Indiana University
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC) &
Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Program

are pleased to present the

Fourth Annual Victor Danner Memorial Lecture in Islamic Studies

7:30 p.m. on April 15th, 2005
IMU, Frangipani Room

Sufi Teachings in Neo-Confucian Islam

Presented by

Professor Sachiko Murata
Stony Brook University, New York

Generously funded by the
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Thank you!
Sachiko Murata completed her BA in family law at Chiba University in Japan, worked for a year in a law firm in Tokyo, and then went to Iran to study Islamic law. She completed a Ph.D. in Persian literature at Tehran University in 1971, and then transferred to the faculty of theology, where she was the first woman and the first non-Muslim to be enrolled. She finished her MA in Islamic jurisprudence in 1975, and then became a research associate at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy. Her work on a PhD dissertation in comparative law was cut short by the revolution.

Since 1983 Murata has taught religious studies at Stony Brook. She has been director of Japanese Studies since its founding in 1990 and regularly teaches Introduction to Japanese Studies, Japanese Buddhism, Feminine Spirituality in World Religions, and occasionally other courses such as Islam or Islam and Confucianism. For the past few years her research has focused on the writings of the Hui-ju or "Muslim Confucianists," who wrote books on Islamic theology, cosmology, and spiritual psychology in the Chinese language while borrowing the terminology of the Neo-Confucian philosophers.

Besides many scholarly articles, Murata has published, among others, Isuramu Hōriron Josetsu (Iwanami, 1985), the translation of a major text on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence from Arabic into Japanese; The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought (SUNY Press, 1992); and Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yii's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm (SUNY Press, 2000).
Professor Victor Danner was born on October 22, 1926, in Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico to Arthur James and Maria Lopez Danner. As a young man, he served his country during WWII. After the war he attended Georgetown University where he received his B.A. \textit{magna cum laude} in 1957. Later that year he traveled to Morocco to become an instructor and eventually Director of the American Language Center, sponsored by the US Information Service. While there he took advantage of the opportunity not only to get acquainted with the country but also to perfect his knowledge of classical Arabic texts.

In 1964, Professor Danner returned to the US for his doctoral studies and graduated from Harvard in 1970. He came to IU in 1967 and was a professor of Arabic and Religious Studies at Indiana University until his death in 1990. He served as Chairman of the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department for five years, and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Middle Eastern Studies Program.

He was an internationally renowned scholar in the fields of Islamic mysticism, comparative religion, and classical Arabic literature. In 1976, he was invited to speak at the international World Festival of Islam in London. Professor Danner was also active in a number of professional organizations, including the Washington D.C.-based Foundation for Traditional Studies, for which he served as Secretary-Treasurer. He wrote Ibn `Ata `Allah’s \textit{Sufi Aphorisms} (1973); Ibn `Ata `Allah: The Book of Wisdom, (1978); and \textit{The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction} (1988), in addition to over twenty-five articles and reviews.

One of his students, Lauri King Irani, captured his essence when she wrote the following of him in memoriam, “As a teacher, Victor Danner had few equals. He taught Arabic, classical Arabic literature, Islam, Sufism, the Qur’an, comparative religion, comparative mysticism, and Eastern religions. His dignified bearing, elegant gestures, and verbal eloquence transformed his lectures into performances which had the power to captivate and inspire his students, whether he was discussing Arabic grammar or Islamic theology. His concern for and encouragement of his students, coupled with his understated sense of humor, earned him a well-deserved reputation as a caring and committed educator who taught not only when behind the classroom lectern, but also by example.”

\textit{He who is illumined at the beginning is illumined at the end.}

-from the \textit{Sufi Aphorisms} by Ibn `Ata `Allah (d.1309)
Translated by Victor Danner