Conference Announcement: Indian Philosophy: New Perspectives on Śāmkhya and Yoga
(Contact person: Geoff Ashton, gashton@usfca.edu)

April 13-14 2023, McLaren Complex, University of San Francisco
Free and Open to the Public. This event will take place in-person and is also available through live zoom streaming. For more information on this event, please contact Geoff Ashton at gashton@usfca.edu.

Event Description:
In many ways, the long and rich history of Indian Philosophy is marked by the varied formulations and deployments of śāmkhya and yoga philosophies. These two “ways of seeing” (Sanskrit, “darśanas“) arguably trace their roots to pre-Vedic India (as early as 3000 BCE), and they continue to be applied in powerfully useful ways. But śāmkhya and yoga have been commonly misunderstood—and in ways that frequently overlook what could be even more meaningful engagement, particularly in view of the challenges and opportunities of contemporary times. This two-day symposium brings together many leading scholars of śāmkhya and yoga texts and traditions in order to bring to light some of these challenges and opportunities for deepened engagement.

Program Schedule

April 13, McLaren Complex

Day 1: Perspectives on Śāmkhya and Yoga

8:30 am: Coffee and Light Breakfast Available

8:45 am: Welcome and Brief Opening Remarks

9:00-9:45 am: “On Prakṛti as Narrative Self” (Raquel Ferrández, National Distance Education University, Spain)

9:55-10:40 am: “The Hard Problem of ‘Pure’ Consciousness: Consciousness, Death and Immortality in Śāmkhya Dualist Ontology” (Karen O’Brien-Kop, King’s College London)

10:50-11:35 am: “Vācaspati Miśra and the Method of Liberation in Śāmkhya” (Dimitry Shevchenko, Ashoka University)

11:35-11:55 am: Coffee & Snack Break

11:55 am – 12:40 pm: Fleishhacker Chair Presentation: “Signs of Intelligent Life in the Śāmkhya Kārikā: A Biosemiotics Response to the Puzzle of Puruṣa-Artha (lit., Goals of Humanity)” (Geoff Ashton, University of San Francisco)
12:40-1:45 pm: Lunch (provided on-site by USF)

1:45-2:30 pm: “Artificial Minds and their Place in Nature: A Sāmkhya-Yoga Perspective” (Anand Vaidya, San Jose State University)

2:40-3:25 pm: “All or None? The Object of Consciousness: Between Pratibhā and Puruṣa” (Neil Sims, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa)

3:25-3:45 pm: Coffee Break

3:45-4:30 pm: “The Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali – A Walking Meditation” (Melissa Townsend, Independent Scholar-Artist)

4:30-5:00 pm: Coffee Break

5:00-6:15 pm: Keynote Presentation: “Living Landscapes: Yoga and Ecology” (Christopher Chapple, Loyola Marymount University)

7:00 pm: Dinner Reservation at nearby Vegetarian Friendly Restaurant (TBD)

April 14, McLaren Complex

Day 2: Perspectives on Sāmkhya and Yoga

8:30 am: Coffee and Light Breakfast Available

9:00-9:45 am: “On the Sāmkhya-Nyāya Debate Regarding the Self and its Agency” (Neeti Singh, Banaras Hindu University)

9:55-10:40 am: “Enumeration in Sāmkhya and Vaiśeṣika: A Hermeneutical Comparison” (Purushottama Bilimoria, Graduate Theological Union, University of California Berkeley)

10:40-11:00 am: Coffee Break

11:00-11:45 am: “Agency and Freedom of Will in Sāmkhya Yoga” (Marzenna Jakubczak, Pedagogical University of Cracow)

11:55 am - 12:40 pm: “Sāmkhya Moral Psychology of Equanimity” (Ana Laura Funes Maderey, Eastern Connecticut State University)

12:40-1:45 pm: Lunch (provided on-site by USF)
1:45-2:30 pm: “Sāṃkhya (Yuktidīpikā) and Yoga (Tattvavaiśāradī) on Word (Śabda) and Concept (Vikalpa)” (Arindam Chakrabarti, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa [present in absence], and Neil Sims, University of New Mexico [presenter])

2:40-3:25 pm: “Why the Matter-Consciousness Distinction does not Matter: Embodiment in Light of the Dialogue between Sulabhā and Janaka” (Sthaneshwar Timalsina, San Diego State University)

3:25-4:10 pm: Coffee Break & In Memoriam: JN Mohanty (led by Purushottama Bilimoria)

4:10-4:55 pm: “Reversal of Creation: Kuṇḍalinī and the Body in Early Haṭha Yoga” (Ruth Westoby, SOAS University of London)

5:00-5:45 pm: “Vedāntic Adaptation of Sāṃkhya and its Use by Śri Aurobindo” (Debashish Banerji, California Institute of Integral Studies)

6:30 pm: Dinner Reservation at nearby Vegetarian Friendly Restaurant (TBD)

Speaker Bios:

Geoff Ashton is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Francisco. He reads Sanskrit, Thai, and Spanish, and has conducted research at several institutions of higher learning abroad, including Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi, India), Deccan College (Pune, India), the Jñāna-Pravaha Institute (Varanasi, India), Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai, Thailand), Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand), and La Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Madrid, Spain). He has authored numerous articles, book chapters, and essays on Asian philosophies. His current research explores the meaning of nature across Western and Asian traditions.

Debashish Banerji, Ph.D., is the Haridas Chaudhuri Professor of Indian Philosophies and Cultures and the Doshi Professor of Asian Art at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), San Francisco. He has authored and edited books on figures of "the Bengal Renaissance," Critical Posthumanism, Integral Yoga Psychology and on several creative and art-related projects. His most recent monograph is Meditations on the Isha Upanishad: Tracing the Philosophical Vision of Sri Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo Samity and Maha Bodhi Publishers, 2019). A new book, Time-Steps of the Cosmic Horse: Meditations on the Contemplative Philosophy of the Great Forest Upanishad is in press.

Purushottama Bilimoria research and teaches in Cross-Cultural, Continental and Indian philosophy. Principal Fellow at University of Melbourne, and Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. Founder of Australasian Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy; served as Lead Scientist of Purushottama Centre for Study of Indian Philosophy and Culture at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow ((2021-2). Is co-Editor-in-Chief of Sophia, Assoc Editor of Journal of Dharma Studies. Recent publications comprise: History of Indian Philosophy (2019), Religion
and Sustainability (ed with Rita D. Sherma, 2021), Contemplative Studies and Hinduism (ed with Bohenac and Sherma, 2021); Indian Ethics Vol. 2 (ed with Amy Rayner, 2023), Testimony in Indian Philosophy (Paperback). Ze teaches for Cal State University and UC Berkeley.

Arindam Chakrabarti was trained in Western mathematical logic and classical Indian Nyāya logic and epistemology, and in 20th century British philosophy of language, in India and England. He did his doctoral work at Oxford University, on singular negative existentials and fictional discourse, under the supervision of Sir Michael Dummett and Sir Peter Strawson. After teaching in Calcutta University, UK and the USA, he returned to India to take up a professorship in philosophy at University of Delhi. Since 1997 he has been at University of Hawaii; between 2018 and 2020, he occupied the Nirmal and Augustina Mattoo Chair in Indic Humanities at the department of philosophy Stony Brook University, New York. He has edited or authored 14 books (in English, Sanskrit, and Bengali), and has published more than a hundred papers and reviews in refereed journals or anthologies. In 2019, Bloomsbury London published his critically acclaimed work: Realisms Interlinked: Objects, Subjects and Other Subjects. Currently he is finishing: The Book of Questions: Indian Philosophical Analysis (under contract with Penguin, India). A monograph on the moral psychology of emotions is in the pipeline.

Christopher Chapple is the Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology and founding Director of the M.A. in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University. He has written several books on the history and philosophy of yoga, and on the intersection of religion and ecology. His keynote address for this symposium is title, “Indian Philosophy Symposium: Perspectives on Sāṃkhya and Yoga.” This talk will explore themes from one of his most recent books, “Living Landscapes: Meditations on the Elements in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Yogas.”

Raquel Ferrández Formoso is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at UNED (Spain), where she teaches cross-cultural comparative philosophy subjects. Her research focuses on the practical roots of philosophy, currently at the crossroads between philosophy and literature.

Marzenna Jakubczak is Professor of Philosophy at Department of Philosophy and Sociology, Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland. She received her PhD in 1998 from Jagiellonian University, specializing in Indian philosophy. Her research interests focus on the self and mind discussed in terms of classical Indian philosophy, especially in Sāṃkhya-yoga tradition, Buddhism and contemporary Western philosophy. She has authored, co-authored and edited several volumes and numerous papers on comparative philosophy and religion, cross-cultural aesthetics and gender studies, e.g. “Why Didn’t Siddhartha Gautama Become a Sāṃkhya Philosopher, After All?” in I. Kuznetsova, J. Ganeri, and Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, eds., Hindu and Buddhist Ideas in Dialogue. Self and No-Self (2012); “What is the Sense of Ego-Maker in Classical Samkhya and Yoga?,” in Girishwar Misra, ed., Psychology & Psychoanalysis (2013); “Earth” in Aesthetics of the Four Elements (2001). Since 2010 she has been editor-in-chief of a peer-reviewed open access journal Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal (www.argument-journal.eu).
Karen O’Brien-Kop is Lecturer in Asian Religions at King’s College London, UK. Her research focuses on mind-body philosophy in early Sanskrit texts, particularly addressing meditation, yoga, asceticism, and consciousness. Her 2021 monograph *Rethinking ‘Classical Yoga’ and Buddhism: Meditation, Metaphors and Materiality* (Bloomsbury Academic) considered the early formation of yogic thought and practice within Hindu and Buddhist texts, and examined the historical import of the category of ‘classical yoga’. Her forthcoming book for the Bloomsbury Introduction to World Philosophies series is *The Philosophy of the Yogasūtra: An Introduction* (2023).

Dimitry Shevchenko is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Ashoka University. He works primarily on the history of Brahmanical philosophical schools in classical India, especially on Sāmkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta. His first book, *Mirror of Nature, Mirror of Self: Models of Consciousness in Sāmkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Neil Sims is a PhD Candidate at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. My areas of special research are contemporary philosophy of mind, Indian Philosophy, and aspects of Daoism and Chan/Zen. I especially focus on epistemological questions that arise when attempting to use experiential reports from meditation traditions to inform philosophy of mind.

Neeti Singh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, BHU, Varanasi. She got Gold-medal in both BA and MA and pursued D.Phil. Degree in Philosophy. She has published 13 research papers and presented more than 20 papers. She co-authored a book entitled "Introductory Principles of Logic: Seeing Things into Categories" and edited two Volumes of the Journal "Aanvikshikee". Her areas of interest are applied philosophy, Philosophy-of-action, ethics, logic, and Indian philosophy.

Sthaneshwar Timalsina completed his Master’s degree at Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Benares, and received his Ph.D. from Martin Luther University, Germany. He is currently teaching Indian religions and philosophies as Professor at San Diego State University. He works in the areas of Advaita and Tantric philosophy and his select publications include *Seeing and Appearance, Consciousness in Indian Philosophy, Language of Images*, and *Tantric Visual Culture*.

Melissa Townsend is an independent scholar, artist, writer, teacher, and yoga practitioner. A student of Sanskrit and Yoga Philosophy, she has translated, painted, and authored *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali – A Visual Meditation. Book One, Samādhi Pādah and Book Two, Sādhana Pādah*. She has completed the paintings for *Book Three, Vibhūti Pādah* and *Book Four, Kaivalya Pādah*, and is currently working on the translations can commentary for publication.

Anand Jayprakash Vaidya is Professor of Philosophy at San Jose State University and an occasional director of the center for comparative philosophy. His research is focuses on the philosophy of mind, philosophy of logic and epistemology at the intersection of analytic and Indian philosophy.
Ruth Westoby is a doctoral candidate at SOAS University of London. Ruth’s thesis is a historical textual study of the body in Sanskrit sources on early *hatha* yoga. As a practitioner Ruth collaborated on the reconstruction of postures for the SOAS Hatha Yoga Project contributing to the development the methodology ‘embodied philology’. Ruth’s 2021 article, ‘Raising *rajas* in *hatha* yoga and beyond’, shares early research findings.