



Bhagirathi



Newsletter of The Center for Indic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Fall 2010

The Vedanta Conference



Dr. Singh welcomes the audience

The 19th Conference of the Vedanta Congress was held on the campus of the University of Massachusetts in July 2010. The conference at Dartmouth last year followed in a long line of meaningful annual scholarly meetings of the Vedantic Congress. The first conference was held in April 1986. It was spearheaded by Dr. and Mrs. S. S. Rama Rao Pappu of Miami University in Ohio, and a core group of philosophers and Vedic scholars. The first six Vedantic Conferences were held at Miami University. Some were thematic such as in 1992, which celebrated the centennial of Swami Vivekananda's participation in the Parliament of World Religions. In the past two and a half decades, nineteen Vedantic Conferences have been held, of these, eleven were at Miami University; and seven were held in auspicious places in India, such as Rishikesh. One was recently held in Trinidad.

As the founder of the Vedanta Congress, Professor Rama Rao Pappu of Miami University explained "Twenty-five years ago, the first Conference of the Vedanta Congress began with a narrowly focused group for the study of Vedantic texts and their interpretations. Since then, the scope of the Vedanta

Congress has expanded to include all major schools of Vedanta such as Advaita, Visistadvaita, Dvaita, Suddhadvaita, as well as Hindu, Buddhist, and Jaina Darsanas, Epics and Puranas, and Dharma Sastras. Recently, scholars have used Indian philosophical points-of-view to look at contemporary issues like abortion, euthanasia, war, peace, caste, race, and karma. Additionally there has emerged an on-going theme that applies Indian philosophical implications to recent developments in mathematics, life sciences, cognitive sciences, etc. At past conferences, in addition to mainstream papers on Vedanta, physicists have presented papers such as the 'Brahman of Physics'; and medical practitioners with a knowledge of the Vedas have presented papers on advances in medical research and their implications



The Conch Blowing

for Vedantic thought; and environmental scientists have presented papers on Vedantic concepts and their implications for our environment." The Vedantic Congress represents a living tradition.

Beginning last year in the summer of 2009 and continuing in 2010, the Vedanta Conference found a new home at The Center for Indic Studies and the conferences were held at The University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, thereby initiating our annual sponsorship of the yearly Vedanta conference.

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Upcoming Events 2011

Symposium:
Vedanta and Science
July 6, 7
UMass Dartmouth

Symposium:
Origins of Civilizations
July 8, 9
UMass Dartmouth

Teacher Training
in Dharmic Studies
Session I: July 18-22
Session II: July 25-29
UMass Dartmouth



The Center for Indic Studies welcomes our newest staff member, Ms. Shivi Chandra, Research Cum Program assistant for Dharmic Traditions' Workshops at UMD

Bhagirathi Staff

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Photographics
by UMass

Vedanta Conference (continued from pg 1)



Vedanta Conference Group Photograph

The Center for Indic Studies is proud to announce that the Twentieth meeting of the VedantaCongress, the third that we will have helped to organize, will be held in New Delhi on the campus of JNU during December 28-31, 2011.

In July 2010, in accordance with the tradition established for all major events organized by the Center for Indic Studies, the Vedantic Congress began with the blowing of a conch or Shankhanaad and the chanting of a Vedic hymn. This was followed by the welcoming of the

delegates by Dr. William Hogan, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences at UMass Dartmouth. He noted the uniqueness of this event at a public university. He congratulated the faculty, staff, and students affiliated with the Center for Indic Studies. He enthusiastically encouraged the delegates to mingle and to be open to ideas from all participants. The inaugural lecture on "Vedic Values for Global Renaissance" was presented by Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, President of the Janata Party, and a visiting Professor

at Harvard University. He articulated how Vedic principles can be assimilated by seekers of truth living in a globalizing society.

The 2010 sessions of the Vedantic Congress covered a wide assortment of topics over four days: Science and Vedanta, Consciousness, Hermeneutics, Comparative Philosophy, Linguistics, Literature, Psychology, Education, Vedanta's interaction with other faiths, and how principles of Vedanta can be applied to tackle challenges in daily life.



The audience shares a light moment as well as discussions in between sessions.

At the 2010 Vedanta Conference, a new format was tried for the first time called a "Panel Symposium", where prior to the conference, the panel leaders proposed a topic, recruited experts, and assigned papers to the panelists so that all aspects of a topic were discussed. The panels included, "A Critical Review of the Status of Knowledge in Vedanta", "Vedanta and Mystic Traditions of Other Faiths", "Sanskrit - its Evolution and Representation in the Digital Age", "Vedanta and Psychology", and "Vedanta and Education." Juxtaposed with this new format was the traditional session where all the speakers lectured in Sanskrit, as well as taking questions from the audience in Sanskrit. One participant observed, "I did not understand every word spoken, but was fascinated with the ease at which the conversation was carried out, in a supposedly dead language." At the conference, there were more than three score of scholars and contributors from the United States, India, Canada, Italy, Germany, Guyana, Trinidad, and other nations. The Center for Indic Studies looks forward to helping to host many more memorable conferences for the Vedanta Congress.

As announced in 2009, when the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth took over the organizational details for the annual conferences, the founder, Prof. S. S. Rama Rao Pappu, will continue to serve as the Program Planner for future conferences. The highly motivated and capable staff and the gifted, articulate, and polite students associated with The Center for Indic Studies, such as Maureen, Soniya, Aditya, Hema, and Hitesh with Professor Bal Ram Singh will help with conferences organized by and for the Vedana Congress. In that capacity, the Center for Indic Studies encourages scholars to submit papers and to attend the 20th Conference of The International Vedantic Congress, to be held at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, this coming December 28-31, 2011. Please visit <http://sanskrit.jnu.ac.in/conf/20vedanta/>



The audience immersed in the proceedings of the conference

index.jsp for more information.

As part of the cultural program of last year's 2010 Vedantic conference held at Dartmouth, the highly acclaimed documentary, "Yoga Unveiled" was screened. Gita Desai, the producer of this remarkable documentary, was on hand and interspersed segments of the film with background and context, sharing her film-making experiences. The Q/A after the film, made it a highly educational experience. On the second day of the Vedanta conference, the cultural program presented a Bharatnatyam performance of classical Indian dance, by Sampada Savardekar who was also a speaker at the Vedantic Congress. On a panel called "Vedanta and Learning" she had presented a paper titled, "Modern Need and Application of Vedanta" and subtitled, "Realistic Advaita: A New Approach to Vedanta." It equated Shri Aurobindo Ghose's teachings of Integral Yoga with universal ideals in Advaita. Her Bharatnatyam performance also brought God down on Earth.

Later that evening, there was an uplifting concert of classical Indian sitar music played by the gifted Koyel Ghosal, a graduate student at UMass Dartmouth. Her excellent sitar playing was accompanied

on the tabla by Akshay Navaladi. After the concert, the participants were transfixed and speechless, having been transported into a smadhi-like state by the hypnotic sitar music played professionally and so very expressively by Ms. Koyel.



Dean Hogan welcomes attendees



Various books, including the Light on Ayurveda Journal, on display and on sale



Organizers and presenters in traditional Indian dress, along with Uberoi Foundation officials on August 18, 2010

Teacher Training in Dharmic Studies

The Center for Indic Studies is pleased to announce the commencement of our first pilot project to improve the manner in which India-related topics are represented in American secondary schools. In July 2010, the Center for Indic Studies initiated its preliminary effort to be a regional resource from where teachers can better learn how to teach their students about the culture and history of India. Our first summer workshop was titled "Teaching Dharmic Traditions." Six teachers from the New England area, all from public secondary schools, were selected to attend a week-long seminar that included background information and teaching materials regarding Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism - the four distinctly "Indic" or "Dharmic" faiths. The Center for Indic Studies is planning to continue offering yearly seminars for educators. Participating teachers are eligible to receive three graduate credits from the university and/or professional development points. Based on their experiences at UMass Dartmouth in July 2010, the six teachers who took part in the pilot program will be better able to present materials about India to their students.

The 2010 Teacher Training in Dharmic Studies was made possible through generous funding from the Uberoi Foundation. The organizers of this first summer workshop were very interested in feedback from the participating teachers so that the pilot program can be improved upon in anticipation of the Uberoi Teachers' Seminar in July, 2011. During this first summer training program slide presentations, hands-on activities, demonstrations, and lesson plan discussions were organized for each topic. In addition, two documentaries, *Yoga Unveiled* and *Raaga Unveiled* were screened, featuring a discussion with the producer, Geeta Desai. Evening programs included discussions on Indian culture, music, dress, family, and other traditions. The teachers enjoyed trying on saris, shawls, turbans, a salwar kamiz, and other styles of Indian clothing.

Interactive sessions were held with representatives of the Uberoi Foundation, and also with practitioners of the four traditions, and with a faculty member from the UMass Dartmouth Department of Education. These interactions and feedback provided opportunities to work on lesson plans and assessment of the program.



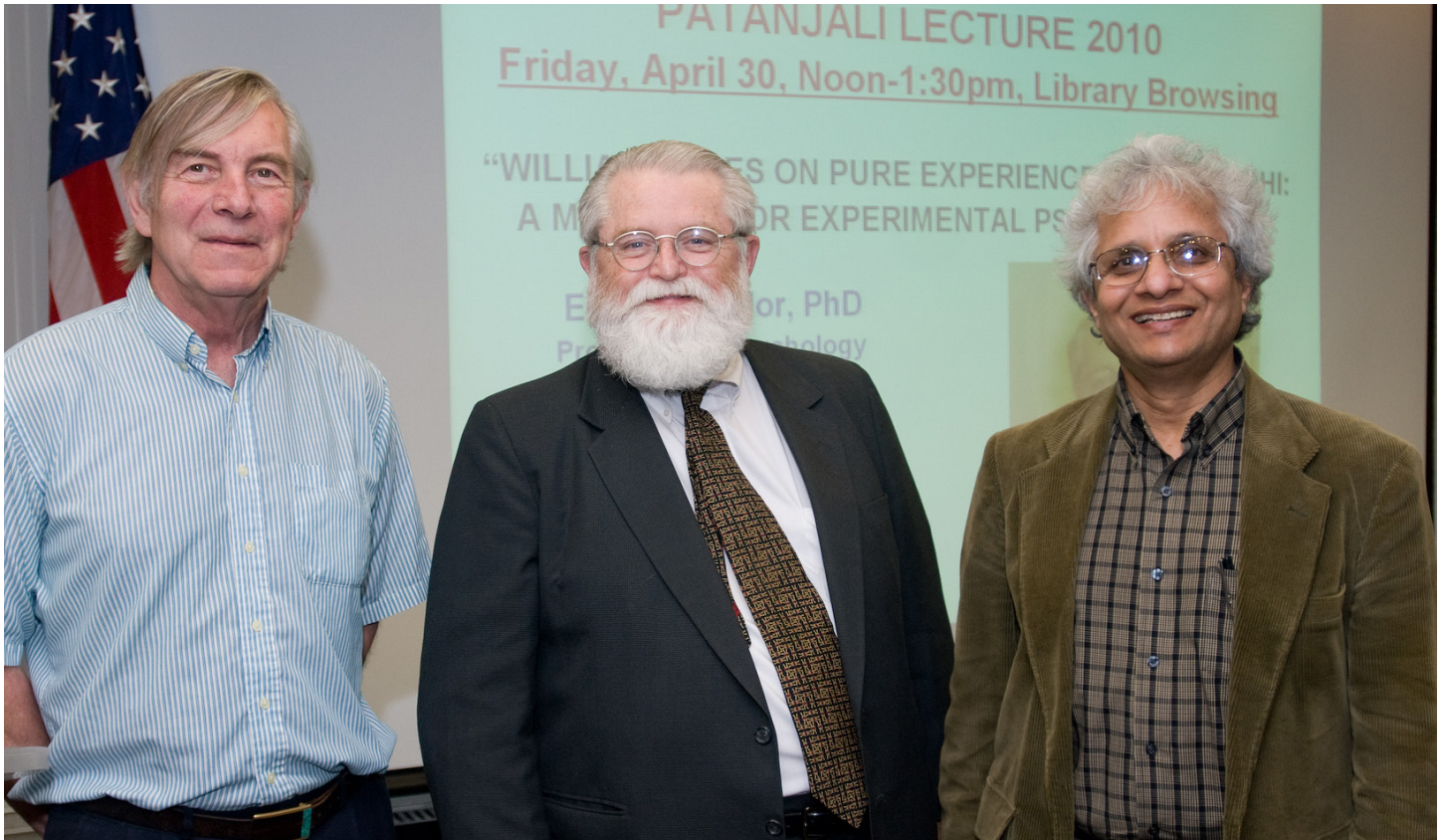
Teachers involved in various discussions as part of their training program.

On the final day of the training program, the teachers were taken to a Hindu temple for a first-hand cultural experience and an extended discussion on Dharmic practices. This field trip was very well received, and provided an excellent chance to interact with practitioners on their own turf and a greater opportunity to understand the meaning of concepts and practices such as puja, sadhana, and mantra.

The 2010 Uberoi Foundation summer seminar for classroom teachers on the topic of “Teaching Dharmic Traditions” facilitated by the Center for Indic Studies was a well received and effective strategy to advance education of the Dharmic traditions in American schools. Importantly, the pilot program provided vital feedback for planning our future workshops. The Center for Indic Studies anticipates that yearly educational workshops will enhance and enrich the teaching of Indic Studies in the USA.



Teacher trainees at the Lakshmi Mandir in Ashland, MA



Dr. Eugene Taylor (middle) with Dr. Jerry Solvvin (left) and Dr. Bal Ram Singh (right). Dr. Taylor described the chain of events that led to the widespread practice of yoga and meditation in U.S. today.

Patanjali Lecture Series, 2010

On the 29th and 30th of April 2010, the Patanjali Lecture Series, an annual scholarly event of the Center for Indic Studies, sponsored two lectures by Dr. Eugene Taylor, who is not only a scholar familiar with Asian Studies but also an expert on the history of psychology and the author of numerous books on the life and work of William James. The two papers presented by Dr. Taylor discussed the influence of India's philosophies on 18th and 19th century America. This presentation in April 2010 marked the eighth year of the Patanjali Lectures Series at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth.

Dr. Taylor's lectures dealt with the topic of the Dharma in the USA. His first talk was titled "Yoga and Meditation in America Before 1900" and his second lecture was a discussion of William James, whose philosophy was a natural outgrowth of the yogic ideas that had arrived on American shores. Taylor's talk, "William James on Pure Experience and Samadhi: A Message for Experimental Psychologists" investigated the connection between

James' theoretical perspectives of psychology with his personal experiences of meditation and the implications of that connection for modern practitioners of psychoanalysis.

In his talk about the arrival of yoga and Indian philosophy, Taylor pointed out that in America there has always been a core of leaders and intellectuals who believed that "things are not always as they seem." This tradition existed since the time of the American colonies and, according to Taylor, "opened the way for voices of other traditions from across the globe to enter the American culture and tradition. In 1691, Pennsylvania became the haven for any repressed group that wanted shelter to live and practice their religion as they saw fit." Taylor explained that during this period, "Solitary monks settled in caves along Philadelphia Rivers which soon came to be called the 'Ganges of the new world'."

Taylor said that "Knowledge of the East first came to America through the sea traders of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, who took their goods to China and India and brought back silks, exotic spices, commodities, and even religious objects which

landed on the pianos and shelves of the rich merchants of New England for their offspring to contemplate." Taylor explained that "It was not until the Transcendentalist era of the 1830s and 40s, however, that Confucian philosophy and Hindu yoga graced the pages of *The Dial*," a magazine influenced by the Transcendentalists and edited by Margaret Fuller, who is considered to have been one of the first feminists in America. This was a period of time when "after reading the Gita, Thoreau announced that he was a yogi."

Dr. Taylor explained that, "spiritualism and mental healing began to absorb Asian ideas with the advent of the Theosophical Society in the 1870s, while the first Swamis came to American shores to teach meditation and yoga in the wake of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893." Currently a lecturer of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Taylor informs his audience that "Yoga and meditation were even topics of discourse at Harvard as found in the philosophies of Josiah Royce and William James in the 1890's." Taylor mentions that William James had surmised, "that meditation might be the psychology of the future." Taylor makes the fascinating comment that, "though Asian religions never quite got a foothold as a religion in the West, nonetheless there evolved after World War Two an experiential folk-psychology geared toward spiritual self-realization." Taylor concluded that, "Asian spirituality succeeded admirably in influencing America, in the long run, through figures such as Aldous Huxley and Alan Watts."

Taylor's second speech for the Patanjali series "William James on Pure Experience and Samadhi: A Message for Experimental Psychologists" discussed the American philosopher-psychologist and a physician, who "pioneered the scientific study of consciousness at Harvard University." James was the author of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), a pioneering text that launched psychology in America as an experimental science. He had also written *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), *The Will to Believe* (1897), and *Pragmatism* (1907)."

Taylor, extremely knowledgeable about William James, informs the audience, that James "was heir to the Swedenborgian and Transcendentalist literary legacy," which Taylor said was "essentially an intuitive psychology of spiritual self-realization, individual differences and a spirited defense of religious beliefs for the pragmatic effects of spiritual experience on healing." "James became the first



Dr. Eugene Taylor described the chain of events that led to the widespread practice of yoga and meditation in U.S. today

professor of the philosophy of Psychology and Harvard's first ever professor of Psychology." Taylor continues, "James originally learned scientific methods through experimental physiology which he applied to the surgical investigation of brain structure and function in live animals. He later adapted these methods making important contributions in otology and functional disorders of the nervous system. He was also involved in the study of trance states reported by psychic mediums and patients who demonstrated multiple personalities. James was able to take traditional categories of philosophy such as thoughts, emotions, perceptions, instincts, habits and self and interpret them in physiological psychology context, which launched psychology as a science."

In the 1890s, James demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of Asian ideas. According to Taylor's summation of the life of William James, "He went to great

lengths to demonstrate that he comprehended the differences between Vedanta - Samkhya and Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (lifeless inert matter)." Taylor mentioned that, "James was introduced to Swami Vivekananda when Swami Vivekananda had come to America to attend the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. James had hinted that Swami Vivekananda was brilliant enough to deserve a Chair in Philosophy at Harvard University."

"Undergirding his efforts to develop a science of consciousness James developed a tripartite metaphysics centered in his radical empiricism, pragmatism and pluralism. His tripartite metaphysics made him widen the scope of scientific psychology to include abnormal psychology, dynamic states of consciousness and psychic phenomena that included experiences associated with mystical awakening and transformative spiritual states.

D.T. Suzuki introduced James' philosophy into Japan, which had a profound effect on Nishida and his philosophy of emptiness. More recently, David Kaluphanna, a Buddhist scholar has compared the early Buddhist conceptions of consciousness with James's ideas in the *The Principles of Psychology* in his *Principles of Buddhist Psychology*. In any case, though honored in many other ways, he was ignored during his lifetime for these ideas. Meanwhile, after a century, his work has returned among some investigators in the form of a budding challenge to the current neuroscientific study of consciousness.

Maritime Myths and the Origins of Civilization

—a lecture presented by N.S. Rajaram

"History is the academic reconstruction of what we think happened; Mythology is how we remember it."

For nearly two centuries, historians have maintained that civilizations began 5000 years ago in the river valleys of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India. Recent findings in natural history, including genetics, show this model to be wrong and allow us to trace the present phase of civilization to the closing centuries of the last Ice Age more than ten thousand years ago. Rajaram's presentation described how ancient Indian texts recorded the transition from a maritime to a land-based civilization when large coastal areas were submerged due to rising sea levels. It is further shown that the Rigveda describes a maritime society. Rajaram pointed out that, theories attributing the Vedas to nomadic 'Aryan invaders' are totally false. It was further shown by Rajaram that the Rigveda describes a maritime society and therefore the theory that attributes the Vedas and the Vedic civilization to nomadic 'Aryan invaders' is also totally false.

N.S. Rajaram, a Visiting Lecturer at the Center for Indic Studies, engaged his audience on Friday, April 2, 2011, with vivid descriptions of fascinating historical controversies. For hundreds of years, most mainstream scholars believed that "Vedic culture and literature was brought to India 4000 years ago by a race of nomadic people called the Aryans." Rajaram and many of his contemporary colleagues have found evidence that proves this "Aryan invasion" supposition is actually false, though it has been incorrectly taught as fact for generations. DNA evidence is just one source of data that proves that "Indians have lived where they are today for over



Dr. N.S. Rajaram brings out hidden facts from the Vedic texts

50,000 years." Dr. Rajaram pointed out that, "The M17 Caucasian genetic marker shows the greatest diversity in South Asia. All non Africans living in the world today are descendents of South Asians." Rajaram pointed out that "From among all the ancient civilizations in the world, India has the most extensive collection of preserved cultural artifacts, such as archeological records, written and orally preserved literary records, and evidence of ancient languages."

Rajaram discussed at length the prevalence of historiographical misconceptions among many social scientists. Their errors were based on mistakes of mistranslations and misinterpretations of the meaning of Vedic Sanskrit verses by colonial era linguists and philologists. Rajaram pointed out that "Though the Rig Veda consists of 10 books with about 1,000 hymns and over 10,000 verses, the word 'Arya' has been mentioned less than 40 times. Ancient Indian texts describe 'Arya' as someone who has a noble character, neither as a race nor a language group, as westernized scholars would have us believe. The Aryan myth was proposed, created, and implemented academically by British imperialists and German nationalists. Rajaram quoted the British Prime Minister Stanley Balwin who in 1912 stated that "The British and the Indians are two branches of the Aryan ancestry and

we need to uplift India", offering this as a genetic racial justification for establishing British rule in India. However, Rajaram pointed out that the even though the word Arya seemed comparatively unimportant to those who wrote the Vedas, it was however mentioned many times in Hitler's Mein Kampf. This is a lamentable historical misuse of the term, motivated by misdirected and unhealthy modern politics, and has nothing to do with its source, its historical usage, or the land of its geographical origins.

With regard to these misconceptions, Rajaram highlighted the challenge that these misinformed scholars must face when they have to admit that years of their writings and their on-going research have been heretofore based on erroneous reconstructions of the historical record. In this regard, the speaker quoted Max Planck, "An important scientific innovation rarely makes its way by gradually winning over and converting its opponents: it rarely happens that Saul becomes Paul. What does happen is that its opponents gradually die out and that the growing generation is familiarized with the idea from the beginning."

The Rig Veda describes a world in which ocean and maritime activity played a prominent role. Its poetic imagery is filled with references to ships and oceans. Rajaram quoted the translations of several the hymns from the Rig Veda that describe rivers, oceans, and seas: "He who knows the path of birds in the sky, he knows the course of the ocean-going ships"; "The ships of truth have delivered the righteous, Varuna takes us across the great ocean." These are obviously not a part of the poetic conventions of nomadic people who are unfamiliar with the sea.

Another prevalent misconception vis-à-vis the source of Indian civilization is that Vedic Civilization and the Indus Valley/Harappan Civilization or culture are considered to be separate. "But in reality," Rajaram explains that archeological excavations at Indus

Valley sites have produced the material remains of the Vedic culture, "Harappan language and script are related to Vedic Sanskrit." The speaker wondered ironically how these important facts have been missed consistently by generations of Indologist historians! He stated that this school of scholars ignored science, natural history, the climate, and biology, much less archeology. They have consistently drawn conclusions from linguistics and sometimes twisted anthropological data in order to support the Aryan invasion that contradicts scientific facts while bolstering colonial era geo-politics.

The speaker explained that the origins of the Vedic civilization emerged from the Pleistocene era when the sea levels were much lower and communication was mostly by sea. With the advent of the Holocene

era, when the Earth was getting warmer, the oldest crop rice which could have been only cultivated in a tropical area has been described in the Vedic texts to have been cultivated near the Brahmaputra region. Rajaram explained that civilizations could have originated from the south of India and spread north. Explaining the chronology of the civilizations, he said that the Harappan civilization was destroyed along with many other civilizations across the world in a drought between 2200 and 1900 BCE.

The speaker concluded by saying that we need to build an academic foundation based on science to recognize the maritime origins of Vedic civilization. Currently, there is strong evidence to encourage historians to correlate maritime images in the Vedas and Puranas to natural history. Importantly,

the transition periods in the development of world civilizations should not be ignored as they are responsible for great environmental and anthropological changes.

Dr. Navaratna S. Rajaram is a mathematical scientist who after more than twenty years as an academic and industrial researcher turned his attention to history and the history of science. He authored several acclaimed books on ancient history including "Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilization," and "Hidden Horizons" (w/David Frawley), and "The Deciphered Indus Script" (w/Natwar Jha). He is best known for showing the connections between Vedic Mathematics and Indus archaeology and deciphering the 5000 year old Indus script jointly with the late Natwar Jha.

How Not to Study Ancient India

—Ashok Aklujkar

The speaker, Dr. Ashok Aklujkar, who has been a professor of Sanskrit language and India's philosophical literatures for more than thirty years, speculated that "discourses on certain sensitive issues in ancient Indian history are of contemporary importance because these issues relate to the identity of Indians and to the course India will take in the future." Elaborating on this theme, Dr. Aklujkar explained that on the topic of Ancient India, currently there is extensive research being conducted in many countries of the world. Many questions remain unanswered.

Aklujkar critiqued "The interpretations of Indian texts by non-Indian scholars which have no relationship to the actual Indian texts." Aklujkar questioned the integrity of many translations of Indian manuscripts and the context in which they are situated. Aklujkar discussed several issues regarding the study of ancient India that are considered by some scholars to be "sensitive topics." One such issue is the debate about the origins of the Sanskrit language. Is it indigenous to India? Or was it brought into the Subcontinent by outside invaders? Since there are many European languages that share Sanskrit words, it raises the question whether Sanskrit moved from India to Europe or the other direction? Based on his life-long research, the speaker opined that, "there is no definite evidence of Sanskrit speaking invaders or immigrants settling in India." Aklujkar strongly recommended that "this historical issue must



Dr. Ashok Aklujkar engaging with the audience

be reexamined." Another problem Aklujkar pointed out concerns the "Relative chronology of the cultures in India." He highlighted several examples of astronomical events that can be proved to have occurred at a certain time. Aklujkar attributes India's religious tolerance to the fact that there was no exclusive organized religion in the ancient period. All the religions that existed in India had their own monasteries and organizations with localized centers of power, and none of them were dominant. This led to the practice of tolerance of the other or the alternative.

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The Center for Jewish studies and the Center for Indic Studies explored the unknown Jewish experience in India

The Unknown Jewish Experience in India

A fascinating talk, "The Unknown Jewish Experience in India" was presented by Rabbi Marvin Tokayer at noon on Friday, May 7, 2010 on the Campus of UMass Dartmouth. The talk was co-sponsored by The Center for Indic Studies and The Center for Jewish Studies at Dartmouth, also with the support of The Tifereth Israel Synagogue in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, shown in this photo between Dr. Bal Ram Singh and Rabbi Jacqueline Satlow, along with Dr. Jerry Solovay, in May 2010, spoke about the "Unknown Jewish Experience in India"—a historical and cultural investigation.

Rabbi Marvin Tokayer greeted his audience with the word, "Namaste" which, he explained, means: "The divine in me greets the divine in you." He added that

"through the ages ... India has lived by its words." Years ago, Rabbi Tokayer became interested in the Jewish community in India when he found an article in a Japanese newspaper stating that, "the Indian government had issued a postage stamp to commemorate the oldest [continuous habitation] Jewish community in the world.... The postal stamp was presented to the then Indian Prime Minister of India, the late Indira Gandhi." Following that bit of evidence, Rabbi Tokayer discovered that for millennia "Jews had been living securely and successfully in India contributing to its rich cultural diversity ... with no persecution or prejudice, whatsoever."

Rabbi Tokayer told his rapt audience that members of the Jewish community "had been coming to India regularly over

the course of 2200 years... that forming a regular trickle through the years, Jews had migrated and/or moved, and in some cases had literally escaped to India for safety, slowly, over an extended period of more than two millennia. Amazingly, their communities survived intact, without any contact with other Jewish communities." Rabbi Tokayer was fascinated that in all those dozens of centuries in India, Jewish culture and tradition had consistently been carefully honored and preserved. According to his historical investigation of the Jewish communities in India, Rabbi Tokayer found that "the India-Jewish community has never experienced any form of anti-Semitism, no discrimination or hostility... ever." He pointed out that, Jewish immigrants "had come to India at different critical times throughout Jewish history... Jews have been coming to India beginning with the

(How not to study India continued from page 10)

Aklujkar is a scholar who believes that we can learn from the past. He stated, "Scholars must take care not to misconstrue and misinterpret historical events, so citizens can be better prepared to meet the future. There are many interesting, if controversial issues that have come to light regarding the study of ancient India." Aklujkar advised that each "issue requires scholars' extensive research to solve efficiently." He concludes that a "Diligent investigation of ancient India will help in shaping modern India and the course India will take in the future." Dr. Aklujkar asked for discussion from the audience and a lively debate ensued.

Ashok Aklujkar received his M.A. degree in Sanskrit and Pali from the University of Poona and his Ph.D. degree in Sanskrit and Indian Studies from Harvard University. He taught Sanskrit language and related mythological and philosophical literatures (occasionally also in Indian belles letters in general) at the University of British Columbia from 1969 to 2006. His published research is mostly in the areas of Sanskrit linguistic tradition and poetics. Advanced students have worked under Aklujkar's guidance in the areas of Buddhist and Brahmanical philosophy, religion, and mythology.

Babylonia exile in the 6th century BCE, a steady movement of Diasporic Jews to peace and safety, which increased in the contemporary period, with precarious personal escapes from Berlin or Vienna, during the 1930's and 40's.

While researching this unique India-based Jewish community, he discovered that in 379 AD, there had even been a Jewish state with a Jewish king, in a small kingdom located on the western coast of Southern India. Through the centuries, and even in the modern period, many musicians, poets, artists, and directors, producers, cricketers, and judges in India are Jewish. Rabbi Tokayer mentioned that, "Members of the Jewish community have held prestigious positions in the Indian military services; they have even become governors of states." One of the most famous Jews in modern Indian history is Lieutenant General J. F. R. Jacob, an officer in the Indian Army, who successfully orchestrated India's liberation of Bangladesh during the Indo-Pakistani War in 1971. Jacob is a former governor of the Indian states of Punjab and Goa and a former member of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Rabbi Tokayer discussed several examples of Jews who had contributed to India: In the mid 19th century, "David Sassoon, a Baghdadi Jew – a wealthy Iraqi businessman, developed cotton mills in India, which employed about 19,000 people in the 1860s. Sassoon also built

the Sassoon lending library, Sassoon Jewish schools, Sassoon docks, and a fountain built in his daughter's name." Tokayer mentioned "the Portuguese Jewish physician and naturalist, Garcia de Orta, a pioneer of tropical medicine, and a philosopher who published a book on medicinal plants in India. The book was widely recognized and distributed throughout many parts of Asia." In this way, time and again, "Jews have made a significant imprint on the legacy of India."

Rabbi Tokayer stressed that "India has been the most benevolent of hosts, without ever a trace of anti-Semitism or discrimination. Jews were prominent in the military, in Bollywood, medicine, education – all with a sterling reputation. Interestingly, there are vestiges of the ancient lost tribe of Israel that have been located in states in Northeastern India. There are as well, Jews who have only lived in India for a few generations, such as those Jews who came to India with the British, or who fled the Nazis during WWII. In fact, Tokayer mentioned that "in the 1930s and 40s, when Germany and much of Europe were engulfed in a horrible holocaust against the Jews, the kings [or Maharajas] of India went to great lengths, sometimes against their British rulers, to help Jewish refugees, welcoming them to live in India." Rabbi Tokayer stated that "India has had a fascinating Jewish existence consistently for over 2000 years. In India, Jews never

suffered hostility, second-class citizenship, or intolerance. Jews contributed to the rich cultural diversity of India. Their contributions in western medicines, modern commercial ventures, music, and art are undeniable."

Concluding his talk, with the statement that, "India has been a benevolent nation throughout history, welcoming communities and individual refugees", Rabbi Tokayer ended with the traditional Sanskrit greeting, 'Namaste', and his hands clasped together, in the traditional Indian greeting and gesture for "thank you and goodbye!"

Rabbi Tokayer stated that when his books are published, "this knowledge about Jews in India will be more widely available at university libraries, within the reach the public." His book on Jews in Japan, *The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews During World War II*, describes an equally unknown and fascinating story about WWII Japan, amazing historical narratives that his research about Jews in India has also revealed. Rabbi Marvin Tokayer has traveled extensively, especially throughout Asia. He is a lifetime honorary Rabbi of the Jewish community of Japan and has published more than 25 books in Japanese, on Judaica and Japan. He is currently working on a 6-volume series, "The Unknown Jewish Experience in India."



Jon Seskevich is a nurse clinician in the Duke Hospital Department of Nursing Advanced Clinical Practice, providing stress and pain management education and consultation service for patients, families and staff. Widely known for his stress management work, Seskevich was named "Alumnus of the Year" (1997) by UNC-Chapel Hill School of Nursing, received the Friends' of Nursing "Excellence in Nursing Practice" award (1998), was nominated for the Fetzer Foundation Norman Cousins Mind/Body Medicine Award (1996), and was a "Great 100 in NC Nursing" award winner in 2005-06.

Bhakti Yoga and Healing: Reflections on a trip to India with Ram Dass

Eastern approaches to stress management through 'self healing' had long intrigued the speaker, Jon Seskevich, a registered nurse widely known for his involvement in pain and stress management. He offers consultation services, and is widely known for his stress management work. Many years ago, Jon Seskevich met a popular spiritual teacher known as "Baba" Ram Dass, and soon developed a great sense of respect and love for him. For many years Ram Dass served as a mentor and spiritual guide who along with Jon Seskevich, literally introduced millions of people to the Dharma, and led more than three generations to seek God in their hearts. In the early-sixties, before becoming Ram Dass, Professor Richard Alpert worked with Dr. Timothy Leary in the

Psychology Department at Harvard where his career soon ended and in the late sixties, he journeyed to India, to find God through Yoga and meditation rather than mind-altering substances.

In India, he soon met his guru or spiritual teacher, Shri Neem Karoli Baba-ji and stayed with him for some time at ashrams in Kumoan in the Himalayas and in Vrindaban, where he was given the name Ram Dass, aka "Servant of God." He returned to America as Ram Dass and while living at the Lama Foundation north of Taos, New Mexico, wrote the ground-breaking, best-selling book, *Be Here Now...* that could be said to have single-handedly led several generations of youth (in the 1970s, 80s, 90s, and beyond), to a new level of spiritual awareness. Seskevich was one of those, mentored by Ram

Dass, who since the early 1970s, had been guided by him towards the Dharma.

In October 2004, Jon followed his own "life-altering journey to India" as a member of Ram Dass' team of caregivers. This was Ram Dass' first trip back to India since his stroke in 1997. During this talk at Dartmouth in February 2010, Seskevich shared lessons from his long mentorship with Ram Dass and how his journey to India deepened the understanding of his chosen field of stress management by showing him that while trusting or using the meditative or enlightened mind to help lighten the body, one must tap in to, or tune in to the all-pervasive, all-encompassing, spiritual essence of conscious, that is best explained by the word, "AUM" – in all its vastness. In that capacity, the inherent divinity of all

relationships and all seemingly separate moments are but offshoots of AUM and other seed syllables or Bijj Mantras, such as "Ram."

Jon Seskevich explained to the audience at UMass Dartmouth that healing can happen when the person who is suffering lets go and opens his or her heart, to light and love so that a sense of peace can flow in... and through the breath open the mind to hear the heavenly humming of the universe. Jon stressed that there are many routes for each of us to reach our soul force or divine spirituality.

Seskevich mentioned, that "One way to attain spirituality is through religion where we bring our mind and body together into the presence of God, believing that He is real and is living among us." Seskevich described "another way of developing spirituality" that happens because of "difficult life experiences which make us commune with God, or people and seek fellowship." According to Seskevich, Ram Dass told him that once an object has "been blessed and passed to someone" it can "give purification and a sense of spirituality to that person." A blessed gift could be something of beauty, a small thing that feels sacred, including small items from nature, meaningful art; creative expressions and poetry are other routes to attain spirituality. Ram Dass asks people to listen to their own hearts and follow their own Dharma towards spiritual understanding. It's very personal...and simultaneously impersonal.

Some eastern healing methodologies include 'Nad Yoga', the yoga of healing with sound. The practitioners of naad yoga spiritually connect the various points that are power centers (naadi) in the body. Listening to spiritual music and allowing it to flow through our body and work on our naadis maximizes healing. At Kainchi Dham, the beautiful Ashram and Hanuman Temple in Kumoan built through the grace of Shri Neem Karoli Baba, Jon Seskevich was able to rise very early in the morning, carry water to his room, and go to the temple doors to



Jon Seskevich speaking at UMass Dartmouth

chant for hours in the mornings, and once again before dinner in the evenings. There was a book Pratna Prithi that included all the songs at Arti and Jon and other guests at the ashram could sing along in front of the temples for Shiva, Hanuman, and the Goddess Durga. For someone who didn't understand the language of the songs, he was carried away by the spiritually enriching experience, and still can recreate the feelings of calm and peace he felt during the Arti in Kainchi Dham.

Seskevich explained that "Bhakti yoga is about love and devotion that involves singing chants and developing a personal relationship with God. Karma yoga is another path to develop spirituality. It involves serving people and spreading goodwill and remembering God through service."

Seskevich shared his experiences of the people at the temple who took great pleasure in feeding him and his colleagues. "All the food had first been offered to God and thus became PRASAD that was then distributed to the workers and the visitors at the ashram, who were treated like royalty." The experiences at Kainchi Dham in the foothills of the Himalayas were pristine and filled with color. "I was at the ashram in October, during the time of Durga Puja, which entailed nightly ceremonies to the Goddess." Seskevich added that he had

been told that "Neem Kaoli Baba loved to celebrate Durga Puja in honor of Nova Ratri, nine sacred nights dedicated to the Goddess. Luckily," he added, "that was the blessed time that we were in India." He said with amazement that "The essence of Neem Karoli Baba's divine presence remains strong at his ashram in Kainchi due in part to the magnanimous love and devotion of Shri Mati Siddhi Ma-ji." Jon shared that the greatest blessing of his experience in India, was having the opportunity of seeing and getting to spend so much time with Siddhi Ma. She took him into Maharaj-ji's room where she showed him Maharaj-ji's diaries and other personal belongings. Reflecting on his time spent at the ashrams of Shri Neem Karoli Baba-ji, Jon Seskevich said, "I was very fortunate to get to spend so much time with Siddhi Ma. I got to ask her questions about my meditation practice, marital longing questions, and other personal issues. When I left the ashram in Kainchi, Siddhi Ma's personal caretaker, Jaya said to me that if I was ever in trouble, I should ask Mata-ji for help, and in so doing, I would be surprised. "What a blessing!"

The speaker concluded with the statement that complimentary therapies merging the eastern healing methodologies and the western practices would be very beneficial and efficient. Bhakti yoga, the practice of devotion and ways of remembering God through prayers, chants, pictures, stories and actions needs to be implemented for healing a person efficiently. He believes that healing is the improvement of the quality of life and physical function even when a person is in his/her last period in life. He emphasized that yoga tells us how to relax and meditate which is very important for stress management and thus for healing. He finally shared a simple teaching, "Do whatever you want to do to another person but never put them out of your heart irrespective of who they are and what they do to you." This manifests love and healing.



Dr. Aparna Pande engaging with the audience at the seminar

India and the United States: A Changing Relationship through the Decades

The Center for Indic Studies sponsored a seminar on March 5, 2010, featuring Aparna Pande, a Research Fellow at the Hudson Institute in DC. For several years, Dr. Pande worked at the UN and then she taught International Business at Boston University's School of Management, and as well, she taught courses on India and Pakistan at Tufts University. These professional experiences provided a unique perspective to understand the subtleties of more than six decades of often rocky relationships between the USA and India. Much of that tension resulted from decades of American strategic support of Pakistan's various military regimes.

Initially the United States was somewhat enamored by India's efforts to throw off the yoke of colonialism, the same British shackles that the USA had broken in 1776. However, it didn't take long for the relationship between the two nations to develop what Dr. Pande described as "a very skeptical note." In 1948 Jawaharlal Nehru, the 1st prime minister of independent India, expressed his

ambivalence towards US policy when he said that, "The safest policy therefore appears to be friendly to America, to give them fair terms, to invite their help on such terms, and at the same time not to tie ourselves up too much with their world or their economic policy." Nehru's tepid, unaligned attitude towards the US, was matched by American skepticism of his foreign policies, however, in the 1950s India was barely a bleep on America's international radar.

In the 1960s, the relationship between the countries strengthened with the establishment of cultural and educational ties and an increase of developmental aid. Strangely enough, even though these two nations share an abiding respect for civilian rule, and neither nation has ever experienced the threat of a coup or the military takeover of the government, nonetheless, for decades America and India viewed each other with an unsteady diplomatic lens and uneasy military tension, particularly in 1971 when in support of Pakistan, the US stationed its Seventh Fleet in the Bay of Bengal during the Bangladesh war of independence, even though

India had not initiated the conflict.

Dr. Pande explained that "India took a big leap of faith in the 1990s and accepted America's intervention in India-Pakistan bilateral talks which marked the "dawn of a new political and military relationship between the two countries." She added that "India supported America in both Gulf Wars and still supports America today in its fight against terrorism."

Dr. Pande termed Bill Clinton's visit to India in 2000 as "symbolic." Clinton wanted to build "a closer and qualitatively new relationship between the two democracies." Around that same time, the then Governor of Texas, George W. Bush stated that "This coming century will see democratic India's arrival as a force in the world.... We should establish more trade and investment with India as it opens to the world. And we should work with the Indian government, ensuring it is a force for stability and security in Asia." Needless to say, as president, Bush continued Clinton's pro-Indian policies.

Today, trade between the two countries has flourished.

"A change in military relations, allows American companies to work with the Indian government to improve its military. The US and India are top trading partners, with over \$61 billion in bilateral trade. American arms sales to India average about 3.5 billion dollars annually. In the last couple of years, India and US have been holding joint military exercises."

According to Dr. Pande, "A change in military relations, allows American companies to work with the Indian government to improve its military. The US and India are top trading partners, with over \$61 billion in bilateral trade. American arms sales to India average about 3.5 billion dollars annually. In the last couple of years, India and US have been holding joint military exercises." Dr. Pande discussed the complexities of the Indian-US civilian nuclear deal, and its impact on the market.

Presently, over 2.5 million Indian-Americans live permanently in the USA and over a hundred thousand Indian students come to study every year in American universities. Dr. Pande marveled, that "The flourishing of Indian-owned businesses, affluent families and homeowners, are witnesses to American hospitality and the ability of the Indian immigrant to fit in and thrive. The relationship between the two countries has become healthier and stronger." Dr. Pande concluded that, "both countries are finally working together coherently for a better future."



Dr. Aparna Pande describes the chain of events enhancing the relationship between the countries

Aparna Pande, Ph.D., is a Research Fellow at Hudson Institute, Washington DC. Educated in India and the U.S., Dr. Pande worked with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for 5 years. She has taught International Business at Boston University's School of Management, and courses on India and Pakistan at Tufts University. Her major field of interest is International Relations with a special interest in foreign policy, security studies, religion in politics, political Islam and South Asia. She writes a bi-monthly piece in online newspapers such as 'IndoLink,' 'Outlook India' and 'Chowk'.



Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan with Dr. Bal Ram Singh and Dr. Sathyaparayitham on his right and Dr. Jerry Solvin and Mr. Bharath Reddy, ex-president of the Indian Student Association, to his left

India's Future Promise vs. Unfulfilled Potential

On May 5, 2010 Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, a member of the Andhra State legislative body and founder of the reformist party, Lok Satta spoke at a seminar sponsored by the Center for Indic Studies. The speaker first lauded India for its culture of tolerance and the fact that through the centuries, "many traditions have found hospitality in India." He said that "India's commitment to the value of diversity has been an inspiration to many countries around the world." But, he added, "Today India faces many concerns in its educational system, health care, energy source, and most importantly inefficient management in politics."

The speaker believes that "unfulfilled potential" of a society and "avoidable suffering" in a society are two great sins caused by wrong thinking. "The best of every individual's potential has harnessed together technology and other resources which have given unprecedented opportunities for change, yet these concerns in the society have not been properly utilized. Proper management and organizational skills are needed to appreciate and utilize the resources at hand

and solve the issues our country is facing."

That is the unfortunate backdrop in which Narayan and his colleagues are working in politics today. "Politics should not be made as a quest for power alone but power as a means to influence and reshape institutions to become more efficient. This goal has to be the central ideology in politics today. Investing large expenditures to bring about these changes doesn't guarantee victory but spending nothing to solve the problem, guarantees defeat." He encouraged people to get involved with the political system, "Every single contribution is needed."

Narayan is passionately working towards reviving public institutions and service-oriented politics. He mentioned some of the various changes that he wished to make in the current political system in India. He is working to remove the loopholes that he sees "in the current government policies that allow too many politicians to escape accountability." He waits attentively for the day when "Indian policy makers and the society come together to bring about efficient political management systems." Much like his name-sake, the original famous freedom fighter J. Prakash Narayan,

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan has dedicated his life to fight corruption and bring about a more transparent political system.

Narayan concluded that, "India has grown democratically and has become prosperous in a short span of time. Though India has much potential to grow, its success can't be guaranteed unless people join hands and help organize and manage efforts efficiently, transforming not only India but the surrounding nations as well." His passion for India was apparent, as was his commitment to reform of the corruption and self-interest of many elected officials.

Narayan is a physician by training who worked in the prestigious Indian Administrative Service for sixteen years of distinguished public service. His experience in government convinced him that faulty government processes were the biggest hurdle for India and other nations in achieving greater success. In 1996, Narayan resigned from IAS and worked with like-minded colleagues in the formation of Lok Satta, of which he is currently the National Coordinator. Lok Satta has now emerged as India's leading civil society initiative for governance reforms.

August 15th is India's Fourth of July: The "Jana, Gana, Mana" Banner Still Proudly Waves...

On August 15, 2010 members of the university faculty and of the student body gathered at UMass Dartmouth, along with citizens from the local community to attend a celebration marking the sixty-third anniversary of the birth of modern India as a sovereign nation-state. Sixty-three years ago, at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, India (also known as Bharat), declared independence from the British. In one click of the clock, India shed its colonial shackles and emerged onto the modern international stage as a free, democratic country.

The ceremony at Dartmouth began with the singing of the national anthems of both nations; the "Star Spangled Banner" always creates a rousing, patriotic moment that brings us to our feet. The Indian national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana", is based on a song dedicated to "Mother India", composed and scored by Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore. The first time it was sung officially was almost a hundred years ago, in 1911, at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.

This English version of "Jana, Gana, Mana" was translated by Tagore:
"Oh! The ruler of the minds of people, Victory be to You!
Dispenser of the destiny of India: Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Dravida (South India), Orissa, and Bengal, the Vindhya, the Himalayas, the Yamuna, the Ganges, and the oceans with foaming waves all around. Wake up listening to Your auspicious name; Ask for Your auspicious blessings; And sing to Your glorious victory. Oh! You who impart well-being to the people! Victory be to You, dispenser of the destiny of India! Victory to You. Victory to You. Victory to You. Victory, Victory, Victory, Victory to You! (refrain repeated five times)
"Jaya he! Jaya he! Jaya he! Jaya, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya he!"

After the singing of the national anthems, the president of the Indian Student Association, Mr. Aditya Kemkar welcomed the audience with a heartwarming speech comparing the brave and noble struggle of the Indian freedom fighters with the selfless service of the soldiers of our country. He reminded the audience that it is every citizen's duty and responsibility to care for not only our neighbors but also to pay attention to the nation, which is now in the midst of a political and financial crisis. This proactive attitude towards a government with limited political powers is a value shared by the constitutional democracies of India and the USA. While the chief guest of the event, Dr. Tridib Roy hoisted the national flag, the students sang a famous song, Vande Mataram, dedicated to 'Mother India'. Vande Mataram can be compared to The Battle Hymn of the Republic, a much loved and well known alternative national anthem.

For thirty years, between 1978 to 2008, Dr. Roy was a faculty member at UMass Dartmouth in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Decades ago, he started the Indian Students Association at Dartmouth and was one of the first faculty members to work at the Center for Indic Studies. Roy fondly remembered the



Swami Yogatmananda encouraged the audience to follow Swami Vivekananda's ideologies

early days of the Indian Students Association and recalled several enjoyable celebrations in years past.

In his speech, Roy took the audience through the different struggles Indians faced to free India from British rule. He praised the efforts of freedom fighters such as "Aurobindo Ghosh, Bipinchandra Pal, Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak." Roy compared the apparent political impasses in today's stagnant politics in the USA, by pointing out that, "during the Indian freedom struggle, the political ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi were the complete opposite of those followed by Subash Chandra Bose, yet they struggled tirelessly for the same goal, India's independence." He suggested that we pray that the leaders of the USA will have similarly guided goals for the betterment of the nation.

On this occasion of India's 63rd birthday celebration, Swami Yogatmananda shared a few words with the students. He discussed the emotional and spiritual value found in the preservation of freedom and its positive impact on the spirit – "freedom and justice for all" and honesty among friends are powerful motivators. He concluded his speech with three guidelines to follow; 1. Learn from the past; 2. Introspect the present; and 3. Move ahead into the future with a plan.

Swami Yogatmananda and Roy shared their points of view over questions asked by the audience. Dr. Parayitam, professor at the Charlton College of Business and adviser for the Indian Students Association, expressed his concern that the freedom that India received after much struggle should not be taken for granted. He believes that education should create awareness of the value and the proper use of freedom. The event concluded with a delicious lunch of Indian cuisine.

Indic studies: new directions and responsibilities

—Girish Nath Jha

Origin and decline of traditional Indology

Study of Sanskrit based Indology in the west started in the middle of 17th Century when some sayings from Bhartrhari were translated into Portuguese by Abraham Roger. This was more than 100 years prior to the accidental discovery of its genealogical connection with the languages of Europe by Sir William Jones in 1789 (the year the English translation of sakuntalam was published). Charles Wilkins, a near contemporary of William Jones, seems to have been the first serious Indologist with many valuable contributions. He was the first Englishman to have learned Sanskrit and he authored a number of important translations – the most important being the translation of Bhagvadgita in 1785 which incidentally happens to be the first Sanskrit text to have been directly translated into English. This was followed by many famous scholars like H.T. Colebrook, Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Franz Bopp, William von Humboldt, Otto Bohtlingk, Rudolf Roth, Albrecht Weber, Friedrich Adelung who focused on texts like the Vedas, Upanisadas, Mahabharata, Ramayala, Gita, didactic literature and grammar-lexicon. The 20th century saw the teaching of historical and comparative linguistics in south Asian and linguistics departments in the western universities along with teaching Sanskrit and Pali/Prakrita for purely philological purposes.

Thus from the 17th century to the modern times, Indological studies in the western world have seen strange ups and downs. From a cautious beginning to frenzied reception in the 19th century and finally towards shutting down of centers in the current times – it has been an interesting journey indeed. It is true that fields of study too have their ups and downs and sometimes are linked with current socio-economic conditions. The discovery of India led to setting up of hallowed centers of Sanskritic studies in Europe opening a floodgate of famous scholars to India. The rise of Nazis and their own skewed interpretation of what may be 'aryan' may have led to some linking of Indological studies to a certain kind of historiography, but the discipline gained momentum in philological centers in Europe and America. Then came the 'discovery' of Panini's grammar and its amazing insights for formal analysis of human languages and modeling human cognition. Though Noam Chomsky refers to Panini as 'the other generative grammarian', there is a common belief that Panini's formal account of Sanskrit may have influenced some

of Chomskyan theories. Even today, though any study of historical linguistics may not be possible without Sanskrit, the fact remains that serious Indological studies are on a rapid decline all over the world.

Present situation

The situation has become very interesting owing to amazing strides that India has made towards economic and political significance in the global scenario. Combined with this is the economic clout and social prestige that the Indian immigrants in America and Europe enjoy. It appears that a time has come when Indian studies in the west have to take a fresh look. Newer centers like the Center of Indic Studies at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (CISUMASSD) therefore have tremendous leadership opportunities in taking fresh initiatives for popularizing India studies in the western world. Such centers should first carefully investigate the reasons of the decline of the traditional Indological centers and lay the foundation of viable alternatives by broadening their perspectives towards the new India and its sensitivities. Since India is no more 'a jewel in the crown' and there is never going to be a uni or bipolar world again, the goals of such centers have to be a little different than those of early days when the primary objective was to translate primary text and apply the fundamental knowledge for newer discoveries for the western world.



Dr. Girish Nath Jha

Goals of emerging Indology

One of the primary goals of Indic centers in the western world should be teaching Humanism by bringing in the best from ancient Indian religions – Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. This will help build a tolerant society by teaching it the merits of diversity, and will surely have a large following.

General objectives which follow from this goal may be the following:

- Spiritual discourses and lifestyle training
- Yoga and Ayurveda
- Teaching of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Hindi
- Bringing in more Indian languages depending on need from the community
- Educating the kids with

interesting multimedia content for children from these texts

- f) Reviving the Indo-European studies with new perspectives gained from newer linguistic, historical, geological research
- g) Classical cultural shows (as highlighted by Prof Rajaram), fine arts etc
- h) A good library of Indian studies. Help may be obtained from experts in the field. During my visit to U Penn's South Asia library, I had requested the librarian to help which he willingly accepted. The Van Pelt has good collection of manuscripts which probably can be looked after better at CIS at UMass Dartmouth. In fact, there can be a move to acquire Indic manuscripts from other languishing centers.
- i) Collaborations with prominent Sanskrit study centers in India
- j) Partnering with Indian financiers in setting up a program to support traditional scholars in India, and comprehensive documenting of living traditions

The second important goal can be projecting the strength of new India as a modern and vibrant democracy. During my recent visit to the Center for Indic Studies in the summer of 2010, I was encouraged by the keen interest that students take in India's ancient language, culture and history. This interest should be our asset and every effort should be made to not only teach the traditions of India, but also introduce the achievements which India has made as a thriving democracy. I had a similar experience as a Hindi teacher in the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. The children of Indians in America and other western countries are curious to know about India and are to a similar degree fascinated by the Bollywood. However, they do not have a good knowledge of its socio-political history and diversity. Keeping these in mind the general objectives from this goal could be the following:

- a) Introductory courses in Indian history
- b) Teaching functional and communicative Hindi
- c) A course in Indian businesses and entrepreneurship
- d) Bring in more Indian languages depending on demand and availability of resources
- e) In some way bring in media studies and Bollywood to Indic studies programs. This may also help influence movie making in Indian and improve its quality
- f) Project India's economic power and its potentials
- g) Collaborating with leading Indian universities to help in these The Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth is already doing many of these as part of its minor program

"From the 17th century to the modern times, the study of Indology in the western world has seen many strange ups and downs; with a cautious beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries, to a frenzied politicized reception in the 19th century, leading to its distortion and misuse fifty years later,"

and summer courses.

Another very important objective of modern center of Indology should be (as being done by the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth) is to bring to fore the technical literature from ancient Indian texts and get them translated and experimented in modern laboratories. I appreciate the efforts of the Center for Indic Studies in collaborating with Center for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru

University and in trying to form a consortium of Sanskrit and Science departments for this purpose. As part of a broader goal of collecting important manuscripts, a focus can be made to procure Science & Technology manuscripts in the initial stage.

The Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth can be a leader in the new emerging Indology that is destined to take roots in the western world. It can identify important centers of Indians in America and try to have more such centers in other parts of USA. There is a distinct opportunity in inspiring other potential centers with this new vision. The focus on the yoga and ayurveda, lifestyle, spiritualism, Gandhi and other aspects of modern India is a well thought strategy. Another laudable effort that The Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth has taken is to involve the local community and give them a sense of responsibility and ownership. I admire the efforts by its director and other resident faculty and staff for making this happen. The collaboration between The Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth and 3R Foundation for exploring newer methods of learning based on Vedic visions is laudable, and one may hope that fundamental ideas will spring up from this collaboration. Finally I thank the The Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth and the 3R Foundation for inviting me and hosting me at Dartmouth during the summer 2010.

Dr. Girish Nath Jha is the Associate Professor in Computational Linguistics at the Special Center for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He has done Masters in Arts at University of Illinois, and Masters in Philosophy and Ph.D., in Computational Morphology and Machine Translation at the Jawaharlal University, India. His research interest involves the Indian languages corpora and standards, Sanskrit and Hindi linguistics, Science & Technology in Sanskrit texts, Computational Lexicography, Machine Translation, e-learning, web based technologies, RDBMS techniques, software design and localization. He has written many articles and research papers, and has given my invited lectures and speeches. Numerous books on Sanskrit Computational Linguistics add to his credit.

