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ABSTRACTS

Transregional Bhakti Traditions

Convener and Presider: Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

Shivani Bothra, University of California, Santa Barbara
Terapanth Prabodha: A 'short-cut method' to Develop Piety in the Shvetambar Terapanth Tradition

This paper sets out to rethink the dynamics of bhakti traditions within all South Asian religious traditions. Two main models of bhakti dominate the academics and the evolving scholarship. One is the intimate relationship with the idol or deity, and the second is the intense love for the formless divine. This paper takes into account both the models in examining the Terapanth Prabodh, a long poetic devotional song, composed by the late Acharya Tulsi, the ninth religious head of the Shvetambar Terapanth tradition. Terapanth, being a non-image-worshipping tradition, would follow the second model. This paper seeks to understand the inspirations of Acharya Tulsi in composing the Terapanth Prabodh, as a 'short-cut method,' to cultivate devotion amongst its adherents. The understanding of the Terapanth Prabodh will make sense not only of the Terapanth tradition but also of other non-image-worshipping traditions within all South Asian religions.

Rodney Sebastian, University of Florida
Transregional Transmission of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism: Building the Sacred Body in Manipuri Vaiṣṇava Dance Dramas

From the mid-18th century, Manipuri kings sought to transform the local religious habitus which was dominated by the indigenous Meitei religion's emphasis on body metaphors, to absorb Vaiṣṇava beliefs and practices from Bengal and Assam. They promoted new ways of experiencing the sacred primarily through dance dramas such as the *rāslīlā*. These dance dramas became authentic and authoritative institutions of religious practice centered on the sacred bodies

of actors. The sacred bodies were built through innovative reformulations of Meitei practices and provided an indigenous aesthetic framework for Manipuri Vaiṣṇavism. I illustrate some of the specific ways in which Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology and practices combined with Meitei rituals and aesthetics to build sacred bodies through the preparation and training of actors and audiences, costume, musical instruments, body movements, specific rituals, and lyrics. I argue that the body practices resonated with the Meitei habitus to make Vaiṣṇava dance dramas a widely accepted art form and medium of transmission for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* tradition.

Brita Heimarck, Boston University
    Global Bhakti: A Complex Network of Devotional Music, Meditation, and Communitas

While Bhakti devotional practices have proliferated in south India since the seventh or eighth centuries CE, one important aspect of Bhakti traditions, namasankirtana, the praising or repeating(sankirtana) of the names of God(nama) has become globally significant in the past century. When namasankirtana are chanted in the U.S., many Indian cultural dimensions are conveyed: Indian languages such as Sanskrit, social conventions wherein men sit and chant on one side of the room and women sit and chant on the other, musical organization such as lead musicians and lead chanters who instigate each 'call,' followed by the response group of the audience, and theological dimensions in the sacred texts that may include the names of Hindu gods and goddesses revered in this sacred music practice. What draws North Americans to join in this communal music practice, and what reasons do they give for making the practice of Bhakti devotional chanting a regular part of their lives? How can we understand the issues of inclusivity and exclusivity in this global setting? What are the bases for authenticity or authority in the practice of namasankirtana of a particular tradition? I will consider the important role of these devotional chanting practices to global Bhakti practices in the United States based on extensive fieldwork in the community of Siddha Yoga. This research distinguishes between namasankirtanaas, a practice found in the Modern Postural Yoga scene, and the practice as it is observed in Hindu-based lineages and ashram settings.

Pranati Parikh, Harvard University
    Transregional Theologies of Grace for Comparative Theology

Prominent 20th century Christian systematic theologian, Karl Barth, engaged extensively in his writings with theological systems of the religious other. Though Barth does not explicitly espouse a comparative project, extensive references to non-Christian traditions and prolific citation by comparative theologians signal the inherently transregional nature of his work. In particular, Barth bolsters his theology of grace with reductive references to Buddhist and Hindu theologies of grace. This paper focuses on how Barth's calculated mentions render his literature indisposed to sincerely understanding the religious other with specificity and nuance of Francis Clooney's tradition of comparative theology. I reaffirm Clooney's proposition, exploring "Hindu bhakti" theology more deeply through Srilata Raman's exposition of Śrīvaiṣṇava theology. Drawing from this discussion, I argue that removing grace from the hackneyed contexts of regional, sectarian debate and instead conceptualizing it anew can illuminate more nuanced insights into both traditions participating in the comparative study.

Through a comparative analysis, I bring into focus two ideas. First, because Barth's approach to grace as a theological concept is preformed by a Christian understanding of the "grace versus works" debate, he is drawn to Hindu theologies that participate in a similar debate. Therefore, second, as the regional Śrīvaiṣṇava debate imposes its baggage on the comparison, his comparative study remains misaligned. Having assessed Barth's shortcomings, this paper drives toward a transregionally constructive theology of grace that intercedes for the polarized positions of Barth and the Śrīvaiṣṇava sects. Ultimately, the paper exemplifies a corrective to these problems by articulating a theology of grace independent from the regional, sectarian debates and grounded in the idea that God grants a devotee freedom, through grace, to engage interreligiously with the other independent of geographical boundaries.

Nalini Rao, SUA
Guru *Bhakti* as Understood in the *Dvaita Sampradaya*

During the 14th C, Madhvacharya's Dualist philosophy (*Dvaita*) emerged into an institution of Dvaita monasteries and its twenty-four denominations. The seminal role of the ascetic monk-scholar drew a large number of disciples largely due to its unique form of *bhakti* that revolved around the deification of the Guru within the institution of the monastery. My paper will consider the implications of the icon of the Guru as an unusual material structure, its meaning, role and function that inspired and transformed devotional practices within *Vaisnavism*. It examines whether the re-definition of *bhakti* with its emphasis on the Guru in material terms, was due to the multidimensional role of the Guru, or the deification of the past Guru. The emphasis is upon a discussion of the identification of *bhakti* towards Guru and God, through the interaction of relics, rituals, and poetry. In addition, the paper hopes to investigate into the relation between the canon of *Dvaita sampradaya* and popular *Guru-stotra*, within a religious and historical background that augmented the sacred role of Guru-bhakti within the community.

Hindu-Jewish Studies: Tantra and Kabbalah

Convener: Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, Rollins College
Presider: Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder

Pravina Rodrigues, Graduate Theological Union
The Semiotics of Sefirot and Śrīcakra: A reflection on Sacred Geometry

The *Sefirot* and the *Śrīcakra*, as subsets of sacred geometry, make a great couple, in that they both contain similar categories of cosmology, theology, theosophy, psychology, and spirituality, yet the content in these categories and the way they are appropriated in praxis is different in Judaism and Hinduism. For example, while, the *sefirot* in Kabbalah notes ten emanations (*sefirah*) through which the Infinite, Endless *Ein Sof*, transitions to creation, the *śrīcakra* notes dyadic cyclical movements of emanation and involution (*shristi-samhara*), creation and dissolution (*prasara-vishranti*), contraction and expansion (*sankocha-vikasa*) through which the

relation of the created with Śiva-Śakti is imagined. In this paper, I will juxtapose the *sefirot* in Kabbalah to the *śrīcakra* from the Śrīvidyā tradition to compare and contrast their cosmology, theology, theosophy, psychology, and their role in praxis.

Alan Brill, Seton Hall University
  Can Tantra Help us Understand Kabbalistic Prayer Kavvanot?

The Kabbalistic prayer intentions (kavvanot) of Rabbi Moses Cordovero are coordinated scripted sequence of visualizations and intentions to be done by the devotee during the recitations of the prayers. This paper will focus on the commonality between tantra and these intentions as having realm of imagination that requires a weave of elevation of spirituality through combined words, actions, and visualization. Both will have a clear sequence to the visualization, an imaginative progression, in which one creates a mental temple, brings down blessing, dissolves dualities, and prunes evil forces. Both kabbalah and tantra have a highly structured field of visualization of lights, letters, and shapes that are considered the divine force of creation. The method of the paper will look at various tantra-influenced acts of mental worship as part of puja, a ritual procedure similar to kabbalisitc prayer visualization of the weekday morning prayer. The goals of this paper are to answer several questions: (1) Is there a useful comparison to be made between the visualizations in kabbalisitc intentions and those in tantra? (2) Is it useful to understand Kabbalistic intentions as tantra rather than the category of mysticism and esotericism? (3) Can this comparison with tantra help to integrate Kabbalistic intentions as part of ritual studies and contemplative studies?

Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, Rollins College
  Reading Shakti and Shekhinah in Hindu and Jewish Texts

Religious adepts, philosophers, and mystics cross-culturally employ gender symbolism in depicting their understanding of the divine. Whether as the divine mother, the beloved, or as the embodiment of Love, feminine images of the divine are omnipresent in their writings. Hindu and Jewish texts evoke concepts of the divine feminine in terms such as Shakti and Shekhinah as well as a multiplicity of other images that operate on numerous levels of reality, knowledge and truth. While the terms Shakti and Shekhinah do not appear in two of the most important sacred texts, Shir Ha-Shirim (Song of Songs) and the Sanskrit Gitagovinda, they figure prominently in rabbinic and Kabbalistic texts, as well as in Kashmir Shaivism and Vaishnava Bhakti sources. In this paper, I will examine a selection of commentaries that illustrate conceptualizations of the divine feminine as both vulnerable and subservient, as well as potent and superior to her divine male. My objective is to show common as well as distinct qualities of Shakti and Shekhinah, and their status in the Hindu and Jewish metaphysical imaginary.

Ithamar Theodor, University of Haifa
  Modification, Emanation and Pariṇāma-Vāda in Medieval Theistic Vedānta and Kabbalah

Medieval *Vedānta* has been divided into two major worldviews; *pariṇāma-vāda* and *vivarta-vada.* The *pariṇāma-vādins* maintain that the world is a transformation or

development (*pariṇāma*) of ultimate reality (*Brahman*), whereas the second group, the *vivarta-vādins* hold that the world is a false appearance (*vivarta*) of ultimate reality. The *pariṇāma-vādins* use the simile of the production of curds from milk to explain the existence of the world, whereas the *vivarta-vadins* favour the analogy of a rope being mistaken for a snake, to explain the world's (false) existence. In many ways Kabbalah is similar to the concept of *pariṇāma* in Hinduism, according to which, divinity descends into the world through transformation, thus enabling human beings to encounter the divine reality through matter. As such, one of the most common and meaningful descriptions of the system of the *sefirot* is the anthropomorphic one. Accordingly, the three upper *sefirot* represent the divine head, the next two are the right and left arms, the sixth is the body or the heart, which also represents the masculinity of this figure. The next two represent the legs; the ninth, the phallus; and the tenth represents a separate body, that of the female divine power. The paper looks into the system of the Kabbalistic system of the *sefirot* and argues that it is in many ways the counterpart of the *Vedāntin pariṇāma-vāda.*

Dharma and Artificial Intelligence

Convener: Ravi Deepak, Taksha Institute
Presider: Rita D. Sherma, Graduate Theological Union

Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder
    Artificial Intelligence and Indian Tantra

If, in fact, humans will be replaced by artificial intelligence, what will it look like? An emotionally fraught Terminator? Or rather instead closer to the flat, syncopated intelligence we see in Nick Bostrom's deadly scenario of an AI hell-bent on maximizing paper clip production? Is our fear of machines taking over reflective of our peculiarly Western-shaped conceptions of soul? How might the possibility of a machine intelligence sit within a cosmology not foundationally shaped by a Cartesian homunculus?

This paper addresses medieval Indian conceptions of what makes for sentience where sentience is not partitioned off into locally contained, particularized individual souls, but is instead the expression of a single pervasive reality as deity, Śiva.

Surprisingly, the medieval thinker Abhinavagupta tells us that sentience is not an all or nothing affair. This paper will spell out what makes for sentience and what this entails for artificial intelligence.

Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College
    On Jīva-s, Artificial Life Forms, and Inanimate Objects: Commander Data, Marie Kondo, and the Dharma Traditions

The second-season Star Trek: The Next Generation episode "The Measure of a Man" famously raises the question, "Does Commander Data have a soul?" Commander Data is an android and is

one of the most beloved characters in Star Trek. This paper will examine the question, "Could an artificial intelligence, from the perspectives of various Dharma traditions, be possessed of jīva, the soul or essential life force of a living being?" The paper will examine various permutations of this question from the perspectives of different Dharma traditions. The Buddhist conception of 'self' as a process, for example, will be considered, along with Jain and Hindu concepts of jīva. The recent work of Marie Kondo, who recommends that we thank inanimate objects before we recycle them, will also be considered, along with the ethos of reverence for all entities, even those which we conventionally regard as inanimate, which Kondo's approach entails. This ethos can be seen as involving a convergence of ideas from the Advaita Vedānta, Zen Buddhism, Jainism, and Shinto traditions.

Stuart Ray Sarbacker, Oregon State University
Minds and the Philosophy and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

In the fourth section (pāda) of the Pātañjalayogaśāstra, Patañjali discusses the conception of "constructed minds" (nirmāṇa-citta), which are interpreted in the commentarial literature as individuated minds that are an extension of and dependent upon a central mind [4.1-5]. Nirmāṇa-citta are referenced in the context of yogic siddhi, or perfections, achieved through a variety of sources, including birth (janma), herbs (auṣadhi), incantation (mantra), asceticism (tapas), and contemplation (samādhi) [4.1]. The nirmāṇa-citta are said to have a particular karmic valence, depending upon the source, with contemplation being of a different moral order than the others [4.6-7]. Patañjali's views on the nature of constructed minds have a number of implications for thinking about the nature of machine-technology-based Artificial Intelligence (AI), including 1) whether an AI mind would be an autonomous agent or simply an extension of a developer's mind in a newly constructed body; 2) the potential power that a technologically-constructed mind would wield either as an autonomous agent or as an instrument; and 3) the ethical implications for the AI and the developer with respect to the karmic calculus of such action. The goal of this paper will be to demonstrate that Patañjali's thought regarding the extraordinary capacities of the yogin or yoginī provides insights into the philosophical and ethical implications of technologies of human augmentation, and particularly that of Artificial Intelligence.

Joseph Prabhu, California State University, Los Angeles
Interbeing: Humanity in an Ecological Age

In good Buddhist fashion, this paper diagnoses a pervasive cultural illness and attempts to provide a remedy. The cultural illness I describe and analyze is "instrumental rationality," a form of rationality that is purely functional, aiming for the most efficient means for a given end, without subjecting that end itself to substantive socio-ethical evaluation. Such rationality I argue is pervasive in our technocratic culture, which allows and encourages technological development and experimentation for its own sake, from the development of many forms of artificial intelligence (AI) to the wide use of robots and machines to perform tasks that previously were human ones. My proposed remedy relies on the related Buddhist notions of "emptiness" and "interdependence," setting up an ontology of relations and relatedness. This might help to restore

a better and more sustainable balance between the divine, human and cosmic dimensions of reality. This balance issues in and supports an ethic of reverence for life.

Judith Carlisle, Loyola Marymount University
     Pockets of Place and the Right to Space: Transcendence through Haṭha-Yoga and AI

In this paper, two different paths to transcendence in the 21st century are explored. The first path attempts transcendence via digital technologies. Artificial intelligence and related technologies such as nanotechnologies and genetic engineering combine to create the Singularity, or the transmutation of the mortal human into the 21st century transcendent, an immortal consciousness sustained within digital space. The second path explored is that of haṭha yoga, which utilizes potentials for transcendence innate within the human mind and body, or what Feuerstein refers to as a "psychospiritual technology." The Singularity realizes transcendent consciousness as a virtual reality that can be transferred to, and ultimately housed within, digital technologies. The human potential, then, is defined as a computational consciousness that can be sustained and that can thrive within virtual places. Haṭha yoga identifies a different transcendent consciousness that can be accessed within the space of the human body itself, independent of the technologies of mortal humans.

Both forms of consciousness ultimately require an immediate place where consciousness resides and then a space for that place. The place of the Singularity transcendent is within the possibilities of digital technology and the spaces where that technology thrives. Minimally, this space consists of the hardware that houses the virtual place and the attendants, artificial intelligences or other, needed to maintain it. In haṭha yoga, the divine body is cultivated in the same somatic environment that houses everyday life and living. This place is accessed using the psychospiritual technologies that support transmutation to the adamantine body. These material places reside within a spiritual space that sustains transformation from the mortal to the divine. These different modes of transcendent existence necessitate unique examinations of the right to space defined as competition for resources - human, machine, environmental, and spiritual, all of which are explored in this paper.

This paper discusses these two paths to transcendence, creates a model from which to view the transcendent's right to material space, and analyzes struggles that may emerge as the human spirit continues its march toward illumination in the 21st century.

Gopal K. Gupta, University of Evansville
     Hindu Perspectives on Artificial Life and the Self

History has been enamored by the possibility of breathing life into an artifact. In recent decades, the rise of digital computers has led to much speculation about thinking machines. Can a machine be self-aware? Can it think and have feelings like a human being? The computers of today can easily outdo the human mind in their ability to perform vast repetitious computations, but artificial life (Alife) and artificial intelligence (AI) researchers find that to simulate ordinary human behavior in a computer is extremely difficult. Simple acts of sense perception such as distinguishing between an apple and pear are largely beyond the capacity of existing computers.

AI researchers describe two different approaches to artificial intelligence—weak AI and strong AI. Weak AI holds that the human mind can be simulated by computers, and strong AI holds that computers can fully duplicate the human mind. The theistic traditions and texts of Hinduism would largely tend toward a weak AI, one that preserves the independent and conscious existence of the self. That very conscious element which is not accepted by proponents of strong AI (such as Daniel Dennett) is the starting point for Hindu meditative and religious disciplines that try to realize the self by distinguishing it from the non-self. The Bhagavad-gita in particular describes the uniquely independent nature of the self and contends that the consciousness of each person is due to the presence of a non-physical conscious entity called the self, or atman. The Gita offers a model in which human beings, or all living beings for that matter, are composed of three substances—matter, mind and consciousness. In this essay, I will compare and contrast Daniel Dennett's materialist viewpoint of self-awareness and the tripartite model described in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Michael Reading, Claremont School of Theology
>   **Jainism and the Technological Singularity Hypothesis: Defeating the Wrath of AI through Cautious and Nonviolent Intent**

From the companionability of tamagotchi pets to the wrathful destruction of smart bombs and military drones, the relative safeness of technology is ultimately determined by the original intent of its designers. As new AI-based technology becomes ever more creative and computationally super-intelligent, it is thus a matter of high moral importance that such technology be designed with the principles of ethical goodwill and supreme cautiousness in mind. Putting aside whether the threat of AI is potentially destructive in a more relative or absolute sense (as with the "technological singularity" hypothesis—a doomsday scenario), this paper argues that it behooves humanity to be maximally cautious regardless, and in doing so much practical inspiration can be derived from none other than the core religious values of Jainism. Here, if designers of super-intelligent technology can incorporate lessons from the Jain principles of nonviolence (ahimsa), self-control (gupti), and equanimity (samayika), as well as inspiration from the inherent beneficence of epistemic multiplism (anekantavada), the potential wrathfulness of such super-intelligent technology, I will argue, can be successfully mitigated and safeguarded against.

Subjectivity, Emotions, and Feelings

Conveners: James Madaio, Czech Academy of Sciences, and Agnieszka Rostalska, Ghent University
Presider: Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder

Ana Bajželj, University of Calirfornia (Riverside)
>   **Passions and Intention in Jainism**

In his Tattvārthasūtra Umāsvāti categorizes sixteen passions (kaṣāya: four kinds of anger, pride, deceit, and greed) and nine secondary passions (nokaṣāya: laughter, pleasure in sense activity,

displeasure in sense activity, sorrow, fear, disgust, and sexual inclination toward women, men, and both women and men) as the twenty-five types of conduct-deluding karma (cāritra-mohanīya-karman) that cause the inflow (āsrava) of long-term karma. This paper will explore how the Tattvārthasūtra and four of its commentaries explain the dynamics involved in planning, preparing, and perpetrating an activity informed by passions. Broadly addressing the question of agency in a relatively mechanistic karmic system, the paper will pay particular attention to the relationship between passions and intention.

James Madaio, Czech Academy of Sciences
　　A Hermeneutics of Happiness in Medieval Advaita Vedānta

Advaita Vedānta is largely considered an otherworldly tradition that emphasizes dispassion (vairāgya) and dis-identification with the emotional intensities of an enworlded self. Despite the Advaita Vedāntin view that phenomenality is virtual or non-real, Vidyāraṇya and Bhāratītīrtha, two key shapers of the Advaita Vedāntic tradition at the Śṛṅgeri maṭha in the 13-14th centuries, argue that experiences of happiness/bliss (ānanda, sukha) derive from brahman, the supernal reality. In this paper I explore the surprising phenomenological sensitivity demonstrated in the Pañcadaśī, and, to a lesser extent, the Jīvanmuktiviveka and the Anubhūtiprakāśa, on the occasioning of happiness or bliss. I argue that careful attention to happiness during both intentional and non-intentional experience provides a method of educating an aspirant to recognize happiness as a kind of hierophany of brahman.

Agnieszka Rostalska, Ghent University
　　Epistemic Faults and Signs of Understanding: An Account of Emotions in Early Nyāya

Nyāya epistemology provides elaborate models of perception, reasoning, and testimony that are based on the notions of cognition (jñāna, buddhi or upalabdhi) and belief (nirṇaya). Lesser known is the Naiyāyika treatment of emotional states and volition and their function in gaining experience. According to Nyāya tradition, human experience may be classified into three types: 1) cognitive apprehension (anubhava) or understanding derived from personal observation, 2) affective wish (icchā) or inclination of mind, which deals with emotional states, and 3) conative effort (prayatna) or activity, which motivates one to act on thoughts and feelings. In this model, the introspective faculty or inner sense (manas) registers mental objects, including emotions and beliefs. Subsequently, the emergence of emotions and the formation of attitudes stimulate human behavior. Within the above account, emotions that result from ignorance (mithyājñāna) are considered unwanted faults (doṣas). Faults are classified into three groups: 1) attachment (rāga), 2) aversion (dveṣa), and 3) error (moha). These faults cause attachment to objects, which disturb cognition. Additionally, happiness and unhappiness are understood to bring about attachment and are therefore obstacles to liberation. Emotions, however, also play a positive role in social understanding. Attention to the signs of emotional states in other individuals provides the means of inferring their beliefs and emotions and to anticipate, respond, and act accordingly. Moreover, it is through proper cognition that one reaches the conclusion that liberation is the ultimate aim, which ends all cognition whatsoever. Liberation, however, requires desire for everlasting happiness and the cessation of suffering, which are not obstacles to liberation but prerequisites.

Finally, could rational thought be free from emotions? An analysis of emotional states in the Nyāyasūtra, Nyāyabhāṣya, Nyāyavārttika, and Nyāyamañjarī will provide answers to this and related questions.

Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University
The Ubiquity and Scarcity of Pure Love: A Constructivist Comparative Analysis of Krishna Premā in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and in Chaitanya Theology

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is indisputably the most important scriptural text for the Chaitanya school of Vaishnavism. Indeed, the original leading theologians under Chaitanya, namely the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, established the Bhāgavata as the very foundational text on which its original theology was most dependent and from which its original theology was drawn and constructed. In my previous research, the Bhāgavata's employment of the word *premā,* and related words derivative from its original verbal root form, on the one hand, can describe the love between divine personages, certainly, and certainly between humans and the divine, but perhaps more surprisingly even between humans. And even more unexpectedly, *premā* can describe the love between a human and an animal, and between even other beings, suggesting the ubiquity of purest love.

On the other hand, the Chaitanya school's adaptation of the word *premā* is reserved only for the very rarely achieved highest state of perfect love for God, suggesting the rarest occurrence or scarcity of *premā.* This paper asks, then, is there such a disparity between the Bhāgavata's employment of the word and that of its employment in the theology of the Chaitanya school? I will present a constructivist argument that shows that within such a disparity there is a subtle dialectical tension necessary in order to reveal both a most profound theological moment in Krishna Bhakti theology, which yet includes also something that is true for love coming from human hearts as well as all sentient beings.

Jon Paul Sydnor, Emmanuel College
Rāmānuja's Celebratory Panentheism: The Case for a Nondual Theological Epistemology

What if Rāmānuja was right? This paper will focus on Rāmānuja's theological ontology and apply it to the varieties of religious experience. Specifically, this paper will argue that Rāmānuja's trimodal, monosubstantial ontology accounts for six diverse ways in which human beings experience the sacred. To wit: First, human beings experience Nārāyaṇa as a located person, because he is a person, with a personality and a personal body in a specific place, Vaikuṇṭha. Second, human beings experience Nārāyaṇa as impersonal presence, because Nārāyaṇa permeates the universe as the scent of sandalwood permeates a room. Third, human beings experience other human beings as ensouled, because they are jīvas supported in their being by Nārāyaṇa. Fourth, human beings experience material reality as enchanted, because matter is a mode of Nārāyaṇa, endowed with the majesty of Nārāyaṇa. Fifth, human beings experience the mathematical structure of the universe as sacred, because through it they are encountering the mind of Nārāyaṇa. Finally, human beings experience ethical demands as a divine summons, because our conduct toward others and the world is ultimately conduct toward Nārāyaṇa, the source and ground of all being. Each of these religious experiences is equally true

and valid. We only err when we declare our own particular experience to be the exclusively legitimate experience of God. Instead, in our interpretation of the varieties of religious experience, we need to adopt a both/and categorical pluralism. Rāmānuja's trimodal, monosubstantial ontology of Nārāyaṇa facilitates this inclusive interpretation.

Book Review Panel

Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care: Chaplaincy in Theory and Practice,
editors: Vineet Chander, Princeton University and New York University, and Lucinda Mosher, Hartford Seminary

Convener: Rita D. Sherma, GTU
Presider: Asha Shipman, Yale University

In October 2019, Jessica Kingsley Publishers will release *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care*, an edited volume exploring Hindu chaplaincy in theory and practice. The book, made up of 30 essays by chaplains, scholars and other important voices in the field, offers an original and unique contribution to the field. It represents, arguably for the first time, an academic text that examines the emergence of chaplaincy (professional spiritual caregiving in a number of contexts, such as hospitals, colleges and universities, and prisons) as a form of religious leadership within Hindu faith. Moreover, the book also serves as a resource for Hindu chaplains to practice spiritual care in a way that is authentic to their own tradition and that meets the needs of Hindus, and also offers a Hindu perspective for all chaplains to inform their work. How does this volume give us insight into the fluid process of Hindus navigating modernity? How do these essays speak to important shifts in our understanding of religious leadership and authority vis à vis the Hindu diaspora? What are the gains and losses that result from adapting frameworks rooted in Christian contexts—such as chaplaincy or pastoral care—to Dharmic ones? These are but a few of the questions raised by the book and its theme. We propose a special DANAM panel to mark, and engage with, the publication of this seminal work. Such a panel could call together several of the volume's key contributors to share (or draw from) their papers and then engage in dialogue with one another and with the audience.

Panelists: No Abstracts for this session.

• **Varun Khanna,** University of Pennsylvania
• **Christopher Chapple,** Loyola Marymount University
• **Ramdas Lamb,** University of Hawaii
• K**erry San Chirico**, Society for Hindu-Christian Studies

Respondents: Vineet Chander, Princeton University and L**ucinda Mosher**, Virginia Theological Seminary

<u>Mahatma Gandhi's Global Legacy</u>

Convener and Presider: Veena R. Howard, California State University, Fresno

Sungjin Im, Duke University

(Un)dressing the Mahatma: The Visual Presence of Gandhi in Colonial Korea, 1921-33

This paper looks at the evolution of portrait photographs of Gandhi in the Dong-a Ilbo, a Korean vernacular press, between 1921 and 1933. The Indian independence movement was a topic of keen interest in colonial Korea, and hundreds of laudatory articles were published on Gandhi's thoughts, ideas, and activities. The premise of this paper is that the images featured alongside these numerous articles were not simply illustrative companions, but that they functioned as both authentic indexes of their subject and as manufactured icons displaced from their original contexts. Importantly, the ten images I selected for this paper reveal a curious reluctance to display Gandhi's half-naked body, which had become a critical component of the Mahatma's strategies of self-representation in India since the 1920s. The chronological ordering of the photographs shows a progression of what I call Gandhi's "undressing." I argue that the complexities of Gandhi's visual presence in the Dong-a Ilbo in colonial Korea must be understood as part of what Emma Tarlo describes as the desire to "re-clothe" Gandhi's half-naked body, which in turn reveals important struggles among Korean nationalist intellectuals in their efforts to navigate between visions of Western and Gandhian modernities.

Samani Pratibha Pragya, SOAS, University of London

Ahiṁsā Yātrā: A Socio-religious Initiative

The generic term "yātrā" denotes motion towards a specific destination. When this "physical movement" is associated with some political, religious, ethical or social agenda, it transpires into its own specific purpose. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), who was inspired by Jain and other Dharma traditions' teachings of ahiṁsā and satya, embarked on the Dandi yātrā to break the unjust taxation law by making salt from the seawater. His yātrā had socio-political drive and mobilized the masses and resulted in mass disobedience (asahayoga-āndolana) against the salt tax. Ācārya Mahāprajña (1920-2010)—a prominent Jain leader—launched the ahiṁsā yātrā movement in 2001 to promote nonviolence and interfaith harmony. While Gandhi's Dandi yātrā lasted 24 days and culminated at Dandi on the Western cost in breaking the salt law. Mahāprajña's yātrā continued for about nine years. Just as Vinoba Bhave continued the work of Gandhi, ahiṁsā yātrā is continued by Mahāprajña's yātrā successor Ācārya Mahāśrmaṇa (b1962). In both the cases of Gandhi and Mahāprajña, Aahiṁsā yātrā had socio-religious aspirations. Ahiṁsā yātrā is motivated by three goals 1) to promote harmony; 2) to encourage a moral lifestyle and 3) to create awareness of addiction. This paper explores how a challenging personal journey propagating the message of non-violence transforms the masses resulting in a shift of ideologies. It is an outer journey of the guru for the inward transformation of the masses. The Spiritual engagement of the guru or religious leader offers mundane goals associated with social and moral well-being. While Mahāprajña was a prominent Jain religious leader, Mahatma

Gandhi, although having no official religious position—was revered as a Mahatma (a spiritual honorific title). I will focus on the ability of a guru/leader to transform the masses using innovative methods, without any conversions or changing anyone's religious or cultural identity, which I term as the 'engaged spirituality' of Guru-ship.

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   Rethinking Satyagraha in a "Post-Truth" Culture

Gandhi's notion of Truth is holistic, with epistemological, ontological and moral dimensions to it. Epistemologically, it implies a noetic awakening to the true nature of the self/Self. Ontologically, this awakening should lead to a radical transformation of the self from ego-centredness to Reality-centredness. Morally, this transformation points to living these epistemological and ontological insights in lives of service to God, to our fellow-humans and to the cosmos. It is, thus, no surprise that Gandhi found Truth in this holistic sense to be the best description and account of God.

Emphasizing the existential aspect of Truth raises the question of the particular demands that Truth makes of us in our particular time, where relativists, deconstructionists and ideologues have devalued the notion of truth, to the great detriment of our personal, social and political lives. I assert with Gandhi that Truth is an essential moral compass and that to claim that we can or should live in a "post-truth" culture is to invite moral chaos, where hate and division reign, as they do in many parts of the contemporary world. Gandhi's insistence on holding firmly to the Truth (satyagraha), thus has an urgent relevance.

Truth for Gandhi found its fullest expression in the field of politics, but politics here has to be carefully conceptualized to prevent misunderstanding, because for him politics is not primarily a sphere for the promotion of interest, ideology or nationalism, but rather the arena for doing good on the largest possible scale. This highly moral conception of politics was regarded as unrealistic and deluded even by many of Gandhi's friends and mentors like Tilak, who warned him before he launched his political career in India, that "politics is a game of worldly people, not of sadhus." And, indeed, it is an open question as to whether Gandhi's conception of politics was over-idealistic. Gandhi's particular blending of religion and politics remains a highly contested issue.

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   Global Nonviolent Awakening and Sustainable Future

The twenty-one years of Gandhi's life and mission in South Africa and the various campaigns he led heralded a new era in human history. The power of nonviolence as a moral and political weapon and instrument of liberation was emphasized and successfully demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi in his various campaigns both in South Africa during the close of the nineteenth century, and later in India during the early decades of the twentieth century. Since then, it has made its mark on the world and has come to stay as an effective weapon and strategy in the hands of those who believe in the supremacy of soul-force and moral law. Gandhi

demonstrated the irresistible power of ahiṁsā (nonviolence) as an alternative to war and violence as well as an effective tool to tackle the menace of injustice of various kinds. It is true that the global nonviolent awakening and sustainable future which began with Gandhi has grown into a powerful alternative vision and creative option before humanity. Non-violent collective action along the Gandhian lines initiated by Martin Luther King, Jr. and led with conviction and courage by peace activists who head civil liberty movements, continues all over the world. The Dalai Lama, Kenneth Kaunda, Bishop Tutu, Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Ho Chi Min, and Aung San Suu Kyi are only a few of such illustrious leaders whose striving justify King's assertion that "the word 'nonviolence' is no longer an option for intellectual analysis; it is an imperative of action". However, its success and sustainability are intrinsically related to our generation's ability to change from a value free life style to a value oriented way of life.