

EDITORIAL

Editor's Introduction: Welcoming Voices, Widening the Field

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It is an honor to join Leah Kalmanson as Coeditor in Chief of *Samyak* as the journal moves into its second year and beyond. Leah's vision in founding this journal as a peer-reviewed, open-access venue dedicated entirely to undergraduate work in Jain Studies reflects a generosity of spirit consonant with the values that animate the field, and I am excited for what we can build together.

I come to Jain Studies as an anthropologist whose methodological home is ethnography, but whose intellectual life has always been lived at intersections. My training and ongoing work have been shaped by sustained conversation with religious studies, women's and gender studies, and the medical humanities, among other fields. What I have learned from working across these disciplines is that Jainism as a living ethical tradition, as well as a philosophical system and embodied practice, rewards approaches that refuse easy disciplinary containment. The questions of most significance often emerge precisely where textual study meets fieldwork, where doctrine meets the body, where principles meet the messy plurality of how Jains live, learn, debate, mourn, practice, contemplate, build community, and make meaning in the contemporary world.

It is this conviction that Jain Studies is enriched by new scholarly voices shaped by methodological and disciplinary plurality that describes my hopes for *Samyak*. Undergraduate education in the United States and beyond is increasingly interdisciplinary by design, and today's students arrive at the study of Jainism prepared to ask questions that cut across the humanities and social sciences. They bring perspectives from environmental studies and bioethics, from history and literature, from sociology and philosophy, from art history and gender studies. They are well prepared to contribute to our field, and we should welcome what they bring.

^a Miki Chase received her PhD from the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. Her research focuses on intersections of religion, law, and gender in questions of care around death and dying in India, with a specific focus on Jainism. Currently she is the Śrī Anantnāth Chair in Jain Studies in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Coeditor in Chief of *Samyak: An Undergraduate Journal of Jain Studies*.

To that end, *Samyak* aims to be a venue where diverse voices can find an early foothold in Jain Studies. We are committed to publishing rigorous, innovative work at the earliest stages of scholarly formation, and to taking seriously the idea that intellectual seriousness and accessibility are not opposed. We particularly invite contributions from students whose paths into Jain Studies have come through unexpected doors: a course in comparative ethics, a community connection, a research project on food systems or nonviolence or feminist philosophy, a question raised by a family conversation. The field is strengthened when it expands and when it makes room for the perspectives of students who are themselves Jain alongside those encountering the tradition for the first time, for students working with classical texts as well as those working with contemporary communities, and for students whose questions are both devotional and critical.

In the spirit of *anekāntavāda*, we recognize that no single perspective exhausts what can be said about Jainism, and that the work of building a field is the work of holding many partial views in productive conversation. We look forward to the conversations the coming issues of *Samyak* will host.

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