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Press Release

Conference to Resolve Aryan/Non-Aryan Origin of Indian Civilization

Recently, a controversy arose in California, which has serious implications in America and elsewhere. Today's multicultural world requires new noncombative ways of preventing and resolving cultural misunderstandings. The California controversy involves the portrayal of India and Indian origins in the California education system as well as in various textbooks. In response to this, the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth has organized a symposium to discuss and debate the essence of the issue: whether Hindus of today are the products of Aryan invasion or survival of indigenous peoples.

This will be the first time in a conference on this topic that population geneticists such as Dr. Peter Underhill of Stanford University and Dr. V. K. Kashyap of National Institute of Biologicals, India, will share the stage with prominent international scholars on archeology, history, linguistics, and anthropology to try to resolve the vexed issue of Aryan vs. Indigenous origin of the oldest surviving civilization on earth.

"Given the list of speakers and topics being covered, the discussions are going to be hard. I hope we can keep it civil", commented Dr. Petr Eltsov, of Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut, Berlin, Germany. The symposium speakers include Dr. B. B. Lal, former director of Archeological Survey of India, and Dr. N. S. Rajaram, author of a recently published book, *SARASVATI RIVER AND THE VEDIC CIVILIZATION* (Aditya Prakashan, 2006).

The symposium is part of the Fourth Annual Indic Conference organized by the Center for Indic Studies at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, June 23-25, 2006. The conference also includes a symposium on the Indian Family System that will debate issues of philosophy, traditions, and practicality of Indian family culture in modern times.

The family symposium will include a presentation by Honorable C. M. Bhandari, Indian Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, on the ways to practice the joint family system in modern times using his own example as a case study. Other topics to be discussed include economics of the Indian family system by Dr. Mona Khaitan of MassBay Community college, and the role of women in Indian family by Dr. Divya Tripathi, DAV College of Girls in India.

A workshop on Indian Civilization is also being offered at the conference in an effort to develop a textbook on Indian Civilization for American college students. The workshop will discuss developing introductory course content by experts in Indian science, archeology, astronomy, history, philosophy, dance, music, social structure, politics, culture, and geography, among about two dozen topics of the proposed book.

Workshop participants include Drs. Shiva Bajpai of California State University at Northridge, Subhash Kak of Louisiana State University, Vanita Shastri of Meru Education Foundation, V. T. Patil, former Vice Chancellor of Pondicherry University, Yvette Rosser of UMass Dartmouth, and R. P. Singh from Jawaharlal Nehru University, among others.

Bal Ram Singh, Director of the Center for Indic Studies commented, "I'm very excited about the topic and timing of the conference. It so happened that the focus of this year's conference was Indian Civilization. The controversy on California textbooks just provided us an extra impetus to contact scholars in the field to put together a symposium on the topic. I am very grateful for the response of scholars to the symposium."

During the conference weekend, a special concert by vocalist par excellence Vidushi Sumitra Guha (www.sumitraguha.com) has been arranged. The concert will be held on the UMass Dartmouth campus Saturday, June 24 at 7:30 PM. The public is welcome.

For more information on the conference or about tickets for the concert, please contact **Dr. Jerry Solfvin** via email (jsolfvin@umassd.com), or phone (508-910-6630). In addition, visit the Center for Indic Studies website: <http://www.umassd.edu/indic/c2.htm>.