Introduction

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I am delighted to introduce this new issue of the Journal of Dharma Studies dedicated to the theme of Anticolonialism and Solidarity with Others. As is well known, by the early to mid-twentieth century the Euro-West controlled or occupied most of the globe. To put it bluntly, one of the fundamental assumptions of the West, taken as a justification of this hegemony, is that the West is culturally or racially superior and more intelligent than everyone else. Studies of non-Western cultures were developed largely as Western tools to control those cultures. Even after explicit decolonization, Western cultures continue to hold many of the same assumptions in neocolonial studies of non-Western societies. In the West-dominated academy, South Asian and other non-Western cultures continue to accept the superior theoretical prestige of the West. South Asian and other non-Western cultures are viewed as merely “scientific objects.” These cultures do not have a voice to express their own worldview and values, and even have to follow Western academic and other discursive styles to express themselves. Lingering Western hegemony has been observed by numerous scholars from South Asia and diverse other societies.

Our first section is dedicated to Professor Gerald Larson, a renowned and pioneering scholar in our field; a dedicated, skillful and caring teacher; and an exemplary, kind, modest and inspiring human being. In his own way, Professor Larson contributed greatly toward the goal of interpreting accurately an indigenous South Asian philosophical tradition, *Sāṃkhya*, and more broadly toward the achievement of deserved respect and an equal status for Dharmic cultures in the global academy. Professor Larson is commemorated by several leading scholars in our field.

Next we have our main section on Anticolonialism and Solidarity with Other Colonized Societies. Most of these essays are developed from presentations for a session at the 2018 Annual Conference of the Dharma Academy of North America. One of those papers advocates a new interpretation of the decolonizing Hindu Renaissance leader, Vivekananda’s teaching on *vijñāna*-based *sevā*. This is important in order properly to understand Vivekananda’s pragmatic religious pluralism, and provides a

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valuable concept for future South Asian efforts in religious dialogue. Another advocates the relevance of the thought of the popular sectarian tradition following Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru of Santhigiri Ashram, to addressing our postcolonial and postmodern dilemmas. Yet another argues for the value of Confucian teachings of harmony (*he*) for intercultural philosophical dialogue. One article demonstrates strong commonalities and possibilities for mutual enrichment between two pioneering scholars in achieving an equal place for their culture's philosophies in the global academy—Bimal Krishna Matilal from South Asia and Henry Odera Oruka from Kenya. Another to be published in a future issue focuses on the decline and revitalization of Kenyan and African coming-of-age ceremonies. A couple articles have also been included that present decolonizing efforts to interpret dharmic traditions. One essay aims to give an undistorted and unbiased interpretation of Hindu understandings of *dharma yuddha* and other aspects of war ethics. Another focuses on the accurate interpretation, correcting colonialist biases, of Mohandas K. Gandhi, the mid-twentieth century South Asian and worldwide leader in decolonization, and advocate of Dharmic understandings of nonviolence and religious pluralism. It provides us with a Gandhian understanding of the critical topic of the relationship of faith and reason.

It goes without saying that we have been able to obtain essays on only a sampling of the vast number of colonized groups. It is hoped that, as the academy becomes more equitable, scholars from various non-Western and Western societies can further invite each other into collaborations, publications and conferences.

Finally we have two reviews of important books on Southeast Asian popular religion and South Asian traditions of philosophical skepticism.

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