



**Bishembarnath & Sheela Mattoo**  
**CENTER FOR INDIA STUDIES**  
invites you to a lecture

**Is Language Conventional or “Natural”?**  
**Mīmāṃsā and Indian Philosophy of Language**

**John Taber**  
University of New Mexico

It is generally believed today that language is based on custom and convention. An important controversy in classical Indian philosophy, however, concerned whether the relation between a word and its meaning is natural or established by convention. The Mīmāṃsā tradition, which held the authority of the Veda to derive from its authorlessness, defended the view that the relation of word and meaning is eternal; that is to say, words are naturally restricted to indicating only certain meanings. Other traditions criticized this position, arguing instead that the relation is strictly conventional: a word can mean anything you want it to mean; meanings are fixed only by conventions. Professor Taber will discuss what was at stake in this debate and some interesting logical features of certain arguments.

**Wednesday, April 5, 2017, 4:00 PM**

Harriman 214

Reception to follow

John Taber is Regents' Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico, where he has taught since 1987.

For further information, call 631-632-9742.

