Welcome: Prof. Wawrytko

Introduction: Prof. Madhavan

Mystical experience as a Unifying Force in Religion Prof. Naschak

Professor Bruce Stephen Naschak has been teaching in the Humanities Discipline at San Diego Mesa College since 1990, with a specialization in Comparative Religions since 1998. Though he is an academic generalist, he has recently been engaged in detailed research on the mystical teachings of the world's religions--from Paleolithic times, through the Ancient era, and into Modern times.

There are a variety of mystical experiences, of varying depth and intensity. Each tradition describes such experiences depending upon their own metaphysical language, but the Perennial Philosophy (which applies the principles of Vedanta to world religions) believes that all such ideas and experiences derive from the same ultimate source.

Critical Thinking in the Pali Sutras Prof. Wawrytko

Dr. Wawrytko is a Professor in the Philosophy Department at San Diego State University, where she teaches classes on Asian Philosophy with an emphasis on Daoism and Buddhism. She received her B.A. in Philosophy at Knox College and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy at Washington University, St. Louis. She has authored and edited eight books, including The Undercurrent of ‘Feminine’ Philosophy in Eastern and Western Thought and CRYSTAL: Spectrums of Chinese Culture through Poetry. Among her other publications are numerous articles in professional journals and chapters in scholarly books. The Asian Thought and Culture Series that she edits for Peter Lang has more than 60 volumes in print. As founder and President of the Charles Wei-hsun Fu foundation, a non-profit educational foundation, she promotes the study of Asian Thought and Culture through scholarships and other funding. In recognition of her contributions, she has been listed in Marquis Who’s Who in America since 2004 and Who’s Who in the World since 2005. She is finalizing for publication two important annotated translations done with Professor Fupthe Dao De Jing, The Viability and Virtuosity Classic and Wang Bi’s commentary to that text. Also in process is a volume on Enduring Daoist Wisdom: Lao Zì’s Life Lessons on Viability (Dao) and Virtuosity (De). She is currently the Director of the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies at SDSU.
Eminent Buddhist scholar Kenneth Inada noted “the Buddhist middle path is not simply a refined balancing act. Its essence is the achievement of that insight which crushes all views (drṣṭi) that might become obstacles to the normal flow of life, whether of the two extremes or even of the middle itself.” I will introduce four early Buddhist texts that demonstrate how the Buddha crushed incipient dogmatic views among his followers: the Delusion of Dependency in the Kalama Sutta—so we stop hanging on to concepts and words that obscure reality; Intellectual Delusions in the Tīṭṭha Sutta—so we stop looking for Big Data, the Algorithm of Liberation; Social Delusions in the Agganna Sutta—so we stop accepting divisive categories, such as caste; Delusions of Grandeur in the Angulimala Sutta—so we stop living in a burning house, consumed by self-destructive tanha.

Overcoming Divides: Resources for Peacebuilding in Indian Thought

Lance E. Nelson is professor of theology and religious studies at the University of San Diego. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from McMaster University. Dr. Nelson’s research focuses on medieval Hindu theology, particularly Advaita Vedānta and Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism, the relation of religion and environmental activism, and Hindu-Christian dialogue. His writings on aspects of South Asian religious and philosophical thought have appeared in books, reference works, and scholarly journals in the United States and India. He edited Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India (1998). Dr. Nelson is a former president of the Society of Hindu-Christian Studies.

Conflict often arises from, or is fed by, patterns of thought that posit absolutes and prohibit compromise. Religious traditions have historically been especially prone to this kind of dysfunction. The religious traditions of India, while not entirely innocent in this respect, provide interesting resources for promoting dialogue and encouraging compromise. This talk will explore several examples.

Relevance of Vedanta in the Modern World

Dr. Sthaneshwar Timalsina completed his Master’s degree in 1991 from Sampurnananda University in Varanasi, India, and taught for several years in Nepal Sanskrit University, Kathmandu. He completed his PhD from Martin Luther University in Halle, Germany (2005) with a focus on the history of the philosophy of Advaita. His dissertation is published under the title, Seeing and Appearance (Shaker Verlag, 2006). Before joining San Diego State University in 2005, Timalsina has taught in a number of institutes including University of California, Santa Barbara, and Washington University in St. Louis.

His areas of research include classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain literature and philosophies with a specific focus on consciousness studies. His book, Consciousness in Indian Philosophy (Routledge, 2008) is a result of a comparative study between Advaita and Buddhist
understandings of the self and consciousness. Timalsina also works in the area of Tantric studies and his recent publications, Tantric Visual Culture: A Cognitive Approach (Routledge, 2015), and Language of Images: Visualization and Meaning in Tantras (Peter Lang, 2015), explore the cognitive and cultural domains of Tantric visualization. Timalsina has published over forty articles, book chapters, and review essays on religion, culture, literature, aesthetics, and philosophy. Timalsina teaches courses on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious, philosophical, and literary traditions, and his teaching interests include ‘Religion and Science’ as well as ‘Yoga Philosophy and Practice.’ His current areas of research include theories of mind, with a particular focus on the cognitive aspects of recognition, memory, imagination, and emotion.

Modernization and globalization have split the world apart, and people of faith and people of reason are finding less and less in common. In my presentation, I will explore the ways Vedanta of Samkara, particularly as championed by Vivekananda, seeks to combine faith and reason and explores the highest pursuit of life by means of contemplative practices that are grounded in rationality.

Indian Ethos for Modern Management       Rev. Swami Nikhileswarananda

Swami Nikhileswarananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, having its headquarters at Belur Math, West Bengal, India. He joined the Order in 1976, after his graduation with honors in Chemical Engineering, postgraduation in Industrial Engineering and experience as a Management Consultant. He has served the organization in leadership roles as Head of the Mission’s center in Porbandhar, the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, and in Vadodara. With a talent and passion for spreading the universal message of Swami Vivekananda, he travels widely delivering lectures in industrial houses, universities and global conferences. A skillful writer in English, Hindi and Gujarati, he has contributed articles in various journals. His books, “Happiness and Peace in Everyday Life”, “Nurturing Relationships” and “Teacher as the Torch Bearer of Change” and other books are quite popular. A large number of his lectures are available in you tube and iTune and the website: www.rkmvadodara.com/sn. This is his third visit to the United States primarily for giving his presentation at the Parliament of World’s Religions at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The world today is vastly interconnected through revolutions in Science and Technology, resulting in a global village. Management theories dealing with human behavior and our relationships to each other in an interconnected world however remain static. The wisdom of the Indian sages embodied in Indian Ethos speak to the fundamental realization of one consciousness permeating the universe. Our understanding of fundamental truths governing man’s existence will enable us to lead a more holistic and sublime life.
Questions and Answers

Students and Audience

Closing Remarks

Prof. Wawrytko

Seating: 7 p.m.

Parking: Permit Required or $2/- per hour, $10/- whole day

Reception after program