

Peace and Dharma:

Ethics, Nonviolence, and Justice in Dharma Traditions of India

Annual Uberoi Meeting in Collaboration with The M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya and Jain and Hindu Dharma Initiative

(California State University, Fresno)

October 2-4, 2025

Conference Abstracts and Speaker Bios

Dr. Veena R. Howard (Conference Organizer), California State University, Fresno



Veena R. Howard, Ph.D., is Professor of Asian Religious Traditions in the Department of Philosophy at California State University, Fresno. She is a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship (2024-2025). She also holds the Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma and serves as the director of the M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya. Her publications include *Gandhi's Global Legacy: Moral Methods and Moral*

Challenges (Lexington, 2023); *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy and Gender* (ed.), (Bloomsbury, 2019); *Dharma, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh Traditions of India* (ed.) (IB Tauris, 2017); and *Gandhi's Ascetic Activism: Renunciation and Social Action* (SUNY Press, 2013). She has also authored over three dozen peer-reviewed articles and many chapters.

Dr. Jeffery D. Long (Vice Chair, The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies)



Dr. Jeffery D. Long is the Carl W. Zeigler Professor of Religion, Philosophy, and Asian Studies, and specializes in the religions and philosophies of India. He is the author of several books and numerous articles, as well as the editor of the series *Explorations in Indic Traditions* for Lexington Books. In 2020, he received Elizabethtown College's Ranck Award for Excellence in Research, and in 2022, his book, *Hinduism in America: A Convergence of Worlds*, received the Rajinder and Jyoti Gandhi Book Award for Excellence in Theology, Philosophy, and Critical Reflection from the Dharma Academy of North America. He has spoken in

numerous venues, both national and international, including Princeton University, Yale University, the University of Chicago, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Delhi University, and has also given three talks at the United Nations.

H.E. Bawa Jain

Non-Violence as a “Weapon of the Strong”

Rooted in the timeless legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., this keynote explores nonviolence as a bold and transformative force in confronting the world’s deepest challenges. Far beyond passive resistance, nonviolence will be presented as a dynamic strategy for leadership—one that demands moral courage, inner strength, humility, and a commitment to justice. The session will call for a new generation of responsible leaders who lead with compassion, serve with humility, bridge divides, and act with the conviction that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of dignity, truth, and shared humanity.



H.E. Bawa Jain: A trailblazer in global leadership and religious diplomacy, H.E. BawaJain has made a lasting impact from the United Nations to the World Economic Forum. He began his journey as Secretary-General of the Millennium World Peace Summit, where he convened over 1,200 religious leaders from 120 countries in a historic gathering at the UN. As co-founder of the Religious Initiative at the World Economic Forum in Davos, he advanced interfaith dialogue on the world stage. He later founded the World Council of Religious Leaders, focused on mobilizing religious resources to address global challenges. Currently, he leads the Centre for Responsible Leadership, uniting global thought leaders to confront today’s most pressing issues

beyond political or ideological divides. Bawa Jain is also the founder of the Gandhi King Awards and the World Movement for Non-Violence, honoring the legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His ability to bridge faith, governance, and social impact has earned him recognition as a forward-thinking voice for the 21st century.

Dr. Francis X. Clooney

Harvard University

Title: Dharma as Radical Tradition: From Ancient Sages to Gandhi

Why is it that many reformers and prophets of a more just world seem not quite as radical as we might expect? Cherished figures from east and west often seem progressive in some ways, but insistently, even stubbornly traditional in others. This lecture proposes that justice, if it is to be truly radical and able to make a difference, has to be grounded in old values and old ways of seeing the



world — that is, in an ancient wisdom that challenges us today. Dharma (encompassing values and questions regarding religion, ritual, ethics, law, and virtue) is a primary example of this dynamic. If we stress only its importance today, we become impatient with its ancient and often unfamiliar and sometimes difficult roots; if we are merely nostalgic for old values, we miss the ways in which dharma, once rediscovered, can really change us and the world in which we live.

Dr. Francis X. Clooney, S.J., joined the Harvard Divinity School faculty in 2005, where he is the Parkman Professor of Divinity and

Professor of Comparative Theology. After earning his doctorate in South Asian Languages and Civilizations (University of Chicago, 1984), he taught at Boston College for 21 years before coming to Harvard. From 2010 to 2017, he was the Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard. Clooney is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Thinking Ritually: Retrieving the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini* (Vienna, 1990), *Theology after Vedānta: An Experiment in Comparative Theology* (State University of New York Press, 1993), *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), and *His Hiding Place Is Darkness: A Hindu-Catholic Theopoetics of Divine Absence* (Stanford University Press, 2013). His translation of the Hindu theologian Rāmānuja's *Manual of Daily Worship (Nityagrantham)* appeared in the *International Journal of Hindu Studies* in 2020. His memoir, *Hindu and Catholic. Priest and Scholar: A Love Story*, was published by T&T Clark/Bloomsbury in 2024. He is currently completing a translation of poems by the first five ālvārs, Vaiṣṇava poet saints of Tamil Nadu, and a small book on the future of interfaith studies. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2025.

Dr. Venu Mehta

Claremont School of Theology

Theology Without Mercy: Jain Forgiveness, Foucault, and the Ethics of Human Agency

What is forgiveness in a tradition without a creator God, divine will, or salvific grace? In Jainism, *kṣamā* (forgiveness) is not a plea for mercy but a discipline of ethical accountability rooted in nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*). Drawing on Michel Foucault's "technology of the self," this paper examines how Jain practices of confession, repentance, and forgiveness form a moral subject whose liberation rests on self-regulation rather than divine pardon. I argue that Jainism presents a non-theistic model of peace and justice, with reconciliation borne by the individual, and highlight forgiveness as both personal discipline and social ethic through textual and contemporary practices such as *Micchāmi Dukkaḍaṃ*.



Dr. Venu Mehta serves as the Bhagwan Chandraprabha Endowed Assistant Professor in Jain Studies and Assistant Professor of Comparative Spiritualities at Claremont School of Theology. Her scholarship centers on Jain philosophy, comparative theology, and South Asian religious traditions, with particular attention to ethical and devotional practices. Her research engages themes such as non-attachment, forgiveness, the divine feminine, and lived religion, exploring how these intersect in both classical texts and contemporary communities.

Dr. Shivani Bothra

California State University, Long Beach

Dharma in Motion: Everyday Ahimsa and Maternal Agency in Urban Jain Households

This paper explores how Jain mothers in urban India practice and transmit ahimsa (nonviolence) in shifting domestic and social contexts. Drawing on interviews, I argue that maternal agency—embodied in acts such as preparing sattvic meals, scheduling pratikramaṇa, or negotiating children’s food choices—forms the core of Jain ethical cultivation. Using the lens of dianomy, which describes life under overlapping normative systems, I show how women navigate tensions between religious ideals, family routines, school demands, and professional roles. These mothers are not passive transmitters of doctrine but critical interpreters of dharma who balance fidelity to ethics with contemporary constraints. Their practices reveal how nonviolence functions not only as a vow but as a lived, negotiated discipline, keeping dharma alive in kitchens, carpools, and digital prayer rooms.



Dr. Shivani Bothra is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at California State University, Long Beach. Before this, she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Rice University in Houston, USA. She has also served as a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her focus is South Asian traditions, Jainism, and Nonviolence. Presently, Dr. Bothra is engaged in a study that examines how lay Jains incorporate the principles of *ahimsā* (non-injury) *anekāntvāda* (the doctrine of non-absolutism) and *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness) into daily practices. She also explores their involvement in nonviolent movements that transcend religious boundaries.

Dr. Mahua Bhattacharya

Elizabethtown College

Gandhi’s Satyagraha and its Intimate Connections with Yoga

Most scholars associate Gandhi with political nonviolence, yet his activism was deeply shaped by yoga. Initiated into Kriya Yoga by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1935, Gandhi practiced meditation, pranayama, and fasting as disciplines of self-purification and political witness. His satyagraha—



“insistence on truth”—emerged directly from ahimsa (nonviolence) and karma yoga (selfless action), informed by the Bhagavad Gita’s emphasis on anasakti yoga (detachment from fruits of action). Gandhi linked health, discipline, and moral clarity with social reform, viewing yogic practice as a nonviolent resource for resilience in struggle. He believed fasting and meditation cultivated the physical and spiritual strength necessary to endure suffering and transform adversaries. This paper explores Gandhi’s holistic integration of yoga into politics, showing that his nonviolent movement cannot be separated from his spiritual commitments.

Dr. Mahua Bhattacharya is a Professor of Japanese and Asian Studies and has taught at Elizabethtown College since 2001. In the past she has held joint appointments with the departments of Modern Languages and Sociology and Anthropology. A native of India, she taught Japanese in Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi for 13 years. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Japanese Language and Japanese Studies at JNU as well. Before coming to Elizabethtown College, she was a Visiting Fellow at the University of Chicago and taught Japanese at DePaul University in Chicago and Millersville University in Pennsylvania. Her research interests include postcolonial theory, women's studies, popular culture, language ideology, and second language acquisition. Recently, she finished her MA in Counseling Psychology and is a therapist at Ponessa Behavioral Health in Lancaster, PA. With this her research interest has evolved to include Asian forms of healing.

Dr. Christopher Chapple
Loyola Marymount University

Negotiating Peace in the Midst of Disorder: Mahavira and Ralph Fertig

Tumultuous times require measured, strategic methods to restore balance and calm. The Bhagavad Gita advised entering a state known in Sanskrit as "sthita-prajna" or steady wisdom. The great Jain saint Mahavira endured beatings, torture, dog attacks, and various forms of physical abuse including the cutting of his skin, tearing of his hair, and being doused in dust (Acaranga Sutra I.7.2.4., 8.3.4 and 9-11). Ralph Fertig, a participant in the Civil Rights movement, was severely beaten in Selma, Alabama in 1961, refusing, as did Mahavira, to reciprocate with violence. Their example exemplifies the power of steady wisdom. Each helped to effect positive change through their example.



Christopher Key Chapple is Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology and founding Director of the Master of Arts in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. A specialist in the religions of India, he has published more than twenty books, including the recent *Living Landscapes: Meditations on the Elements in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Yogas* (SUNY Press). He serves as advisor to multiple organizations including the Forum on Religion and Ecology (Yale), the Ahimsa Center (Pomona), the Dharma Academy of North America (Berkeley), the Jain Studies Centre (SOAS, London), the South Asian Studies Association, and International School for Jain Studies (New Delhi). He teaches online through the Center for

Religion and Spirituality (LMU) and YogaGlo.

Recent book: <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6860-living-landscapes.aspx>

Dr. Nikky-Guninder Singh
Colby College

The Role of Art in Coloring Peace

Transcending verbal political discourse, art “colors” peace through form and emotion. Rather than an abstract ideal, peace is felt, imagined, and enacted. We will examine the works of six artists from both sides of the Radcliffe Line. In the aftermath of the horrific Partition of India, they invite us to relate with one another in mutuality, empathy, respect, and care. Painters Arpana Caur, Arpita Singh, Nalini Malani, S.H. Raza, Shahzia Sikander, and MF Hussain make peace tangible.



Dr. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh is the Crawford Professor and head of the Department of Religious Studies at Colby College. Her interests focus on Asian Religions, feminist issues, and sacred art and poetry. Dr. Singh has published extensively in the field of Sikh Studies and Punjabi Literature. Her books include *Of Sacred and Secular Desire: An Anthology of Lyrical Writings from the Punjab* (IB Tauris 2012), *Sikhism: An Introduction* (IB Tauris 2011), *Cosmic Symphony* (Sahitya Akademy, 2008), *Birth of the Khalsa* (SUNY

2005), *Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), *Sikhism* (Facts on File, translated into Japanese, 1993), and *The Name of My Beloved* (HarperCollins 1995; Penguin 2001). She has authored over 100 articles and chapters, and has delivered more than 250 lectures nationally and internationally.

Dr. Michael Onyebuchi Eze
California State University, Fresno

Forgiveness as Human Reconciliation: An Ubuntu Path to Peace and Dharma



Forgiveness, in the spirit of *ubuntu*, is not forgetting the past but reclaiming our shared humanity from its wounds. To forgive is to refuse captivity to anger, to restore the dignity of both victim and perpetrator, and to heal the fractured community. Like Dharma, *ubuntu* reminds us that we become human together—or not at all. Forgiveness is thus radical freedom: a practice of peace, compassion, and the re-membering of our common future.

Dr. Michael Onyebuchi Eze is Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Fresno. He holds Ph.D. degrees from the University of Cambridge and Universität Witten-Herdecke, Germany. A philosopher and historian of ideas, his scholarship on *Ubuntu*, intercultural dialogue, reconciliation, and forgiveness bridges African philosophy with global conversations on ethics, nonviolence, and peace. He is the author of *Intellectual History in Contemporary South Africa* and co-editor of *Rick Turner's Politics as the Art of the Impossible* (2024).

Dr. Sumita Sarma

California State University, Bakersfield

Gandhian Ethics in Business Education and Practice

Gandhi's legacy of peace, justice, and nonviolence influenced leaders worldwide, yet remains underutilized in business education. His principles—truth (satya), nonviolence (ahimsa), trusteeship (sahakarita), upliftment of all (sarvodaya), non-possession (aparigraha), and self-reliance (swaraj)—offer decolonial alternatives to Western ethical models that dominate management practice. Gandhi's focus on truth, service, and anti-consumerism challenges frameworks centered on self-interest and profit. Trusteeship, exemplified in companies like Tata, shows how his ideas can guide corporate responsibility. While Gandhian ethics have shaped theology and peace studies, their systematic integration into business curricula is limited. This paper argues for adopting Gandhian values as ethical frameworks for pedagogy and practice, demonstrating how they can reshape global business research and foster sustainable, justice-oriented economies.



Dr. Sumita Sarma is an Associate Professor of Management and the Inaugural Mahatma Gandhi Fellow for Social Entrepreneurship in the College of Business and Public Administration at California State University, Bakersfield. She received her PhD in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Dr. Sarma is passionate about teaching and researching business and sustainability and has widely published in management and entrepreneurship journals. She has presented her research at prestigious conferences such as the Academy of Management, USASBE (United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship), IABS (International Association for Business and Society), Babson Conference, SEE (Sustainability Ethics and

Entrepreneurship), and CEEC (California Entrepreneurship Educators Conference), and has served as a reviewer for several academic journals.

Dr. Samiksha Goyal

Simon Fraser University

Using Non-Attachment to Bridge the Householder-Ascetic Divide in Jain Philosophy

One of the central pieces of Jain ethics is the five vows. These vows are practiced with varying strictness depending on the social division between ascetics and householders, with ascetic vows considered superior for their role in achieving liberation. Using textual references, I will show how Mohandas Gandhi and Rajchandra Rai challenge the traditional householder and ascetic divide in Jain philosophy. Rajchandra presents a continuum of spiritual practices accessible to all, regardless of social status, while Gandhi critiques the absolutism of ascetic non-violence, prioritising instead the ethical ideal of non-attachment (aparigraha). I will argue that both Rajchandra and Gandhi challenge the established view of non-violence and social hierarchies based on their idea of non-attachment.



Dr. Samiksha Goyal is a postdoctoral fellow with the Extending New Narratives Project at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Her research interests are in Indian Philosophy especially Gandhian and Jain thought, Moral Philosophy, and History of Philosophy. Her recent research has been published in Economic and Political Weekly, Journal of Dharma Studies, and American Philosophical Association Studies Newsletter.

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Dr. W. Saam Noonsuk

California State University, Fresno

Religious Diversity and Peace in the Great Reliquary Monastery and Its City in Peninsular Thailand

Wat Phra Mahathat in Nakhon Si Thammarat City is considered the most revered Buddhist monastery in peninsular Thailand and has been included on the UNESCO tentative list for World Heritage sites. Its Great Reliquary complex was constructed in c. the late 8th-10th centuries on a sacred place which already had a Hindu shrine(s) of c. the 5th-7th centuries. Just 2.5 km. north of this monastery, an important stone inscription from c. the 7th century was discovered. It mentions joint rituals between Hindu brahmins and Buddhist monks, which is the first of its kind in the historical record of Southeast Asia. Using various stands of evidence related to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, I will propose that this trend of religious diversity and hybridism continues even today and impactfully promotes peace in this city.



Dr. Noonsuk is Associate Professor of Art History, School of Art, Design, and Art History, at California State University, Fresno. He received his M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i, and Ph.D. in History of Art and Archaeology from Cornell University, under the auspices of the former King of Thailand. Supported by the French Government, Dr. Noonsuk conducted his post- doctoral studies at the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris. He directed his excavation program in peninsular Thailand and published a number of books and articles related to early Southeast Asia and social roles of art.

Dr. Zoë Slatoff

Loyola Marymount University

Dharmic Cultivation: Bhāvanā Across Indic Traditions

According to the Mahābhārata (12.252.12), “[dharma] is subtler than a razor’s edge.” Discerning right action is a continuous practice. This paper argues that while Indic traditions see liberation as an individual pursuit, it is cultivated through ethical intentions and relations with others. The Yogasūtra

(2.33–34), drawing on Buddhist ideas, prescribes cultivating counterstates (pratipakṣa-bhāvanam) when obstructed by negative impulses. Similarly, the Jain Tattvārthasūtra (Dg. 7.9–10, Śv. 4–5) enjoins contemplation of the consequences of violence or untruth, and further states (5.21) that the role of living beings is mutual assistance. Contemplating suffering and practicing discernment (viveka) reveals our shared humanity and directs us toward virtuous action, beginning with nonviolence (ahiṃsā).



Dr. Zoë Slatoff has a Ph.D. in Religion and Philosophy from Lancaster University and an M.A. and B.A. in Asian Languages and Cultures from Columbia University. She is the Clinical Professor of Sanskrit at Loyola Marymount University. Dr. Slatoff is the author of *Yogāvatāraṇam: The Translation of Yoga*, a Sanskrit textbook based on classic yoga texts.

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Dr. Raja Rosenhagen
California State University, Fresno

*Intellectual Ahiṃsā and the Ethics of Non-One-Sidedness: Anekāntavāda,
Nayavāda, and Epistemic Justice*

Jain philosophy's doctrine of anekāntavāda—non-one-sidedness—is often read either as a metaphysical claim about reality's many facets or as a methodological warning against biased views. Drawing on nayavāda (epistemic perspectivalism) and syādvāda (conditional assertibility), I propose an integrated reading that grounds the Jain ideal of intellectual ahiṃsā: nonviolence in thought and discourse. Intellectual ahiṃsā, I argue, is not mere tolerance, but a disciplined openness shaped by the recognition that all non-liberated knowledge is partial, and that our treatment of others' views can inflict epistemic harm. Reframing it through the five vows (mahāvratas) reveals parallels between physical violence and epistemic harms such as misrepresentation and exclusion. This perspective situates anekāntavāda within a broader dharmic ethic that unites epistemic humility with justice-oriented engagement, offering constructive resources for interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding.



Dr. Raja Rosenhagen is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Coordinator of Peace & Nonviolence Studies at California State University, Fresno. Previously, he was Associate Professor of Philosophy at Ashoka University in India, where he also served as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Chair of Philosophy. He held the inaugural Bhagawan Vasu Pujya Swami Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Jain Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his Ph.D. Trained additionally in Indian studies and psychology at the University of Münster (M.A.), his research spans philosophy of perception, Indian and comparative philosophy, moral psychology, and peace studies. His current projects include work on Jain perspectivalism, intellectual ahiṃsā, Iris Murdoch's philosophy of love, and a book in progress,

Thinking with the Jains: An Introduction to Jain Philosophy. A certified philosophical counselor, he connects classical insights with contemporary issues of ethics and nonviolence.

Dr. Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa-Baker

Loyola Marymount University

Courageous Compassion in the Path of the Sage Warrior

This year Sikhs celebrate the 350th martyrdom of the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur whose life and death serve as an example of courageous compassion through his sacrificial martyrdom for the religious freedom of the Kashmiri Hindu community. Guru Tegh Bahadur's example inspires compassion and courage in the face of injustice and suffering. This talk will address Sikh concepts of love, courage, and compassion as a pathway to communal and individual sovereignty, liberation, and freedom.

Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa-Baker is Senior Instructor Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University, where she also served as Clinical Professor Jain and Sikh Studies and Acting Director Graduate Yoga Studies. She is a student of the Sikh drumming tradition on the jori-pakhawaj. Her ethnographic research and publications investigate Sikh kirtan through a decolonial lens to explore diversity in Sikh identity, pedagogy and practice. She serves on the Uberoi Advisory Committee, as co-chair Sikh Studies Unit at the American Academy of Religion, Faculty Advisor to LMU Sikh Student Association, and in Fall 2024 participated in the Revolutionary Love Tour. Her CV and publications can be found. <https://lmu.academia.edu/NirinjanKaurKhalsaBaker>



Dr. Cogen Bohanec

Arihanta Academy

Dialogues of Conscience: Śrīmad Rājendra, Mahātmā Gandhi, and the Ethics of Interreligious Peacebuilding

This paper examines Dr. Bohanec's translations of the 27 questions Mohandas K. Gandhi posed to the Jain poet-philosopher Śrīmad Rājendra, along with the replies that shaped Gandhi's lifelong pursuit of truth, nonviolence (ahimsā), and interfaith respect. Far from a one-sided exchange, these letters model early interreligious dialogue marked by trust and shared moral inquiry, despite metaphysical differences between Jain and Vaiṣṇava worldviews. Dr. Bohanec argues that Śrīmad's responses reflect not only doctrinal clarity but also ethical hospitality, grounded in Jain epistemology (anekāntavāda) and karmic realism, offered to a seeker navigating colonial modernity and pluralistic identity. Situating this correspondence within broader frameworks of peacebuilding and comparative dharma, the paper proposes this Jain-Gandhian exchange as a model for ethical dialogue across traditions—rooted in humility, non-absolutism, and existential honesty—offering enduring resources for nonviolent transformation, both personal and collective, and for interreligious ethics and global justice today.

Dr. Cogen Bohanec teaches Jain philosophy, Sanskrit, and other South Asian languages at Arihanta



Institute and CST. He specializes in dharma studies with a focus on philology and the philosophy of religion. He is the author of “Bhakti Ethics” (Lexington, 2024), has edited several volumes in Jain studies, is currently composing primers on Gujarati and Ardhamāgadhī grammar, and has a book on Śrīmad Rājendra.

Swasti Bhattacharyya

Fulbright-Nehru Senior Scholar Alumna

Charaiveti, Charaiveti: Walk on, Walk on for Truth

Vinoba Bhave, disciple, friend, and spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi, loved the Vedic phrase “Charaiveti, Charaiveti,” “Walk on, walk on.” In 1967, he sent four women to walk for peace. During their Lok Yatra, People’s Pilgrimage, the women spread the philosophy of Sarvodaya and demonstrated Shri Shakti, Women’s Power. Through Nirmal-di’s story and insights, this brief presentation challenges us to consider how then shall we “walk on.”



Swasti Bhattacharyya, PhD, RN, Professor Emerita of Philosophy & Religion, has over twenty years of experience in religious studies and applied ethics. Her work in bioethics reflect a synthesis of her nursing experience and academic inquiry. [*Magical Progeny, Modern Technology* (SUNY, 2006), “Shiva’s Babies: Hindu Perspectives on the Treatment of High-Risk Newborn Infants” in *Religion and Ethics in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit* (Oxford University Press, 2019), and “Cultural Humility: A Mindset for Excellent Healthcare” in *Routledge Handbook of Spirituality, Religion, and the Medical Humanities* (Routledge, forthcoming). Her current project is grounded in a long-term ethnographic study with the sisters of the Brahma Vidya Mandir Ashram.

Music Concert Coordinators

Saxophonist and composer **Benjamin Boone**, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to Ireland (2022-23), Ghana (2017-18) and the Republic of Moldova (2005), is a Professor of composition and theory at Fresno State. His albums have been called “of unmistakable... historic importance” (*UK Vibe*), “a master class in the combining of different art forms...an essay in complementarity... a powerful social narrative” (*All About Jazz*), “a stunning new album... one of the most interesting albums of the year” (London’s JazzFM), “an absolute must – a vector for the reflection of injustice” (Belgium’s *Jazz Halo*), and voted #3 “Best Album of 2018” in *DownBeat Magazine*’s 83rd annual Readers Poll.



Boone’s contemporary classical compositions have been performed in 35 countries, garnered eighteen honors and awards, appear on 28 recordings, and have been the subject of several National Public Radio and Bayerischer Rundfunk (German Radio) stories.



The son of farmworkers, poet **Juan Felipe Herrera**, was born in Fowler, California, in 1948. He is a graduate of UCLA, Stanford University, and the University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop. During the last 50 years, Herrera has dedicated his life to poetry, community, art, and teaching. He served as poet laureate of the United States from 2015 to 2017 and poet laureate of California from 2012 to 2015. He has written more than 30 books in various genres; his recent books of poems are *Every Day We Get More Illegal* (2020) and *Akrilica* (2022), a book in translation. Herrera

is a recipient of the 2022 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize.