

DANAM CONFERENCE 2005

SESSION 4

Theme: Samkhya-Yoga after Larson: New Directions in Samkhya-Yoga Research

Tracy Pintchman, Loyola University Chicago, *Convener*

Judy Saltzman, California Polytechnic State University, *Presiding*

SUMMARY OF ABSTRACTS

Panelists:

T. S. Rukmani, Concordia University, Canada

Revisiting the Concept of Jivanmukti in Samkhya

Lloyd W. Pflueger, Truman State University

Person, Purity, and Power in the Yogasutra

Pratap K. Penumala, University of KwaZulu Natal, S. Africa

Saamkhya-Yoga Contributions to Srivaishnava Theology

Paul Muller-Ortega, University of Rochester

A Tantric Critique of Patanjali

Knut A. Jacobsen, University of Bergen, Norway

In Kapila's Cave: A Samkhya-Yoga Renaissance in Bengal

Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Yoga in the Contemporary Ramananda Sampradaya

Tracy Pintchman, Loyola University Chicago

Maternal Devotion as a Form of Yoga

The panel honors the work of Gerald Larson, who retired last year from active teaching and administration at Indiana University, where he held the Rabindranath Tagore Chair of India Studies. Larson has had a lengthy and distinguished career as an internationally acclaimed Indologist specializing in the study of Samkhya-Yoga. In his capacity as teacher, colleague, and scholar, Larson has been important to all the panel presenters and has variously informed and enlivened their thinking on Samkhya and Yoga. The panel celebrates Larson's legacy but does so by looking forward. Presenters will be speaking on topics related to Larson's main areas of research in ways that move in new directions, reflecting the presenters' own thoughts and interests. Larson served as advisor and dissertation director for all the presenters except one. Therefore, his influence as both teacher and scholar on many of these presentations can be presumed to be both direct and formative.

The presentations all address Samkhya and Yoga in the Hindu Indian context as they are encountered, and sometimes transformed, in a variety of environments. The panel moves from the ancient and textual to the contemporary and ethnographic. The first four presentations focus on textual materials.

The first presentation by **T. S. Rukmani**, titled "*Revisiting the concept of Jivanmukti in Samkhya*," examines the jivanmukti concept in Samkhya from later texts. The conclusion drawn from the Samkyasutra and some of the commentaries on them leads to the conclusion that the very concept of jivanmukti in Samkhya as spelt out in Isvarakrsna's Samkhyakarikas, is in danger of falling apart.

The second presentation, by **Lloyd Pfleuger**, called "*Person, Purity, and Power in the Yogasutra*," teases out hidden theological implications of the lavish attention Patanjali gives to supernatural powers. This paper argues that the unstated and hidden deity of the Yoga Sutras is the successful yogin, whose supernatural powers (*vibhutis/siddhis*), discussed by more sutras than any other single topic in the Yoga Sutra, are largely ignored by commentaries.

The third presentation, by **Pratap Kumar**, entitled "*Saamkhya-Yoga contributions to Srivaishnava Theology*," addresses how the Srivaishnava tradition of South India reworks Samkhya-Yoga categories through the Pancharatra ritual texts and then assimilates them into their Vedanta system, which Ramanuja systematizes.

The fourth presentation, by **Paul Muller-Ortega**, entitled "*A Tantric Critique of Patanjali*," examines the ways in which the Shaiva Traditions of Kashmir adapt and criticize the classical Yoga of Patanjali. Categorizing it as artificial, they contrast it with the "natural" and spontaneous Yoga which they propound. The paper will examine this critique as it is found in the Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta, and as a way of understanding the ways in which the meaning of Yoga changed in the early medieval period as a result of the theological innovations of the Shaivas.

The last three presentations move from the textual to the ethnographic, engaging the contemporary appropriation of Samkhya-Yoga traditions by living practitioners. The fifth presentation, by **Knut Jacobsen**, entitled "*In Kapila's Cave: A Samkhya-Yoga Renaissance in Bengal*," analyzes a living Samkhya-Yoga movement in which there has been a succession of gurus, each of whom have been locked in permanently in the same cave. The presentation traces the historical origin of the cave-tradition of this Samkhya-Yoga movement and gives an analysis of its meaning.

The sixth presentation, by **Ramdass Lamb**, entitled "*Yoga in the contemporary Ramananda Sampraday*," focuses on the Ramananda Sampraday and the ways in which contemporary ascetics in this religious order understand and undertake the practice of yoga.

The final presentation, by **Tracy Pintchman**, "*Maternal Devotion as a Form of Yoga*," focuses on the nature of a particular women's devotional tradition as a form of yoga. In particular, this presentation looks at the portrayal of motherhood as it surfaces in this form of devotional practice and that ways that imagery of mothering and raising children taps into values often associated with yoga.