

# 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary DANAM Conference 2022

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## ABSTRACTS

**FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2022  
HYATT REGENCY CAPITOL BALLROOM 1**

**9:00-10:45am**

**SESSION 1 (M18-103)**

***Theme:* New Directions in Dharma Pedagogy**

***Convener:* Marcy Braverman Goldstein, Ph.D., Faculty, Embodied Philosophy and Founder and Director, Sanskrit Revolution**

***Presider:* Stephanie Corigliano, Ph.D., Lecturer, Cal Poly Humboldt, *Tarka* Editor and Yoga Philosophy Managing Co-Director at Embodied Philosophy**

The dance of learning and sharing knowledge is integral to being alive. Each person is a teacher to some degree; today's panelists engage this art from a distinctive set of contemporary perspectives. What does it take to be a great teacher, one who cultivates shared moments that are transformative, and sometimes salvific? And what is our current pedagogical landscape?

Shifts are arising in the higher educational system that we have known for the past 100+ years. For instance, the in-person campus is losing its stronghold, while virtual classrooms simultaneously expand

and diminish connections. Also, cracks in the system, visible now more than ever, reveal systemic adharmic challenges: skyrocketing tuition for students, low salaries and unstable work contracts for many instructors, #metooPhD, dominant narratives that silence inquiry, bigotries, exclusive spaces, and more.

We need new models for education that offer dharmic opportunities for people to expand their minds, awaken their hearts, and nourish their bodies. This is especially the case for those specializing in dharma traditions. The “legacy institutions,” as they are sometimes called, should be reformed to make way for higher education 2.0. New types of schools and programs are being founded throughout the country (e.g. [UATX](#), [Galileo Commission](#), [Acton University](#)). Also, online educational platforms such as [Embodied Philosophy](#) are growing in scope. These multiplying options aspire to greatness: some aim to root out adharmic issues plaguing legacy institutions; others focus explicitly on dharma traditions.

The panelists will explore foundational adharmic issues and describe ideological approaches, practical techniques, and solutions to align teaching with commitment to justice. We invite collaborative discussion along with suggestions for how to move forward: assignments, thought experiments, exercises, and more to cultivate shared transformative, educational experiences that support everyone’s quest for truth(s) and freedom.

***Presenters:***

**Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College**

*Teaching Many Perspectives in a Polarized World: The Relevance of the Jain Doctrines of Relativity in Contemporary Pedagogy*

How do we convey to students, in a world of increasingly polarized views, the skill of respecting and navigating multiple perspectives, especially in relation to questions of value and meaning? This paper will argue that the Jain doctrines of relativity have considerable light to shed upon the issue of how to encounter and engage with diverse perspectives respectfully and open-mindedly while at the same time holding firmly to one’s own values and understanding of truth.

**Marcy Braverman Goldstein, Ph.D. Faculty, Embodied Philosophy and Founder & Director, Sanskrit Revolution.**

*(A)dharmic Academia*

Postmodernism explains that there is no Absolute Truth except the truth of postmodernist theory. While this mainstream doctrine ironically undercuts itself, few scholars ask: Are we debating all the truths? Is dissent tolerated? Are we in an echo chamber that has become an anti-intellectual enclave? Instances of dogma creating an intolerant climate became common enough that professors and prominent intellectuals such as Gloria Steinem, Cornel West, Steven Pinker, and Salman Rushdie signed “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate.” This statement warns about a “new set of moral attitudes and political commitments that tend to weaken our norms of open debate and toleration of differences in favor of ideological conformity.”

To what extent are academics aware that many of us are modeling intolerance and ideological conformity for our students? And what are we going to do about this problem? Drawing from teachings about *dharma* and *karma-phala* in the *Bhagavadgītā*, this paper will discuss the lack of viewpoint

diversity at universities that undermines justice. I will then propose a solution to heal our fracturing world.

**Isa Gucciardi, PhD, Founder & Director, Sacred Stream**

*A Theory of Personality: Buddha Nature*

“The future of Buddhism in the West lies in meditational therapies.” *Robert Thurman*

As a system, Buddhism can be seen through many lenses. Through one lens, Buddhism can be understood as a system of education. This education involves igniting inner wisdom and focusing it on the causes of suffering. Buddhist practice then provides a series of ladders that help people climb out of their suffering. It also helps people understand how the process of transforming their suffering can become a source of wisdom.

In traditional Buddhist contexts, this process is primarily an internal, more or less solitary voyage where the student is supported by texts and practice instruction. This approach has its limits in the modern Western environment where the deleterious effects of psychological isolation have become so epidemic. As people become more and more isolated in their suffering it becomes more and more difficult for them to find their way out of it. For this reason, Depth Hypnosis brings the educational process of Buddhism into a therapeutic environment which is highly interactive in even In deeply internal spaces.

In this presentation, Isa Gucciardi PhD will discuss how Depth Hypnosis, a clinical transformational process, adapts Buddhist forms of education into the therapeutic environment. She will show how the application of this adaptation can help people suffering from a wide range of imbalances from phobias to autoimmune dysfunction. She will demonstrate how Depth Hypnosis helps clients form a therapeutic bond with their Buddha nature that provides insights as they are deeply supported in uncovering the roots of their suffering using the Four Noble Truths as a diagnostic tool.

**Victoria Price, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley**

*Dharmic Digital Pedagogy: Bringing Yogic Inclusivity to Online Course Design*

In this paper, I argue that the theology of yoga can serve as a model for how online courses can be inclusive of individuals with disabilities. While other scholars have written on the importance of having a liberative Hindu theology, they have largely left out the disabled community. I suggest that yogic theology, specifically as it was described in the *Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and as it has been interpreted by the prominent Hindu figures Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, can be used as a blueprint for a Hindu liberative theology of disability. This liberative theology, when brought into course design, can create an environment of radical inclusivity in the virtual classroom.

**11:00am-12:45pm**

**SESSION 2 (M18-109)**

***Theme: The Plurality of Non-Duality: Theological, Contemplative, and Ethical Approaches to Identity and Non-Difference***

***Convener: James Madaio, Czech Academy of Sciences***

**Presider: Elisa Freschi, University of Toronto**

This panel pursues the varied work non-duality accomplishes across different theological contexts, drawing attention to a vibrant array of non-dual positions. Collectively, the papers are sensitive to ways in which identity and non-difference function not only in metaphysics but in ritual, exegetical, contemplative, devotional, and ethical arenas. In doing so, the panel moves beyond understanding non-duality as narrowly tied to a particular tradition. Instead, it explores how non-dual positions can be integral to the praxis and coherence of a range of approaches, including those that do not posit an ultimately non-dualist ontology.

**Presenters:**

**Kali Nyima Cape, University of Virginia**

*Non-Dual Union in Tibetan Great Perfection*

This paper addresses the uses of the term non-duality in Tibetan Great Perfection (rdzogs chen). In particular, it focuses on *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinī (mkha' gro snying thig)*, a fourteenth century, Tibetan philosophical and contemplative manual. In this scripture, non-duality is used to describe Tibetan consort couples who are said to abide cosmologically in non-dual union as an aspect of ontological unfolding. The term also describes the human consort pairs that represent the knowledge of that ultimate reality. This paper investigates the numerous functions of the term non-duality, juxtaposing its use in the descriptions of consorts, of ultimate reality, and of states of contemplation. Drawing on distributed mind theory, it explores the use of non-duality in descriptions female consorts as an aspect of male adept's extended and embodied consciousness.

**Anya Golovkova, Lake Forest College**

*Non-Dual Reinterpretation of Śrīvidyā in the Yoginīhr̥daya and Amṛtānanda's Dīpikā*

Following the composition of the early *tantras* elucidating the worship of Tripurasundarī within the Śrīcakra, Śrīvidyā ritual was reinterpreted through the lens of non-dualism in scriptural and commentarial texts. This paper examines a shift towards Śaiva Advaita in ritual and exegesis in the *Yoginīhr̥daya tantra* and its commentary, *Dīpikā*, by fourteenth-century Amṛtānanda. Innovations included new meditative and yogic practices with salvific goals laid out over the existing scheme of the Śrīcakra ritual. Viewed as a cosmic emanation, the Śrīcakra could be internalized and mentally superimposed onto the yogic body of the practitioner. A belief in the oneness of the self with the Goddess, the Śrīcakra, the mantra, and the guru was emphasized, together with an imperative for the adept to cultivate non-dual awareness. Imbuing Śrīcakra metaphysics with Pratyabhijñā conceptions of cognition and speech, the *Yoginīhr̥daya* recast the worship of Tripurasundarī as the foremost esoteric Śaiva teaching.

**James Madaio, Czech Academy of Sciences**

*'Consciousness Only' as Disposition and Discipline*

In the mid-thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the Advaita Vedāntic *maṭha* at Śṛṅgeri flourished as a favored tradition of the Sangama dynasty of the Vijayanagara kingdom. During this period, a number of important theological and institutional developments occurred at Śṛṅgeri, which played an important role in shaping later currents of Advaita Vedāntic *sampradāyas*. A key figure of this vibrant intellectual scene was Vidyāraṇya, also known as Mādhava, a venerable polymath, who wrote extensively on

Advaita Vedāntic theology in the latter portion of his prolific career. This paper explores a form of non-duality in contemplative practice, taught by Vidyāraṇya in his *Jīvanmuktiviveka*, which aims to cultivate the tendency of ‘consciousness only’ (*cinmātravāsanā*). In doing so, the paper looks closely at Vidyāraṇya’s exegesis of root verses from the (so-called) *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* on *cinmātravāsanā*, as well as how this practice is articulated within Vidyāraṇya’s comprehensive program of attentional and dispositional training.

### **Vrajivhari Sharan, Georgetown University**

*Contradicting contradictions: Nimbārka’s naturally simultaneous duality and non-duality (svābhāvikaḥedābheda).*

“It is impossible for mutually contradictory attributes to inhere simultaneously in a singular, uniform substrate.” This justification deployed by some Vedāntins to substantiate claims of *bhedābheda*’s chief logical fallacy does not pose a problem to Nimbārka’s reading of Vedāntic sources. A cumulative examination of his writings further reveals that Nimbārka routinely contradicted conventional boundaries in the spheres of Pāñcarātrika and Mīmāṃsaka-facing devotion. A reason for this could be that he fancied himself the divine spiritual teacher of his time, as alleged by one of his contemporaries. In this paper, I will discuss how Nimbārka transcended classical philosophical and theological boundaries. I will also show that he did this not for purposes of self-aggrandisement, but to establish *mokṣasādhanās*, which re-centred the *ruci* of aspirants, ignoring, where he deemed necessary, the dogmatic demands of Mīmāṃsakas, and those seeking their acceptance, for grounding of proposed *mokṣasādhanās* in the Vedas. Finally, venturing beyond colonial categorisations which undergird even current descriptions of Nimbārka’s tradition, I draw on the work of Srilata Raman and Emily Hudson to demonstrate how Nimbārka’s works reflect the desire to foster a spiritual inclusivity that evades Vaiṣṇava traditions that pander to Mīmāṃsaka tastes in order to be accepted by urban elites. I propose that the underlying cause for this is that Nimbārka’s is a tradition domiciled away from urban nexuses of religion and politics, in the spiritual pluralism of the forests.

### **Jvala Singh, University of California, Berkeley**

*Advaita in the Sikh Devotional Historical Text, Suraj Prakash*

Written in the mid-19th century, just at the cusp of full-scale colonial upheaval in Punjab, the voluminous epic of Santokh Singh, the *Suraj Prakash* (1843), describes the life stories from the first Sikh Guru, Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. Since its inception the text attracted significant attention from scholars and various Gurdwaras soon mandated *kathā*, discourse, of the text daily in the late afternoon. This paper will discuss embedded Advaita Vedānta concepts and terminology within the text and how they are utilized within a devotional frame of bhakti focused upon the Sikh Gurus. Specifically, the paper will explore how significant sections within the text endeavor solely to cover and explain concepts such as, the world as illusion, erroneous perception, non-difference between *jīva* and *brahman*, the four *mahavākyas*, and other core concepts which Allen (2017) has referred to as ‘Greater Vedānta’. As this text continues to live on in Sikh Gurdwaras to this day these portions within the text serve as points of interest for the understanding of vernacular Vedānta in the current age.

### **Ben Williams, Naropa University**

*Advaitācāra: Nonduality and Abhinavagupta's Social Ethic*

It is not unreasonable to question whether a robust ethical framework can be derived from a non-dual philosophy, particularly one that flaunts moral conventions rooted in dualistic ontologies. It is also important to disentangle moral virtue and mystical experience, following the insights of Agehananda Bharati who was quite insistent about the naïveté of such a conflation. In this paper, however, I will attempt to reconsider the relationship between non-duality and modes of experience that blur the distinction between self and other with social ethical discourse. To do so, I will examine the relationship between Abhinavagupta's "higher non-dualism" (*parādvaita*) and the initiatory codes of conduct he sets out in his articulation of the "samaya" (initiatory pledge) in the Kaula Trika tradition he envisioned and transmitted in the *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*. When it comes to direct descriptions of norms of behavior within a community of initiates, we find not amorality or ambivalence to ethical life, but a rather coherent application of the implications of Kaula non-dual worldview, and to this end he draws significantly upon the *Ūrmikaulārṇava*, *Mādhavakula*, *Devīyāmala*, *Nīsicāra*. A concrete social ethic becomes particularly clear when we consider Abhinavagupta's injunction to abandon all inhibitions rooted in orthodox conceptions of power and purity and his theorization of the nature of caste (*jāti*) as an extrinsically imposed concept that veils non-dual Consciousness and is presented as a form of possession. This analysis will be supplemented with a consideration of Abhinavagupta's Kaula ethical stance of abandoning sectarian insignia and affiliations, clearly marking a new horizon for social praxis distinguished from observances found in the Mantramārga and Vidyāpīṭha.

**2:00-3:45pm**

**SESSION 3 (M18-207)**

***Theme: Indian Philosophy, Mind, and AI***

***Convener: Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder***

***Presider: Karen Pechilis, Drew University***

***Presenters:***

**David Lawrence, University of North Dakota**

*C.S. Peirce, Biosemiotics and Nondual Śaiva Philosophical Theology*

For a shared, transhumanist pansemioticism, synechism-cum-tychism, and pragmatism—I have recently interpreted nondual Śaivism with the philosophy of C.S. Peirce and followers. In Peircean pansemiotics/biosemiotics, semiosis orders information in evolving, self-organizing systems within changing environments. Although most biosemiotics has been agnostic, Peirce and the Śaivas conceive religious metaphysics as most coherent with transcendental and immanent trajectories in the phenomenology of lived experience.

**Geoff Ashton, University of San Francisco**

*The Teleology of Natural Intelligence in the Sāṅkhya Kārikā: A Biosemiotic Interpretation*

Scholars of the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* have struggled to make sense of the philosophical meaning of *prakṛti* as “nature” and its relation to the *puruṣa* (self, consciousness). This paper explores this topic through the

lens of different models of teleology in Western philosophies. It suggests that a biosemiotic theory of teleology offers a reading of *prakṛti* (nature) as highly intelligent without conflating the intelligence of nature with the pure consciousness that is the *puruṣa*.

**Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder**

*“If we can’t beat ‘em, better join ‘em” : Humans, Machine Intelligence and the Subtle Body*

This paper addresses a current push towards a technological merger of humans with machines. Citing the rapid pace for which artificial intelligence is beginning to exceed human intelligence, Elon Musk famously quipped that “if we can’t beat ‘em, better join them” as the impetus behind his neurolink project, linking human brains to artificial intelligence. This paper addresses the model of cosmology implicit in current models of human and machine intelligence. How might a cosmology that looks beyond materialism, a panpsychism or panentheism, play out in terms of our current understanding of the mechanics of the mind-body relation? Here we look at this from the perspective of Indian models of mind and body relation, adding the category of subtle body as the mechanism for the interface of human consciousness with machine.

**Jonathan Edelman, University of Florida**

*Interrogating Intelligence: Indian Philosophy and the idea of Artificial Intelligence”*

The goal of this paper is to examine Indian views of intelligence, with a focus on but not limited to an examination of how intelligence is conceptualized and distinguished from other aspects of the human psyche like mind, emotion, and consciousness, and how intelligence is framed within conventional and ultimate uses of language.

**4:00-5:45pm**

**SESSION 4 (M18-301)**

***Theme: Dharma and Indigenous Culture: A Dialogue***

***Convener/Presider: Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai’i at Manoa***

“If we acted from the truth of inter-relationality, what would our shared vision look like?” This panel presents the argument that human civilization’s malrelationship with the other-than-human world echoes through (neo)colonizers’ broken relations with Indigenous lands and peoples across the globe. It suggests the need to lead change through an integrative eco-epistemology based in ancestral knowledge that weaves a new ecovision with these suppressed and unacknowledged strands of human experience. Most important is the necessity to keep in mind what Winona LaDuke, of the White Earth Reservation in Northern Minnesota and leading Indigenous environmentalist, has argued:

There is a critical Indigenous resilience that cannot be separated from healing the lands that help constitute Indigenous cultures. When Congress finally passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978, for example, the assumption was that Indigenous Peoples could now freely practice their long suppressed religious rites and traditions.

However, this Act was blind to the rootedness of Indigenous spiritual worlds in the spatial or earthly constitution of those worlds.

The recovery of Native land leadership is important both from the viewpoint of social and ecological justice, but also from the perspective of ecopraxis, understanding that complex epistemologies remain unseen. In contrast to postcolonialism, decoloniality seeks to locate, theorize, and apply critical indigenous epistemologies and support long-submerged ways of being and becoming to bring them into conversation with the reality of a globally interconnected civilization. Decolonial thinkers foreground epistemological justice and argue for its significance to the greater interdisciplinary discourse on a sustainable planetary future. In this effort to reclaim local-global epistemologies of subjugated cultures, Indigenous and dharmic traditions have concurrent interests in ending the erasure of systems of knowing and acting that are other-than-Western, towards planetary resilience and revitalization

***Presenters:***

**Lisa Poupart, University of Wisconsin Green Bay**

*Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being as Path and Vision Forward*

At the time of our creation, Anishinaabe people were offered Original Instructions about how to live with and honor our interconnection to all living things. The Original Instructions offer ancient wisdom and guidance for all humans to connect with the sources of life. Anishinaabe Eighth Fire prophecies foretold of a time when humans would experience tremendous disconnection and, as a result, global destruction would occur. Today, we understand that the processes of Euro-American colonization facilitated this disconnection. We know we are living in the time of great planetary loss. However, the Eight Fire Prophecies also instructed Anishinaabe people about how to respond in this time to bring about renewal of the planet. This oral presentation shares Anishinaabe Original Instructions and offers a message or renewal for others to carry forward.

**Yuri Celidwen, University of California, Berkeley**

*Reckoning, Reparation, and Regeneration in the Indigenous Ethics of Belonging*

Indigenous and tribal peoples are emerging as actors and partners for inclusive and sustainable development. However, reckoning with and overcoming the realities of extreme poverty and erasure of these communities demands a piercing examination of the systems and structures of inequality and lack of participation and consultation that have historically silenced them. The ambitious ideal of an Earth community entails a commitment to reparations and the establishment of diverse participatory engagement, ensuring that—what I call—*ethics of belonging* becomes a critical stance towards responsive and coherent paths to planetary flourishing.

**Marie Alohalani Brown, University of Hawai'i at Manoa**

*How do Kanaka 'Ōiwi Indigeneity and Hawaiian Religious Traditions Inform Kanaka 'Ōiwi Environmental Activism?*

Like many other Indigenous peoples, we Kanaka 'Ōiwi have been subjected to physical, intellectual, and spiritual trauma caused by the nonnative other—explorers, missionaries, missionary descendants and



settlers—whose worldviews stand in opposition to our own. U.S. military occupation of Hawai‘i, corporate tourism, and settler colonialism threaten the viability of our island world and its resources, which we hold sacred according to our religious traditions. I explore the ways that our island world is the matrix of our ways of knowing and being, why more and more Kanaka ‘Ōiwi act as *kia‘i* (guardians, protectors) to protect our island world and its natural resources, and the unexpected consequences of spiritual-driven activism

**Rita Sherma, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley**

*Seeking Epistemic Justice: The Move Towards Critical Indigenous Epistemologies*

(Abstract pending)

**SATURDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2022  
HYATT REGENCY CAPITOL BALLROOM 5**

**9:00-10:45am**

**SESSION 5 (M19-104)**

***Theme: DANAM 2022 Book Review Panel: The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy and Gender***

***Convener: Veena Howard, California State University, Fresno***

***Presider: Anil Mundra, University of Chicago***

**(No Abstracts for this panel)**

***Reviewers:***

**Brian Black, Lancaster University**

**Neelima Shukla Bhatt, Wellesley College**

**Laurie Patton, President, Middlebury College**

**Niranjan Khalsa, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles**

**Cynthia Willett, Emory University**

***Respondent:***

**Veena Howard, California State University, Fresno**

**11:00am-12:45pm**

**SESSION 6 (M19-106)**

**Theme: Spirituality and Sustainability: Indic Responses**

**Convener/Presider: Rita Sherma, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley**

**Presenters:**

**Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College**

*Advaita Vedānta, Swami Vivekananda, and Sustainability*

While it is sometimes characterized as a “world-denying” philosophy, Advaita Vedānta, with its vision of the ultimate unity of existence, bears within itself, as Anantanand Rambachan and others have argued, the capacity to form the conceptual basis not only for liberation as this is traditionally understood in Hindu traditions—as mokṣa, or freedom from the cycle of rebirth—but also for a project of human emancipation in a more conventional, socio-political sense, as well as for a deep ecological approach to sustainability. Such a world-affirming understanding of Advaita Vedānta is strongly anticipated in the works of Swami Vivekananda, whose philosophy of karma yoga conceives of social service as a form of—as opposed to a distraction from—spiritual practice. Caring for the environment, if seen not through the lens of attachment to the world, but of selfless service, is a practice which can be pursued as a sādhana rooted in both bhakti (devotion to Earth as a form of the Divine Mother) and in the principle of detached service which is the essence of karma yoga. To protect the Earth—a service that may not necessarily benefit us directly, but which will be of enormous help to future generations—is an excellent example of seva, of selfless service pursued in a spirit of detachment from the result. I do this not for myself, but because it is good: because it is dharma. Doing one’s duty—one’s dharma—not for the reward it will bring in the form of good results—good karma—for oneself, but in a spirit of *vairāgya*, or detachment, is an old Hindu concept that can be found in sources as ancient as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, whose third chapter consists of an extended reflection on this theme. But its urgency has become greater in our current crisis

**Mugdha Yeolekar, California State University, Fullerton**

*Texts and Trees: Ritual Engagements with Audumbar Tree in the Dattatreya Sampradāya*

This paper introduces readers to the episteme of the Hindu eco-religious world by using Audumbar as a case study. One can see through the textual and ritual discourse about the Audumbar tree that the idea that as much as humans can change the existence of trees, the trees can change the course of action for human beings is central to Hindu cosmology. Ultimately, this paper proposes that we can overcome the challenges of modernization and loss of ecological balance by contemplating collectively on cosmological tools from our religious traditions about harmony between humans and nature.

**Cogen Bohanec, Arihanta Academy and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley**

*A Dialogical Encounter Between Christian Ecotheological Ethics and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Theology*

This paper is a methodological discussion of eco-theology, and the various different strategies that Christian ecotheologians undertake in their work, that is, to understand the methods employed by Christian ecotheologians. I will propose that Christian ecotheology is a unique methodology that can

consist of a variety of methods that are employed both to understand the tradition ecologically, and I will seek to show how some of these methods might be applied to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

**Patrick M. Beldio, Catholic University of America, Washington DC**

*Meher Baba's Spirituality of Sustainability and Transformation*

Meher Baba (“Compassionate Father,” né Merwan Sheriar Irani, 1894-1969) is an understudied spiritual figure in theology and religious studies who has made a substantial global impact, with ashrams, retreat centers, groups, schools, and pilgrimage sites around the world. Like many dharma cosmologies, Meher Baba’s writings describe a spiritual ideal of the soul’s liberation (*mukti*) and transcendence of matter. In addition, his ministry modeled a new pattern of liberation and transformation of matter that would begin a new age of planetary improvement beginning in the twentieth century. He claimed that this was made possible by “breaking his silence,” initiating a great “spiritual turning point” in the universe that advances consciousness from reason to intuition and births a “New Humanity” and “new world culture.” This chapter introduces these important themes in Meher Baba’s mission and the principle of growth through opposition or “law of reaction” that he said fuels this new planetary stage. In light of the Gapminder Foundation’s global statistical data showing that since 1800, life on *every* continent is improving in staggering ways, the chapter ends with a description of programs initiated by Sufism Reoriented, a spiritual school Meher Baba founded as an example of this “path of transformation” of matter.

**Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai’I at Manoa**

*Tulsidas and Sustainability Through Respect of All Creation*

As an indigenous religion with ancient roots, there has traditionally been a deep and abiding concern for nature in Hindu thought and practice, even if it is at a low point today. Many of the ancient texts and tales serve as instruments from which we draw inspiration and in which we can learn about respect for nature, and a good place to begin is by looking at Tulsidas’ *Ramcharitmanas* (commonly referred to as the *Manas*), the most popular scripture in North India and the Hindu Diaspora today. Although the primary goal of the author was clearly to promote devotion to the divine conceptualized as Sita and Ram, he also sought to have the text’s readers and listeners see the world and nature as manifestations and reflections of divinity. This chapter will look at Tulsidas, his telling of the Ram story, and what we can learn from the text to help us address the problems we face today regarding our relationship to nature, to all its inhabitants, and most importantly to each other.

**Purushottama Billimoria, San Francisco State University**

*A Critique of Economic Reason: Between Tradition and Modernity*

It is my intention in this essay to problematize the relationship between economics and ethics. The route I will take is an unconventional one—though not so unconventional if we consider Amartya Sen’s original position on capabilities and his radical revision of the Rawlsian theory of justice. Sen’s thinking is informed by his deep-rooted awareness of alternative possibilities within the heterogeneous—especially given his own argumentative Indian mind—Asian/Indian traditions. I begin here with the ancient *Arthaśāstra* corpus (fl. ca. 321–ca. 296 BCE), with some reference to Buddhist governance practices (notably, those of Aśoka) and an economic system balanced against the imperatives of welfare and just and fair treatment of citizens in all aspects of their lives, needs, and

entitlements (Bilimoria 1998: 220–222). I will also be alluding to some contemporary works, notably of Daya Krishna on the *Puruśārthas*, Arvind Sharma’s *The Hindu Scriptural Value System and India’s Economic Development*, Amartya Sen, Pranab Bardhan and Partha Dasgupta on rethinking how “wealth” and “well-being” are measured, and some Indian constitutional directives on economic rights. I will be looking resourceful *thinking* about economics in consonance with the Kantian “kingdom of ends” – moral and spiritual enlightenment rather than purely in terms of that mainstay of modernity, instrumental reason—which, it may be argued, turns into economic rationalism, the unrestricted market economy that involves foreign investment strategies, global free trade, trade-offs between supply and demand, control over export/import, tariff barriers and protectionism, payment of national debts and (defaulting on) excessive borrowing, profit-driven enterprise and entrepreneurship, strategies of power over capital, the unsavory pressures of corporatism, even globalism and universalization of avarice, all of which manifest as commodity fetishism (or commodification) and a consumer mentalité, what Dasgupta calls in an underdetermined way the “tyranny of free-market” (Dasgupta 2007: 83).

DANAM 2022 ADJOURNS