

Hinduism and Ecology

Conference Participants and Abstracts

Anil Agarwal is the founder and director of the Centre for Science and Environment, a leading environmental public interest research institution in India with a deep interest in participatory natural resource management and pollution-related issues. The centre regularly publishes the *Citizens' Reports on the State of India's Environment*. Anil Agarwal has a deep interest in the material culture of India, especially as it relates to natural resource management.

Abstract of paper: Can Hindu Beliefs and Values Help India Meet its Ecological Crisis?

India is facing a serious social and ecological crisis. The devastation of the natural resource base has increased poverty and increasingly constitutes a serious threat to public health. The Hindu beliefs, values and practices, built on a 'utilitarian conservationism' rather than a 'protectionist conservationism,' can play an important role in restoring a balance between environmental conservation and economic growth. In a democratic society, unless the public demands such a balance, it is unlikely that its elected leaders will try to develop such a balance. But there are constraints that civil society faces in using religion to promote causes and concerns in a secular society.

Kelly Alley is Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at Auburn University. She has spent over seven years studying how various cultural and occupational groups in the Ganga (Ganges) River basin interpret the intersections of wastewater and the river Ganga. She has published articles in *Ethnology*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *City and Society*, and *Urban Anthropology*, among others, and chapters in edited volumes. She has just completed a book titled *On the Banks of the Ganga: Wastescapes and Ideologies of Transformation*.

Abstract of paper: Separate Domains: Hinduism, Politics and Environmental Pollution

Because religion and politics are areas of dynamic interchange in India, social scientists have neglected to examine areas of conflict and debate in which religion and politics are deliberately held apart. This paper asks: why do Hindu religious leaders avoid connecting their spiritual or organizational agendas to the ideology of combating river pollution? I present a case from the colonial period in which Indian nationalists and Hindu religious leaders agitated to prevent government exploitation of the river Ganga. This is contrasted with recent discussions with religious leaders and members of religious organizations to explain why Hindus today are not publicizing the problem of environmental pollution, and in particular, river pollution.

Frederique Apffel-Marglin is professor of anthropology at Smith College. She has written two books and co-edited five more books. A MacArthur grant has enabled her to direct a project

called "Centers for Mutual Learning." It is in the context of this project that she began collaboration with the native Andean grassroots organization PRATEC. A first book co-edited with PRATEC will appear soon entitled *The Spirit of Regeneration: Andean Culture Confronting Western Notions of Development* (London: Zed Books).

Abstract of paper by Frederique Apffel-Marglin and Pramod Parajuli: Sacred Plants and Forests: Lessons from the *Ramayana*

The events of the *Ramayana* spanned the major ecosystems of India, which will be summarized in this presentation. The *Ramayana* mentions by name a large variety of plants (over 200 species), although the scientific identities of some are controversial. The plants are primarily (1) limited to the central and northern portions of the subcontinent; (2) important for medicinal and economic uses; (3) important as sacred plants today, and mentioned in other sacred texts. These descriptions of plants and forests tell us much about classical attitudes toward nature, and the *Ramayana* still may influence these attitudes in India and other areas of tropical Asia.

Harry Blair

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*.

Kamla Chowdry (Ph.D. in Social Psychology, University of Michigan) has worked to build institutions of rural management and is involved with environmental concerns related to degraded lands, deforestation, and watershed. She is presently studying the importance of culture, *dharma*, and development.

Abstract of paper: Gandhi's Truth and Sustainability for the 21st Century

This presentation will explore the potential contribution of Gandhian thought in addressing environmental problems in India, with focus on current patterns of development in contemporary India.

Frank Clooney

Chris Deegan

Abstract of paper: Circumambulating the Narmada: Damming a Sacred Landscape

Early inhabitants of Narmada valley rock shelters clearly displayed the motif of their physical and spiritual environment as home, workplace, and spiritual theater in rock wall painting. Integration of lifestyle, world view, and physical surrounding later gave occasion to the expressive behavior of pilgrimage as a medium of linking spiritual and physical landscapes. The paper will outline the sacred geography of the Narmada, its particularly unique pilgrim circulation pattern, and the redefining of religious and ecological links in this region.

O. P. Dwivedi, Ph.D., LL.D. (Hon.), Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, teaches environmental policy and law and public administration. He has published twenty-six books and many articles and chapters in books. From 1986 to 1989 he was a member of a judicial tribunal, the Environmental Assessment Board of Ontario, Canada. He is a past president of the Canadian Political Science Association; a former vice president of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration, Brussels, Belgium; and chair of the Research Committee on Technology and Development, the International Political Science Association.

Diana Eck

M. David Eckel is associate professor of religion in the Department of Religion at Boston University. He is the author of *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness* (Harper San Francisco, 1992) and the Buddhism editor for *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, general editor, Jonathan Z. Smith (Harper San Francisco, 1995).

Anne Feldhaus

William Fisher, associate professor of anthropology and social studies at Harvard University, teaches courses on contemporary social movements, religion, identity and violence, and the politics of development. His recent publications include *Fluid Boundaries: Forming and Transforming Identity in Central Nepal* (forthcoming 1998, Columbia University Press); "Doing Good? The Politics and Anti-Politics of NGO Practices" in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*

(1997), and *Toward Sustainable Development? Struggling Over India's Narmada River* (editor, M. E. Sharpe 1995).

Abstract of paper: Sacred Rivers, Sacred Dams: Visions of Social Justice and Sustainable Development along the Narmada

This paper explores the conflicting arguments and visions of those involved in the struggle over the damming of the Narmada River. Visions of the Narmada as goddess, homeland, or development resource serve as the basis of conflicting moral arguments for social justice and sustainable development.

Ann Gold received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1984. She is a Professor in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University. Her extensive work in the North Indian state of Rajasthan has included studies of pilgrimage, gender relations, epic tales of world-renunciation, and cultural constructions of the environment. Her publications include three books (published by the University of California Press): *Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrim* (1988); *A Carnival of Parting: The Tales of King Bharthari and King Gopi Chand* (1992); and *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (co-authored with Gloria Raheja, 1994).

Abstract of paper: If You Cut One Branch You Cut My Finger: Court, Forest, and Environmental Ethics in Rajasthan

In an area that has suffered severe environmental degradation over the past half-century, rural citizens speak of communities and disjunctions between royal past and democratic present. The conservationalist ruler of this small North Indian kingdom, who died in 1947, perceived himself so fully identified with his forests that he would tell people, "If you cut one branch you cut my finger." Such vividly expressed embodiment within territory constitutes a major element in "responsible authority" (*zimedari*) attributed to this king. His strictly enforced environmental policies harmonized with ancient ideals of a king's morality (*dharma*), even though his personal responsibility was ultimately selfish--as he simultaneously sustained his own reputation and his hunting pleasure while protecting the forest and wild animals. In today's modern state, government workers who patrol the forest act from self-interest, as did the former king. But, in contrast to him, they are understood to lack any responsibility to their temporarily assigned territories, and no one would describe them as moral agents. Aware of crisis, some communities and schools look for ways to renew environmental responsibility. While this would certainly not be founded in outdated autocracy, it could recognize and expand the king's claim of a substantially shared and mutually determined destiny for nature and humankind.

Shrivatsa Goswami

Abstract of paper: Krishna and Vrindavan: Theology and Play of Ecology

This paper will deal with the resources of Krishnaite Hinduism on ecology and will also show its role in meeting the contemporary challenges to ecology.

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.

David Haberman received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in the History of Religions. He is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He has spent the last eighteen years studying the temple rituals, meditative techniques, pilgrimage activity, and environmental theology of the northern Indian region of Braj, a cultural area associated with the Hindu god Krishna. He has contributed many articles to academic journals, and is author of *Acting as a Way of Salvation* (1988), *Journey Through the Twelve Forests* (1994), and *Ten Theories of Human Nature* (co-authored with Leslie Stevenson, 1998). He has recently finished a translation of a sixteenth-century Sanskrit text on the aesthetics of devotion (*Bhaktirasamrtasindhu*), to be published as *The Yoga of Divine Emotions* (1999).

Abstract of paper: River of Love in an Age of Pollution

For centuries the Yamuna River of northern India has been worshipped as a goddess. Today, however, the river is threatened by rapid development and severe pollution. This paper will examine the Yamuna, both as goddess and river, and the contemporary conflict between religious sensibilities associated with this river and the increasing pollution of its waters. It will draw on key texts to construct a theological portrait of Yamuna Devi to place her in a traditional world of Hindu religiosity, and will explore the growing awareness in India that this powerful and purifying goddess may be in need of purification herself. This investigation will seek to understand both how current environmental degradation is effecting the traditional "natural theology" associated with the Yamuna, and how this traditional theology is being mobilized to resist environmental degradation. current environmental degradation is effecting the traditional "natural theology" associated with the Yamuna, and how this traditional theology is being mobilized to resist environmental degradation.

Jack Hawley

George A. James received his Ph.D in religion from Columbia University in 1983. Over the past several years he has been conducting research on India's Environmental Philosophy. He recently edited a volume of essays entitled *Ethical Perspectives on Environmental Problems in India* (New Delhi, 1998). He teaches in the graduate program in environmental philosophy at the University of North Texas.

Madhu Khanna (Ph.D., Oxford University) is Associate Professor at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi. The author of two popular books, her seminal work *Sricakra of the Cult of Goddess Tripurasundari* is forthcoming. She was awarded the Homi Bhabha Fellowship (1991-1993) for her project on goddess ecology in India. She is the founding member of the Tantra Foundation, New Delhi.

Abstract of paper: The Ritual Capsule of Durga-Puja: An Ecological Perspective

This paper explores the ecological dimension of the nine day autumnal festival of the goddess Durga, popularly known as Durga-Puja, or *Nava-ratra*. Modern studies on the goddess Durga concentrate mainly on the *Devimahatmya*, the first comprehensive text about the function and significance of the goddess whose primary mythological aim is to maintain the balance of cosmic order by vanquishing the demons. The authority of the text of the *Devimahatmya* is so widespread that it seems that the Durga-Puja ceremonies are an invention of the *Shastric* tradition. A closer look at the rituals performed during the Durga-Puja reveal that the roots of this worship lie in the nature-oriented, village-based, agricultural communities of India, whose lives were intimately bound to the seasonal rhythms and crop cycle. For millions in India, the goddess Durga lives in freshly sprung paddy saplings, or in tender shoots of barley; in golden spikelets of harvest grains; in deep forest groves, hidden among clusters of green shrubs, trees and creepers; in spices and roots used in daily diet; in Bilva or the Rose Apple tree and its fortune bestowing fruit, *Shriphala* and in the rich produce of the harvest season. These nature personifications of the goddess represent the fecund power of the earth with which the goddess Durga is identified. The goddess Durga, as portrayed in several versions of her myth and countless variations in iconography, veils these early characterizations of the goddess. Two traditions interweave to complete the cycle of festival ceremonies: the scriptural mainstream as expounded in the text of the *Devimahatmya*, and the agro-based oral tradition. This paper attempts to trace the knowledge-system of primal ecology, as expounded in the *Naba-Patrika-Puja*, which takes place during the festival. The unity of agricultural productivity and festive activity is integral to all traditional societies. The nine-day festival of Durga-Puja presents but one ecocosmic model of such a worship.

Frank Korom is Assistant Professor of South Asian Religion and Culture at Boston University. He is the author and editor of five books, most recently *Constructing Tibetan Culture* (1997) and *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora* (1997). His interest in religion and ecology has led to a number of articles on recycling and socioreligious status in India and religious symbols as environmentalist resources. He is currently completing a book about Indo-Shi'i ritual performances on the island of Trinidad, which is scheduled for completion in 1999.

Vinay Lal received his Ph.D. in South Asian studies from the University of Chicago in 1992. In recent years he has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Institute of Indian Studies, and the National Museum of Ethnology (Japan). He has been teaching history at the University of California, Los Angeles, since 1993. His papers on Gandhi and on an array of other subjects, including modern Indian history, the Indian diaspora, the politics of knowledge, popular culture and sexuality in India, and American cultural politics, have appeared in three dozen journals.

Abstract of paper: Gandhi and Deep Ecology

Gandhi is often recognized as one of the principal sources of inspiration for the Indian environmental movement. His 'influence' is most clearly traced in the Chipko Andolan, and more recently in the Narmada Bachao Andolan. It is submitted, however, that that is only the least part of his legacy for Indian environmentalism. Gandhi was in every respect an ecological thinker: the brevity of his enormous writings (putting it rather paradoxically), his everyday bodily practices, his observance of silence, his abhorrence of waste, and his cultivation of the small as much as the big all equally point to Gandhi's ecological awareness. In a manner of speaking, Gandhi left us with the last of the Upanishads, 'forest books,' and his whole life is an *aranyaka* which hearkens back to the deeply ecological foundations of Hinduism.

David W. Lee is Professor in the Departments of Biological Sciences and Environmental Studies at Florida International University in Miami. A native of eastern Washington State, he received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in 1970. Most of his research in the past thirty years has been on the functional ecology of plants, particularly in tropical Asia where he has lived over seven years. This research has led to some sixty scientific publications, numerous more general articles, and two books on environmental issues in the Asian tropics. He presently is studying the seedling shade responses of Indian forest trees, the function of anthocyanins in leaves, and structural coloration in plants.

Abstract of paper: Sacred Plants and Forests: Lessons from the *Ramayana*

The events of the *Ramayana* spanned the major ecosystems of India, which will be summarized in this presentation. The *Ramayana* mentions by name a large variety of plants (over 200 species), although the scientific identities of some are controversial. The plants are primarily (1) limited to the central and northern portions of the subcontinent; (2) important for medicinal and

economic uses; (3) important as sacred plants today, and mentioned in other sacred texts. These descriptions of plants and forests tell us much about classical attitudes toward nature, and the *Ramayana* still may influence these attitudes in India and other areas of tropical Asia.

Julius Lipner

Philip Lutgendorf received a Ph.D. in South Asian languages and civilizations from the University of Chicago in 1987. His research focuses on popular culture and oral performance traditions in the context of medieval and modern South Asia. His topics range from literary epics and rural folklore to twentieth-century films, television serials, and mass socioreligious movements. His book *The Life of a Text: Performing the Ramcaritmanas of Tulsidas* (University of California Press, 1991) received the Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Prize of the Association for Asian Studies in 1993. He is currently working on a book-length study of the cult of the monkey-god Hanuman.

Abstract of paper: Having a Forest and Eating it Too: "Narrative Ecosystem" in the Sanskrit Epics

This talk will deal with the ambiguity of the portrayal of wilderness in the epics, as well as the implicit notion of ecology that I believe they contain. A reading of the great Sanskrit epics of ancient India--the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*--readily reveals the importance of wild, uncultivated terrain as a setting for heroic narrative and as a contrast to the human-ordered landscapes of city-state or countryside. This paper will seek to clarify some of the diverse functions of "the forest" as an enduring trop in Hindu epic narrative, as well as to weigh the relevance for contemporary ecological movements, or implicit epic notions of cosmological and ecological order.

Mary McGee is Associate Professor of Classical Hinduism at Columbia University. As Director of Dharam Hinduja Indic Research Center at Columbia University from 1995-1999, she inaugurated an initiative on Indic Traditions of Environmental Consciousness, which included support of the 1998 Hinduism and Ecology conference at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University. Her research focuses on ethical, legal, and ritual concerns in classical Hindu texts and contemporary practice.

Abstract of paper: Environmental Consciousness in the Dharmashastras and the Arthashastras

My presentation will introduce preliminary findings based on my examination of selected Dharmashastras (among them, those of Manu and Yajnavalkya) and Arthashastras (among them, Kautilya's and the *Shukraniti*) and their sensitivity to the environment. In my investigations I

have paid particular attention to discussions concerning agricultural practices (farming and animal husbandry), techniques of excavation (mining and well-digging), as well as references to time based on an awareness of seasons and planetary movements. Dharmashastras, treatises on religious, secular, and ethical responsibilities, traditionally deal with customary practices (*acara*), legal procedures (*vyavahara*), and expiation (*prayashcitta*); whereas Arthashastras, treatises designed as handbooks on polity for rulers, emphasize public administration, foreign relations, and civil and criminal law. Taken together, these two types of authoritative treatises provide us with clues for discerning levels of appreciation and awareness, especially among the ruling classes, of the natural environment, on which so much of the Indian economy has traditionally depended.

Vijaya Nagarajan (completed her dissertation, entitled "Hosting the Divine: The Kolam as Embedded Ritual, Aesthetic, and Ecology in South India," at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Francisco. She has been affiliated with various environmental non-governmental organizations both in India and the U.S. since 1981. Vijaya is co-founder and has been co-director of a "backpack NGO," the Institute for the Study of Natural and Cultural Resources, since 1986.

Abstract of paper: Women and the Earth: The Art of Symbolic Expression

This paper explores the specific nature of the discourse on the natural world that surrounds women and their ritual lives in Tamil Nadu. The *kolam* is the major ritual that will be discussed in this paper; the *kolam* is a daily ritual practice that involves the creation of rice flour patterns on the thresholds of shrines, households, and temples; the *kolam* is made to evoke forgiveness from Bhū-Devi, the earth goddess. The discourses that surround this ritual emphasize the ephemeral nature of the conception of spirits in Hinduism. The occupation of space by divinities, the calling of divinities to that space, and the subsequent dismissal, departing, or abandonment of divinities in that space are all equally relevant whether the space occupied by divinities is located in the natural or cultural world. This paper attempts to frame the subtle distinctions, if there are any, between the conception of divine locatibility in the natural and the cultural worlds.

Lance Nelson received his Ph.D. from McMaster University. He is Assistant Professor of Theological and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego. His writings on Advaita Vedanta and other aspects of South Asian religion have appeared in books and scholarly journals in the United States and India. Most recently, he edited *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India* (SUNY, 1998).

Abstract of paper: Reading the *Bhagavad Gita* from an Ecological Perspective

The text of the *Bhagavad Gita* will be examined for its ecological implications, both positive and negative, with a special view to the tension between world-sacralization and world-negation in

Hindu thought. It will be argued that Hindus face problems comparable to, at least in scale, those faced by the faithful of other religious traditions in re-visioning their scriptures to meet the needs of an ecological era.

Pramod Parajuli teaches anthropology, ecology, and social movements at Syracuse University, New York. His research interests are in analyzing the intersection of social movements, ecology and traditions of knowledge among ecological ethnicities--peasants, indigenous peoples, rural peasants, fisherfolks, etc. Recently, he completed a book manuscript entitled: *Tortured Bodies and Altered Earth: Ecological Ethnicities in the Regime of Globalization* He is actively involved in various ethno-ecological movements and movements for sustainable livelihoods in his home country, Nepal, and in India.

Abstract of paper by Frederique Apffel-Marglin and Pramod Parajuli: Sacred Plants and Forests: Lessons from the *Ramayana*

The events of the *Ramayana* spanned the major ecosystems of India, which will be summarized in this presentation. The *Ramayana* mentions by name a large variety of plants (over 200 species), although the scientific identities of some are controversial. The plants are primarily (1) limited to the central and northern portions of the subcontinent; (2) important for medicinal and economic uses; (3) important as sacred plants today, and mentioned in other sacred texts. These descriptions of plants and forests tell us much about classical attitudes toward nature, and the *Ramayana* still may influence these attitudes in India and other areas of tropical Asia.

Laurie L. Patton is Associate Professor of Early Indian Religion at Emory University. She is the author of *Myth as Argument: The Brhaddevata as Canonical Commentary* (de Gruyter, 1996) and the editor of *Authority, Anxiety, and Canon: Essays in Vedic Interpretation* (State University Press of New York, 1994); *Myth and Method* (University of Virginia Press, 1996); and the forthcoming *Jewels of Authority: Women and Text in the Hindu Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2000). She is the author of over twenty-three articles on Vedic interpretation, comparative mythology, and religion and literature. She is also the editor, with Purushottama Bilimoria, of the series "Toward a Comparative Philosophy of Religions." She serves as chair of the Department of Religion at Emory.

Abstract of paper: Nature Romanticism and Violence in Rig Vedic Interpretation

It is by now a commonplace to speak of the nature romanticism of Western nineteenth century Rig Vedic interpretation, especially that of Max Mueller, Abel Bergaine, and others. In the last twenty years of scholarship, Indological nature romanticism, and its attendant intellectual heritage, has become the locus classicus for criticism of Indological knowledge--the first place we look when we want to point out the distortion of knowledge about the other. In this paper I want to move beyond such criticism in two specific ways: First, I want to place the nineteenth century construction of nature within a larger interpretive frame, comparing it to several earlier

school of interpretation: the ritual schools of Ashvalayana and Shankhayana (ca. 6-4th century B.C.E.), the Niruktan (etymological) perspective of Yaska (5th century B.C.E.), and the Vijayanagaram perspective of Sayana (ca. 14th century C.E.). By making this comparative move I want to show that nineteenth century Indologists, while responsible for their own distortions, are not the first "reconstructers"; the natural imagery of the *Rg Veda* is reconstructed at every moment in its interpretive history. Thus follows my second point: Cast in this more historical light, the nature romanticism of the 19th century is distinguished from its earlier counterparts by its refusal to engage the world of ritual violence in which the *Rg Veda* originally emerged. The two "worlds" presented by Rig Vedic metaphor, natural beauty and sacrificial violence, are intertwined in Ashvalayana, Taska and Sayana, albeit in very different ways. In Western Indology, the two are separated, and two very different pictures of Vedic world emerge: the first is pastoral, beautiful and mystic, and the second is violent, bloody, and primitive. This separation occurs because of a basic misunderstanding of how Vedic metaphor works in its ritual contexts. Violence, I argue, is inherent in the Vedic metaphoric process, and Vedic metaphors of the beauty of the natural world must be understood in this light. This examination of the case of Rig Vedic interpretation might give us helpful and cautionary signposts to follow as we examine ancient texts with our own contemporary environmental concerns.

Kusumita Pederson

Ranchor Prime

Abstract of paper: Practical Hindu Ecology

This paper will explore the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature, which has initiated the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, which also supports numerous environmental projects around the world. It will also discuss basic concepts of Hindu ecology, including the Vaishnava teachings of reincarnation, panentheism, and simple living. The talk will conclude with a discussion of the Vrindavan Conservation Project, which works with education, tree planting, and pollution control.

K. L. Seshagiri Rao, Ph.D., LL.D. (Hon.), Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, teaches environmental policy and law and public administration. He has published twenty-six books and many articles and chapters in books. From 1986 to 1989 he was a member of a judicial tribunal, the Environmental Assessment Board of Ontario, Canada. He is a past president of the Canadian Political Science Association; a former vice president of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration, Brussels, Belgium; and chair of the Research Committee on Technology and Development, the International Political Science Association.

Abstract of paper: The Five Great Elements (*Panca Mahabhuta*): An Ecological Perspective

This paper will explore the five great elements as sources for ecological awareness in India. The five great elements, which first appear in the Vedas and serve as building blocks of reality in Samkhya metaphysics, are earth (*prithivi*), water (*jala*), fire (*agni*), air (*vayu*), and space (*akasha*).

T. S. Rukmani holds Ph.D. (1958) and D.Litt. (1991) degrees from the University of Delhi. He now holds the Chair in Hindu Studies at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. He also held the Chair in Hindu Studies and Indian Philosophy at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, from 1993 to 1995. He is the author of ten books and numerous research papers. His main work is in Indian philosophy, especially Advaita Vedanta and Yoga philosophy.

Abstract of paper: Literary Foundations for an Ecological Aesthetic

Literature defined as writings having permanent value are the works which appeal to a critical readership over a long period of time. While there can be and there are literary works that have universal appeal, it will not be untrue to state that all the nuances of a fine piece of literature can only touch one who is 'an implied reader'--a reader who according to Gayatri Spivak is 'constructed within a consolidated system of cultural representation.' Such literature is culture specific and reflects the cultural values of the community it depicts. This paper is written with the belief that there are differing world views and the world view of the Hindu is an ecologically friendly one. While on the one hand literature reflects the world view, it, in turn, has an epistemic and ontic function which it performs in making the reader sensitive to his/her existential nature and also by helping to construct knowledge about what it is to be a human being. Using mainly Sanskrit sources, this paper will explore some of these questions and try to see how literature helps in forming an ecologically sensitive person.

Arvind Sharma

Larry D. Shinn received his B.A. from Baldwin Wallace College in 1964, his B.D. from Drew Theological School in 1968, and his Ph.D. in History of Religions from Princeton University in 1972. He taught religion and humanities courses at Oberlin College from 1970-1983. At Bucknell University, Shinn served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1984 to 1989 and as Vice President for Academic Affairs from 1989 to 1994. He became the eighth president of Berea College in August, 1994. Berea is a non-sectarian Christian liberal arts college in Berea, Kentucky, whose primary mission is to serve the economically disadvantaged youth of the Southern Appalachian region and beyond. He is the author of two books: *Two Sacred*

Worlds: Experience and Structure in the World Religions and *The Dark Lord: Cult Images and the Hare Krishnas in America*.

Abstract of paper: The Inner Logic of Gandhian Ecology

Gandhian thought encompasses philosophy, religion, economics, and politics. Each of these disciplines can be brought to bear in assessing the current ecological crisis in India. Gandhi's teachings on living the simple life, practicing nonviolence, and holding to truth can serve to inform India's emerging ecological awareness.

Jael Silliman is Assistant Professor in the Women's Studies Program at the University of Iowa. She has an Ed.D. from the Graduate School of Education, Columbia University. She works on gender and development issues and transnational movements for social change. She has recently coedited *Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population, Environment, and Development* (Southend Press and Zed Press, 1999). She has also written "Making the Connections: Environmental Justice and the Women's Health Movement," in *Journal of Race, Class and Gender: Issue on Environmental Justice*.

Abstract of paper: Indian Feminist Responses and Challenges to Environmental Population Paradigms

Indian Feminists have played a key role in the transnational women's health movement which has in turn succeeded in moving international opinion, international health and donor agencies to more "women-centered population policies." This shift in the population paradigm was demonstrated in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1993. As a paradigm shift has occurred with regards to official thinking on population, so has there been a shift in thinking regarding environmental issues. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio, 1992, issues of environment and development have been linked and human rights concerns have entered into the designing of environmental programs and policies. The power of this new approach to environmental issues is demonstrated in the opposition to the Narmada Valley Project--an important global case that has set precedents for environmental policy making. While women have been very active, and often protagonists in the environmental movement in India and the rest of the world, a feminist analysis of environmental issues has not taken firm root in this movement. Thus in key environmental struggles, like the Narmada Valley Project, women's issues tend to be ignored, are absent in the analysis of the problem and consequently women's rights are undermined in policy-making. This paper briefly maps the engagement of Indian feminists in the constructions of a new population paradigm. It then uses the Narmada case study to illustrate how, without feminist active involvement and engagement in the construction of new paradigms, and without an explicit feminist presence in the local struggles, women's rights are undermined and ignored.

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.

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.

Hinduism and Ecology. The Hindu has no authority over creatures of the earth. God (Brahman) is the efficient cause and nature, Prakriti, is the material cause of the universe. However, this division is non-dualistic in nature. They are one in the same, or perhaps better stated, they are the one in the many and the many in the one. Despite western assertion that Hinduism is polytheistic in nature, this sort of polytheism is actually monotheistic in nature. While the Divine is manifest in many, the many are all and no less than, but not equal to the Divine. While Hindus are not given the sort of Hinduism and ecology: the intersection of earth, sky, and water. G A James. GA James. The faiths practiced in Sri Lanka include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Smaller numbers in the population are adherents of other faiths. Consideration was given to environmental education by means of teachers associated with the various faiths.