel to "five hundred" Sakyan and Koliyan women.

Prajāpatī's story accompanied the *bhik?unī vinaya* across the Buddhist cultural spectrum. Her life carries special import today because she both accepted the now infamous "eight special rules" (*guru-dharma*) as a condition for the institution of the first *bhik?unī sangha*, and unsuccessfully tried to amend them. The legacy of a woman's inferior status relative to that of a man in the *sangha* has followed nuns from the inception of the order until today. In the interest of Buddhist reform vis-à-vis women, it behooves us to understand Prajāpatī's life as a leader of the *bhik?unī sangha*. Despite the paucity of historical details about her life, we can still reconstruct something of her life based on a study of Buddhist scriptures in conjunction with the cultural context in which she lived.

To get a sense of Prajāpatī from scriptures alone is problematic. Prajāpatī as a *weeping woman* is a prominent image that comes to us. Despite her reputation as Prajāpatī the *Great*, we typically hear about the woman *crying* when Gautama refuses her first request to found a *bhik?unī* order; we hear about her dusty, swollen feet and *more tears* when she follows Gautama for miles to reiterate the request (op. cit, *Cullavagga* X, I, 1-4). For example, in the three sentences that Denise Carmody devotes to Prajāpatī in *Women and World Religions*, she tells us that Buddha "showed himself very cautious" about creating a Sangha for nuns, and that "Prajāpatī therefore was discouraged and left crying" (Prentice Hall, 1989, 2nd ed. p. 70).

Were Prajāpatī's tears those of an emotional female; or were they akin to Ananda's tears, shed upon initially being refused admission to the first Buddhist council? And what of Prajāpatī beyond the tears? We must ask: What did it mean to be one of eight daughters of a Koliyan leader? Who were the "five hundred" women looking to Prajāpatī for practical guidance and spiritual counsel? What was the state of pre-Buddhist wandering female ascetics in North India? How did the early *bhik?unī* community live under the rule of conduct (*vinaya*) that both protected and constrained them? What strides did Prajāpatī make in molding the women's community, and what contemplative realizations and social stature underpinned her authority? When restored into cultural context in light of these questions, the figure of Prajāpatī comes into palpable relief. Any additional light shed on Prajāpatī will be useful not only for our understanding of the early Buddhist tradition, but

also in the quest for an egalitarian *sangha*-- because to understand more about Prajāpatī is to understand more about core Buddhist values.

Karma Lekshe Tsomo, University of San Diego

Illustrating the Way: The Life and Times of Bhiksuni Shig Hiu Wan

Bhiksuni Shig Hiu Wan was a Buddhist master in more than one sense of the word. She was not only a highly accomplished practitioner, teacher, artist, and poet, but she was also a pioneer in higher education. When she arrived in Taiwan in 1966 and began teaching at the Chinese Cultural University, she was the first Buddhist nun to teach at the university level in Taiwan. Now it is commonplace for nuns to get university appointments, but at that time it was a groundbreaking achievement. For a Buddhist nun to teach at a public university was a step that was not universally approved by the general public and was covertly opposed by some. Shihfu did not allow herself to be intimidated by disapproval. Rather than overtly challenge incidences of religious discrimination and gender discrimination, she simply carried on her work with great sincerity and a purity of motivation that eventually dispelled any opposition. At that time, it was highly unusual for a nun to take a visible role in the public sphere, so when Shihfu allowed her paintings to be exhibited in Taipei, this was an important breakthrough in helping raise awareness of Buddhist culture, Buddhist women's achievements, and women's achievements in general. Her achievements in the field of literature and philosophy rank her as probably the most outstanding Buddhist nun of the twentieth century.

Shihfu displayed an international awareness and vision that was highly unusual for a Buddhist scholar of her generation. Beginning in 1976, together with Professor Richard Gard of the Institute for the Advanced Study of World Religions in New York, she initiated a series of conferences known as the International Buddhist Studies Conferences. These conferences continue to the present day, becoming the premier gatherings of Buddhist scholars from around the world, and served as a model for the Sakyadhita International Conferences on Buddhist Women. As with much of her other work, Shihfu's leadership in this groundbreaking international effort is often overlooked. In 1990, Shihfu led a delegation to the International Buddhist Studies Conference in Tokyo, along with a cohort of seventeen nuns. At that conference, these highly educated nuns were insulted by a male speaker who commented, "The presence of so many *bhiks.un.is* today is the result of the decline of the Dharma." In the face of this provocation, she maintained a calm, "cool" demeanor. This "cool" quality was famously instantiated in her paintings and also in her clear, totally genuine, and forthright presence. The only exceptions I witnessed in my twenty-year association with Shihfu were those occasions – "teaching moments" – when she embodied a forceful, even wrathful, guise for the benefit of her students.

In this paper, I take an ethnographic approach in an effort to understand Shihfu's unique teaching style and the qualities that cause many to rank her as one of the leading Buddhist masters of the twentieth century. Based on fieldwork conducted in Taiwan between 1982 and 2002, I will consider her life's work and the impact that she has had on successive generations of Buddhists, particularly Buddhist women teachers, in Taiwan and abroad. In the process, I will examine what it means to be a uniquely non-traditional master in an overtly, proudly traditional Buddhist culture.

Linda LaMacchia, University of Maryland University College

Buddhist Women Masters of Kinnaur: Why Don't Nuns Sing about Nuns?

In Kinnaur, a mountainous district in northwest India on the Tibet border, men and women masters have transmitted the Tibetan form of Buddhism since at least the 10th century, and oral traditions—songs and stories—have been a major means of this transmission. Tibetan and local Kinnauri language songs both teach dharma (the Buddha's teachings). But local language songs also transmit the history and culture of Kinnauri Buddhism, in songs about famous lamas in ancient times, local or famous lamas in modern times, temples, and cultural practices (such as New Years), and in songs about one model nun, called Nyima Zangmo. Apart from her and the Buddha's mother and aunt and, from the 7th century, Padmasambhava's two consorts, Mandarava and Yeshe Tsogyel, there are no other exemplary female figures in the songs Kinnauri nuns sing—or, more specifically, in the 37+ songs they have recorded for me (see LaMacchia 2013). Why not?

My focus in this paper is on contemporary examples of Buddhist women masters in Kinnaur. After defining the varieties of “Buddhist masters,” citing the Dalai Lama (Mullin 1985)—and using as methods fieldwork research, participant-observation, recorded songs, interviews, and life stories—I argue that there are now, and have been before, Buddhist women masters who are good practitioners, good scholars, and valid qualified teachers. But their modes of being masters are different from (some) men's. One aspect of some women's mode of being Buddhist masters is a hands-on and relational quality of working and helping others, in violation of a possible “religious bias toward autonomy and antirelationalism” (Ortner 1978). On the other hand, their mode may be that of good practitioners, solitary, invisible, and unnamed. Another aspect of women's mode of being masters is that they are ordinary, humble, without fame and external trappings. They are “nothing special” (in the Zen sense). As such, Nyima Zangmo in song and the other nuns in their own and others' life stories are exemplary, ordinary good nuns and Buddhist women masters. Why is this significant? The paper concludes that not only are there various modes of being a master, but the inspiration to do something oneself can come better from an ordinary good spiritual practitioner (in any case, for Kinnauri women): “Emulation of the master is the essence of the master-disciple relationship” (Encyclopedia of Religion, 2005, p. 2360).

Holly Gayley, University of Colorado, Boulder

Heroine in Troubled Times: The Miracles of Khandro Tāre Lhamo during the Socialist Transformation of Tibet

The Buddhist female master Khandro Tāre Lhamo (1938–2002) served as a beacon of hope for her local community during the devastating decades that followed the forcible incorporation of Tibetan areas into the PRC and their socialist transformation in the late 1950s. Despite consignment to manual labor during those decades (1959–78), Khandro Tāre Lhamo maintained her religious practice in secret and responded privately to those who approached her for divinations, prayers for the dead, and other requests. According to the oral and biographical accounts that I have gathered, she performed minor miracles on behalf of locals in her home county of Padma (Ch: Baima) throughout this period. She is credited with miraculously producing food for her work unit during famine, preventing a

rock slide from falling on a road crew, helping locals to find lost herds of yak, and appearing in visions to imprisoned lamas to console them. These tales and numerous others showcase the compassion and tantric prowess attributed to her at a time of collective trauma. What is the significance of her miracles in the midst of this period of historical devastation? What is the social meaning and function of miracles performed by a female Buddhist master? In addressing these questions, I elucidate how Khandro Tāre Lhamo emerged as a local heroine in her youth and later, during the 1980s and 90s, a significant leader in the revival of Buddhism in the Tibetan region of Golok.

Zhargal Aiakova, Buryat State Academy of Agriculture

Tenzin Chodron: A Scholar Nun of Post-Soviet Buryatia

In the whole of Russia, there are reportedly only four Buddhist women who have taken the precepts of a nun. All of them are currently novice nuns (Sanskrit: *sramanerika*; Tibetan: *getsulma*). One of them is the Buryat nun Tenzin Chodron (Irina Urbanayeva), who received this name from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama when he ordained her in Dharamsala, India, in 2003. Tenzin Chodron has a doctoral degree in Philosophy and currently works as a researcher at the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies in Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia. The example of Tenzin Chodron illustrates that, like men, women have the right to be ordained, at least as a novice, and to be educated in a rigorous Buddhist philosophical way. Like many other nuns in the contemporary world, she is actively engaged in society. The numerous projects she has initiated for the benefit of the people of Buryatia, for example, petitioning the president of Russia for a visa for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, provide a lens for understanding Buddhism in Buryatia today.

SESSION 3 (M12-204) 2:00 – 4:30 p.m

Theme: Swami Vivekananda: A Modern Hindu Master and His Global Relevance

Convener and President: Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College

James Madaio, University of Manchester

The Problematic Alterity of ‘Neo’-Vedānta: Swami Vivekananda, Vidyāraṇya, and the Scholarly Construction of Neo-Vedānta

'Neo-Vedānta' is the standard scholarly term for the philosophical-theological teachings of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). The concretization of labels, however, can occult as much as it can reveal. I argue that the scholarly construction of 'Neo-Vedānta' emerged within an essentializing, orientalist discourse that considered the commentaries of Śaṅkara (c. 8th century) as the original and pure Advaita. From this vantage point, colonial-period teachers who self-identified with, or drew from, Advaita tradition were considered Neo-Vedāntins in a way that was at once pejorative and indicative of rupture with the classical past. The dichotomy between Śaṅkarite (or classical) Advaita and Neo-Vedānta—which itself mirrors the orientalist interest in all things ancient and the post-colonial studies emphasis on the Victorian 'invention of tradition'—disregards and obfuscates the varied articulations of Advaita that developed in the centuries after Śaṅkara, particularly in the medieval period.

In this paper, I will examine some of the prevalent characterizations of Swami Vivekananda's 'Neo-Vedānta,' such as eclecticism, inclusivism and the centrality of experience (*anubhāva*), in comparison to the Advaita articulated in the *Jīvanmuktiviveka* of Vidyāraṇya, the fourteenth-century pontiff of the Śṛṅgeri-pīṭha. Although there are unique aspects to Swami Vivekananda's teachings, I argue that the scholarly construction of Neo-Vedānta overlooks important philosophical continuities Swami Vivekananda shares with pre-colonial Advaitins, particularly Vidyāraṇya. This discussion, therefore, will call into question the utility of the term 'Neo-Vedānta,' or at least some of its presuppositions, and investigate, more broadly, the problem of 'orthodoxy' in the Advaitin context.

Pravrajika Vrajaprana, Vedanta Society of Southern California

Vivekananda as Agent for Change in America's Religious Landscape

In India Swami Vivekananda is widely known as a patriot, reformer and religious leader. His birthday is celebrated as National Youth Day and his well-recognized visage is seen throughout the land. His words are well known and widely quoted and appropriated by political parties of every spectrum.

By contrast, few in North America have any idea who Vivekananda is, nor do they realize how influential he was in changing the course of America's religious and cultural trajectory. But change it he did, even while his name remains largely unknown. While Vivekananda came to prominence in the late nineteenth century, he was largely forgotten within a generation. However, the seeds for change were planted during his four years in America; eventually these seeds would come to fruition, thus creating the Hinduism-infused American religious landscape that we see today.

Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai'i, Manoa

Swami Vivekananda: Inspiring Awareness through Education

Swami Vivekananda is best known in the west for introducing us to Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, to Vedanta, to his teachings on yoga, etc. What tends to be less known is his philosophy and writings on education. My paper will focus on this aspect of his work and the role that it can play in promoting an expanded awareness about life and self for western students.

Neela Bhattacharya-Saxena, Nassau Community College

'Kali the Mother': Vivekananda, Ramkrishna and the Primacy of the Mother Principle

Stories about Vivekananda's relationship with his guru Ramkrishna are well known, and stories regarding Ramkrishna's profound Kalibhava also abound; yet there is very little known about Vivekananda's Kali sadhana. Except his poem "Kali the Mother" and some stray references, we know almost nothing about this vital relationship. Sister Nibedita in *The Master as I Saw Him* relates Vivekananda's struggle with Kali: "How I used to hate Kali ... and all Her ways! That was the ground of my six years' fight—that I would not accept Her. But I had to accept Her at last!.... You see, I cannot but believe that there is

somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali and Mother.” Looking carefully at Vivekananda’s poem where he recognizes Mrityurupa Kali and examining some other texts including Nibedita’s writings, this paper will attempt to piece together the meaning of Kali for Vivekananda as a teacher and its contemporary relevance.

Anna Pokazanyeva, University of California, Santa Barbara

Masters of the God Particle: Vivekananda’s Science of Yoga and the Quantum Leap of Paramahansa Yogananda

Before modern popular science nicknamed the Higgs boson as the “God particle,” Paramahansa Yogananda had already concluded that there are protons, there are electrons, and then there are “lifetrans.” However, Yogananda is by no means the first to attempt to re-formulate yoga for Western sensibilities through the use of scientific language. This paper juxtaposes Swami Vivekananda’s initial introduction of a modern “science” of yoga as presented in his *Rāja Yoga* (1896) and other works with Yogananda’s famous *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946). Yogananda’s work, though mirroring many of his predecessor’s methods, is unique in that it simultaneously re-traditionalizes yoga by emphasizing it as an esoteric discipline teeming with supernormal powers and further modernizes it by fully integrating its worldview with contemporary scientific theory. The yogi is thus placed side-by-side with the scientist even as he is represented as a master of powers that go well beyond the reach of contemporary applied science.

Ithamar Theodor, University of Haifa

Howard Resnick Rationalizing the Theology of Bhaktivedanta Swami

Bhaktivedanta Swami came to the West and had disseminated his teaching in English; perhaps more than by anyone else, his teachings were intellectualized by Dr. Howard J. Resnick whose scholarly career was divided between acting as a Hare Krsna Guru, and as a scholar of Western Academia.

Resnick articulates his ideas with a certain passion, which combines Indian spirituality with a Western commitment to rationality and reason, and in doing so he seems to transcend the dichotomy of East and West, being free from both Indian or Hindu Nationalism as well as Western Orientalism. Resnick seems to aspire to construct a global, rational and faithful philosophy or theology from the Vedic and Neo Vedic tradition, or a restoration of a classical renaissance of ancient Indian harmony between the physical and the metaphysical sciences. Resnick bases this worldview on certain Vaishnava elements of the classical Indian/Hindu tradition with an emphasis on the Bhagavad gita, relevant aspects of the Epic and the Puranic literature, the later medieval Bhakti traditions and the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. In the sphere of ethics he advocates the basic metaphysical principles of yoga, highlighting austerity, simplicity, renunciation and non-accumulation as values representing spirituality. Apparently, Resnick aims at furthering a theistic worldview which may revert this deterioration of dharma and morality. This worldview would have to be not only theistic but personalistic as well, i.e. it would include a Personal Supreme Being.

Theme: Masters, Magicians, and Mystics: Inter-Dharma Disquisitions

Convener: Purushottama Bilimoria, UC Berkeley & Melbourne, IJDS/Sophia

President: Ellen Goldberg, Queen's University, Canada

Verena Meyer, University of Wisconsin-Madison

God the Trickster: Divine Authority and Liminality in the Javanese Wayang Play

This paper will explore the religious authority of Semar, a figure in the Javanese wayang play, that is characterized by an ambiguous status. As the servant of the hero of the respective story, he is an exceptionally ugly, grotesque figure with all the characteristics of a member of the lowest social class, whose nature is disorderly, unpredictable, and even dangerous. He is a trickster figure, who constantly mocks the values and lifestyle of the noble heroes. However, the spectator knows that he is really Ismaya, the highest god of indigenous Java, without whose power, cunning wisdom, and concrete inventiveness the hero, and indeed all of humankind, would not be able to survive and thrive, but whose anger also causes the earth and all the other gods to tremble in fear.

My main argument is that Semar's religious authority is not relativized, but rather constituted by its dialectic relationship with his structural inferiority. On the phenomenal level, this dialectic is expressed by the trickster's ambiguity of being both a lowly figure and the most powerful god, an unpredictable hazard and humanity's comforter and sustainer. I will show that Semar's pervasive liminality fundamentally subverts the rigid order of the Javanese elite world view by juxtaposing his social lowliness with his divinity, thereby revealing the metaphysical insignificance of authoritative institutions. Semar's coarse and thoughtlessly excessive behavior constantly reaffirms his ontological and epistemic otherness, which places him beyond social conflicts in a mode of existence to which neither the hero of the wayang nor the spectator have direct cognitive access. In other words, as a trickster, Semar's structural inferiority is a forceful vehicle both for calling into question existing power relations and for justifying its own authority to do so.

Jonathan Loar, Emory University

Common Sense/Medical Opinion vs. Faith/Forbearance: Epistemological Conflicts in Shirdi Sai Baba Miracle

Although Shirdi Sai Baba (d. 1918) was known for synthesizing Hindu and Islamic traditions in his eclectic religious practice and for advocating religious egalitarianism through the principle of "The Lord of All Is One," this presentation focuses on his role as a saint who miraculously helps devotees in trouble. By examining several devotees' accounts of miraculous protection and healing in two early hagiographic texts, i.e. G.R. Dahbolkar's *Sri Sai Satcarita* (1929) and B.V. Narasimhaswami's *Devotees' Experiences of Sri Sai Baba* (1939), we will identify a conflict between two epistemologies: one which draws from scientific, medical, or otherwise secular knowledge and another which is grounded in faith and forbearance (*śraddhā* and *saburī*) in the saint's inscrutable ways. Because the latter always trumps the former, we will notice that the failure of secular

knowledge is a common trope used by devotees-cum-hagiographers to assert the superiority of Shirdi Sai Baba and the infallibility of his miracles (*camatkār*).

In the *Satcarita*, Dabholkar describes miracles as *atarkya*, literally “the absence of *tarka*,” or logical reasoning. Far from arguing that stories about how Shirdi Sai Baba protected a devotee living in a plague-infested bungalow and cured tuberculosis only with his glance (*darśana*) are illogical or irrational, I argue that the more useful translation of *atarkya* in this context is for something that is “non-logical” or “supra-rational.” The latter is especially appropriate because the faith-based epistemology not only demonstrates the limits of “common sense” and “medical opinion” – to use one devotee’s terms – but it also equips the devotee with the necessary spiritual technology to access the saint’s unwavering protection and care. The presentation concludes with one final question about religion and modern India: Does the centrality of miracles in the Shirdi Sai Baba movement create an “alternative account of modernity,” one in which the world is (re)enchanted by a saint’s miraculous actions?

Tanya Storch, University of the Pacific, Stockton CA

Master Hsing Yun’s Dream of the “Buddha-Land for Humanity”

In December 2011, near the Foguangshan Temple in Taiwan, the largest known burial of scriptures took place. One million of the hand-written copies of *Heart-Sutra* were buried inside the 37-meter tall bronze statue of the Buddha. The copies were transcribed by thousands of people from all around the world; some -- by monastics, but many more -- by lay people believing this ritual has the power to improve their karma, as well as to create a gigantic karmic merit for all living beings.

The Buddha statue filled with the scriptures is a part of a much larger spiritual-architectural complex personally designed by Master Hsing Yun, the founder of the Buddha Light International and “Humanistic Buddhism.” In this complex, we find four pagodas representing Mahayana Buddhism (a guardian Bodhisattva is assigned to each pagoda and represented through pieces of art), and eight Indian-style pagodas, which represent Theravada Buddhism with its emphasis on the Eight-fold path. Inside the Indian style stupas, each floor is dedicated to specific activities aimed at improving people’s moral character. In the lobby of all stupas, there is a communal hall where people are served tea and food, where they can also enjoy Buddhist music, books, and meditation.

In the complex, called “Buddha-Land for Humanity” (Renjian Foguo, in Chinese), only vegetarian products are used; even mini-marts, such as Seven-Eleven, are under contract to convert to 100% vegetarian. The complex continues growing rapidly in size, as new halls, art exhibits, and service facilities are being added on the regular basis. One of the new additions is the time-capsule under the Buddha-hall. Artifacts and expensive pieces of art for the capsule have been collected from around the world as free donations; they are buried in separate chambers which are sealed and will be re-opened in another century. Thus far, this is the grandest project of Master Hsing Yun. Millions of Buddhists make pilgrimage to the site which now competes in its popularity with the famous Buddha-trail in India.

In this paper, I will present a critical summary of Master Hsing Yun’s life and focus on his “Buddha-Land for Humanity.” I ask questions about religious and geo-political

implications following the construction of this complex, and whether Taiwan is now becoming the Buddhist “Mecca”?

Smita Kothari, Arizona State University

Acharya Tulsī: A Pragmatic, Charismatic, and Controversial Guru.

Ācārya Tulsī (1914-1997), the ninth and the longest serving preceptor of the Terāpanth, a Śvetāmbara Jain sect, was seen by many as the greatest visionary and ‘reformer.’ In this paper I will explore Tulsī’s legacy, his charismatic personality, and the controversies surrounding some of his later reforms. I will argue that the doctrine of visarjana, which the Terāpanth explicate as ‘a parting of one’s possession with complete abandonment,’ and which allowed the sect to turn everyday social giving (laukika) to an activity conducive to dharma (lokottara), was a major source of fissure both within the Terāpanth and between the Terāpanth and the rest of the Jain community.

Neelima Shukla-Bhatt, Wellesley College, MA

Gandhi's interpretation of Sanatan Dharma and Vaishnavism: the Spectre of Narasinh Mehta

Gandhi, it is well known, identified as a follower of *Sanatan Dharma* and Vaishnavism. An important source from which he drew for his interpretation of *Sanatan Dharma* and Vaishnavism was the tradition of Gujarati saint-poet Narasinha Mehta (15th century) who is an iconic figure in Gujarat’s cultural history. Narasinha Mehta is considered both the first poet and the greatest Krishna *bhakti* poet of the Gujarati language whose songs have been sung with great zeal in the region for five centuries. While singing Krishna’s glory, these songs repeatedly point out the meaninglessness of gender and caste hierarchy. Narasinha’s sacred biography depicts him as a saintly man accepting voluntary poverty and singing ecstatically in the company of women and the Dalits (then “untouchables”) despite persecution from his Brahmin community. Gandhi refers to Narasinha Mehta recurrently in his writings as a model Vaishnava and a follower of *dharma* whom he aspired to emulate. This paper will examine how Gandhi drew on devotional songs and hagiography of the most celebrated saint-poet of his native region Gujarat. It will focus especially on Gandhi’s debates with Hindu orthodoxy of Gujarat in the early years following his return from South Africa to India in 1915 where he clearly defines what it means to follow *dharma* and be a Vaishnava using a Narasinha song as the basis.

SATURDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2013

MARRIOTT INNER HARBOR

Stadium Ballroom 4

SESSION 5 (M23-100) 9:00 am – 11:00 pm

NO ABSTRACTS FOR THIS PANEL

Book Review Panel: "Woman and Goddess in Hinduism: Reinterpretations and Re-envisionings"

Convener: Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai'i, Manoa

Presider: Kusumita Pedersen, St. Francis College

Panelists

Kathleen Erndl, Florida State University

Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College

Christopher K. Chapple, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Antoinette DeNapoli, University of Wyoming

Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

Respondents

Tracy Pintchman, Loyola Marymount University

Rita D. Sherma, C.I.S.I., Taksha University

Arvind Sharma, McGill University

Frank X. Clooney, Harvard University

Laurie Patton, Duke University

Phyllis Herman, California State University, Northridge

Neela Saxena, Nassau Community College

Rick Jarrow, Vassar College

Veena Howard, University of Oregon

Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado at Boulder

Karen Pechilis, Drew University

SESSION 6 (M23-110) 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Modern Pioneers of the Globalization of Krishna Bhakti: Prominent Teachers of the Chaitanya School

Convener: Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

Presider: Ravi M. Gupta, Utah State University

Abhishek Ghosh, University of Chicago

Kṛṣṇa Bhakti and the 'West': The Legacy of Bhaktivinode

Kedarnath Datta Bhaktivinode (1838-1914) has been called the 'pioneer of Krishna bhakti in the west' despite having never left Indian shores on mission work. Bhaktivinode corresponded with western intellectuals, such as R.W. Emerson and Reinhold Rost and sent them his writings but his intention, clearly, was not to proselytize. After Bhaktivinode's lifetime, however, his disciples, like Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati and Bhaktivedanta Swami, built upon his intellectual foundations, drew inspiration from his work, and took up the task of sharing Krishna bhakti with a non-South Asian audience. In this paper I briefly examine Bhaktivinode's devotional universalism, on which he based his engagement with the dominant western discourses, and I explore how he not only created the intellectual framework for presenting Krishna bhakti to western audiences, but also inspired the movements of his two disciples mentioned above.

Lucian Wong, University of Oxford

Bhaktivinod Thakur's Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā: Negotiating History in Nineteenth Century Bengal

The nineteenth century is widely regarded as a pivotal period in South Asian religious history. Colonial presence in the region entailed intense and prolonged exposure to challenging currents of western modernity for many South Asian religious traditions and practitioners. While religious responses to the colonial challenge varied widely, the encounter with modernity is often thought of as marking a rupture with pre-modern religious traditions. Historical consciousness has been characterised as one of the key currents and signs of the modern.

Bhaktivinod Thakur was a prominent Bengali Vaishnava theologian and leader, who emerged from a typically nineteenth century Calcuttan middle-class educational and social context. In his first major work, the *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, we find him addressing the modern concern for history and its relation to the mythical narratives of Purānic texts. By highlighting (1) evident tensions within the text and (2) significant revisions that he makes in a subsequent edition of the text, this paper calls into question the plausibility of the notion of rupture in relation to the Bengali Vaishnava tradition in the nineteenth century.

Jason Fuller, DePauw University

Re-Branding Gaudiya Vaishnavism: Bhaktivinoda Thakura and the Religious Marketplace of 19th Century Bengal

Until the latter decades of the 19th century, Gaudiya Vaishnavism remained an historical outlier in the reform, revitalization and recovery of modern Hinduism. Colonial perceptions that Gaudiya Vaishnavism was institutionally submerged in unseemly rural Bengali social networks/practices and controversial scriptures like the Bhagavata Purana, Gita Govinda and Bhagavad Gita led many middle-class Indian elites to eschew the tradition in favor of alternative varieties of religious devotion. It was within the context of this environment that the religious savant Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914) embarked upon a successful, decades-long campaign to re-brand Gaudiya Vaishnavism in a manner befitting its theological beauty, depth and promise as a religion for modern times.

By the turn of the 20th century, Bhaktivinoda's brand of Gaudiya Vaishnavism was positioned to succeed not simply in the colonial marketplace of religion but on the world stage.

Ferdinando Sardella, University of Uppsala

The Globalization of Bhakti: Bhaktisiddhanta and the Gaudiya Math

The paper explores the life and place of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (1874-1937), the founder in Kolkata of one of the earliest international Krishna bhakti movements, the Gaudiya Math (founded in 1918). The movement developed into a mission and established centers in India as well as in London, Berlin and Rangoon. Bhaktisiddhanta placed Chaitanya Vaishnavism within a tradition of understanding the 'person' as the most foundational aspect of reality. His theology of personality and understanding of bhakti as the innermost feature of the self became de facto an alternative theological movement against interpretations of advaita Vedanta that gain importance in Bengal and

in the West during the late colonial period. The development of the Gaudiya Math as an international mission posed significant challenges to the continuity of the tradition and created the need for new perspectives on the role of bhakti in the modern world.

Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

On a New Theological Rhetoric of Krishna Bhakti: Tamal Krishna Goswami's Study of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Hindu Vaishnavism saw its first global spread beyond the borders of India with the work of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, also known as the Hare Krishna Movement. Prabhupada with his disciples not only transformed the faith of persons belonging to other faiths to the life and practice of Krishna Bhakti, and built places and temples of worship in the major cultural centers of the world, but also eventually, and significantly, provided a haven for a growing Indian-Hindu diaspora in the US and other countries. This presentation reviews the new kind of theological rhetoric that Prabhupada utilized for the globalization of Krishna bhakti as Tamal Krishna Goswami examines it in his recently published work entitled, "A Living Theology of Krishna Bhakti: Essential Teachings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada" (Oxford, 2012). I will argue that Prabhupada himself identified and introduced certain key theological mechanisms into his teaching and training, mechanisms that would draw from the original theologians of the Caitanya school, but ones that take on a new rhetoric shaped by modern doctrinal concerns, certain influential sociocultural forces of the West, and an ongoing interreligious distilling of a newly expanding notion of theism.