



Azim Premji
University

Talk: An Ethics of Testimony and Naiyayika Reading of Gita 3.21

Speaker:

Prof Stephen H. Phillips

Date / Time:

May 15, 2014 - 11:00am - 12:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Abstract:

A prominent classical Indian ethical theory is that ethical principles and standards of right action are inherited through lines of “testimony,” śabda, literally “word,” in the terminology of the philosophic schools. Nyāya, for example, subscribing to this ethical view, elaborates it through analysis of conditions governing successful testimony, both with regard to Vedic testimony and the continual “testimonial” exchanges that occur in everyday life. The philosopher Udayana of the eleventh century blends this view with a reading of the Gītā that salutes creativity in all arenas and solves a puzzle concerning the possibility of ethical reform on the supposition that norms are defined as conventions.

A Note on the Speaker:

Professor Stephen H. Phillips is Professor of Philosophy and Asian Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. A specialist in Vedanta, Nyaya and Yoga, he also teaches courses in Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology and World Philosophy. He is the author of such books as *Epistemology in Classical India: The Knowledge Sources of the Nyaya School* (Routledge, 2012), *Yoga, Karma and Rebirth: A Brief History and Philosophy* (Columbia University Press, 2009), and *Classical Indian Metaphysics: Refutations of Realism and the Emergence of "New Logic"* (Open Court, 1995 & Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1998), and numerous articles in scholarly journals and edited volumes. He has also translated parts of the preeminent Navya-Nyaya text, Gangesa's *Tattvacintamani* (published in 2009 as *Epistemology of Perception: Gangesa's Tattvacintamani, Vol. 1*) as well as selections from the Upanishads, Kularnava Tantra and Hathayogapradipika.