

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ANIMAL RIGHTS: RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

21 & 22 March 2012
Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre
SOAS, University of London

www.soas.ac.uk/biodiversity

21 March 2012: 12TH ANNUAL JAINA LECTURE

Mahavira, Don Quixote and the history of ecological ethics and idealism

MICHAEL TOBIAS (Santa Fe, New Mexico)

6pm - 7.30pm *Followed by a reception*

22 March 2012 / 10am - 5pm: SYMPOSIUM

This symposium addresses the lack of public reflection on the value and the limitations of received religious paradigms and intellectual habits across cultures concerning the welfare of animals and plants by opening up a new dialogue between thinkers and activists from different religious and philosophical backgrounds on the global problem of biodiversity conservation and animal welfare.

The call for action countering the accelerating speed of human destruction of the natural conditions of humanity's own existence has become a common place. Equally familiar is the shrugging of shoulders that nothing can be done about it because destructive habits are rooted not only in industrially magnified greed but in culture if not in human biology and hence are difficult to change.

Yet, human feelings and attitudes towards animals and other forms of non-human life vary greatly across cultures and time and are changeable. The continuing cultural influence of religious and philosophical reflection on human behaviour cannot be underestimated, and is here, at the doctrinal roots of widespread habits and customs, that a fruitful debate on conditions and prospects for attitudinal change may be engendered.

At this time of rapid globalisation, worldwide environmental destruction and palpable existential uncertainty, few universally oriented deliberations on practical ethics across religious and cultural boundaries are on record. To the contrary, the lamented process of universal self-destruction is defended in the name of a combination of pragmatic necessity and entrenched value orientations and habits.

This symposium provides a forum for discussion and dialogue between distinguished scholars, activists, ethical and philosophical thinkers reflecting on the potential of existing cultural, religious and philosophical resources contributing to new trans-cultural orientations towards the preservation of human and non-human forms of life.



SYMPOSIUM / 22 MARCH 2012

PROGRAMME

| TIME | SPEAKER/TITLE |
|-------|---|
| 9.30 | Registration |
| 10.00 | CHRISTOPHER CHAPPLE (Department of Theological Studies, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles) Animals in early India: stories from the Upaniṣads, the Jātakas, the Pañcatantra, and Jaina Narratives |
| 10.30 | MARC BEKOFF (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder) Who lives, who dies, and why: ignoring and redecorating nature and specious speciesism |
| 11.00 | PAUL WALDAU (Chair, Anthrozoology, Canisius College & Barker Lecturer in Animal Law, Harvard Law School) Animal studies is the key of animal rights [via SKYPE] |
| 11.30 | Break |
| 12.00 | LU FENG (Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tsinghua University, Beijing) Reflections on Confucian perspectives on the global environmental crisis |
| 12.30 | EMMA TOMALIN (Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds) Religious discourses about the environment: resources for sustainable development or a modern-day myth? |
| 13.00 | Break |
| 14.00 | SARRA TLILI (Assistant Professor of Arabic, Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, Gainesville, University of Florida) If it got worse, it can get better: Muslims' attitudes toward animals between the past and the present |
| 14.30 | ANDREW LINZEY (Director, Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics) Can Christianity become good news for animals? |
| 15.00 | STEPHEN R.L. CLARK (Department of Philosophy, University of Liverpool) Imaging the divine: how is humanity the reason for creation, and what is humanity? |
| 15.30 | Break |
| 16.00 | MICHAEL ZIMMERMANN (Professor for Indian Buddhism, Head Asien-Afrika Institut, Hamburg University) Anthropocentrism in the guise of an all-inclusive ethics? Buddhist attitudes to the natural world |
| 16.30 | PETER FLÜGEL (Chair, Centre of Jaina Studies, Department of the Study of Religions, SOAS) Rethinking animism: the Jaina doctrine of non-violence from the perspective of comparative ethics |
| 17.00 | Break |
| 17.15 | ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION |
| 18.15 | Final Remarks |

CENTRE OF JAINA STUDIES

The aim of the Centre of Jaina Studies (COJS) is to promote the study of Jaina religion and culture by providing an interdisciplinary platform for academic research, teaching and publication in the field of Jaina Studies

DR PETER FLÜGEL
Chair, Centre for Jaina Studies

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