



**Dharma Academy of North America
(DANAM)**

**22nd Annual
DANAM Conference 2024**

**22-23 November 2024
San Diego, California**

DHARMA SUSTAINS DIVERSITY

22nd Annual
DANAM Conference 2024

Sponsored by

Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM)

22-23 November 2024

**Held in conjunction with the
2024 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting
San Diego, California**

22nd Annual DANAM CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS:

Jonathan Edelman

Chair, DANAM Steering Committee

Veena Howard

Vice Chair, DANAM Steering Committee
California State University, Fresno

PURPOSE of the CONFERENCE

To provide a Dedicated Forum where scholars of Dharma Studies (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other dharmic traditions and lineages) can engage in the examination of, and constructive approaches to lived experience and contemporary concerns in the global expressions of these traditions. While there are multiple scholarly arenas for presentation of new sociological, anthropological, and historic approaches to the study of cultural and religious traditions that originated in South Asia, there are few dedicated venues for discourse on, and constructive approaches to philosophy, theology, ethics, epistemology, hermeneutics, pedagogy, praxis, theory, and constructive studies in these systems of thought and practice. It is hoped that these meetings can explore the conceptual complexity of, and critical transdisciplinary research on these traditions in an inclusive forum.

DANAM Summary

DANAM (Dharma Academy of North America) is an independent, non-political, donation-based, non-profit organization of Virginia, with a focus on constructive presentation of Dharma traditions in the North American context. Its mission and objectives are described at its web site at www.danam-web.org, which lists the advisory committee of reputable scholars under Board of Distinguished Scholars (BDVS) drawn from various disciplines. DANAM holds its Annual Meeting in conjunction with the yearly conference of the American Academy of Religion. DANAM was a sponsor during 2001-2011 of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, and since 2003 is the sponsor of the peer-reviewed Contemporary Issues in Constructive Dharma edited volumes.

Proceedings of DANAM Conference Sessions

The proceedings of earlier DANAM Conference sessions are available at Deepak Heritage Books (DHB), www.deepakheritage.com, unless otherwise stated. They are listed as follows: *Contemporary Issues in Constructive Dharma Volume I* (Eds. Rita D. Sherma and Adarsh Deepak, 2003). *Contemporary Issues in Constructive Dharma Volume II: Epistemology and Hermeneutics* (Eds. Rita D. Sherma and Adarsh Deepak, 2004). *Asceticism Identity and Pedagogy in Dharma Traditions* (Eds. Graham M. Schweig, Jeffery D. Long, Ramdas Lamb and Adarsh Deepak, 2006). *Dying Death and Afterlife in Dharma Traditions and Western Religions* (Eds. Adarsh Deepak and Rita D. Sherma, 2006). *Authority and Its Challenges in Hindu Texts, Translations, and Transnational Communities* (Ed. Deepak Sarma). *Yoga and Ecology: Dharma for the Earth* (Ed. Christopher K. Chapple).

AGENDA**22nd Annual DANAM Conference****22-23 November 2024****Friday, 22 Nov 2024****10:00 a.m.** DANAM CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DESK opens.

Participation at DANAM sessions at the AAR Annual Meetings is *complimentary*; with **NO FEE** involved.

To help us monitor attendance and keep our member database updated we would be pleased to receive a preregistration notice from you by email. Your DANAM registration will help us communicate with members more efficiently and utilize our resources more effectively to ensure conference sessions run smoothly. This information is strictly meant for planning purposes and to facilitate communications.



For Latest Updates of the Agenda, please continue to check the web site at:
www.danam-web.org

SESSION SCHEDULE**FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER****OMNI, GRAND BALLROOM, SALON A****SESSION 1: 11:00 am– 12:30 pm (M22-103)****Critical Reflections on Ethics and Pedagogy in the Hindu Epics****Convener/Presider: Jonathan Edelman, DANAM Steering Committee, Chair****Panelists:**

- **Brian Black, Lancaster University**
Dialectics of Violence in the Mahabharata
- **Rodney Sebastian, St. John's University**
Nonviolence (ahimsa) and War in the Mahabharata: The Journey of Yudhisthira
- **Vineet Chander, Princeton University**
"Good Grief"?: Re-examining the Mahabharata Critique of Grieving in Light of Theologies of Pastoral Care and the Krsna of the Bhagavata
- **Justin W. Henry, University of South Florida**
Historical Realism in Ramayana Literature

SESSION 2: 2:00 – 3:30 pm (M22-203)**Yoga in the Dharmic Traditions: Many Facets**

Yoga in the West is widely associated with a secular, bodily posture practice. The recent decade or so of scholarship in Yoga Studies has widely worked to bridge the gap between modern postural yoga, western esotericism, colonial influences, and Hindu roots for understanding the origins and future potentials of Yoga philosophy. Still, as with the study of Tantra, Yoga Studies is a pan-Indic phenomenon with influences emerging from and upon several diverse traditions. In this panel, we explore the interfaith and intertextual nature of yoga as it appears across the four Dharmic traditions. Each panelist engages with Yoga in specific contexts, terms, and practices as they relate to Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Hinduism in ways that are both historical and constructive, working towards an interreligious study of Yoga philosophy that can support individuals to navigate conflict, chaos, and spiritual development skillfully.

Convener/Presider: Stephanie Corigliano, California State University, Humboldt**Panelists:**

- **Blaine Patrick Werner, University of Virginia, PhD Candidate**
Apramada and Yoga in Hindu and Buddhist Traditions: Text, Theory, and Practice

- **Balbinder S. Bhogal, Hofstra University, NY**
Sahaj Jog and Zen: Yoga-less Yoga
- **Corinna Lhoir, Universitat Hamburg, PhD Candidate**
Influence and Integration: Tracing the Impact of Broader Yoga Traditions on Second Millennium Jain Yoga Texts
- **Pratibha Pragya, Florida International University**
Postural Practice in Jain Yoga: A Historical Overview

SESSION 3: 3:45 – 5:15 pm (M22-306)

Demystifying Siddhis

The idea of order and chaos within an Indian context is predicated upon the idea that the rule of order invariably entails its exception, chaos. No where is this more stridently exemplified than in these Indian traditions' signature feature: the ubiquitous presence of *siddhi*, magical powers endemic within these traditions. I never cease to be astonished by the ease with which medieval Indian tantric texts use the miraculous, impossible feats of yogis in an altogether deadpan, matter-of-fact way to prove some unrelated, tangential philosophical argument. Yogis who can fly through the air, read other people's minds, hop into a dead body and bring it back to life—Indian thinkers routinely cite these with no fanfare, without even batting an eye. This panel proposes to think through the idea of *siddhi* as feature of Indian traditions as that which breaks the normative order—particularly our contemporary Western assumption of the laws of Nature determining the rules of how matter operates. *Siddhis* barefacedly break what we think of as the order of Nature, its laws and limitations. At the same time, they generate a larger sense of order, drawing on the magical powers on display in *siddhis* as a way in which a higher order is expressed.

Convener: Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder

President: Cogen Bohanec, Arihanta Institute

Panelists:

- **Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai'i at Manoa**
Tantra as Seva in the Ramananda Sampraday
- **Loriliai Biernecki, Univeristy of Colorado, Boulder**
Yoga? Science? Swami Vishuddhananda, a 20th Century Yogi's Siddhis
- **Patrick Beldio, University of Scranton**
Meher Baba's Task for Spiritual Workers in the Travail of a New World Order
- **Jeffrey D. Long, Elizabethtown College**
Siddhis in the Tradition of Sri Ramakrishna
- **Cogen Bohanec, Arihanta Institute**
Jain Siddhis and Srimad Rajcandra

SATURDAY, 23 NOVEMBER
OMNI, GRAND BALLROOM, SALON A

SESSION 4: 9:00am – 10 :30am (M23-103)

DANAM Annual Book Review- *Mirabai: The Making of a Saint*

Nancy M. Martin, Oxford University Press, 2023.

Mirabai, an iconic sixteenth-century Indian poet-saint, is renowned for her unwavering love of God, her disregard for social hierarchies and gendered notions of honor and shame, and her challenge to familial, feudal, and religious authorities. Defying attempts to constrain and even kill her, she could not be silenced. Though verifiable facts regarding her life are few, her fame spread across social, linguistic, and religious boundaries, and stories about her multiplied across the subcontinent and the centuries.

In *Mirabai*, Nancy M. Martin traces the story of this immensely popular Indian saint from the earliest manuscript references to her through colonial and nationalist developments to scholarly and popular portrayals in the decades leading up to Indian independence as well as oral epic traditions. This book examines Mirabai's place as both insider and outsider to the developing strands of devotional Hinduism and her role in the contested and gendered terrain of debates around the education and independence of women and the crafting of Indian and Hindu identities.

Mirabai offers a comprehensive and multi-layered portrait of this remarkable and still controversial woman, who continues to be a source of inspiration and catalyst for self-actualization for spiritual seekers, artists, activists, and so many others in India and around the world today.

Convener: Nancy M. Martin, Chapman University

Presider: Veena Howard, California State University, Fresno

Reviewers:

- **Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder**
- **Bhakti Mamtora, University of Arizona**
- **Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida, Gainesville**
- **Dalpat Rajpurohit, University of Texas, Austin**
- **Gil Ben-Herut, University of South Florida**

Respondent:

Nancy Martin, Chapman University

DANAM 2024 ADJOURNS

NOTES

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair

Jonathan Edelman, University of Florida

Vice Chair

Veena Howard, California State University, Fresno

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DANAM PRESIDENT

Ravi Deepak

TREASURER

Pat Deepak

CONFERENCE COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Susan Lamb, Conference Manager

Pat Deepak

Ravi Deepak

WEBSITE SUPPORT

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