



10TH DANAM CONFERENCE – 2012

Chicago, Illinois
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PROGRAM and ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2012

McCORMICK PLACE CONVENTION CENTER – South Building

9:00 – 9:05 a.m. **Opening Remarks**

SESSION 1 (M16-100) 9:05 – 11:00 a.m. MPCC-S501a

Theme: The Contemporary Transmission of Jain Dharma

Convener and Presider: Anne Vallely, University of Ottawa

Respondent: Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College

Shivani Bothra, Florida International University

The Anuvrat Movement: A Study of Ethical Practice in the Jain Diaspora of North America

Can the Anuvrat Movement, an indigenized archetype, cross the geographical boundaries of the Indian subcontinent to be a part of larger global initiatives?

This paper proposes to utilize the religious ethnographic method and examines to what extent the Jain Diaspora in United States has embraced the teachings of the Anuvrat Movement. Does the more united immigrant Jain community feel the relevance of the movement against the background of social, ethical and environmental crisis?

The Encyclopedia of Asian American Folklore and Folk Life, identifies Virchand Raghav Gandhi as the first key figure in the history of American Jains, who spoke publicly at the most notable World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 about Jainism. In due course of time, Jainism set out to alter some of its social institutions and embarked on remarkable expansion of activities. One such activity is the Anuvrat Movement started by Acharya Tulsi, ninth religious leader of the Jain *Shvetambara Terapanth* sect. The Anuvrat movement is non-sectarian, infused with morality, and sought to create an unrestrained, free world society; but it was indigenous in character and remained primarily within the Indian subcontinent. One particularly interesting aspect of this study is attention to the adjustments that a Jain laity makes in a material-driven Western society in order to keep up with their practice. However, with the advantage of increasing Jain Diaspora, can the Anuvrat Movement succeed in transcending the tradition-based religious and geographical boundaries?

Unnata Pragna, at Jain Vishva Bharati and Florida International University
Fasting, a Double Edged Sword: Spiritual Fasting, Engaged Fasting, and Coercive Fasting

This paper is an attempt at analyzing one practice (fasting) in one cultural back ground in contrast to the other. The paper shall explore the practice of fasting placed in a different context or place or with a different purpose invariably displaying a shift. To simplify the process, I use fasting undertaken by Mahavir, Gandhi and further the same in the non-Indian panorama.

In the first half of the paper I shall explore spiritual and engaged fasting of Mahavir and Gandhi applied for themselves and the society (Chandanbala's reformation and Indian transformation respectively). Their application of engaged fasting at different levels was not mere transformative problem solving, but, more important, empowering the truth and nonviolence; more than 'sacred' for them (sacred is changing to secular, the word is now going through its transition and heading to its decline as per value). Having explored Mahavir and Gandhi, the next half of the paper shall deal with fasting applied by different populaces in a non-Indian platform and in non-Indian culture. Fasts like that of hunger-striking prisoners often cause authorities the most problems; they are put in position of force feeding the fasters, who usually resist violently. Some governments such as England's have just given up on them very determined. Germany has been very sensitive about its law enforcement activities since Nazi activities during World War II; authorities decided three weeks after the fasting began that they would not allow the terrorists to die. They began force feeding, tying, taping, and holding down the prisoners when necessary - they received food through tubes for months. They started off fasting when they were found guilty in court. The fast which is a sacred act of Indians, Mahavir's tool of enlightenment and social awakening, Gandhi's tool of nonviolence and truth, was also a tool for the prisoners to coerce their way out. The east-west same approach stands oceans apart. The paper will seek the causes of this difference of spiritual fasting, engaged fasting and further coercive fasting in east and west cultural context.

Alexis Reichert, University of Ottawa
Veerayatan: The Transmission of a Reformed Message

This paper will explore Veerayatan, a reform group within Jainism whose motto, "compassion in action" presents an interesting contrast to traditional Jain ideals of compassion through inaction. Striking too is that the group is led by a female acarya, Sadhvi Chanandanji. Both the message and messenger represent a marked departure from traditional Jain practice. I will explore this new message and it's relationship to traditional Jain thought and practice, as well as consider some of the controversies surrounding the Veerayatan and their philosophy.

Sherry Fohr, Converse College
The Transmission of Jainism through Narratives

Jainism is communicated and taught in India? mostly through religious narratives. These narratives are recounted by monks and nuns when they preach to the laity, told by mothers to their children, depicted in religious plays, referred to in religious singing, recited or

reenacted during various rituals, shown in videos, and included in vernacular literature and novels. While most Jains are not familiar with non-narrative religious texts, most are familiar with much of the content of narrative scriptures. Jain narratives communicate (a) beliefs about the nature of the world and how it works, (b) beliefs about the nature of humans, and (c) beliefs about what humans should or should not do in that world, all of which Jains consider when choosing how to be Jains according to their differing roles as monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen.

SESSION 2(M16-103) 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. MPCC Room S501a

Theme: Hindu Dharma, Yoga, and the East-West Transmission

Convener and President: Purushottama Bilimoria, Deakin College and University of California, Berkeley

Ellen Goldberg, Queens University, and **Mark Singleton**, St. John's College
Gurus of Modern Yoga

In this paper, we share the complex and unprecedented research of our authors related to the theme of 'Eastern Gurus and Western Seekers' and, by extension, Western Gurus and transnational seekers. While teachings and gurus have always adapted to the times and circumstances they find themselves in, the sheer pace of cultural change ushered in by modernity has led to some unprecedented innovations in the way gurus present themselves and transmit their teachings, and the way they are received by their students. The situation is complicated still further when these gurus operate within foreign cultures where there is no traditional framework for their activities. What happens when gurus come west? What happens when their teachings are shaped by modern technology, or corporate organizational structures? What abuses occur as a result of a guru's transplantation from a traditional, conservative environment to the modern, liberal West? These are some of the critical and engaging questions that we will pursue in this joint paper. The research presented is based on our multi-authored manuscript for Oxford University Press (June 2012). We will reflect critically on various gurus including Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Mata Amritanandamayi, Sai Baba, Swami Narayan, Swami Muktananda, Swami Kripalvananda, Swami Ramdev, John Friend, and the Krishnamacarya lineage, to name just a few.

June McDaniel, College of Charleston

Hinduism in Indonesia: Issues in Transmission, Innovation and Transformation

In Indonesia, we can describe several forms of religious belief and practice that have been defined as Hinduism. In its form as folk religion, we see the worship of local deities (such as Rangda and the Barong), and a special concern for ancestors (with elaborate cremations and spirit houses), combined with the worship of more traditional Hindu deities. Indonesian folk Hinduism includes mediumship, spiritual healing, and group possession. While this diverse set of practices did not have a generic name among Indonesian island cultures for many centuries, the recent requirement for religious affiliation by the Indonesian government has motivated many of these local systems to adopt the category

of Hinduism. The classical style of Indonesian Hinduism focuses on the worship of Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa. There are also goddesses, such as Dewi Sri, Saraswati, and a Kali-esque form of Dhurga. There are temples and pujas which would be recognizable in India, religious statues and paintings, priests, and offerings of fruits and flowers.

Since the 1950's, a modernist strain of Hinduism has been developing at the national level. At its independence, the Indonesian constitution included the pancasila, the five basic rules of Indonesian law and culture. The first of these was belief in one Almighty God. In order for Hindus to get government approval (and thus be able to get a national identity card, required for voting and travel) they had to prove that they fit the criteria for an accepted religion. This involved demonstrating belief in one God, as well as a revealed sacred text, a prophet, and a consistent ethical system suitable to a world religion; standards of religion understandable to the Muslim majority in Indonesia. This modernist form of religion was deliberately created by a team of writers, theologians, psychologists and politicians, and eventually called Agama Hindu Dharma Indonesia. They held academic discussions and debates for years, to develop a form of Hinduism that could fit into Muslim categories of understanding. As an academic enterprise, it created a form of religion which is now mandatory, taught to all Hindu children through the books of the religion curriculum published by the Department of Religion. It is officially followed by all Indonesian Hindus. This new form of Hinduism has one God, Sanghyang Widhi Wasa, the Vedas and Gita as revealed texts, the rishis and sages as prophets, and an ethical system based on the dharmasastras. These categories were necessary for the survival of the religion, after the political chaos of an attempted communist coup. All atheists were suspect - having an accepted religion became a form of self-defense. Now, the common categories shared between Islam, the Christianities (they technically separate Catholicism and Protestant Christianity), Buddhism and Confucianism allow dialogue because of shared understandings and assumptions. There is currently a debate over whether to develop a Hindu personal law in Indonesia, and there are philosophical elaborations of the meaning of monotheism, and the many dimensions that a single deity may have. There are ongoing discussions of the roles of caste and vegetarianism in Hindu practice. This paper will briefly discuss the official Hindu curriculum, to contrast the emphases of folk, classical and modernist forms of Indonesian Hinduism. It will describe some ways that these forms of Hinduism negotiate with other forms of religion in Indonesia, and also how they get along with each other.

Gerald Carney, Hampden-Sydney College

A Tale of Two Disciples: Baba Premananda Bharati's Pioneering Journey to the U.S.A. and His American Disciples

Baba Premananda Bharati (1858-1914) made two trips to the West (1902-1907 and 1910-1912). On his return to India in 1907, he was accompanied by five American disciples, among them Rose Reinhardt Anthon (c1870-1951) and Maud Lalita Johnson (1875-1943). Rose Anthon was part of his first group of disciples in New York and later followed Baba Bharati to Boston and Los Angeles. She co-wrote his 1907 introduction to Indian society in *The Hindu* and composed his 1914 obituary for the *Indian Review*. Actress and poet, her literary and organizational talents were at the core of the Baba's American mission. She remained in India and for seven years served as companion to a princess of the Burdwan royal family; later she lectured to Chicago audiences about women in India.

Maud Johnson encountered Baba Bharati in Los Angeles around 1906. She helped to finance the 1907 mission to India but was disillusioned on encountering the "real" India, rather than the romantically spiritual place she had envisioned. Nevertheless, in 1934 she wrote a novelistic treatment of Baba Bharati's career, *Square*. Her interests ranged from spiritualism to the occult. Her last years were spent living on a houseboat on Dal Lake in Srinagar as she continued to write poetry about India. Although I have previously written about Baba Bharati himself and his works, this paper is an opportunity to show the diverse experiences of these women in their encounters with him, their varied contributions to his mission, and the different directions of their lives afterwards.

Veena Howard, University of Oregon

From Gandhi's Satyagraha to Passive Resistance: Exploring the Issues of Transmission

One of the most recent and significant examples of interchange between the East and the West is the method of passive resistance, which has been utilized all over the world to confront sociopolitical injustice. Gandhi credited his inspiration for the strategy of Satyagraha to the principles found in Eastern and Western religious, social, and political texts and traditions. Simultaneously, he asserted his unique rendering of these to construct his "nonviolent weapon," which has been experimented with globally in various situations. Many have explored the connections among Gandhi's "Satyagraha," Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Passive Resistance," and modern protest movements. These models share the basic rubric of nonviolent resistance to confront injustice, but their adaptation of the fundamental principles varies from movement to movement.

By drawing on the historical examples of Gandhi's Satyagraha and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Passive Resistance, this paper seeks to explore the process of transmission for making the principle effective. More specifically, I focus on Gandhi's creative rendering of the passive resistance for his Indian context, which arguably became the model for Martin Luther King's version for the Civil Rights Movement. What are the culturally specific features of Gandhi's Satyagraha? What precisely can we learn from Gandhi's interpretation and King's rendering of Satyagraha? I suggest that a successful strategy of nonviolent resistance requires creative interpretation of the nonviolent paradigm within specific cultural contexts, while holding firm to the fundamental principles of Satyagraha.

Ithamar Theodor, Haifa University

Gandhi's Bhagavad Gita Interpretation: Universalizing its Message and Teachings

Gandhi's complex personality seems to be comprised of various layers completing each other; Gandhi is all at the same time a Social Activist, an Indian Nationalist, a Political Thinker and a Commentator on the *Bhagavad Gita*. Gandhi's doctrine has exceeded beyond the Indian milieu and became a global doctrine involving social-political ideas which are to a large extent based upon Gandhi's interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is in many ways the founding text of the Indian National Movement, and one of its main themes is Krishna's call to Arjuna to lead his army and fight the battle. As opposed to other contemporary thinkers such as Sri Aurobindo, B.G. Tilak and Vir Savarkar who understood the text explicitly and interpreted it as encouraging political activism including an armed struggle against the British regime, Gandhi awarded the text

a different interpretation, according to which it calls for non-violence. His doctrine became world famous and served as an inspiration to various non violent resistance movements worldwide. The paper looks into Gandhi's interpretation and sheds light on the exegetical steps he takes in order to establish his doctrine of Satyagraha. This includes his metaphoric exegesis system, his highlighting the 2nd Chapter's concluding 19 verses as the *Gita's* essence, his emphasizing Brahminical qualities over Kshatriya ones, and his consideration of the permission to kill without ego as merely theoretical.

SESSION 3 (M16-206) 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. MPCC Room S501a

Theme: Transmission, Innovation, and Identity Formation in Buddhist Communities

President: Karma Lekshe Tsomo, University of San Diego

Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, University of Alabama

Reversing Transmission – or Creating a New Buddhism? The Reception of Buddhist Modernity in the Himalayas

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, technologies of colonialism facilitated intercultural communication in an unprecedented way. Scholars such as Donald S. Lopez, Jr. have considered the ramifications of the mistranslations that arose during this period on the formation of the academic category of “Buddhism” as an object of Orientalist fantasy. More recently David McMahan has identified the formation of a distinct Buddhist tradition that has been sculpted from these fantasies known as “Buddhist modernism” which privileges rationality, empiricism, textual knowledge, and meditation as elements of a timeless and cross-cultural Buddhist tradition.

The creation of Buddhist modernism is often read in a unidirectional way, as the mistranslation of Asian cultural traditions that flow into Western interpretation, only to be rendered unrecognizable. This paper will disrupt this unidirectional tendency through focusing on the reception of Buddhist modernism from the West in Tibetan Buddhist cultural areas of the Himalayas. It will outline how contemporary Buddhist communities are embracing products of this modernism, including books that intertwine New Age ideologies with Tibetan philosophy, and videos of English-speaking, sneaker-wearing Tibetan lamas discussing compassion, and transforming them into the “authentic” Buddhist tradition. The acceptance of Buddhist modernism as authoritative is having radical effects in these areas, as other facets of local identity, including language use and local cultural traditions, are marginalized and sometimes even dismissed in the process of this negotiation of modernity. This paper will explore the challenges modernity brings with this retransmission of Buddhism, and some of its deeper implications for regional identity.

Ann Gleig, Millsaps College

Buddhist Geeks, Generation Y and Integral Evolutionary Buddhism: From Buddhist Modernism to Buddhist Postmodernism?

Drawing on fieldwork and discourse analysis, this paper examines Buddhist Geeks, a digital media magazine and weekly audio program that frames itself as promoting “the

emerging faces of Buddhism” and explores the impact of the intersection of technology, science and culture on Buddhism. My analysis will focus particularly on teasing out the dominant metaphysical vision advocated within Buddhist Geeks. I argue that across the plurality of Buddhist traditions and teachings represented on the site is an advancement of an essentially integral evolutionary reframing of traditional forms of Buddhism. I tease out a number of central strands within this evolutionary integral Buddhism and discuss how it is located and legitimated in relationship to historic and contemporary forms of Buddhism. I illuminate its critique of what has been dubbed as “consensus Buddhism” and note how evolutionary Buddhism situates itself as an alternative to what it sees as a monolithic and mediocre vision of Western Buddhism. I further discuss how this shift is articulated as reflecting differences between what has been identified as “first-generation” and “Generation Y” Western Buddhist practitioners. In conclusion, I suggest that the shift from “consensus Buddhism” to an integral evolutionary Buddhism is indication of a wider shift within the acculturation of Buddhism in the West, one that might be articulated as a shift from Buddhist modernism to Buddhist postmodernism.

Natalie Quli, Institute of Buddhist Studies, and Asst. Editor, *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*
The Relationship between Temple Ownership Patterns and Ethnic Identity in Four Sri Lankan American Buddhist Temples

This ethnographic study, based on fieldwork conducted in the U.S. and Sri Lanka, looks at the development of temple organizations, particularly ownership patterns, in four Sri Lankan American Buddhist viharas in Northern California. Because no overarching Sri Lankan Theravada institution exists to establish and enforce organizational models in the U.S., a diversity of models of temple ownership developed among these temples. In tandem with other adaptations in the American context, the lay founding, funding, and management of temples has led to a renegotiation of the authority and roles of laypeople and monastics, resulting in laicization. This laicization represents intensification in the American environment of already-existing trends that began in Sri Lanka, exaggerated in part by nonprofit legal norms and the lay founding and funding of temples that can empower lay members. In turn, lay members at such temples may have more control over a temple’s identity. I suggest that as a result, the degree of ethnic exclusivity in temples is related to the degree of lay authority and may be correlated with temple ownership patterns. Lay-owned temples—those with deeds owned either by laypeople or by nonprofits with lay-dominated boards of directors—are associated with a more mono-ethnic (Sri Lankan American) lay congregation, while those temples with deeds owned by monastics have a more pan-ethnic, non-exclusively Sri Lankan lay membership. Temple ownership patterns in Sri Lanka (esp. among the “mother” temples of those in the study) and the influence of the abbots’ nikayas (fraternities) are also discussed.

Scott A. Mitchell, Institute of Buddhist Studies
Buddhism in the American Media Imagination

Buddhists and Buddhism are represented in specific, narrowly defined, and surprisingly consistent ways across a wide spectrum of media, and an accounting of these representations helps reveal American’s attitudes toward the Buddhist tradition. In the proposed paper, I argue that there is a relationship between these media representations

and the expectations or preconceptions Western seekers have about Buddhism. These expectations may play an important role in how newcomers to Buddhism relate both to the tradition generally as well as to Buddhist authority figures specifically. Further, I explore the extent to which Buddhists reinforce, challenge, or respond to media representations and stereotypes.

Both in traditional print formats as well as new media and the Internet, U.S. Buddhists themselves are media creators and therefore add to mainstream media representations of Buddhism. To what extent do Buddhist communities perpetuate existing media narratives and tropes, or do they reject them in the hopes of supplanting their own perspectives on Buddhist teachings and practices? This work builds, in part, on Jane Iwamura's recent work on the hyperreal icon of the "Oriental Monk," a mediated image of Asian persons and spirituality that stands in for Western needs and desires. It also uses demographic fieldwork conducted by Wendy Cadge and Robert Wuthnow to explore the relationship between media images and American's general attitudes toward Buddhism and Buddhists.

Sharon A. Suh, Seattle University
Buddhism, Race, and the Political

In this presentation, I discuss the vexing question of how we might begin to democratize the study of Buddhism and, in so doing, how such an inherently political project is deeply invested in an interrogation of American Buddhism that implicates, renders in stark relief, and redresses the troubled relationship between religion and race in the United States. I discuss the ways that American Buddhism has rhetorically advances itself as an intrinsically democratic, egalitarian, and utilitarian practice based upon a secularized notion of ritual meditation primarily in forms of vipassana and zazen – disciplinary practices associated with the mind and the authentic (non-religious) over and above the devotional (the overly religious and, by extension, the overly Asian). As a result, American Buddhism self-reflexively lays claim to an inherently secular, democratic, and paradoxically, rhetorically apolitical embodiment of "real" tradition attributed to the nonpartisan position advocated by the Buddha himself. Yet, I note that such a self-fashioned non-partisan democratic and secular Buddhism is in fact implicitly political, self-consciously partisan, and practices a troubled racial politics that renders Asian American Buddhist communities and practitioners overly devotional (non-secular), un-American (because their practices retain too many cultural accretions from the homeland), and, paradoxically, viewed as apolitical and partisan in their suspicious connections to Asian monies and the non-democratic. Thus, I argue that American Buddhism maintains its appeal to the democratic in distinction to and distortion of Asian American Buddhists historically racialized as the socially disengaged, the perpetual foreigner, the irredeemably hierarchical – or, in short, the undemocratic. I conclude my presentation by gesturing toward a democratization of Buddhist Studies and the construction of American Buddhism.

Tanya Storch, University of the Pacific
Buddhist Universities in the United States of America

A Buddhist university in the United States, by my definition, is a university that is accredited by the state and offers a variety of degrees in liberal arts and professional

fields, yet historically and in the present is involved in the ethical development of human character in accordance with traditional Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist universities in the U.S. are unique because no other Western country has developed similar institutions for graduate education. They are also unique because other religious/spiritual tradition prominent in the U.S., such as Hinduism, Shamanism, Sikhism, or other, has yet produced an institution of higher learning accredited by the state. The very first accredited Islamic University opened its doors in 2011 and there are only two accredited Jewish universities in existence – fewer than the number of Buddhist universities. The fact that several Buddhist universities exist in the U.S. is therefore extremely significant. It indicates that Buddhism-generated ideas and practices based on a peaceful global humanistic perspective have become an integral part of American education.

This paper is a summary of several years of comprehensive, systematic study of American Buddhist universities that explores their history, academic programs, and social cultural effects on the graduates, as well as on the broader society. The primary focus is on Naropa University, University of the West, Soka University of America, and Dharma Realm University. The most important questions that I will try to answer are these:

1. What historical social conditions led to the establishment of the Buddhist universities in the United States?
2. Why have these universities become more popular over the years, as their enrollments have grown, and several more Buddhist universities and colleges are getting ready to be accredited by the states?
3. What particular methods of personal moral cultivation are considered to be effective, according to the faculty, administration, students and graduates of these universities?
4. Does a professional education supplemented by a deep ethical training make a difference in the life of a graduate? Does it have the potential to make a difference for the broader society?
5. What successful elements of the whole-person ethical education practiced on Buddhist university campuses can be duplicated on other campuses?

SESSION 4 (M16-300) 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. MPCC-S501a

Theme: InterDharma, IntraDharma, and Interfaith Dialogue as Forms of Transmitting Dharma

Presider: Sachi Edwards, University of Maryland

Respondent: Phyllis K. Herman, California State University, Northridge

Sachi Edwards, University of Maryland

Interfaith Dialogue as Dharma Transmission

A key element of transmission of dharma concepts involves crossing the borders between faith. In the west, this usually means interfaith dialogue with member of Abrahamic and other non-Dharma religious traditions. The process of interfaith dialogue has been undertaken to develop mutual understanding between the various traditions in a variety of formats. On an individual level, it provides the opportunity for dharma practitioners to share the ways in which they personally experience their own dharma. This paper will

look at the pedagogy of interfaith dialogue in colleges and universities across the United States for the purpose of facilitating this dialogue.

Dimple Dhanani, University of Hawai'i

The Internet and the Transmission of Inspiration and Teachings

As a computer-dominated society, almost all aspects of American life have been influenced by the Internet including interpersonal relationships. The Hindu guru-disciple relationship, a simultaneously interpersonal and divine relationship, has indeed been influenced as well. As a consequence, the transmission of inspiration and teachings by way of video darshan, audio recordings, etc. have become valid and valuable tools to expand the ways that relationship can be actualized and have thus become immensely important to the practitioners of these traditions. Two examples are the online media of Srila Prabhupada of ISKCON and Pramukh Swami Maharaj of BAPS Swaminarayan Sampraday. Through an analysis of interviews with Hindu-American devotees of both traditions as well as a survey of the messages portrayed in these online media, I will provide a snapshot of how the Internet as public, multi-faith space can be utilized for the giving and receiving of teachings.

Anne Vallely, University of Ottawa

Experiential Dimensions of Religiosity as Academic Transmission

This paper will consider the variety of methodological approaches we typically employ in the teaching (or transmission) of World Religions, and draw upon my own experiments in this regard. For five years, I taught the large World Religions course from an exclusively anthropological-humanistic perspective. Two years ago, I added to it an explicitly phenomenological dimension. Approaching religion as one of the few cultural institutions left in contemporary society that take seriously the human experience of «inner conflict», we explored the Dharma traditions (Sikh, Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist) as profoundly distinct expressions of a universal human condition. The shift in pedagogy to consider experiential dimensions of religiosity, in addition to the discursive, led to a rather dramatic (in my view) change in student engagement. My paper will reflect upon the impact of this experiential approach, and consider well-established debates within Religious Studies that support and challenge it.

Rita Gross, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire (emerita)

Reverse Transmission: From Western Academic Scholarship to Buddhist Institutions

As scholar-practitioners, we most often think that the dharma traditions themselves supply the information that academic scholars of religions study. We often further claim that much academic scholarship is lacking because in depth understanding of the actual practice traditions is absent from most academic methods. This would mean that, primarily, the academic traditions need to be supplemented with the perspectives that a scholar-practitioner can bring to the discourse. However, sometimes information learned mainly through academic studies challenges traditional understandings, which need to be revised in the light of these newly discovered materials. This is never more the case than

in the study of Buddhist history, especially as understood by Mahayana Buddhists. Mahayana sutras are set as if they were narratives that occurred during the lifetime of the historical Buddha, but they clearly are not. Nevertheless, many traditional Buddhists, especially in the Tibetan tradition, read these stories quite literally, believing, for example, that the historical Buddha himself taught the Heart Sutra at Mt. Rajgriha. Western followers of Tibetan Vajrayana traditions are usually taught the historical Buddha himself taught Mahayana teachings, but then withdrew them after he realized that his current disciples were not ready to understand them. The sectarian polemical intent of such teachings is clear. In my work teaching accurate and non-sectarian Buddhist history to Western Buddhist practitioners, such knowledge is often unwelcome, and, as far as I can tell, Tibetans are completely unwilling to assimilate such information into their understandings of Buddhism. In this paper I will explore the problems and possibilities of such “reverse transmission” from Western academic scholarship about Buddhism into Buddhist institutions themselves.

Ramdas Lamb, University of Hawai'i

Beyond Introductions: In-depth Academic Teaching of Dharma Traditions as Transmission

The knowledge about the Dharma Traditions that is held by most students in North American universities is limited to what they might learn in an introductory course in religion or history, and these often provide little in the way of real understanding of the fundamental aspects of the traditions. This is especially the case in regards to religion courses, which should be the place where a good basic understanding is provided. My paper will look at some of the reasons for this lacuna, and then theorize on how such courses can become, instead, vehicles for transmitting both valid and useful information about the traditions.

SESSION 5 (M16-401) 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Hilton Hotel, Williford Room A

Theme: Sikh Identity and the Kundalini Yoga Movement of Yogi Bhajan

President: Balbinder Bhogal, Hofstra University

Respondent: Balbinder Bhogal, Hofstra University

Michael Hawley, Mount Royal University

Hubristic, Heretical, or Heterogeneous? Exploring the KY / 3HO Community in Calgary

With a few recent exceptions, scholarly work dealing with Sikhism in Canada has largely been limited to the geographic areas of the lower mainland British Columbia and the greater Toronto area. Even less has been done on Sikh groups that might be considered non-normative or outside the mainstream (i.e. Punjabi, Khalsa-oriented) tradition. The current project makes a preliminary attempt to address both of these gaps by exploring the kundalini yoga (KY) / 3HO communities in Calgary. Drawing from historical sources, personal interviews, and participant observation, this paper chronicles the history and development of KY / 3HO groups in Calgary, documents their constituencies and

demographics, and seeks to sketch their associations with mainstream, normative Sikh tradition. This paper draws attention to the recent and rapid expansion of KY / 3HO in Calgary among both Panjabis and non-Panjabis (gora). In doing so, this presentation raises larger questions about the nature of religious identity, power, and the transmission of dharma traditions in the diaspora. While it has become commonplace to understand KY / 3HO in terms of a new religious movement (Khalsa 1986; Dusenbery 1988; Jakobsh 2008), or to draw attention to the worldly, material success of the tradition (Khalsa 1986), this paper proposes an alternate framework in which KY / 3HO subjectivity is an analogue to the episteme and accompanying discourse of an enduring sanatan Sikh tradition in the diaspora.

Philip Deslippe, UC Santa Barbara

From Maharaj to Mahan Tantric: The Construction of Yogi Bhajan's Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan (1929-2004) stands distinct from other popular schools within modern yogic practice. It does not claim to be hatha or primarily posture-based, its lineage has only vague antecedents prior to Yogi Bhajan introducing it to the West, it is claimed to have been a secret tradition prior to Yogi Bhajan's open teaching of it, and it unusually claims a connection to the Sikh tradition. This paper will detail the influences upon and construction of Kundalini Yoga as introduced, taught and propagated in the West by Yogi Bhajan, by delving into the lost history of the practice's earliest years through previously neglected sources such as its documentation in rare early texts and interviews with early students and associates, many of which were some of the most important in the formation of 3HO. As opposed to the official history of Kundalini Yoga, this article argues that it was derived from two main figures: a hatha yoga teacher named Swami Dharendra Bramachari (1924-1994) and the Sikh saint Maharaj Virsa Singh (1934-2007). It is the aim of this paper to not only provide clear evidence as to what Yogi Bhajan's Kundalini Yoga is and what it is comprised of, but to put forward the historical and cultural context in which it was developed and presented by Yogi Bhajan to his Western audience, and suggest larger conclusions about Kundalini Yoga, Yogi Bhajan, and modern yogic practice in the West as a whole, that could be drawn from this revised understanding of the practice.

Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa, University of Michigan

When Gurbani Sings a Healthy Happy Holy Song~ Toward the Kirtaan Generation

My paper is an ethnographic examination of the Euro-American (non-Punjabi) Sikh community (Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere aka 3HO-Healthy Happy Holy Organization) whose innovative styles of singing Sikh devotional music (Gurbani Kirtan) both reconstruct and deconstruct a particular notion of Sikh identity. Gurbani Kirtan orthopraxy maintains specific performative parameters which the western 3HO/Sikh Dharma community can be seen as transgressing through singing Gurbani in English-translation rather than the "sacred" originary Gurmukhi script, intermixing Gurbani with mantras from other traditions, singing personally composed songs or using "celestial communication" movements in the Gurdwara services and appropriating various musical styles such as blues, folk, and new age to appeal to a western audience.

Today many 3HO kirtan musicians record and sell their music through Spirit Voyage, which markets kirtan music, festivals, and concerts to the Sikh, Kundalini yoga, and broader yoga-meditation “kirtaan” audiences. How does the commercialization and popularization of Sikh devotional music within the marketplace of new-age spirituality and world music affect representations of Gurbani Kirtan and the Sikh self?

Interestingly, there are also a growing number of kirtan musicians in 3HO/Sikh Dharma who now study classically traditional forms of Gurbani Kirtan, sung in raga melody to stringed instrumentation. Does the renewed interest in classical Gurbani Kirtan affect the musical forms and orthopraxy surrounding the 3HO kirtan music being propagated within the community? How do these diverse forms of performative practice affect identity formation not only in this group of non-Punjabi first and second generation Sikhs but also within the Diasporic Punjabi Sikhs who attend the 3HO/Sikh Dharma concerts, events, and Gurdwaras? By exploring the multiple musical voices of the Diaspora I hope to map the history and trajectory of Gurbani Kirtan toward the “kirtaan generation

SATURDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2012

McCORMICK PLACE CONVENTION CENTER – South Building

SESSION 6 (M17-108) 11:00 am – 1:00 pm MPCC-S402a

Theme: Being in Borderlands: The Negotiation of Boundaries in South Asian Religious Communities

Presider: Christopher K. Chapple, Loyola Marymount University

Respondent: Laurie Patton, Duke University

Pankaj Jain, University of North Texas

Bishnois: At the Crossroads of Hinduism, Islam, and Jainism

Rajasthan has been a fertile ground for interreligious dialogue and interactions for last several centuries welcoming and sometimes battling the new groups entering South Asia. My paper presents my fieldwork done with the Bishnois, a Rajasthani community that transcends the boundaries of Hinduism, Islam, and Jainism, the three religious traditions of Rajasthan. Although Bishnois are now considered a caste-group within the Hindu community, they were classified with Muslims in 1891 Census of Marwar. Based on the similarities of the two non-violent traditions of Jainism and Bishnois, it is not surprising that a noted conservationist Valmik Thapar called Bishnoi tradition as an “offshoot of Jainism”. I also note that despite the several common elements of Hindu, Muslim, and Jain practices and ideas in this community, at present the Bishnois reject any connection with Islam. This “Hinduization” movement can be contextualized with similar process taking place with several other “liminal” communities.

Purushottama Bilimoria, Melbourne University/University of California-Berkeley

Diasporic Borders: Of Deterritorialized Hindu-Sikh Transnationals

The paper conducts a theoretical inquiry on the driving force behind the movement of Hindus and Sikhs from one location to another, and again to a third, beyond familiar

borders. What leads ‘twice-migrants’ to leave one diasporic home for another – e.g. from the subcontinent via former British colonies to North America – and back again? I examine also the factors motivating bride/bridegroom seekers turning to prospective counterparts in North America, not to India. Factors comprise comparable educational qualifications, professional marketability, religious orientation sans caste concerns, ease of immigration procedure, educational prospects for offspring. How well and how far have these desi-porias been able to integrate with the cognate communities in America – e.g. do they participate in the local Hindu and Jain temples or do they desire to erect their own mandalis? This border-double-crossing transnational phenomenon is not well understood.

Leela Prasad, Duke University

Ownership and its Borders: An Exploration in the Poetics of Habitation

Controversies over representations of religious teachers or deities, over religious material in school textbooks, or over symbolic personal clothing revisit familiar questions: Who owns the right to define a community and represent it? Should only Hindus write about Hindus? Or which Muslims should speak for (or with) which Muslims? The answers to these questions usually identify specific figures who must inhabit specific spaces within inhibiting borders. Drawing on three narratives from early and medieval South India—a story from the Alvar tradition, a song by the poet-saint Purandara, and a dream narrative of a Chola king—this paper posits an alternative poetics of habitation that demarcates spaces and presences and simultaneously dissolves borders between them. In the process, the very nature and notion of ownership is questioned and altered, paving the way for an ethos of co-being. These narratives counter-intuitively argue that the greatest gain occurs when ownership is relinquished.

Gregory D. Alles, McDaniel College

Ritual Space as Borderland: Building and Breaching Borders in Rathva Rituals

The building and breaching of borders defines an important dynamic in the political, social, and economic lives of people in the twenty-first century, including stateless and displaced peoples. Perhaps unexpectedly, it also provides a significant frame for understanding much ritual activity among “adivasis,” the so-called indigenous people of India, at least, among the “adivasis” I know best, the Rathvas. This paper will suggest that the formal characteristics of Rathva ritual life may be profitably understood in terms of the building and breaching of borders. In a first, preliminary phase, ritual agents build in material, manifest form borders between empirical and non-empirical realms that are otherwise only imagined. In the second, culminating phase, they breach the built borders through various transactions. In contrast to the political construction of borders, they construct a borderland in which breaches are not perceived as threats to well-being but as a crucial means to achieving it.

MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2012

McCORMICK PLACE CONVENTION CENTER – West Building.

SESSION 7 (M19-102) 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. MPCC-W183c

***Theme:* Religious Violence, Pluralism, and the American Social Covenant: Implications of the Sikh Temple Shootings**

Presider: Rita D. Sherma, Taksha University

Respondent: Arvind-Pal Mandair, University of Michigan

Panelists:

Mehnaz Afridi, Manhattan College

Philip Clayton, Claremont Lincoln University

Morny Joy, University of Calgary

Balbinder Bhogal, Hofstra University

Hussein Rashid, Hofstra University

Panel Abstract

DANAM (Dharma Academy of North America) is sponsoring at the Chicago meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) on the intellectual and practical responsibility of religion scholars in regards to religious violence in America exemplified by the Sikh Gurdwara shooting. As the Sikh community has been targeted repeatedly every year after 9/11 and prior to that, DANAM feels that there is, at least in part, a responsibility incumbent upon the community of North American scholars represented by the American Academy of Religion to help mitigate the circumstances that have led to these multiple tragedies.

There are theoretical issues at stake as well as pragmatic ones. Critical theories can certainly be called upon, as well as theories of multiculturalism or religious pluralism, and violence and religion. The day after the Sikh Gurdwara shootings, a Missouri mosque was burned to the ground. No social outrage has been sparked by these events. No serious or consistent media coverage that addressed the issues raised by these and similar events.

As a result of the above reflections, DANAM has decided to sponsor this Special Session on the questions raised about our responsibilities as scholars of religion and our critical reflections on religion, violence, and pluralism in America.