

Jainism and Ecology

Conference Participants and Abstracts

Christopher Chapple is Professor of Theological Studies and Director of Asian and Pacific Studies at Loyola Marymount University where he teaches religions of India and comparative theology. He has published several books, including *Karma and Creativity; Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*; a co-translation of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, and several edited collections of essays, including *Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Aesthetic, and Religious Perspectives*.

John Cort is Associate Professor of Religion at Denison University, where he teaches courses on religion in Asia and also on comparative themes (including a course entitled "Religion and Nature"). His research has focused primarily on the Jains. He is author of several dozen articles and of the forthcoming book *Liberation and Wellbeing in Jainism: Ritual, Ideology, and Religious Values*.

Abstract of paper: Toward a Possible Jain Environmental Ethic

This essay starts with the recognition that Jainism as an ideology focused upon the path to liberation (*moksha-marg*) is distinctly not ecological or even proto-ecological. At the heart of this ideology is the goal of permanent separation of the soul from all matter; in such a dualist ideology any positive environmental impact is largely incidental. But the *moksha-marg* ideology is not the whole of Jainism, for Jainism also is a religious culture that provides people with a definition of a good life in this lifetime, what I have elsewhere termed the value of well-being. The realm of well-being involves a much less negative (albeit still not unreservedly positive) attitude toward the non-human world, toward the physical world, and toward our own physical embodiedness. This essay will be a reading of key aspects of Jain practice from an environmental/well-being perspective, to try to provide some potential bases for a Jain environmental ethic.

Cromwell Crawford was born and raised in India of a Civil Service family. He holds graduate degrees from Serampore University, West Bengal, India, Indiana University and Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley. He is a Professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. He teaches in the areas of Comparative Ethics and Religion and Medicine. His publications are chiefly in the field of Bioethics.

Abstract of paper: Agenda 21: Jain Cosmology and Ethics for the Eco-Crisis

Jain environmental ethics is based on 5 principles--Equality, Non-Violence, Reciprocity, Restraint, and Recompense. These principles are applied to address the major problems of : Biodiversity, Global Warming, Pollution, Waste, Over Population, and Nuclear Epidemic.

Paul Dundas studies Sanskrit, Classics and Middle Indo-Aryan Philology at the Universities of Edinburgh and Cambridge and is currently Senior Lecturer in Sanskrit in the University of Edinburgh.

Abstract of paper: Digging Ahimsa: The Limits of a Jain Environmental Ethic

In this paper I will consider on the basis of writings by medieval Jain monks some of the ambiguities inherent in the processes of building temples and digging wells, necessary for the maintenance of religion (at least according to one important section of the Jain community) and the maintenance of life, but on the face of it infringing the principle of non-violence. I will also point to some difficulties involved in deriving an environmentalist ethic from an ascetic tradition which has always felt itself to be embattled by the natural world.

S. L. Gandhi, an international pacifist, is currently working as Honourary Secretary General Anuvibha, a transnational Centre for Peace and Nonviolent Action. He is Resident Representative, Jaipur Region, and International Advisor, Asia Pacific Region for Intercultural Open University, and Academic Consultant for the Global Peace University of the Netherlands. He has organized and attended several international conferences, has traveled extensively all over the world, and has translated, edited, and authored several books on Anuvrat, religion, and other related areas.

Abstract of paper: Jain Principle of Ahimsa and Ecology

Ecology deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical environment and studies the interaction of people with their environment. According to the Gaia scientist James Lovelock, the planet earth is gravely ill. Pressed for space and resources, human beings are becoming violent, greedy and extremely selfish. Many important species vital for human survival are gradually disappearing posing serious threat to the very survival of life on this planet. It is this dangerous situation that attracts our attention towards the Jain Principle of Ahimsa which alone can ensure environmental and ecological balance. Life is bound together by mutual support and cooperation. Ahimsa can save life on this planet.

John A. Grim is a professor in the Department of Religion at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA. As a historian of religions, John undertakes annual field studies in American Indian lifeways among the Apsaalooke/Crow peoples of Montana and the Swy-ahl-puh/Salish peoples of the Columbia River Plateau in eastern Washington. He published *The Shaman: Patterns of Religious Healing Among the Ojibway Indians*, a study of Anishinaabe/Ojibway healing practitioners, with the University of Oklahoma Press. With his wife, Mary Evelyn Tucker, he has co-edited *Worldviews and Ecology* a book discussing perspectives on the environmental crisis from world

religions and contemporary philosophy. Mary Evelyn and John are currently organizing the series of twelve conferences on Religions of the World and Ecology held at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions. John is also president of the American Teilhard Association.

Bhagchandra Jain received his D. Litt in Sanskrit, Pali-Prakrit, and Hindi and his thesis was on Jainism in Buddhist literature. A former professor and Director of the Center for Jaina Studies at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, he is presently professor and head of the Department of Pali-Prakrit, Nagpur University, Nagpur. He is also Honorary Director of the Sanmati Research Institute of Indology in Nagpur. He has written extensively on Jainism and Mahavira, Jaina Philosophy, Jaina Logic, Buddhist Philosophy, and has published approximately 40 books. Following are some of the awards he has received: U.G.C. Fellowship, commonwealth Fellowship, National U.G.C. Fellowship, Central Government of India Award, Rampuria Award, and the Kundakundajnanapeeth Award. He has traveled abroad six times attending conferences and delivering lectures.

Abstract of paper: Ecology and Spirituality in Jain Tradition

Jainism, the religion of nature, preached the most non-violent approach and humanitarian viewpoint towards all souls with a profound progressive attitude and judicious understanding. The Jain thinkers had discussed at length long ago as to how one can protect the ecology and environment and saves himself, society, nations and all creatures from natural calamities through non-violence and non-possession. The present paper will throw a light on the subject matter and explain as to how it had protected the ecology and environment and created awareness regarding interaction within natural systems through establishing spiritual relationships between humans and the environment on a collective basis.

Padmanabh S. Jaini graduated from the University of Bombay and spent two years studying Theravada Buddhism in the Vidyodaya Monastery in Sri Lanka. He received his Ph.D. degree in Buddhist Literature at the University of London. He was Lecturer in Pali and Buddhism at the Banaras Hindu University in 1952, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, in 1956. He joined the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) in 1969 and moved to the University of California at Berkeley as Professor of Buddhist Studies in 1972. He is a Trustee of the U.K. based Institute of Jainology and has participated in the first Interfaith Dialogue on Jainism and Christianity held at the Vatican in 1995, and in the meeting of the World Faiths and the World Bank (on development) sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Lambeth Palace in February 1998. His major publications are in the field of Buddhist and Jaina doctrines, and his most recent works are *The Jaina Path of Purification* (University of California, 1979), *Apocryphal Birth-Stories* (The Pali Text Society, London, 1986), and *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (University of California, 1991).

John Koller, past president of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, is Professor of Asian and Comparative Philosophy at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Author of *Asian Philosophies* (Prentice Hall, 1998), *The Indian Way* (Macmillan, 1982), *A Sourcebook in Asian Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1991), and numerous journal articles and book chapters, Koller has lectured at many universities in India and the U.S. and is an external Ph.D. examiner at four universities in India.

Abstract of paper: Perspectivalism as a Basis for Ecological Dialogue

In this paper I explore how the epistemological methodology of the standpoints (*nayas*) and sevenfold scheme of qualified predication (*syadavada*) which support the Jaina metaphysics of non-absolutism (*anekantavada*), provide the basis for a global dialogue about and with the environment. *Nayavada* methodically shows how mutually opposing views are one-sided and limited because they are based on only one, or a limited number of, standpoints, and analyzes the nature of the principle standpoints. *Syadavada* is a theory of predication that explains how statements about something that can be both permanent, remaining identical with itself over time, and that can change, becoming something else, can be true. Together, the methods of standpoints and qualified predication provide a basis for reconciling conflicting claims about ecological well-being.

Satish Kumar is the director of programs at Schumacher College, editor of *Resurgence*, and founder of the Small School. At the early age of 9 he became a Jain monk, at 18 he joined the Gandhian Movement, and later he walked from India to the United States covering 8,000 miles and propagating peace and non-violence. His autobiography *No Destination* is published in the United Kingdom by Green Books and will be published by William Morrow in the U.S. in early 1999.

Abstract of paper: Celebration of Simplicity

There are five Jain principles which, to a greater or lesser extent, all Jains -- monks and lay people -- are required to observe. They are non-violence, truth, non-accumulation of material possessions, right sexual relationship and gender dignity, and non-acquisitiveness. The paper will elaborate on and interpret these principles in the context of ecological sustainability. By understanding and practicing these principles in the contemporary context, society can develop a sense of reverence for all life and a sense of the sacred.

B. C. Lodha, M.Sc., Ph.D., F.B.S., is currently Vice-Chancellor, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun, Rajasthan, India. Earlier he served as Assistant Professor in the Department of Botany, Rajasthan University, Jaipur (1964-77). In 1967-68 he visited the University of Toronto as a Post-Doctorate Fellow of the National Research Council of Canada. He served as Associate Professor in Plant Pathology in Haryana Agricultural University (1977-84) and then as Professor

and Head of the Department of Plant Pathology in Rajasthan Agricultural University until February 1984. His major research interests focus on the ecology and systematics of fungi and biological control of soil borne plant diseases. He is the former President of the Mycological Society of India, a previous executive council member (1990-94) of the International Mycological Association (IMA); currently a member of the International Committee on Plant Pathology Teaching and Training (1988-93; 1993-98); and is National representative and Committee member of the IMA Committee for Asia. He has published more than 50 research papers in journals of international repute and chapters in books on mycological research topics, which are highly appreciated by the academic world, and he has undertaken numerous academic visits to universities and institutes in North America, Europe, Japan, Taiwan, and Australia.

Abstract of paper: Protection of the Environment from a Jain Perspective

Ecology is the other name of Jainism. Jainism from the times of Mahavira (600 B.C.) has provided classified, minute details of all living beings, and for their protection has suggested some codes of conduct for its believers. It has also given maximum emphasis on "Aparigraha" (non-possession) for and limitation of wants. It envisaged that if a person by self-realization follows non-violence and non-possession to the extent one is willing to inculcate in practice, these principles in one's life will cause minimum interference in nature, and thereby protect oneself. Attempt has been made in this paper to enumerate some of the details of Jain codes of conduct and discuss their direct relationship to the protection of the individual and the environment as understood today.

Samani Malli Prajna and **Pratibha Prajna** are the disciples of His Holiness Gurudev Shree Tulsi and Shree Mahapragya Ji. The nuns were initiated 14 and 9 years ago, respectively, and received Masters degrees in Philosophy from Jain Vishva Bharati in Ladnun, India. They teach at the Jain Vishva Bharti specializing in science of living and computer science. They are experts in spiritual discourses, Jain yoga, and Preksha Dhyana.

Abstract of paper: Solution to the Environmental Crisis Through Jain Way of Life

Lord Mahavira says, "Sanyamah Khalu Jivanam," i.e., moderation absolutely is life. This life may be micro or macro-organism. In other words, moderation is necessary for sustaining life in the individual organism as well as the overall environment of living beings. The lack of moderation causes environmental crisis, and today the application of self-restraint looks like the nearest determinate factor for establishing environmental ethics. Nobody can practice non-violence without first being moderate in their daily life. That is why spiritual victors say, "Non-violence is the controlling factor towards the success of all living beings." This is why we suggest that the moderate Jain way of life is the key to environmental well-being.

Sadhvi Shilapi, a Jain nun, comes from Veerayatan, a Jain socioreligious institution located at Rajgir in the State of Bihar in northeast India. She received her masters degree in Comparative

Indian Religions from King's College, London in 1995 and is currently working there on her doctoral thesis, *Compassionate Aspect of Jainism*. She has established an International School of Jainism with centers in North and South London and in Nairobi and Thika in Kenya.

Abstract of paper: Environmental and Ecological Issues Propagated and Discussed by Tirthankara Mahavira

Tirthankara Mahavira was an apostle of love for all forms of life. He developed a unique oneness with all facets of the environment. Not only did he preach on environmental and ecological issues, but his entire life was an example of how to live in perfect harmony with the environment.

L. M. Singhvi, author of the *Jain Declaration On Nature*, served as India's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom from 1991 to 1997. He is presently a member of Parliament in India (Rajya Sabha). A leading law authority in India, he is the founder of the Supreme Court of India Bar Association Trust. He was awarded the U Thant Peace Award in 1995 and holds earned and honorary degrees from fifteen universities in the United States, India, and the United Kingdom. He has been highly active in the field of human rights and has published more than sixty research papers and monographs, including the book *Freedom On Trial*.

Kim Skoog is a member of the philosophy program at the University of Guam and currently is Chair of the Division of Humanistic Studies (a multidisciplinary unit focusing on the Human Prospect). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii in Comparative Philosophy, his M.A. from the University of Washington, and his B.A. from the University of Minnesota. He has presented and published numerous articles both in Asia and the United States. His most recent publication is a chapter in the book *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought* (SUNY).

Abstract of paper: Ahimsa as a Categorical Imperative for Environmental Care

Some philosophers who have tried to understand and articulate morality have resorted to efforts to identify a basic moral ground or "supreme principle" upon which all other moral directives are derived. This paper will examine the Jaina principle of ahimsa (nonviolence) as a candidate for such a fundamental principle or categorical imperative. Specifically, we will create a functional environmental ethic grounded in this principle of ahimsa. Some effort will also be made to summarize the current and historical Jaina attitudes toward preservation and respect for nature, given that they have adopted ahimsa as a basic principle of life for nearly three thousand years.

Lawrence Sullivan is director of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School. He took his Ph.D. in the history of religions from the University of Chicago, under the direction of Victor Turner and Mircea Eliade, and later taught on the faculty there. He has special

research interest in the religious life of native peoples of South America, about which he wrote a book entitled *Icanchu's Drum* which was awarded a prize for the best book in philosophy and religion from the Association of American Publishers, and lived among the Nahuatlcos in the state of Hidalgo in Mexico. He edited the *Encyclopedia of Religion* published by Macmillan. He has served as President of the American Academy of Religions, the 8,000-member professional organization of those who teach about religion in North American colleges and universities.

Nathmal Tatia is research director of the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute in Ladnun, Rajasthan. He received his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Calcutta University where his doctoral thesis was on Jain philosophy. He taught in Nalanda, and in Vaishali before coming to Ladnun in 1977. He was a visiting professor of Buddhist Studies at Harvard in 1990 and attended the International Congress of History of Religions at Claremont in 1965 as the representative from India. He has published numerous books, articles, translations and edited works. He has also published a Bibliography of Jain Research (*Tulsi Prajna*).

Abstract of paper: The Jain Worldview and Ecology

This paper will begin with an overview of the Jain worldview and will conclude with some reflections on the current ecological crisis and some possible remedies. It will discuss ahimsa as the central theme of the earliest books of the Jain canon and explore ways in which ahimsa is a moral imperative that is fruitful in practice. Some comparisons will be drawn between Mahavira's Anukampa, Buddha's Maitri and Karuna, the love of Jesus, and Gandhi's non-violence.

Mary Evelyn Tucker is a professor of religion at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, where she teaches courses in world religions, Asian religions, and religion and ecology. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in the history of religions specializing in Confucianism in Japan. She has published *Moral and Spiritual Cultivation in Japanese Neo-Confucianism* (SUNY, 1989). She co-edited *Worldviews and Ecology* (Orbis Books, 1994) with John Grim, *Buddhism and Ecology* (Harvard/CSWR, 1997) with Duncan Williams, *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (CSWR, 1998) with John Berthrong, and *Hinduism and Ecology* (forthcoming) with Christopher Key Chapple. She and John Grim are directing the series of twelve conferences on Religions of the World and Ecology at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions. They are also editors for a series on Ecology and Justice from Orbis Press.

Kristi L. Wiley is a graduate student in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently writing her Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Aghatiya Karma: Agents of Embodiment in Jainism*. She is the recipient of a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (1997-98).

Abstract of paper: The Nature of Nature: Jain Perspectives on the Natural World

Jainism has placed great emphasis on minimizing harm to all living beings, even those who experience the world through only one sense, the sense of touch. In addition, Jains maintain that a soul may repeatedly be born in one of the four states of existence (*gatis*) as a heavenly being (*deva*), hell being (*naraki*), human (*manusya*), or as a plant or animal (*tiryanka*). For these reasons, Jains have sought to understand the nature of each type of embodiment. Jain textual sources contain descriptions of the characteristics of embodiment not just as a human or animal but in all categories that comprise the *tiryanka gati*. These sources reveal that there are certain distinctions that can be made among even the most basic forms of embodiment, the one-sensed beings (*ekendriyas*), including plants as well as souls with earth bodies (*prthvi-kayika*), water bodies (*ap-kayika*), fire bodies (*tejo-kayika*), and air bodies (*vayu-kayika*). While the potential for spiritual advancement of a five-sensed rational animal (*pancendriya-samjini*) has been frequently discussed, there has been less scholarly research on the other animals and on the plants and one-sensed beings that comprise the natural world. This paper will discuss Jain understandings of the characteristics of these living beings and the ways in which these views shape Jain perspectives on the natural world.