

Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions

7th-9th April 2017

Monson Room, Lady Margaret Hall,
University of Oxford

spaldingsymposium.org

PROGRAMME

Friday 7th April

3.00-3.45pm Registration, tea and coffee

3.45-4.00pm Welcome, announcements

4.00-5.00pm Opening Keynote Lecture:

Professor Anne MacDonald, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

'Real Illusions, Illusory Realities: Appearance and Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism'

5.00-5.15 comfort break

5.15-6.15pm Dr Alice Collett, Nalanda University - 'Literary Motif and Meme in Considerations of Biological Sex as Appearance and Reality'

6.30-7.30pm Dinner

7.30-8.30pm Dr Rafal Stepien, Berggruen Research Fellow in Indian Philosophy, University of Oxford - 'Illusory Selves in Action, Delusory Views in Thought: A Buddhist Approach to the Abandonment of All'

Saturday 8th April

9.00-10.00am Dr Marco Ferrante, Austrian Academy of Sciences

'Between language and being: Bhartṛhari's on reality and appearance'

10.00-11.00am Dr Monika Nowakowska, University of Warsaw - '(Ir)reality of desire: early *Mīmāṃsā* on decisive craving, enigmatic heaven and insignificant gods'

11.00-11.30am Coffee

11.30am-1.00pm Postgraduate papers

11.30-12.00 Avni Chag, SOAS, University of London

'The Apocryphal Making of a Religious Relic: Problematising the History ascribed to the Śikṣāpatrī Manuscript in the Bodleian Library'

12.00-12.30 Aleksandra Gordeeva, Yale University

'Despair (*nirveda*) and Delusion (*moha*): The Entanglement of the Divergent Emotions in Rāmacandra's Dramatic Works'

12.30-1.00 Charles Li, University of Cambridge
'Casting Sāṃkhya as Advaita: A falsified quotation from the
Pātañjalayogaśāstra'

1.00-3.00pm Lunch and free time to explore the town

3.00-4.00pm Postgraduate papers continued

3.00-3.30pm Davey K. Tomlinson, University of Chicago
'A Buddhist Debate on the Reality of Appearances'

3.30-4.00pm Karen O'Brien-Kop, SOAS, University of London
'The entangled discourse of classical yoga'

4.00-4.30pm Coffee

4.30-5.30pm Dr Julie Regan, La Salle University, Philadelphia
'The Path to Truth through Appearances in the Literary Works of Aśvaghoṣa'

5.30-6.30pm Dr Eviatar Shulman, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
'Omniscience and Reality: Reflections on Knowledge and Truth in the *Jātakas*'

6.30-7.30pm Dinner

Sunday 9th April

9.00-10.00 Dr Michael S. Allen, University of Virginia
'The Idealist Turn in Late Advaita Vedānta'

10.00-11.00 Dr Victor A. van Bijlert, Faculty of Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
'Realistic reasoning and the unreal world: Gaudapada's use of Nyāya-methodology to argue for illusionism'

11.00-11.30 Coffee

11.30-12.30 Closing Keynote Lecture: Prof David Gellner (University of Oxford)
'The Politics of Religious Affiliation in Nepal'

12.30-1.00 Final remarks and information about following year's Symposium

1.00-2.00pm Lunch, followed by departure

Abstracts

(in order of appearance in the programme)

Professor Anne MacDonald, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

‘Real Illusions, Illusory Realities: Appearance and Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism’

In contrast to early Buddhism and the Conservative Buddhist schools, which stress the impermanence of the things of the world and provide reductionistic analyses of these entities, Mahāyāna Buddhism tends to describe the world and its constituents in terms of illusionism, often comparing persons and things to magical displays, mirages, and dreams. Mahāyāna of course does not deny that the world appears, but the proponents of its different strands disagree on the type of reality that underlies or exists separately from the appearances, or whether something “real” may be found at all.

Of the three main Mahāyāna philosophical traditions, the Madhyamaka is often considered the most challenging. The past few decades have seen a surge in the scholarly investigation of Indian Madhyamaka works and ideas, which has led to new Sanskrit and Tibetan critical editions of the surviving compositions of Nāgārjuna (late 2nd-3rd c.) and his commentators Buddhapālita (6th c.), Bhāviveka (6th c.), and Candrakīrti (7th c.) being published. Numerous translations into modern languages made on the basis of the early and more recent editions are now available, and many attempts have been undertaken to decipher the assertions of the texts. These attempts, informed by a variety of approaches to and assumptions about the material, have nonetheless not yet been able to bring about consensus amongst contemporary Madhyamaka scholars regarding what our authors mean when they say, for example, that the things of the world are empty (*śūnya*) of an “own-being” (*svabhāva*). Nor have scholars been able to agree on the psychological and spiritual effects that a penetrative, experiential understanding of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) might bring for the individual who has reached the culmination of the path.

The talk will consider some of the most influential of the modern interpretations of Madhyamaka, offer an assessment of their value in the endeavour to understand the Indian authors, and explore the consequences of and the motivations behind the Madhyamaka positing of a world of mere appearances.

Dr Alice Collett, Nalanda University

‘Literary Motif and Meme in Considerations of Biological Sex as Appearance and Reality’

The religious literature of early historic India contains numerous narratives on the phenomenon of sexual transformation. That is, narratives that recount episodes in which an individual is able to change from one biological sex to another; from female to male, or vice versa. The idea of spontaneous sexual transformation is not an exclusively South Asian phenomenon, however, it does appear in both Brahmanical and Indian Buddhist texts, and seems to be a trope that rather captured the imagination of early and early medieval South

Asian storytellers. Within the Indian Buddhist tradition, its presentation in – mainly – Indian Mahāyāna texts has received a great deal of scholarly attention, with scholars expressing a range of diverse views on it. Understood as a motif that communicates something about gender, the episodes of sexual transformation have been interpreted in two polarised ways - to be expressing the idea that a woman must transform into a man in order to make significant progress on the path, or, on the contrary, to illuminate gender as an (empty) constructed category that has no bearing on one's progress. The two polarised interpretations demonstrate that, if narrative episodes on sexual transformation were functioning as literary motif in relation to gender, then either the meaning of it has become unclear to our modern eyes, or it is failing to do what a motif should. On the level of doctrine, it is, on the contrary, entirely successful. On the level of doctrine there is no dispute as to the symbolic significance of the motif; it functions as a signifier for the emptiness of constructed categories, and works successfully in doing so. In this paper, I want to question whether, therefore, the gender aspect of the narrative episodes on sexual transformation should be seen more as literary meme than motif. Was the transformation of sex chosen as a way to illustrate this fundamental Mahāyāna doctrine because stories of sexual transformation are so common in Hindu narratives of the time? Is the fact that gender is being utilized as a category more accidental than evidence of a deliberate attempt to demonstrate that gendered categories of experience are empty? Thus, the paper is not so much concerned with biological sex as 'appearance' or 'reality', but rather with explorations of the hermeneutics of it.

Rafal Stepień, Berggruen Research Fellow in Indian Philosophy, University of Oxford
'Illusory Selves in Action, Delusory Views in Thought: A Buddhist Approach to the Abandonment of All'

The immense influence of Nāgārjuna (c. 150-250), founder of the Madhyamaka school, on subsequent Buddhist philosophy stems from his universalization of the Buddha's doctrine of no-self (*anātman*) in terms of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) – the absence of any essential self (*svabhāva*) – to include all phenomena. Furthermore, Nāgārjuna is concerned to unravel the epistemological implications of this ontological condition, for he agrees with the standard Buddhist view that it is our epistemic mistaking of conventional/apparent irreality for ultimate/real reality that lies at the source of our existential suffering (*duḥkha*). As such, in the first part of this paper I seek to demonstrate how Nāgārjuna's refutation of all selfhood necessarily entails his "abandonment of all views" (*sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya*). For, in marked contradistinction to the almost unanimous efforts among modern scholars to 'rescue' Nāgārjuna from the purported incoherence his all-embracing denial of positionality would entail, my reading proposes that Nāgārjuna's insistence on the abandonment of *all* views – including ultimately his own – constitutes his distinctive means to the epistemological and ontological 'exhaustion' characteristic of *nirvāṇa*, wherein all views, theses, propositions

(*dṛṣṭi, pakṣa, pratijñā*) are abandoned as so many subtle affirmations of an only ever empty self.

Of course, for Nāgārjuna the conventional distinction between conventional and ultimate reality (*saṃvṛti-* and *paramārtha-satya*) breaks down once one attains to ultimate truth, for then one perceives that “between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* there is no difference at all” (*na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃ cid asti viśeṣaṇam*). Indeed, this must be so, for otherwise no ignorance could be dispelled with wisdom, no ‘self’ even inter-act with any ‘other’, since both would be perpetually stuck in static independence. In the second half of my paper, I therefore consider the ethical implications of Nāgārjuna’s metaphysical ground-clearing. I attempt to show that the socio-ethical import of the denial of essential/independent selfhood in favour of a self only ever empty/relational lies precisely in the corollary abjuration of doxastic positionality in favour of critical detachment from any op-positional grasping. In other words, I argue that selves and views are mutually reinforcing in that holding a view is always also holding to a self – as Nāgārjuna says, “there is no self without holding” (*ātmā nāsti upādānān*) – and then demonstrate how it is only on a basis of selflessness/viewlessness that Nāgārjuna is able to construct a conventionally meaningful ethics. I thus propose that it is only by passing “beyond conceptualizations” (*prapañcātītam*) such as ‘self’ and ‘other’ (and abandoning in the process the apparent distinction between ‘appearance’ and ‘reality’), that we can come to see ourselves, ultimately, as conventionally self-othered members of the body politic. Soteriological liberation therefore resides not in any supposed independence from the social fabric but in fully harmonizing with others in the knowledge that selfhood can only ever be constituted inter- dependently, in a world ultimately known to be conventionally real. This, for Nāgārjuna, is ‘the good life’; “thus does this entire mass of suffering completely cease” (*duḥkhaskandhaḥ kevalo 'yam evaṃ samyag nirudhyate*).

Dr Marco Ferrante, Austrian Academy of Sciences

‘Between language and being: Bhartṛhari’s on reality and appearance’

The dichotomy between “what is real” and “what appears to be real (but it is not!)” is a thread that links various religious/philosophical traditions of South Asia. The idea is frequently adopted by idealistic philosophers as an argument to justify the (real) existence of a higher state of affairs in contrast with an (unreal) lower condition, which is usually the one ordinary people experience and aim at leaving behind. Examples of this attitude are offered by the Upaniṣads, the Advaita Vedānta, Mahāyāna Buddhism and so forth. A peculiar case of this approach is to be found in the work of the 5th c. CE grammarian, linguist and philosopher Bhartṛhari, in which the above said dichotomy assumes a metaphysical connotation. Moving from a non dualistic perspective, whereby the only existing reality is a single and unitary principle named Brahman, Bhartṛhari develops an ontological picture in which the distinction between what is real and what only appears to

be so is less rigid than in other South Asian monistic philosophies. In his view, the entities of the ordinary life are eventually real, yet they keep having a substantial difference with the unitary Brahman. How is this possible? In the paper I address the question by a thorough examination of the relevant passages of Bhartr̥hari's *magnum opus*, the *Vākyapadīya*. In doing so, I will try to show how the effort to develop a coherent interpretation is made complicated by the nature of the *Vākyapadīya* itself, in which it is not uncommon to find diverging opinions on the very same issue, sometimes put side by side. Nevertheless, I will eventually claim that a possible way to understand Bhartr̥hari's standpoint is to appeal to his linguistic conceptions, and use them as an instrument to shed light on his ontological positions too.

Dr Monika Nowakowska, University of Warsaw

'(Ir)reality of desire: early *Mīmāṃsā* on decisive craving, enigmatic heaven and insignificant gods'

Early *Mīmāṃsā* textual sources (*Mīmāṃsā-sūtras* and *Śabara-bhāṣya*) tend to focus on their declared domain of interest, i.e. the exegesis of Vedic ritual and of Vedic literature in its relevance to that ritual. Vedic injunction constitutes their primary point of reference in the realm of sacrificial activities, and ritual as action is the central of human pursuits in the world, and the only one with transcendent capacities.

The paradigmatic injunction *svarga-kāmo yajeta* ("desirous of heaven should sacrifice") points to two important aspects of this conceptual structure. Firstly, it is wish or desire (*kāma*) that initiates and fuels human ritual activity, so motivational needs appear to be the primary and most certain reality, although by definition unsubstantial, elusive, subjective, and, at least initially, individual. Secondly, this fundamental Vedic desire is for some enigmatic heaven (*svarga*), defined vaguely, according to Śabara, as the state of happiness, i.e. some future outcome of present ritual action, so not real yet, only being potentially realized by ritual. Thus, from *Mīmāṃsā* perspective the reality is human craving and Vedic word (impelling instruction, i.e. injunction) that can produce ritual action. This action, when undertaken, has to be carried through properly, giving rise in its turn (at least according to Śabara) to a transcendent link (*apūrvā*) between the sacrifice and its fruit, again, not real yet, but realized anew by ritual. And only then and thanks to all that, might happen heaven.

What about the gods then? Where are they, if at all, besides being an indispensable element of the ritual syntax? Early *Mīmāṃsā* does not have to say much about gods, ascribing to them only some qualified reality, while leaving the power of realization of human transcendent needs with the Vedic ritual itself.

In this paper I try to distil the early *Mīmāṃsā*'s understanding of reality (of what is human and of what is not human) and come up with an informed classification of real elements in terms of their immediate importance, emphasizing motivational aspects of

religious behavior. As my initial references I also use the results of research and consideration by F. Clooney (“Thinking Ritually. Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini”, Vienna 1990) and J-M Verpoorten (“Une discussion sur le ciel...” 1981, 1983).

Avni Chag, PhD student, SOAS, University of London

‘The Apocryphal Making of a Religious Relic: Problematising the History ascribed to the Śikṣāpatrī Manuscript in the Bodleian Library’

Last year, a Sanskrit manuscript – a copy of the *Śikṣāpatrī*, a short didactic code on *dharma* and *ācāra* – was displayed in the ‘Bodleian Treasures’ collection in the University of Oxford’s new Weston Library. The *Śikṣāpatrī* is revered for its authorship as followers believe it was composed by Svāminārāyaṇa, their embodied *iṣṭadeva*, or god, and the founder of the Svāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya. Although the manuscript in the Bodleian is not Svāminārāyaṇa’s original, but is rather a scribed commentary of the *Śikṣāpatrī* written by one of his close followers, Nityānanda, it is revered as the earliest extant manuscript presented by Svāminārāyaṇa himself. According to the Svāminārāyaṇa sacred biographical tradition, the British had asked to meet with Svāminārāyaṇa having been impressed by the spread and success of his ministry during the colonial period in the previously lawless western region of India (now known as Gujarat). Svāminārāyaṇa had met Sir John Malcolm, Governor of the Bombay Presidency at the time, in 1830, at the house of David Blane, the Acting Political Agent of Kathiawar, in Rajkot. During the meeting, Svāminārāyaṇa presented the Governor with a copy of the *Śikṣāpatrī*. An inscription on the internal cover of the Oxford *Śikṣāpatrī* manuscript reads ‘presented by T. L. Blane’, referring to the brother of David Blane, has led to the manuscript being regarded as the very text presented to Governor Malcolm by Svāminārāyaṇa in their meeting, in Rajkot. However, the colophon of the manuscript does not corroborate this attribution. The manuscript is dated four months *after* the meeting between the two leaders took place and one month *after* Svāminārāyaṇa passed away.

This paper concerns the history of this manuscript: how it came to reside in the Bodleian and how its scholarly reception history has configured its canonical, reverential status. In 1981, in a chapter titled ‘Presentation of the Shikshapatri to Sir John Malcolm,’¹ Raymond Brady Williams of Wabash College, Indiana, presented a history of the manuscript, which has since become authoritative for the Svāminārāyaṇa community and scholarly monographs on the tradition. Since then the manuscript in Oxford has been revered as *prasādi* (a holy relic) and library staff receive numerous requests from followers of the Svāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya for its *darśana* (reverential viewing) and *pūjā* (veneration). Further, a British proceeding detailing the Rajkot meeting first found in a

¹ A copy can be found on the website dedicated to the Śikṣāpatrī: www.shikshapatri.org.uk, and in the book, *New Dimensions in Vedanta Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (Ahmedabad: Swaminarayan Aksharpith 1981), chapter 43.

critique of the Svāminārāyaṇa hagiographical tradition by historian Makrand Mehta² also continues to be used as primary source material. By examining (i) colonial British records and proceedings in the British Library, the Maharashtra State Archives and the National Archives in New Delhi; and (ii) the Oxford Indian Institute documentation on book and artefact donations, this paper problematizes the conventional history and, simultaneously, the sacrality ascribed to the Oxford *Śikṣāpatrī* manuscript. In so doing, this paper also questions the scholar's position in the production of religious knowledge and highlights the responsibilities and sensitivities that he or she must heed before making any claims that might have an impact on a religious community and its beliefs.

Aleksandra Gordeeva, PhD student, Yale University

'Despair (*nirveda*) and Delusion (*moha*): The Entanglement of the Divergent Emotions in Rāmacandra's Dramatic Works'

The relationship between the real, illusory, and imaginary in Sanskrit literature has long fascinated scholars of South Asia. This paper seeks to contribute to this conversation by exploring the dichotomy between reality and appearance through the technical categories of despair (*nirveda*) and delusion (*moha*) as they are laid down in Sanskrit works on poetics and expressed in medieval dramas. It focuses on the ways Rāmacandra, a twelfth century Jain monk, court poet and playwright, envisions the interplay between the notions of delusion, detachment, and discrimination in his poetic treatise, the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* (co-authored with Guṇacandra), and dramatic compositions. On one hand, *nirveda* and *moha* are polar opposites; *nirveda* is evoked by true knowledge (*tattvajñāna*) and *moha* is characterized by the lack thereof. On the other hand, they represent alternative emotional responses to the same dire circumstance of misery, misfortune, and pain. Moreover, *nirveda* is known as a contested category in the tradition of Sanskrit poetics. Abhinavagupta and Mammaṭa rationalize Bharata's choice to begin the list of the transient emotions with this rather inauspicious (*amaṅgalaprāya*) sentiment by its distinct status as both a stable and transient state. While Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra disagree with this interpretation, they similarly contextualize *nirveda* as "mostly unpleasurable" (*duḥkhātmaṅkalaprāya*). The ambiguous nature of *nirveda* stems from its transformative power to move one from the experience of pain in this world (*saṃsāra*) to the true knowledge about the world to liberation from it. While *nirveda*, as the first step to renunciation (*vairāgya*), and *moha*, as the complete loss of control over one's sense organs, appear to be on the opposite sides of human mental and emotional experience, their similar generating causes (e.g., *kleśa* and *tīvravedanā*) ensure a considerable measure of correspondence between them. The state of *nirveda*, interpreted as aversion (*vairasya*) by Rāmacandra and self-despair (*svāvamānana*) by a number of earlier theorists, is ordinarily concomitant with such physical reactions (*anubhāvas*) of the

² 'Sāmpradāyiki Sāhitya ane Sāmājīk Chetnā: Svāmīnārāyaṇ Sampradāynā abhyās, 1800-1840' (Sect Literature and Social Consciousness: A Study of the Swaminarayan Sect, 1800-1840), *Arthat*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Oct-Dec 1986.

character as falling, fainting, and failing to control sense organs, characteristic of the transient state of *moha* (e.g., Daśaratha's agony in the first act of Rāmacandra's *Raghuvilāsa*). This paper, therefore, examines the ways in which Rāmacandra's works probe and employ the two seemingly divergent aesthetic categories and demonstrates that the dramatic reality often finds them concurrent and even entangled with each other.

Charles Li, PhD student, University of Cambridge

'Casting Sāṃkhya as Advaita: A falsified quotation from the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*'

In his commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*, the 10th-century philosopher Helārāja is at pains to prove that the doctrine of *śabdādvaita*, or word non-dualism, is applicable to all religions and all schools of thought. This is harder to achieve for some systems than for others. In order to interpret Sāṃkhya — a fundamentally dualist philosophy — in non-dual terms, Helārāja appeals to authority by quoting from the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, also known as the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*. However, he does not quote verbatim, but creatively and subtly reworks the passage in order to make it seem as if it proves his point. In this paper, I will compare the passage as it is in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* with the slightly modified version that Helārāja uses, and I will show that these modifications could not have been accidental, since they are vital to his proof that Sāṃkhyas are, in fact, really Advaitins.

Davey K. Tomlinson, PhD student, University of Chicago

'A Buddhist Debate on the Reality of Appearances'

Given the non-existence of the external world, Buddhist idealists are left with a problem. On the one hand, they all agree that taking the content of consciousness to be external is an error. On the other hand, it seems obvious that the phenomenal content (*ākāra*) of consciousness is indubitable: I might be wrong to say that a thing out there in the world is blue, but surely I cannot be wrong that it appears blue to me. However, if this is so, how are we to distinguish between erroneous mental content and the phenomenal character thereof? For if it immediately appears to us that the content of consciousness is external, then externality is in fact part of the phenomenal content of our experience; that, however, would make externality indubitable, and so idealism would be untenable. This problem leads Ratnākaraśānti (ca.970-1045) to a radical conclusion: because we cannot distinguish between phenomenal and erroneous content, phenomenal content is not indubitable; in fact, all mental content is erroneous. Contentfulness, then, cannot be criterial of conscious experience. Rather, bare, contentless phenomenal presence (*prakāśamātra*) is the real nature of consciousness, while all appearances are unreal (*alīka*). Ratnākaraśānti develops this position as a response to a Sākāravādin, or a Buddhist idealist who argues that contentfulness is the mark of the mental and that appearances that directly manifest to awareness are real. In this paper, I will explore Ratnākaraśānti's arguments as they are put forth in his *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitopadeśa)* and the critique of

this work developed by Jñānaśrīmitra (ca.980-1040) in his *Treatise that Proves that Consciousness has Content (Sākārasiddhiśāstra)*, wherein he endeavors to save the reality of direct appearances and to defend contentfulness as criterial of consciousness.

Karen O'Brien-Kop, PhD student, SOAS, University of London

'The entangled discourse of classical yoga'

This paper will compare two self-declared authoritative expositions on yoga from 5th-century India: the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (attributed to Patañjali) and the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* (attributed to Asaṅga). Within scholarship on yoga, only one of these texts, the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (PYŚ), has been foregrounded as the textual arbiter of 'classical yoga'. Yet the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* (YĀBh), 'The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners', is not a discrete manual for Buddhist practice that accidentally positions itself as a text about yoga. Neither is the term 'yoga' in the YĀBh a generic or catch-all term for the exercising of spiritual precepts of any affiliation. Indeed, the vast YĀBh contains more detail about yoga practice in the 5th-century than the PYŚ. I argue that broadening the scope of enquiry to include the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* necessitates widening the recognized boundaries of the discourse and practice of 'classical yoga'. If we accept that the YĀBh deliberately positions itself as a *śāstra* on yoga, then it shares a discursive field with the PYŚ. In this discursive field, the concept of yoga practice is dialogically co-constructed through processes of affirmation, refutation, and co-option. Thus the YĀBh should be recognized as an equally legitimate site of the production of the discourse of classical yoga. Why, for example, should the *Śrāvakahūmi*'s crystalline definition of yoga as faith (*śraddhā*), aspiration (*chandas*), vigour (*vīrya*) and means (*upāya*)³ be any less valid than the PYŚ's much cited '*yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ*' (PYŚ 1.2)? Indeed, even the latter proposition is a reductive representation of Patañjali's diverse and complex definitions of yoga.

I will examine such definitions and descriptions of yoga to illuminate the ways in which the PYŚ and the YĀBh texts intersect and diverge in their promotion of a practice called 'yoga'. The term 'yoga' itself is a semantic placeholder for a sub-field of meaning which branches into variants such as *saṃyoga* (conjunction), *viyoga* (disjunction), and *prayoga* (application). Although the PYŚ and the YĀBh both address the existential problem of *saṃyoga* as entrapment, the PYŚ focuses on disjunctive processes of *viyoga* as a soteriological solution, while the YĀBh centres around the concept of zealous *prayoga* (preparation or application), which is particularized and streamlined according to the aspirant's level of training. According to an intertextual analysis, the discourse of classical yoga emerges as polyvalent, ex-centric, and distributed beyond a single religion – in short, entangled.

Within a broader context, I will assess how contemporary scholars of Buddhism and of yoga have variously utilized or ignored the category of 'classical yoga' in relation to the

³ *tatra yogaḥ katamaḥ / āha / caturvidho yogaḥ / tadyathā śraddhā chando vīryam upāyaś ca* (Śbh 2.152).

Yogācārabhūmiśāstra, and I will suggest an approach of ‘joining the dots’ between streams of scholarship to produce a richer, cross-religious depiction of classical yoga. Finally, my paper will also critique the category of ‘classical yoga’ itself by highlighting some key aspects of its historical construction.

Dr Julie Regan, La Salle University, Philadelphia

‘The Path to Truth through Appearances in the Literary Works of Aśvaghōṣa’

This paper is based on research from my recently completed dissertation at Harvard University, examining how Buddhist literary works, such as those of the second century Aśvaghōṣa, depend upon the appearances or guises of literary forms as instruments to enable ordinary people to see or grasp the nature of reality (*tattvaṃ*). In the final verses of his *Saundarananda*, Aśvaghōṣa claims that he has told truth in literary form (*kāvyavyājena*) in order to reach an audience interested only in pleasure and not liberation. This paper will explore how some of the formal strategies of Aśvaghōṣa's works may be seen to operate through the means of such appearances or form, not simply as container or guise, but rather as a conduit for truth.

In particular, I will demonstrate how Aśvaghōṣa employs the sensual and erotic pleasures of *rasa* and figures that turn the mind to engage readers on the path of the text of *Buddhacarita* in a way that prepares them to see with Siddhārtha a glimpse of what it is to be awakened. This scene of the fourteenth canto, which I have translated from the Tibetan based on Johnston's critical edition together with Weller, is particularly interesting for examining how the aesthetic features of Aśvaghōṣa's texts are not simply vehicles for a message with which they might more typically be opposed but rather function as essential elements of a literary reading practice I will suggest may be designed to bring about Buddhist insight.

Dr Eviatar Shulman, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

‘Omniscience and Reality: Reflections on Knowledge and Truth in the *Jātakas*’

A central concern of many Theravāda Buddhist texts and narratives is to portray the Buddha's omniscience. One of the prime manifestations of this interest is in the popular and influential stories of the *Jātakas*, considered a fundamental aspect of Theravāda “imaginaire.” The narrative framework of the genre demonstrates this concern - stories of the past are told by the Buddha in order to shed light on events of the present. The Buddha knows all past conditioning and tells the stories in order to reveal his omniscience and to shed light on the nature of his consciousness, with its infinite knowledge of the past. In his compassionate benevolence, he always has the right story at hand in order to expose underlying causality and guide his students.

The theme of appearance and reality helps penetrate the *Jātaka* perception of omniscience and understand the ideology of this fundamental corpus. For normal people,

reality is mostly appearance; they are driven to action and identity by their limited perspective and overflowing desires. Buddha, however, knows what is real – the deep patterns of underlying conditioning, which emerge from past lives. Reality – in the strong sense – is situated in the deep connections between past and present; here these are much more than a nebulous notion of karma, but rather reflect fundamental personality structures. These connections between past and present are known – or perhaps constituted? – by the Buddha, through his omniscient mind, so that reality and omniscience fully converge in his consciousness.

The *Jātakas* relate the story regarding the maturation of the Buddha’s consciousness from one engaged with appearances to one fully attuned to reality. This knowledge matured in him over many lifetimes, catalyzed by his extreme, transformative acts of selfless morality that opened up his mind to its full potential. This is the story of the Bodhisatta’s gradual turning away from attachment to appearances, in order return to appearances with the omniscient, compassionate vision of a Buddha, who perceives them while seeing through them to the reality behind them. The Buddha’s knowledge thus combines appearance and reality. In this, perhaps, *Jātakas* offer a narrative version for a favorite Buddhist philosophical position.

Dr Michael S. Allen, University of Virginia
‘The Idealist Turn in Late Advaita Vedānta’

Advaita Vedānta is one of the best-known schools of Indian philosophy to take up the question of the relationship between appearance and reality; but scholars have tended to focus overwhelmingly on the writings of Śaṅkara, leaving developments within the post-Śaṅkara tradition relatively understudied. This paper focuses on one of the most philosophically interesting and historically influential of these developments: the rise of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda*, a form of metaphysical idealism according to which the world (*sr̥ṣṭi*) does not exist independently of perception (*dr̥ṣṭi*). The doctrine, which has affinities with Yogācāra Buddhism, is classically expressed in Prakāśānanda’s *Vedānta-siddhānta-muktāvalī* (sixteenth century). I argue that contrary to the view of some scholars that Prakāśānanda’s views marked “just a temporary phase in the long history of Advaita” (Ramachandran 219), in fact the doctrine of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* took such a hold in Advaitin circles after the time of Prakāśānanda that one can meaningfully speak of an idealist turn in late Advaita Vedānta.

It might seem odd to speak of an “idealist turn” when Advaita Vedānta has always taught some form of idealism: the world is an illusion, and consciousness (*cit*) alone is real. But *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda* represents a far more radical form of idealism than what is found in the works of Śaṅkara; indeed, the doctrine directly contradicts Śaṅkara’s position in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. Although Śaṅkara teaches that only the pure consciousness of Brahman is ultimately real, he stresses that external objects nonetheless have a conventional reality, which is not dependent on their being perceived by individual minds. The followers of

dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda, by contrast, reject the category of “conventional reality” (*vyavahāra-sat*) and hold that external objects do not exist apart from our momentary perceptions of them.

Recent studies of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda* include Divatia (1994), Joshi (2010), and most thoroughly Timalsina (2006, 2009), but their work traces the doctrine only up to the sixteenth century, or to the seventeenth century at the latest. In order to demonstrate the historical reach of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda*, this paper will draw attention to a later, nineteenth-century work: the *Vicār-sāgar* of Niścaldās, a Hindi-language work that is not widely known today but that was once referred to by Swami Vivekananda as the most influential book in India. I will examine Niścaldās’s presentation of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi-vāda*—which he refers to as the “hidden position of the Vedas,” and which he connects with the epistemology of dreams—and I will attempt to situate his work within the wider “idealist turn” I have identified.

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Dr Victor A. van Bijlert, Faculty of Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

‘Realistic reasoning and the unreal world: Gaudapada’s use of Nyāya-methodology to argue for illusionism’

The Advaita Vedānta, whether Shankara’s or Gaudapada’s, regards the world as we perceive it as an illusion, a magic show, *māyā*. When we take a closer look at the arguments the adherents of Advaita put forward to ‘prove’ illusionism, we must go straight to Gaudapada. For his reasoning on the illusory character of the world has remained classic, and was popularised a few centuries after him by Shankara.

Gaudapada’s illusionism presents us with a remarkable fact. Gaudapada argues against the reality of the world and argues for pure idealism (the world is nothing but our own consciousness). He accomplished this with the help of logic and a type of epistemology that are the very opposite of illusionism. The main text in which Gaudapada reasons in favour of illusionism is book 4, the ground-breaking text that in all likelihood was his earliest attempt. For his epistemological and logical apparatus Gaudapada relies solely on the Nyaya Sutra of Akshapada Gotama. In some places Gaudapada also refers to the earliest commentary on the Nyaya Sutra, Pakshilasvamin Vatsyayana’s Nyaya Bhashya (probably late 4th century, cf. King 1999: 60; Bartley 2015: 309). Now the early Nyaya system as promoted by the Nyaya Sutra is a philosophy that assumes the reality of the world.

The key characteristic of the Nyaya is verifiability and as a philosophy it demands

conducting debates following certain rules of logic. According to the Nyaya, true knowledge is verifiable knowledge. And verifiability is based on empirical knowledge of reality. In this respect the Nyaya is the very opposite of Gaudapada's thinking in book 4 especially. The fact that Gaudapada makes ample and good use of the Nyaya is remarkable. This is the main theme of this paper: how does Gaudapada do this? No one has yet noticed how much Gaudapada is indebted to the Nyaya Sutra and Nyaya Bhashya for his logic, epistemology and philosophical similes. The reason that no-one recognised this influence in Gaudapada is probably caused by the seeming incompatibility between both systems of thought: realistic Nyaya and illusionistic monism. In the paper I will show that Gaudapada the illusionist reasoned like a Nyaya realist and how this made sense.

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Prof David Gellner, University of Oxford

'The Politics of Religious Affiliation in Nepal'

The idea that every individual within the nation-state must have one, and only one, religious affiliation is relatively new in South Asia. It is now combined in the Nepalese context with a pervasive notion that every ethnic group must in reality have one and only one religious identity, whatever deceptive appearances and historical happenstance may suggest. In the search for alternative, non-Hindu religious identities (much of it driven by anti-brahmanism) the solutions are diverse: Buddhism, shamanism, tribal religion. On the individual level Christianity, Marxism, and guru-focused modernism are also popular. The monistic utopias sought by the ethnic activists remain elusive.

Notes:

