

AHIMSA CENTER

NONVIOLENCE IN THOUGHT AND ACTION

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2021

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

GREETINGS to the seekers and supporters of ahimsa!

This special issue celebrates the extraordinary life and work of Padmanabh S. Jaini, Professor Emeritus of Buddhist and Jain Studies at University of California, Berkeley, who passed away on May 25, 2021. He was a giant in his fields, and a prominent member of the Jain community. We are delighted to bring this issue to you on October 23 which marks his 98th birthday.

Professor Jaini had a unique place and role at the Ahimsa Center. He was a key member of the Ahimsa Center Advisory Board from its very inception, who through his ideas and insights inspired initiatives of the Center. He and his wife gifted the collection of his books, including rare books in his fields, to Cal Poly Pomona,



Tara Sethia with Prof. and Mrs. Jaini

which is housed under the **P.S. Jaini Collection** in our Library. We had the pleasure of hosting them on our campus, and the honor of having him speak on several occasions at the Center.

I had the privilege of personally knowing him and benefitting from his advice over last two decades. The words that come to mind as I reflect on his legacy are: *wisdom, accessibility, generosity, and humility.*

Professor Jaini was a man of wisdom with deep knowledge of Jain and Buddhist scriptures as well as the history of scholarships in these fields going back to several centuries.

He was a man of exceptional experiences or "coincidences," as he would like to say, rising from very modest background to becoming a towering scholar in his fields. He wrote in an accessible style communicating complex concepts and ideas in a clear and simple manner.

Like his scholarship, Professor Jaini was always accessible. This was particularly striking given his professional

Special Issue

Celebrating the Life and Work of Professor Padmanabh S. Jaini, 1923-2021

demands and engagements, and a wide network of scholars. He readily made himself available for conversations and provided many welcoming opportunities for meeting at his home, on our campus, and at our home. He was generous with his time, with his ideas, and his advice. Although he had stopped traveling in the last few years, he made himself available via phone and in-person meetings.

Sitting with him was a real treat, and every meeting was an enjoyable learning experience. My last meeting was in November 2019 at his home in Berkeley, soon after the release of his autobiography. Having read it, I expressed awe and admiration. He promptly responded by quoting from the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, *Parasparopagraho Jīvānām*, "souls render services to one another," an aphorism he fully embraced. His example, and his sense of great humility will continue to be a source of inspiration for me.

Tara Sethia is the inaugural Shri Shantinath Endowed Chair in Ahimsa Studies and the Director of Ahimsa Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

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Tribute to Prof. Jaini: Scholars

In Memoriam

Padmanabh Jaini

By Paul Dundas



I am deeply gratified to have this opportunity to offer a brief contribution in celebration of the remarkable life and scholarly achievements of Prof. Pamanabh Jaini. To my regret, I did not

meet Prof. Jaini in-person until 1989 when he was 66—his relatively short sojourn in the UK at SOAS prior to moving to the USA was before my time. What brought us together was a small conference organised at Cambridge University by the anthropologists Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey, who wished to establish some parameters for conducting research on the Jains as a specific community. Prof. Jaini's seminal work *The Jaina Path of Purification* had appeared some ten years before in 1979, and it soon became clear as the conference proceeded that he knew far more about Jain history and teachings, particularly from a Digambara perspective, than the rest of the participants combined. Yet he treated everybody's relative ignorance with a gentle forbearance, and both during the conference and outside it he opened vistas of possible research and relevant source materials, which I will, for one, will always be grateful.

Age 66 is a period of life when most academics, at least in Europe, would be thinking about retirement and possibly curtailing some of their research work, especially as in the case of Professor Jaini after producing so many outstanding editions and studies around the Buddhist jātakas and abhi-

dharma literature. In fact, as everybody knows, he was to remain extraordinarily active and productive, and in his 70s and 80s he published some of his most important work on Jain studies—it's almost as if after 1979 he had embarked on a second scholarly career! If I were to single out just one publication from many, it would be his edition, translation, and fascinating commentary on the *Cauryaṃsībol*, a late eighteenth-century Hindi work by a Digambara pundit that refutes eighty-four points of contention held by the Śvetambaras. Here we see exemplified scholarly qualities which remained consistent throughout Jaini's career: the ability to identify important textual material, often unpublished; full mastery of the sources; keen analysis; and clarity of exposition. It is this last quality, also exemplified regularly in Prof. Jaini's wonderfully engaging lectures over the years, which has ensured that his works can be appreciated by specialists and students alike.

The *Cauryaṃsībol* study, of monograph length, first appeared in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* in 2008 and in a way represented a return by Jaini to his academic origins, for the unique manuscript on which this edition of the Hindi text is based was located by him in one of the temple libraries at Karanja in Maharashtra. As he frequently recalled, Prof. Jaini received his initial academic training and a significant part of his intellectual formation in the Mahavira *Brahmacharyashrama Jaina Gurukula* in Karanja during the 1930s. When I visited this establishment several years ago, it was gratifying to learn that his memory was still very much alive and his achievements a source of pride to the local Jain community in Karanja.

For all that I and many others have benefited greatly in our own research and teaching from Prof. Padmanabh Jaini's writings over several decades (he was still publishing valuable contributions into his 90s), my abiding memory of him will simply be of delightful time spent in his company at conferences and elsewhere. A wonderful raconteur, (evidence of this can be seen his autobiography *Yogāyoga*), he was quite simply immense fun to be with. Cliches generally serve to convey truths: Padmanabh Jaini will be much missed, but his personality and writings ensure that he will not be forgotten.

Paul Dundas is an Honorary Fellow and Quondam Reader in Sanskrit, and Asian Studies, the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

A Reminiscence of Dr. Padmanabh Jaini

By Michael Charles Tobias

In 1986 Padmanabh joined me for six weeks, moving from film location to location across India. I was writing/directing one of the first hour-long documentaries for PBS on the world of Jainism (Ahimsa: Non-Violence), and I knew from years of study that there was no greater spokesperson on the subject than Dr. Jaini.

But I relied upon collaboration for reasons far more complex than his unparalleled scholarship on ancient Jain texts, nuances, and philosophical differentiations within the history of Eastern spiritual traditions. It was Padmanabh's personable manner, his true Anekāntavāda (many-sidedness) in action that utterly mesmerized me. In over 100 filming locations, he demonstrated an incredible compas-

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sion towards me, always with a tender boyish grin. He knew only too well that my film was setting out to idealize the Jains and to portray their history, various sects, and elaborate rituals in an utterly Utopian-like ethical realm, which he kept telling me was not entirely accurate. However, he withstood my own youthful passion to present the historic and contemporary annals of Jainism within the context of pure, unabashed harmony and nonviolence.

Padmanabh knew that human nature is human nature and that there were some Jains who ate meat, wore leather shoes, consumed garlic, etc. That no culture was 100% this or that. Yes, the Jains—as I portrayed throughout the film—had shown a window of true kindness to the rest of the world, had given us an ideal to aspire towards. That was the compromise that Padmanabh felt comfortable pursuing, as I wrote, re-wrote and directed the film, from family dinner tables in Mumbai and Ahmedabad to sacred temple sites like Mount Abu and Palitana. He was always there for me, explaining in the gentlest terms, and urging me forward in my untiring embrace of a culture that Padmanabh himself so magnificently and humbly enshrined.

I had never met in another man the quintessence of tranquility, goodness, and un-conditional love. This pattern of behavior came as naturally to Pamanabh as flight to a butterfly. I'm forever grateful for his enduring gift.



Michael Charles Tobias is an author, ecologist, film-maker, historian, explorer, educator, and nonviolence activist.

Remembrance of Professor Jaini

By Kristi Wiley

My academic life was profoundly impacted by Professor Jaini. We first met in the 1980s when I took his introductory classes on Hinduism and Buddhism as a graduate student in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. A few years later, he hired me as his research assistant because he needed someone to edit articles that he was writing, and he knew of my work on the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Translation Project with Bob and Sally Goldman. As I recall, it took us a while to develop a relationship where I was comfortable with offering my suggestions and where he felt free to accept or reject them as he saw fit.

It soon became apparent that I knew almost nothing about Jainism, so I bought a copy of *The Jaina Path of Purification*. On a Friday evening I began reading and did not stop until the end of the weekend, when I had reached the end of this fascinating work. An entirely new world had opened up for me. I was eager to learn more, and Professor Jaini was most generous with his time, patiently answering my never-ending questions about what would have been very basic concepts for him. I took his class on Jainism the only time that it was offered after the University switched to the semester system. In the reader was his article on Karma and Rebirth, and this ultimately led to my passion for Jain karma theory and my dissertation on the *aghātiyā karmas* and their role in death and rebirth. I believe this was the only dissertation on Jaina Studies that he supervised, and I would not have

considered this topic without reading karma texts with an expert like him.

After graduation, I kept in contact with Professor Jaini, stopping to visit with him at his office when I was on campus for library work. It was only a few years ago that he stopped coming to the office. Because he no longer had access to email, I informally resumed the role of his research assistant, handling some of his academic correspondence by dictation over the phone. It was truly a blessing to have had the opportunity of talking with him on a regular basis over the past few years, particularly after the Covid pandemic when in-person visits were out of the question. His phone conversations often turned into lectures on a wide range of topics, and it was almost as if I were sitting in his class again at Berkeley. His clarity of thought, attention to details, and insight into the most complex topics never ceased to amaze me.



We are indeed fortunate that his *āyu karma* was so firmly bound, and of such long duration, that those of us who have talked with him in person, and those of us who have read his works, have benefited from his wisdom for so many years.

Kristi Wiley is scholar of Jainism. She has been a lecturer in Sanskrit and South Asian Religions in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at University of California, Berkeley.

Note about Professor Jaini

By John E. Cort

I have been fortunate that Professor Jaini was a staunch supporter of my research from early in my graduate career. In Ahmedabad in the summer of 1986, in the middle of my two years of dissertation fieldwork in Gujarat, we were able to have several long conversations at the house of Hemant Broker, whom he had known since he was studied in Ahmedabad in the 1940s. He was excited at the nature of my work, and he helped me develop the theoretical argument that underlies the dissertation and subsequent book. Three years later, he agreed to serve as an external examiner for my Harvard Ph.D. thesis, and once again was highly supportive of the new perspectives my ethnohistorical approach brought to Jain Studies.

He did, however, express one regret: my research at the time focused on the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjak Jains. He had already argued in his influential 1976 article “The Jainas and the Western Scholars,” published in the festschrift for A. N. Upadhye, that Western scholarship had for too long investigated the Śvetāmbar tradition to the neglect of the Digambaras. After my work on the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjaks, he wanted me to turn my attention to the Digambaras and conduct similar research. In recent years my research has indeed looked at early modern and contemporary Digambar materials, combining textual studies with fieldwork. He was always happy with my publications in this area. Once, in response to an article in which I translated several Braj Bhasha *paḍ*s by the eighteenth-century poet Dyānatrāy, he wrote to say that he remembered fondly singing some of these very same *paḍ*s as a student in the ashram at Bahubali in the 1930s.

To quote the opening line of one of

Dyānatrāy’s most famous *paḍ*s, in words that aptly fit Prof. Padmanabh S. Jaini, *guru samān dātā nahi koī* (no one gives like the guru).

John E. Cort is an author and scholar of Jainism, and professor at Dennison University, where he teaches about religions of Asia.



Professor Padmanabh Jaini

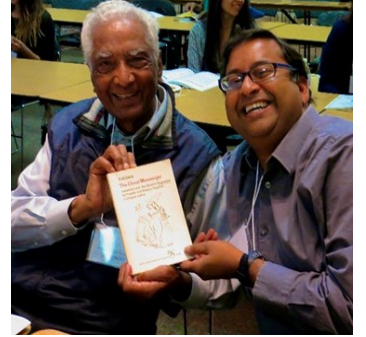
By Srinivas Reddy

During the past year, while the world faced a life-altering pandemic, I spoke to Professor Jaini every day from 4pm-5pm. How precious! It was like having a private class with the master on a daily basis. Our discussions ranged widely, but each day he would say, “So what is our subhāṣita for the day?” And then he would go on to quote a verse from the Upanishads, the *Jaina Agamas*, the Buddhist *Nikayas*, or from one of his favorite Banarsi poets, Tulsi or Kabir.

On one such occasion he told me a story about Professor TRV Murti, the staunch Advaitan and Madhyamika scholar who was a major intellectual influence on Professor Jaini during his early years. They had first become friends in Sri Lanka. As Professor was returning to India, Murti gave him a memorable sendoff. On a whim, Murti took Professor to the fancy Longman’s Bookstore in Colombo and gifted him a brand new copy of the hefty Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary. In it, Murti inscribed a verse from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, which Professor Jaini took to heart:

Whatever actions are beyond reproach,
Whatever good deeds we may have done,
Abide by those things, and no others.
But should there be wise men more learned than us,
Offer them a seat with honor.

In particular, Professor took time to stress the last line, which he believed reflected the openness of Indian wisdom traditions. And indeed, in both his long life and his illustrious career, Professor Padmanabh S. Jaini was a living embodiment of the Jaina principle of *anekāntavāda*. At the end of these happy reminiscences, Professor would often chuckle and say, “Isn’t it nice to tell stories about our gurus?” I would chuckle too, knowing in the back of my mind that I might one day tell this story about my guru.



Srinivas Reddy is an author, scholar, translator, and concert sitarist. He teaches at Brown University. www.srinivasreddy.org

“Time wounds all heels” Remembering P. S. Jaini

By Claire R. Maes

Raindrops

I learned about the passing of Professor Dr. Padmanabh S. Jaini when I just came out of a 10-day vipassana retreat. It was one of the first emails I read. It touched me deeply. I instantly recalled the last time we spoke.

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He had talked about his views on life after death. At one point he suggested he may come back in raindrops. In Tübingen, where I now live, it's been raining much lately. Prof. Jaini left a unique impact on me. He not only changed the way I think about rain. For me, he was an academic role model. I admired him for both his scholarship and personality. He was gentle, caring, witty, and generous. He was also respectful to the point that he burned his feet, literally. In honor of P.S. Jaini's memory, I would like to recount a few moments I shared with him.

Gwalior

In the summer of 2009, P.S. Jaini was one of the principal instructors of the International Summer School for Jain Studies (ISSJS). I was a participating student, having just begun my Ph.D. research. As part of the program, we visited Gwalior to see the historic rock-cut caves with the monumental Tirthankara carvings. Out of respect for the site, P.S. Jaini insisted on climbing the hill barefoot. I was wearing socks, but despite this extra layer of protection, I soon felt the heat of the rocks. It was late morning, and the sun already had a few good hours to



turn the rocks into burning coals. Somewhere midway-up the hill, another student (Ellen Gough) and I insisted he put socks on to protect his feet. When he agreed, it was already too late: his feet were burned. In an email exchange a few weeks after the program, P.S. Jaini reflected amusingly on this event. I share an extract of his email. Though short, it shows his sense of humor and love for witty wordplay:

My pilgrimage will remain memorable for my bold climb up the hill in the heat and meeting there with two obliging "insurance agents" helping me to walk! I remember saying, "Time wounds all

heels": Well, I am much better now: I can walk, but it will be months before I can jog: "Time heals all wounds, indeed!" (12 August 2009, personal communication)

Sandwich

Fast forward a few years later. In February 2017, I spent an unforgettable afternoon with P.S. Jaini at his office at UC Berkeley. We talked for many long hours. As time flew by and we got hungry, he brought out his lunch box. In a gesture of utter kindness, he cut his sandwich in half and



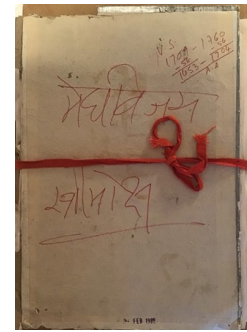
shared it. I have eaten countless sandwiches in my life. I hardly recall any

of them, but till this day I vividly remember this sandwich. Given the fact that P.S. Jaini came from a Jain background, I was not surprised to see that it was vegetarian. What struck me, however, was its simplicity: two slices of white bread holding together some lettuce and cucumber. If we are what we eat, then P.S. Jaini embodied ahimsa to a degree I had rarely seen before.

At that time, I was working on a paper that examined the practice of nakedness as a marker of ascetic identity in early India. P.S. Jaini had addressed this subject in several of his publications. In "Jain Sectarian Debates" (2008), for instance, he shows how throughout the centuries, the question of clothed versus unclothed asceticism has been a central point of dispute between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras.

While talking about this topic, P.S. Jaini, in another generous gesture, gave me his xeroxed copy of the Yuktīprabodha, a seventeenth centu-

ry Śvetāmbara text composed by Upādhyāya Meghavijaya and centered on the refutation of the "neo-digambara" sect of Banārasidās.



The copy is dotted with his handwritten notes and markups.

When I look at the text, and when it is raining, I am reminded of my

afternoon with P.S. Jaini at UC Berkely, and I feel that our conversation did not end then but is still continuing.

Claire R. Maes

teaches in the Department of Indology at the University of Tübingen in Germany. She is a scholar of Jainism and Indian Buddhism.



Tribute to Professor Jaini

By Chris Chapple

Shortly after completing my doctoral dissertation at Fordham University in 1980, I became Assistant Director of The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions at Stony Brook University on Long Island. Thankfully, the Institute supported conferences which allowed me to invite Professor Jaini to visit and give a lecture. In the company of Rabbi Reuven Firestone, Mennonite theologian John Yoder, and many others, Prof. Jaini provided an overview of

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Jaina faith and practice for the university community. As he told the tale of the elephant (future prince and Jain monk) Meruprabh sparing the life of a hapless rabbit during a forest fire, I was deeply moved, not only by the story itself but also Jaini's enthusiastic narration. Following his talk, my colleague Janet Gyatso, his former student and now professor of Buddhism at Harvard, posed the standard challenge: "Don't Jain monks and nuns go to an unnecessary extreme in their asceticism?" With great aplomb and with professorial authority, Jaini gently replied: "Before judging the lives of these monks and nuns, please spend time with them, visit them in India, and then make your decision." These words sunk deeply into my psyche.

Some years later I recontacted Professor Jaini, seeking advice on how to do just that. In short, to paraphrase John Cort's translation of early modern Digambara poetry, "Where can I find such a Yogi?" Jaini directed me to Professor Cort and with funding from my new academic home in Los Angeles, I traveled to India in 1989 and sought out Sadhus and Sadhvis. I took darshan from Acharya Tulsi and Mahaprajna, making connections in India that have grown over the years. Due to that initial prodding, I have now helped hundreds of students, several who have become professors, meet with Jain monks and nuns in India through the International School for Jain Studies.

Jain Studies experienced a renaissance due to Professor Jaini. Since the publication of *The Jaina Path*, with dozens of scholars have emerged with new areas of research, generating new translations and filed studies. Prof. Jaini was ubiquitous throughout the 90s and 00s, giving advice, often chiding and cajoling. He once asked me to ghost-write a

speech for Prince Charles upon the release of Nathmal Tatia's translation of the *Tattvārthasūtra*, and advised loyalty to my institution when the proverbial grass looked greener on the other side. A true friend and colleague to many, Jaini nudged each of us forward professionally and personally, all the while keeping us humble. We are all the better for having known and learned from Professor Jaini.

Christopher Key Chapple is *Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology, Director, Master of Arts in Yoga Studies, Loyola Marymount University.*



Professor Padmanabha Jaini: Never Losing Sight of Academics

By Shivani Bothra

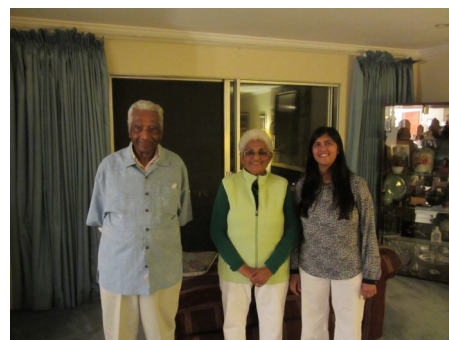
Padmanabha Jaini was an Indian origin polymath. My first met him in June 2009 in Jaipur (India) at a lecture delivered by him that went above my head!

His three-day stay in Jaipur coincided with my birthday. My husband and I offered Prof. Jaini a tour of the Pink City. Although he was reluctant because of long tiring journey, he conceded to his wife's wishes. Spending three hours with him and his wife in the car was the beginning of my interactions with Prof Jaini. We noticed that his feet were covered with blisters, which were unbearable to his body but untouched to his soul. Without expressing any pain, he talked endlessly and enthusiastically. He posed multiple questions to me that I had no answers to then. But they stirred my thought processes

such that it turned out to be my birthday into academics.

I share three experiences with Prof. Jaini that remain indelible in my mind. The first was about getting to know the reason for the blisters on Prof. Jaini's feet. Mrs Shashi Jaini told us that Prof. Jaini behaved like a youth in his mid-80s. He walked barefoot with 25 university students on a peak summer day. Prof. Jaini was driven to provide the students a religious experience of a real Jain pilgrimage and to encourage them to look for joy, rising above physical discomforts. Such experience transcends the boundaries of knowledge- in the confines of classrooms but emphasizes what is truly experiential education.

The second memory was at his home in Berkley. I was fortunate to be invited to his home after completing my Master's in religious studies



from Florida International University. Having spent the first half of the day with Mrs Jaini, the second and third part with Prof. Jaini in his office at University of California, Berkley, we reached his home by dinner time. I was amazed to see a rich spread of homemade Indian snacks, starters, main course, desserts, all served in a large traditional Indian plate called thaali. Seeing my puzzled look, Prof. Jaini declared, "We are celebrating your post-convocation ceremony." I was further startled by the fact that while Mrs Jaini prepared each item with love, Prof.

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Tribute to Prof. Jaini: Community

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Professor Padmanabh S. Jaini

By Nitin Shah, MD



“A sharp and clear mind at 94.” This is how I will remember Professor Jaini! I feel very privileged and honored to have known him.

My interactions with him were limited. However, every time I came away with more knowledge and wisdom.

He promoted education about Jainism. And his book, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, became a must read for all those who were interested in teaching and learning of Jainism.

I had met him first time in 2002 and started interacting with him more after 2011, when I got involved with Jain Academic Education at Claremont Lincoln University previously known as the Claremont School of Theology. He advised us on how to engage institutions in conversations exploring the introduction of Jain studies in higher education. He also offered negotiating tips to advance the understanding of Jainism in universities.

He readily shared his wisdom and years of experience, and was always available to share his knowledge for the benefit of students, scholars, and the community.

My last interaction with him came in July 2020. I requested him to write a

foreword to the special issue of *Jain Digest*—a publication of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA). The focus of this issue was Jain education in north America. When I spoke to him at that time, he was crystal clear in his thoughts and knew exactly what he wanted to say even at the age of 94!

He wrote an insightful foreword covering his academic life, and the start of academic study of Jainism at the University of California, Berkeley—perhaps the first institution to offer courses on Jain studies in North America.

In his foreword he emphasized the significance of “teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels,” which he noted “should remain the foundation of all charitable giving” for the advancement of Jain studies.

Jains will always be indebted to him for his pioneering role in promoting the study of Jainism at institutions of higher education in the USA. We miss you, Professor Padmanabh Jaini, Sir!

Nitin Shah is Professor of Anesthesiology at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, and former President of the Jain Center of Southern California (JCNC).



Scholars and Community at Prof. Jaini's 90th Birthday Celebration at the University of California - Berkeley
Photo from: Dr. Kristi Wiley

Jaini undertook all the cleaning—placing the dishes in the dishwasher and clearing the kitchen counter. When I offered help, Prof. Jaini said that this was his modest contribution to the evening!

The third experience is drawn from my last telephone conversation with Prof. Jaini. I sought his advice: Is it going to be useful for me to learn Brahmi script? In a frustrated voice, he said, “Brahmi script is of no use to you at all. Whosoever thinks that Brahmi script is necessary is living in 100 years earlier times.” Lastly, he told me, “Perfection is the enemy of good.” Another piece of advice was to convert my dissertation into a book, soonest. His last sentence was a couplet from Kabir: kaal kare so aaj kar, pal mein parlay hoyega, bahuri karoga kab? (What you want to do tomorrow, do it right now. There may be holocaust in a moment. In that case, when will you do it?)

It is a coincidence that we lost Prof. Jaini three days after I had lost my beloved husband. Their last conversation was focused on the publication of my Ph.D. dissertation. May their souls rest in peace and they continue to transmit strength and courage to pursue the academic goals which they inspired me to achieve.



Shivani Bothra is the Bhagwaan Mahavir/Chao Family Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Jain Studies in the Department of Transnational Asian Studies at Rice University.

Jaini Ji: A World-Renowned Scholar of Jain Studies

By Prem Jain

Professor Padmanabh Jaini came to Berkeley in 1972 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and joined UC Berkeley as the Professor of Buddhist Studies in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies. I first met Professor Jaini, or Jaini Ji as he was fondly referred to, and his family at a social get-together when I arrived in California in 1975. As we continued to meet after that first encounter, I came to understand that he is a world leading authority on both Jain and Buddhist studies. He told us stories about receiving formal training on Jain studies from his Guru Pandit Sukhlal Ji in which he was exposed to sectarian issues within the community. What impressed me the most was his deep knowledge on rituals as well as a history of all religions, including Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity. We had many fascinating political discussions, and Jaini Ji was always ready to provide factual data and a history lesson on any topic we discussed.

Around the same time in 1975, Acharya Sushil Jumar Ji came to the US and stayed at Professor Jaini and Shahshi Ji's house. With the blessings of Guruji, Professor Jaini, my Uncle (Dr. Shantilal Mutha), Professor Subodh Jain, Dr. Nemi Chand Jain, myself, and other prominent Jain residents of the Greater Bay Area founded Jain Milan, a meeting place for local Jains. This was a non-sectarian Jain organization of the San Francisco/Davis area, and in 1981 we formally incorporated at JCNC (Jain Center of Northern California). Jaini Ji was our scholar as well as the mentor for celebrating Mahaveer Jayanti, Diwali, and other special occasions. I fondly remember when Professor Jaini,

Sashi Ji, Arvind, and Asha hosted our first picnic at Tilden Park close to their family residence. This was the start of something very special for the local Jain community.

It was clear early on that Jaini Ji would have a lasting impact on Jainism both around the world as well as in the Greater Bay Area. He published his book, *Jaina Path of Purification*, in 1977 by UC-Berkeley Press, and I was privileged to go to India on his behalf and collect various illustrations for his book. When JAINA was established in 1981, Professor Jaini was part of the delegation from JCNC and was also a scholar speaker on Jain studies at the event. In 1990, Professor Jaini contributed to shaping the Jain Declaration on Nature, which was distributed at the JAINA Convention in 1991. Additionally, at the Convention, Jaini Ji was chairperson for the Scholar Sessions Committee and led many sessions, including Youth Workshop: History of Jainism, Ecology and Ahimsa, and others.

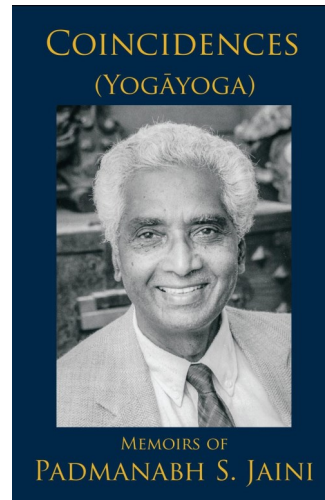
Unfortunately, after the convention was over, we received some shocking and devastating news. Asha, Jaini Ji's daughter, passed away suddenly, and it was a big loss to our community since a part of our extended family was taken away from us so soon. In search for answers, Jaini Ji dove even deeper into Jainism and Buddhist studies.

He played an important role as a member of the advisory board for Ahimsa Center at Cal Poly Pomona and participated in numerous conferences for the Ahimsa Center since its inception in 2004. Over the years, I had many opportunities to drive him from the Bay Area to Cal Poly and had the privilege to continue to learn from him on those long drives, at the breakfast table, or on our morning walks. He was always ready to share and impart wisdom to others, and it is a gift that I will always cherish.

A few weeks before Jaini Ji left us, he requested that the best way to give tribute to him would be by celebrating his life's journey, documented in his memoir (2019)

We are so grateful that he has documented much of his knowledge in resources that we can learn from and share. Whether it is his published books and papers, his countless keynotes, the PBS

video on Ahimsa produced by Michael Tobias, we are blessed that we have been left with a trove of information on Jain and Buddhist studies. Let us all work together to make sure we take his work to the next level. Jai Jinendra, Om Shanti!



Prem Jain is CEO and Co-Founder of Pensando Systems. Most recently he served as SVP / General Manager of Cisco INSBU. He is also co-founder and part of the unprecedented spin-in team for Andiamo Systems, Nuova Systems (CFO) and Insieme Networks (CEO).

PROFESSOR JAINI AT THE AHIMSA CENTER

Professor Jaini was featured at the Ahimsa Center in 2004, 2006, and 2014. Below are select photos from his visits at the Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

Prof. & Mrs. Jaini at the very back left corner. In the center front is Dr. Ariyaratne from Sri Lanka along with Dean, Dr. Barbara Way on the left and Provost and Vice President Morales on the right. Joined in the photo are center sponsors and dignitaries attending the inaugural conference of the Center in 2004.



Below: the Provost & the Vice President, Dr. Morales and the Dean, Dr. Barbara Way (center) following the recognition of Professor Jaini and Mrs. Jaini in 2006 for their gift, *P.S. Jaini Collection*, to the CPP Library.

Prof. & Mrs. Jaini



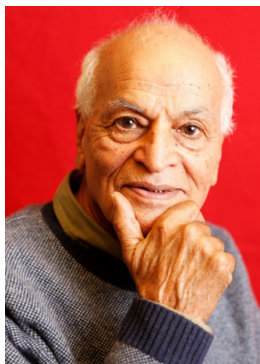
In 2006



In 2014

From Left: D. R. Mehta of *Jaipur Foot*, Prof. and Mrs. Jaini, Tara and Nirmal Sethia, Jeff Smith, Lunar Design at 2006 Ahimsa Conference.

2021 VIRTUAL PUBLIC LECTURES AT THE AHIMSA CENTER



Satish Kumar, an author, a thought leader, Editor Emeritus of *Resurgence magazine*, and Co-Founder of Schumacher College, UK, where he also served as Program Director, spoke on **Ahimsa : A Way of Life**, on February 21.

Ahimsa or nonviolence, he pointed, is not just a philosophical concept. It is a way of life, a life that is rooted in respect for all beings, including respect for nature and the environment. It is a life informed by love, empathy, trust and elegant simplicity.

In this context, he also shared the basic lessons and insights he gained, while he was a young monk, from his teacher, Acharya Mahapragya (1920-2010).

Ana Bajželj, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Shrimad Rajchandra Endowed Chair in Jain Studies at the University of California, Riverside, gave a talk, **Nonviolence and Bioethics: Jain Approaches to the Ethical Dilemmas of Birth, Life, and Death**, on March 22.

Based on a range of textual sources and an international survey conducted with Jain medical professionals in India and diaspora communities abroad, she illustrated the Jain perspectives on nonviolence, bioethical issues, and the ethical dilemmas of birth, life, and death.

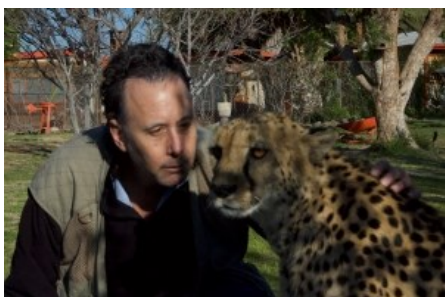


Andrew Moss, an Emeritus Professor of English, Cal Poly Pomona, currently involved with Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE-LA), an interfaith organization that advocates for the rights of low-wage workers and immigrants, spoke about **Ahimsa, Labor, and the Struggle for Economic Justice** on March 7.

Drawing on historical exemplars of nonviolence and their engagement with labor struggles, he explored the ways in which ahimsa today remains a vital, necessary, and guiding force for justice in the workplace.

Randall Amster, author of *Peace Ecology*, co-director and Teaching Professor of Environmental Studies at Georgetown University, spoke about **Digital Nonviolence** on May 3.

He addressed the critical question of our time: How can we collectively repurpose emerging technologies to activate the positive potentials and minimize the negative ones? In a wired world, he suggested, we need the core tenets of nonviolence to be a new source code and go viral.



Michael Charles Tobias, an author, historian of consciousness, a global ecologist, a film-maker, an animal rights activist and the president of the Dancing Star Foundation, spoke about **Nonviolence in An Age of Mass Extinctions** on October 2.

In the context of humanity's dominion over the biosphere, Tobias explored, how can individuals contribute meaningfully to the amelioration of suffering? Based on his own research and experiences, he discussed the nonviolent options that Gandhi had demonstrated through his life which can empower us to deal with the ecological crises we are facing today.

The Bridging Divides :What Can Ahimsa Offer?

Report By Danita Dodson

The Ahimsa Center hosted a multi-disciplinary virtual conference entitled *Bridging Divides: What Can Ahimsa Offer?* Without leaving the comfort of home, the diverse audience of college faculty, students, K-12 educators, professionals, and the community listened to enlightening keynote speakers and panelists discuss the role of ahimsa in bridging the divides that plague our world.

The scope of the conference was incredibly inclusive, featuring a wide range of subjects that explored the significance and application of nonviolence in nurturing oneness, empathy, and understanding in our own spaces and experiences with others. As both an attendee and a panelist, I was inspired anew by this powerful and timely event.

On the inaugural afternoon of the conference, Dr. Sara Garver welcomed the speakers, panelists and the audience to the conference with her warm remarks. Dr. Tara Sethia, the Ahimsa Center Director introduced the conference theme. Pointing to the realities of living in an era of increasing divides, she highlighted the ways that ahimsa can be a guiding principle for bridging the rifts, promoting inclusion, and strengthening our multicultural and multiracial society.



The opening keynote speaker, **Rajni Bakshi**, founder of Ahimsa Conversations, shared key insights from her YouTube

platform which explores the many possibilities of nonviolence.

The first conference panel for the inaugural day brought together David Thomas and Anand Sreekumar joining from India who explored Gandhi’s concept of ahimsa as an interwoven concept of unity and love and examined its role in education to bridge the nuclear divides.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to nonviolence education, with a focus on empathy. As a teacher, I was heartened by the many profound lessons of the day. The opening keynote was delivered by



Terri Givens, professor of political science from McGill University, Canada. Drawing from her

memoir, *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides* (2021), she made the case for “A Time for Radical Empathy.” This was followed by the first panel of the day—*Empathy, Poetic Engagement and Storytelling*—echoing Dr. Givens’ key message of empathy. I spoke on “Ahimsa and Environmental Empathy,” while my colleagues Jyoti Bachani and Jode Brexa respectively addressed the topics of “Poetic Engagement to Humanize and Reenergize” and “Bridging Divides through Digital Storytelling.”

The second panel was *The Role of Thinking, Listening, and Reflecting in Overcoming Divides*, which conveyed compelling ideas about “Anekanta: A Concept for Connecting Multiple Perspectives” by Andrew Bridges, “Active Listening: A Step in Addressing Conflict” by Yasmiene Mabrouk, and “Deep Reflection: The Next Step for Promoting Understanding” by Kirby Broadnax.

In the closing keynote, Hongyu Wang, Curriculum Studies professor at Oklahoma State University,



shared her work in integrating non-violence in higher education and curricular studies to assure a nuanced cross-cultural understanding.

On the final day of the conference, Gandhi’s grand-daughter, Ela Gandhi, delivered the opening keynote. Sharing experiences and insights garnered from her steady engagement in promoting a culture of nonviolence through education projects and media, she spoke about the role of faith-based communities and the Gandhian ideal in healing divisions and addressing conflicts in present-day South Africa.



Then the first panel of the day was *Coalition, Restorative Practices, and Healing*, featuring Donna Hill, who spoke about “Coalition-Building to Resolve Racial Conflict,” and Vikas Srivastava, who talked about “Mindful Orientation: Trauma Sensitive Restorative Dialogue.” The second panel was *Inclusive Learning and Nonviolence Education*, which gave us enlightening discourse about “Gandhi, Inclusion, and Bridging Gaps in the Learning Community” by Tazeen Rashid” and “Education about Kingian Nonviolence and Intrapersonal Peace” by Yehuda Silverman.

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Ahimsa and K-12 Education

Coalition-Building: A Bridge to Nonviolence

By Donna Hill

Homies Unidos, an organization formed in 1998 to address the problems of urban violence among Salvadoreans in Los Angeles, has as one of its mottos “Believe in the Possibility of a World Without Violence.” That struck me because an organization that deals with gang violence is not the likely place to imagine a world without violence; and yet, that is their vision. It started me thinking about how many of us, given the rise in gun sales and the terror that many feel at the mention of the slogan “Defund the Police,” do not believe it is even possible that the United States could be violence-free.

Fortunately, an inspiring number of grassroots organizations and coalitions seek not only peace but also the vision of a violence-free and equitable society that places value on helping people and improving their lives instead of punishing and exploiting them. It is this kind of grassroots organizing that made possible the incredible diversity of people who took part in the marches and protests supporting Black lives. Rather than accepting as status quo systems that perpetuate incarceration, poverty, hunger, and homelessness, many coalitions are striving to institute systems of care and compassion.

A coalition is simply an alliance of individuals and/or organizations working together to achieve a common purpose. One such coalition is Justice LA (JLA). It represents the racial diversity of Los Angeles with organizations and families from

mostly African American and Latinx communities that have crossed racial divisions to work together for a common purpose. Formed in 2017, it addresses the violence, racism, and inequities of the LA jail system, the largest of any city in the world. When talking about incarceration, I am reminded of the documentary by Ava Duvernay entitled *Thirteenth* that documents the explosion of the US prison population from 200,000 prisoners in 1970 to more than 2 million today. The film exposes the inequity and punitive nature of our justice system. It is no secret that jails and prisons are places of punishment, not rehabilitation. We dehumanize human beings as “criminals” or “felons,” so then we can dismiss and forget about the conditions they are subjected to. We know that the prison industrial complex often treats black and brown people unfairly.

The JLA is a combination of over forty organizations and multiple families. As stated on the website, it works “to reduce the footprint of incarceration by stopping jail expansion and reclaiming, reimagining and reinvesting dollars away from incarceration and into community based-systems of care.” It believes that community-based alternatives are better equipped to prevent incarceration, reduce recidivism, and rehabilitate offenders. Despite knowing it is education, affordable housing, and jobs with adequate wages that reduce crime, and not incarceration, in recent years LA County has proposed a \$3.5 billion jail expansion. The JLA coalition has had the strength and influence to campaign against and successfully stop that jail expansion.

Our increasingly complex world and its problems require diversity and inclusion of multiple voices; as such,

coalitions are becoming essential. A *Stanford Innovation Review* article, “10 Things You Need to Build Clever Coalitions,” used the term “the hive mind” as a metaphor for the collective intelligence that occurs in coalitions. The article goes on to explain that a well-organized coalition has more power and exerts more influence than one individual or even an organization can, especially for the marginalized and disenfranchised.

Working in a coalition establishes alliances that can develop into long-lasting collaborations across racial and socio-economic divides. Working together can definitely make a world without violence more possible.



Donna Hill, is high-school educator committed to nonviolence and social justice. A 2005 inaugural Ahimsa Fellow, she is a contributor to the recently published collection of essays, *Teachers Teaching Non-violence*.



[NEW CONVERSATION EVERY WEEK](#)

FOUNDER: RAJNI BAKSHI

Environmental Empathy: Reconnection to the Earth Through Ahimsa

By Danita Dodson



Though our lives and the environment are entwined, the aware-

ness of that interconnection seems to be unraveling, dividing us from the very thing that sustains life. As the pandemic prompts us to value spaces of healing, the earth also urges restoration, deceleration of our tracks across its face, and appreciation of what we have and where we live. We must answer the call for environmental empathy to assure a harmonious, inclusive, and healthy future.

The bridge to a sustainable future is *ahimsa*, whose ecological vision advocates the oneness of all life and soul force through simple living.

The reality of climate change is dire. We are spewing 152 million tons of global-warming pollution into the atmosphere every 24 hours, chiefly through the burning of fossil fuels, which has escalated in the past 150 years. As a result, the global surface temperature has risen extremely: 19 of the 20 hottest years on record have occurred since 2001. Wildfires are relentless. The high global ocean heat produces devastating hurricanes, and the extra heat that evaporates ocean water triggers downpours and floods. Scientists warn it will get worse—we risk losing 50% of land-based species in this century.

If we listen now to what the earth is speaking, we hear “the

groans of creation.” All at once in March 2020, it seemed that the earth began to cry in deep pain, pleading for restoration. Then in the first months of the COVID-19 lockdown, there was scientific evidence that the planet might indeed be healing. Yet almost a year-and-a-half later, there is again wide disregard for warnings to stay safe, travel less, and prevent harm to others. Amid new virus fears, ecological destruction and climate racism have escalated. Desmond Tutu says, “We, who should have been responsible stewards preserving our vulnerable, fragile planet home, have been wantonly reckless. We need to be accountable.”

There *are* solutions. Advances in technologies to reverse climate change suggest we can make real differences. Wind-energy capacity could supply worldwide electricity. The solar energy market is budding. Auto manufacturers are making more electric cars. As we rebuild economies, we have a chance to pursue green recoveries. However, science alone can accomplish no lasting remedy if there is not also a positive change in the “climate” of the human heart. The same forces that hurt marginalized peoples also hurt songbirds—greed, impatience, selfishness, arrogance, anger, hurry, competition, irreverence.

That is why it is imperative to spread the consciousness of *ahimsa*, the practice of “no harm,” a kind restraint with self, others, and nature. Satish Kumar says, “There is no hierarchy of life. It all has equal value. There should be no violence to nature. Nature has soul. Nature is alive. Trees speak to us. The rivers are a book, which we need to learn to read.” Yes, all living things have their own languages, and the only way to understand those unique voices, many of which are silenced and marginalized, is to learn the vocabulary that *ahimsa* teaches—to communi-

cate *life* through nonviolence.

Urging us to care about the suffering around us, *ahimsa* anchors action in empathy and soul force. Gandhi, recognizing the burden of material possessions and embracing simple living, encouraged an ecology rooted in sustainability. His image of the Oceanic Circle showed the equality and interconnection of every living thing. But most profoundly, Gandhi encouraged us to visualize “the poorest and the weakest” in his “Talisman.” Using this exercise to create environmental empathy, we can understand “face” of the earth—its damaged hillsides, rivers, and forgotten people. Taking the time to cultivate kindness, we can value every living thing as worth protecting.

Danita Dodson, a 2015 *Ahimsa Fellow*, is the co-editor of *Teachers Teaching Nonviolence*. She also is the author of *Trailing the Azimuth*, a forthcoming poetry collection. She teaches English at Walters State Community College.

Mindful Orientation

By Vikas Srivastava

Mindful Orientation is a framework I developed in response to three major concerns regarding attempts to facilitate dialogue around intense and/or controversial topics. First is the communication breakdown in the midst of attempted dialogue. Second is equity at the expense of true diversity and inclusion. The third concern is compromising spiritual evolution for the sake of (perceived) political progress.

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Mindful Orientation

Mindful Orientation is rooted in ahimsa. One of the most widely used application of Ahimsa is the confrontation of social injustice and inequity as a form of violence. The adherence to principles of nonviolence does not equate to passivity towards oppression, but rather views liberation as a collective consciousness. Therefore, the liberation of the oppressor is integral to overcoming violence.

A fundamental practice of Mindfulness is to reflect on reactions in terms of the relationship between external and internal chemistry. Intense discussions purposely bring together a volatile chemical reaction. This external and internal intensity can lead to communication breakdown or deeper divisions without a container that facilitates resilience.

The indigenous tradition of Restorative Circles facilitates participatory and focused conversation. However, it can be ineffective when the volatility is beyond the threshold of the participants and/or facilitator. By applying principles of Trauma Sensitivity to Restorative Circles, we provide a container that allows for discomfort and conflict to be discussed in a manner that develops resilience.

Mindful Orientation is a multilayered approach that combines Mindfulness, Restorative Practices and Trauma Sensitivity. In Mindful Orientation, we adhere to the principles of nonviolence and collective consciousness. Everyone is allowed an equal opportunity to participate. Therefore, Mindful Orientation provides a means consistent with the end goal.

Below I outline a brief and simple version of this refined circle.

1. **Opening Ritual/ Routine:** Emphasize ease, comfort and gratitude. Ask: "What are you enjoying and/or grateful for right now, today or this week?"
2. **Begin with a guided question.** If intensity is high then continue with guided questions.
3. **Maintain protocols.** Take turns in a systematic cycle (clockwise).
4. **Closing Ritual/ Routine:** Emphasize wisdom of the group and feasible action items
5. **Stay consistent:** Practice circle on a consistent basis whether or not there is an obvious perceived need. This allows for constant communication before issues build up into toxic feelings.



Vikas Srivastava is a 2007 Ahimsa Fellow. A contributing author to the book, *Teachers Teaching Nonviolence* (2020), he currently serves in the Human Relations department as "Employee Relations and Mindfulness" liason at the Legacy Early College (pk-12 public charter school) in Greenville, South Carolina.

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Bridging Divides Conference

The closing event was the presentation by Michael Nagler, a long time



scholar and practitioner of nonviolence, and founder of the Metta Center, *The Third Harmony: Nonviolence and the New Story of Human Nature*, a film which shows us how we can recognize and support a shift from violence to nonviolence.

The conference concluded with "thank you" remarks by Tara Sethia, the organizer of the conference.

As an educator and an author dedicated to nonviolence as a healing force in a world that is increasingly divisive, I was uplifted by the opportunity to enter a space where like minds talked together about ways that we can bring more harmony, unity, equality, and peace to the circles we inhabit.

In a forum where we engaged with such brilliant minds as reported here, my fellow participants and I have begun the work of creating what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi terms a "fellowship of the future."

Danita Dodson, a 2015 Ahimsa Fellow, is the co-editor of *Teachers Teaching Nonviolence*. She also is the author of *Trailing the Azimuth*, a forthcoming poetry collection. She teaches English at Walters State Community College.

ABOUT THE AHIMSA CENTER

Established in 2003-04 in the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, the Ahimsa Center is focused on interdisciplinary teaching and learning about nonviolence and its practical applications at personal, interpersonal, societal, national, and international levels. Educational and outreach initiatives of the Center facilitate an understanding of ahimsa as a positive force informing the ways of thinking as well as living.

The Center provides an institutional forum to innovatively serve and foster synergistic interactions among many important stakeholders in higher education, K-12 education, and the community at large.

Educational initiatives of the Center, such as the interdisciplinary Minor in Nonviolence Studies on our campus, help students understand nonviolence and nonviolent social change at intellectual and practical levels and in a global context.

To integrate in the K-12 curricula an interdisciplinary understanding of nonviolence and nonviolent social change, the Center has launched a fellowship program for the K-12 educators and offers summer institutions for them. Finally, for the benefits of the larger community, the Center organizes conferences, symposia, lectures, dialogues, workshops, and special events focusing on a deeper understanding of nonviolence as a way of life.

The Center is playing a pioneering role by fostering a vision in which each individual is an important player in the building and sustaining of a culture of nonviolence. It is a vision for cooperation and collaboration among fellow human beings on the basis of mutual respect, trust, and self restraint. It is a vision where one sees that any violence inflicted on others is a violence inflicted on oneself.

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UPCOMING VIRTUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

A Recipe for Nonviolence: The Ethics and Politics of Gandhi's Diet

Wednesday, November 17, 2:30 PST via Zoom



Nico Slate is Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University.

His research focuses on struggles against racism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression in the United States and India.

He is the author of four books and the editor of a collected volume. His most recent books are:

Lord Cornwallis Is Dead: The Struggle for Democracy in the United States and India (Harvard University Press, 2019) and

Gandhi's Search for the Perfect Diet: Eating with the World in Mind (University of Washington Press, 2019).