



# Bhagirathi



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

Fall 2008



*Dr. William Hogan (far left) and Dr. Bal Ram Singh look on as Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack and Pandit Ramadhean Ramsamooj, Director of Three Rs Foundation, finalize the foundation's gift to the Center for Indic Studies.*

## UMass Dartmouth announces \$1 million gift to "build a bridge to Indian culture and economy"

**A**s the Indian community celebrated on August 15 India's independence from British colonial rule, UMass Dartmouth announced that the Three Rs Foundation had pledged \$1 million to the university's Center for Indic Studies to initiate an innovative and educational pedagogy rooted in India's Vedic traditions. The donation will support the center's mission to connect the university, region, and Commonwealth to India's growing economy and world influence.

The announcement was deliberately made

during the celebration of Indian independence which featured presentations by Indian students and a speech by Dr. Subramanian Swamy, visiting Harvard professor and president of Janata Party in India.

"Our university, our students, and our region are enriched by experiencing diverse cultures," Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack said. "The history, art, music and religion of India hold important lessons for all of us as we strive to be better citizens of our own community and

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## Upcoming Events 2009

*Eighteenth International Congress of Vedanta*

July 16-19  
Main auditorium,  
UMass  
Dartmouth

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*The editor apologizes for the delay of this publication*

\$1 million gift (continued from pg 1)

the world. On behalf of UMass Dartmouth, I thank the Three Rs Foundation for its exemplary generosity.”

“We are excited to be part of this educational initiative that will allow UMass Dartmouth students to learn about India at a time when the information super highway and global economy are creating important East-West connections,” said Pandit Ramadheen Ramsamooj, director of Three Rs Foundation. “Among our highest priorities is to develop innovative teaching strategies, rooted in Indian culture.”

The Three Rs Foundation is the lead sponsor of the Super Accelerated Learning Theory (SALT), a school model that emphasizes whole brain education that integrates music, suggestions, and childlike play to facilitate learning.

Preceding the announcement, the center’s Board of Governors unanimously approved the memorandum of understanding with the Foundation. Board Chairman Rajiv Malhotra said that the accelerated learning movements in the U.S. regard Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian educator and neuroscientist, as their founding father. What is seldom considered is that Lozanov had studied traditional Vedic learning systems in India in the 1960s under UNESCO programs, in order to determine how Vedic pandits were able to memorize and impeccably recite tens of thousands of verses.

Malhotra said, “Today, the Three Rs Foundation is reviving that learning system from its source, and creating a program which could be a breakthrough even beyond Lozanov’s. This deserves all our encouragement and support.”

Braham Aggarwal, general secretary of the Indic Governing Board, agreed: “This is a good beginning for the center.”

The center plans several major academic and scholarly initiatives in the coming years. In its meeting, Dr. William Hogan, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, suggested including graduate education as part of the Three Rs Foundation’s agenda in Indic Studies. He agreed with the board chairman’s suggestion to distinguish Indic Studies from South Asian Studies, the latter being adopted by many US universities for a general area of study that impedes a deeper understanding of Indic traditions and values.

“An endowment of this size to bridge ancient civilization of India to the most modern civilization of United States through education is a most powerful statement to society,” said Dr. Bal Ram Singh, director of the Center of Indic Studies. “I am thrilled at this opportunity and am looking forward to facilitating the engagement of my colleagues in this educational mission.” ♦

## UMass Dartmouth conference explores consciousness, mind, and time from various perspectives

**A**n interdisciplinary group of scholars assembled at a UMass Dartmouth symposium, organized by the Center for Indic Studies, to exchange views on consciousness, mind, and time. One continuing issue was the definition of consciousness itself. Views ranged from “any attempt to define it would be limiting it,” to upanishadic sayings (satyam, jnanam, anantam or sat-chit-ananda), to “consciousness is the witness of intentionality,” to “even elementary particles such as photons, electrons, etc. display aspects of consciousness in a rudimentary way,” to “we can study neural correlates of consciousness to identify its presence.”

Speakers also emphasized that one should explore efforts to qualify consciousness (individual, universal, material, non-empirical, etc.) for a better understanding of any attempt to create a grand theory.

The introductory lecture was delivered by Swami

Yogatmananda of the Vedanta Society of Providence. He summarized the views of consciousness from a variety of disciplines (cosmology, mathematics, arts, social sciences, physical and life sciences, aesthetics, etc.) and implored the speakers to enter into a multilogue.

Professor R. P. Singh of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, outlined the ideas of various philosophical schools as related to consciousness: dualists (Descartes, Kant, etc.), monists (Spinoza, Hegel, Shankara, etc.), and pluralists (Hume, Russell, Ayer, etc.). Dr. V. V. Raman, emeritus professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, stressed the role of consciousness in this cosmos, saying “without consciousness, the universe would be like a stage where there is action, but in an empty auditorium.”

Prof. Subhash Kak of Oklahoma State University highlighted how an artist’s vision of transcendence and freedom relates to a scientist’s fundamental principle of





causality. Using examples, he demonstrated the intriguing parallels between the insights of the early Vedic theory of consciousness and those of quantum mechanics and neuroscience.

Dr. Diane Powell, a practicing psychoanalyst, summarized many case studies of anomalous experiences (out of body experience, near death experience, telepathy, psychokinesis, remote viewing, precognition, autistic savant syndrome, and mystical experiences) that defy the current model of understanding of consciousness and the brain.

Prof. Lothar Schafer of the University of Arkansas presented many examples from quantum mechanics to convince the audience of a new way to understand “reality” and thus consciousness from a non-empirical framework.

Another major area of exploration was the concept of time. Swami Tyagananda of the Vedanta Society of Massachusetts presented the vedantic view of time and space as they relate to levels of consciousness.

In a numerical model to measure consciousness as a function of time, Professors Bal Ram Singh and Sukalyan Sengupta, along with Rishi Bal Singh of Dartmouth High School, used the kinetic theory of gases to demonstrate how each individual can manipulate consciousness coefficient and achieve mental time dilation.

Both audience and speakers represented a variety of backgrounds, and the intense discussions after each

presentation left a substantive impact.

Dr. Sengupta, the main organizer, noted enthusiastically that the conference achieved its main objective—to facilitate an environment encouraging cross-fertilization among many areas. “I am glad to see that all speakers forcefully and convincingly presented their viewpoint, but at the same time displayed an open-mindedness and respect for opinions that were varying or sometimes even contrary. The entire gathering agreed that this subject area is such that any tangible progress in understanding these topics can be obtained only after each one of us is aware of vigorous inquiry being conducted by serious scholars in fields other than ours.”

Many speakers said they would revise their theses based on the new insights gained from the audience and other speakers. Many listeners said that while their previous understanding of consciousness and mind was limited to one framework, the conference convinced them to broaden their perspective to better grasp the subject matter.

Gary Sottile of Quincy said, “As Columbus set out to find a passage to India, it seems as if India has set out to find a passage to me, and I have never been so close to India. And now, the work of the Center for Indic Studies has found me and I feel I am among friends.”

The Center for Indic Studies plans to compile the proceedings of this conference into a book in the near future. ♦

## Deepening the Hindu contribution to American religious life

**T**he increasing visibility and impact of Hinduism in American life was the topic of a presentation by Prof. Francis X. Clooney, SJ., during the Patanjali Lecture Series, sponsored by the Center for Indic Studies.

The Roman Catholic priest, a member of the Society of Jesus, joined the Harvard Divinity School in 2005. He was previously professor of comparative theology at Boston College, and earned his doctorate in South Asian languages and civilizations from the University of Chicago. Dr. Clooney received his master's in divinity degree from Weston School of Theology and a bachelor's degree from Fordham University.

Dr. Clooney has written extensively on the Jesuit missionary tradition, particularly in India, and is interested in the dynamics of dialogue in a postcolonial world. He is on numerous editorial boards; was the first president of the International Society for Hindu-Christian Studies; and was coordinator for interreligious dialogue for the Society of Jesus from 1984 to 2004.

According to Clooney, Hinduism has in various ways been part of American life for a century and more, but it is only now that the growing Hindu population, the increasing number of temples and educational institutions, and the greater availability of Hindu wisdom and practice predict a larger Hindu influence in the United States. It is all the more important then for Hindus in America to draw intelligently on classic texts, philosophies, devotions, and ways of life, to contribute to the building of American religious identity in the 21st century. Among the points which Prof. Clooney made:

The U.S. needs the wisdom of the Hindu community today. We are passing through a time of religious ferment, and we need to reflect on the state of religion in America today, on where we are religiously. We are still strongly religious, but our relationships to our religious traditions are changing. Some interesting features of the changing religious scene include: declining institutional membership; shifting loyalties; a preference for spirituality, not religion; patterns of crisis and renewal among Christians; the tendency of religious people in all traditions towards tolerance of others.

In other words, America is religiously in transition. There are many positive features about our current situation, but we seem also to be losing our grounding and our sense of traditional loyalties. Despite the exciting nature of some of

the religious developments, there is danger of disorientation, with a loss of direction and depth. So there is a need for some new thinking about our religious possibilities, with more imaginative resources for

considering religion and theism today, and

achieving a new and appropriate sense of tradition, commitment, and religious practice for our time. There is a general need for a conversation on tradition and openness, and a commitment within pluralism--how to manage being American and religious, and with a particular interest in theistic commitments. Hinduism has much to offer to this conversation. We need the wisdom and intellectual acuity of the Hindu traditions as we shape religious life and identity in the next several generations.

As with any opening of new areas for reflection, vulnerable to questioning, a Hindu community in America that engages the intellectual life here more vigorously will have many challenges. The community's self-conception is likely to change in this new intellectual climate.

But the fruits of this effort are also potentially great for both Hindus and all Americans. The Hindu community can make a fuller contribution to American life for the sake of a richer intellectual life for all of us. It can model, for the sake of Christians and others, an intelligent interreligious learning, and remind Americans, who pride ourselves on a history of tolerance, of other time-honored ways of retaining personal and communal religious identity while engaging pluralism properly.

Dr. Clooney believes that, because the U.S. is still very Christian, Hinduism, with its rich theistic theological traditions, has much to say to all Americans. If the appropriate education takes place, and intellectual inquiry is pursued honestly, then this will add up to a more learned exchange, made fresh in this American context, and resulting in a deepening of the spirituality of all of us.



*Prof. Francis X. Clooney, SJ.*

*Dr. Clooney online at: [www.hds.harvard.edu/faculty/clooney.cfm](http://www.hds.harvard.edu/faculty/clooney.cfm)*



## World Association for Vedic Studies calls for empowering youth with Vedic ideas to provide global solutions

**T**he seventh international conference of WAVES, held at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, called upon Hindu youth to study the traditions of Vedic knowledge and apply those values to provide comprehensive solutions to global problems.

The conference was highlighted by the participation of Hindu youth in workshops jointly organized with the Hindu American Foundation and Hindu Student Council. These well-attended sessions were the most lively of the conference. Hindu youth, sitting on panels at the plenary session, felt heard and empowered, as they considered their heritage and its impact on their lives, as well as those of future generations.

While the discussion was mostly for Indian-American youth, students born and raised in India pointed out that issues are similar for them, due to a lack of Vedic instruction in their educational system. "We want to be listened to and heard by our parents so that together we can incorporate our heritage in our lives", said Jaya Goswami, past president of the university's Hindu Student Council chapter.

"By being included in the WAVES Conference, we feel empowered," said Ruti Dwivedi, a junior at UCF.

Professor Madan Goel, general secretary of WAVES and an organizer of the youth session, said, "The attendance was great. . . . The dialogue was lively and intense between the youth and the senior generation."

Vajay Pallod, a young professional and the other organizer of the youth session, felt satisfied with the deliberations. "I am glad that the organizers gave plenty of time this year."

At the Intergeneration Dialogue session, contemporary issues of Hindus in America included the need to establish one's Hindu identity. While defining Hindu identity, measures must be taken on dealing with those who do not understand or appreciate the world-view of dharma, the global, eternal ethic.

Issues such as inter-religious marriage and Hindu value were discussed fiercely with many points and counterpoints. The interactive sessions among youth and Hindu Vedic scholars reiterated the imperative of detailing and disseminating sources of knowledge related to Hindu culture and heritage. Thus, younger generation Hindus living in America and countries other than India can benefit.

Shobana Daniel, a local media personality, said, "Being married to a non-Hindu, I can say that it is not easy when there is an attempt to convert you, or your in-laws think you are going to hell."

Nikhil Joshi of HAF "enjoyed my time at the conference," and looked forward to future gatherings.

Another major topic of discussion included portrayal of Hinduism in the Western world. At the inauguration, Professor Francis Clooney of Harvard University presented a keynote address outlining a series of values, including the intellectual tradition of Hindus that can benefit the religious life in America.

Professor T.S. Rukmani, chair of Hindu Studies at Concordia University, set the tone of the conference at the inaugural session by outlining what Hinduism can offer for social and environmental issues facing the world.

Excited with the participation of young scholars, she said, "I am willing to mentor them to become strong scholars of Hindu philosophy."

Aditi Banerjee, a young attorney in Manhattan, discussed the contents of the book, *Invading the Sacred*, highlighting several issues of bias in academia such as Hinduphobic works that resemble earlier American literature in depicting non-whites as dangerous savages needing to be civilized by the West. Prof. Nathan Katz of Florida International University referred to the historic Hindu-Jewish Summit declaration of February 2008 by the Chief Rabbi of Israel and Swamy Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha.

Prof. Katz emphasized the need for diasporized religious communities, both Hindus and Jews, to preserve tradition while adapting to new circumstances.

Another aspect of Hindu portrayal was presented by Dr. S. Kalyanaraman who spoke on the ongoing attack on Hindu symbols: Sarasvati, Vedic language, and cultural traditions.

Rajiv Malhotra of Infinity Foundation made a keynote presentation on how the study of India by Europeans was dominated by Germans, British and French in the colonial era. Individual scholars came with positive as well as negative designs and agendas, and different European national interests played a key role.

Based on a combination of a thorough research in history, literature, and politics, and a brilliant multivariate analysis, Malhotra has derived a new comprehensive theory

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that many of the ills facing the Indian sub-continent, including today's Dravidianism, the Sri Lankan civil war, as well as US-based South Asian Studies, are the legacies of this colonial Indology.

Dr. Subramanian Swamy expounded in his valedictory address on the framework of Hindu religious thought and philosophy that has evolved as Sanatana Dharma. He encouraged scholars to continue scholarly deliberations at forums like WAVES to advance intellectual approaches and recognize traditions.

Prominent community leaders such as Braham Aggarwal, Anil Deshpande, and Subas Razdan actively participated in the conference. In his welcome address, Aggarwal, one of the founders of the International Hindu University of America, lauded the local communities in which Hindus were living in harmony.

John Bersia, assistant to the president of the University of Central Florida, announced formation of the India Studies Program, started with the support of Anil Deshpande, with

the goal of a better understanding of Hindu traditions and India.

At the conference, there were plenary sessions and workshops on various topics. Yogi Amrit Desai presented a workshop on Amrit Yoga and demonstrated the effectiveness of Yoga in experiencing the reality of consciousness.

"This was so effective that I could experience how to feel no pain", said exuberant Koyel Ghosal, a student.

A session on using Hindu mandirs to disseminate Vedic values was chaired by Swamy Jyotirmayananda and Nachiketa Tiwari of Hindu Mandir Executive Conference in USA, and was attended by local Hindu temple committee members.

The session highlighted the importance of networking among temples, resource material for and training of the Hindu priests, and youth education on the significance of symbols and metaphors of a Hindu temple.

Other prominent scholars at the conference included Professor Satya Prakash Agarwal, Dr. Kosal Vepa, Dr. Sannidhanam Sudarshan sharma, Dr. Vinod Deshmukh, Er. Himendra

Thakur, Dr. Shashi Tiwari, Dr. Lothar Schaefer, Dr. Shivamurthy Shivacharya, and Jeffrey Armstrong.

Young scholars included Dr. Kundan Singh, Dr. Sunita Chandak, Dr. Sampada Savardekar, Dr. Falguni Zaveri, Kalyan Viswanathan, and others pursuing Vedic Studies for their careers.

WAVES President Dr. Surendra Dwivedi, said "Dharmo rakshati rakshitah," and was heartened by the new generation of scholars willing to promote these Vedic values.

The University of Central Florida, University of Louisiana, UMass Dartmouth, and Indian Council for Cultural Relations sponsored the conference. The next WAVES conference will be held in Trinidad and Tobago, August 6-8, 2010, in coordination with the Saraswati Mandiram Foundation and University of West Indies.

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*For more information, please contact  
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## Ayurveda wellness workshop

**A**yurveda is an old medicinal practice from ancient India encompassing an understanding of the human body and mind. A therapeutic system that uses herbs in their natural state, Ayurveda has been beneficial to the masses since ancient time.

The Ayurveda Wellness Workshop at UMass Dartmouth was conducted by Dr. Avinash Lele, BAMS, MASc, a skilled practitioner of Ayurvedic herbology and pharmacology and a specialist in *Panchakarma* and *Rasayan*. He operates a school and clinic in Pune, India.

In his full-day workshop, Lele shared his insights on the human body, mind, and diet from the Ayurvedic perspective. The functioning of the human body, rather than anatomy, is the focus of Ayurveda. The human body

is a mixture of matter and energy, and this energy, along with the mind and soul, is of utmost importance.

Ayurveda emphasizes that elements in the universe are also present in man. The universe comprises the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space, all of which are found in man also. According to Ayurveda, if one knows the composition of the body, and the relation of the body to individual foods, no secrets remain. An Ayurvedic approach to medicinal herbs requires a thorough knowledge of various herbs as well as an understanding of various body types and the best match of herbs to a body type.

Each being is different, and healing must be based on the individual and not solely on the disease. Ayurveda respects the individual and provides medical care to the patient according to the individual disease.

The approach calls for understanding body type and



constitution by listening to patients in order to administer the correct treatment. To bring about balance in the body, Ayurveda seeks to understand and treat the energies of movement, metabolism, and lubrication. The body's constitution plays a large role in determining the health of an individual. The human system is inter-related; in understanding the relationship of the human senses to the sense of the mind lies the solution to a problem.

The science of Ayurveda arouses curiosity. The mind is subtle and certain areas of the mind impact various body parts. The relationship of the mind with the body is integral and both health and disease have their place in the body and mind. Mind is the prime matter or the structural component of the universe.

Ayurveda deals with cleansing the human body; in doing so, we are respecting and understanding it. The essence of Ayurveda is the understanding of the human mind and the channeling of thoughts towards the positive in order to become healthy. Ayurveda aims at harmonizing the human

body and the life force, making control of the mind easier.

The mind has a dual nature. The first is the outward construction of reality based on what the senses perceive, an outer world of enjoyment which becomes the basic purpose of life. The second is the inward state of mind or pure consciousness that is assumed to be real. We learn to perceive directly and comprehend objectively the nature of things. It is the inward state of mind that leads us back to the cosmic principles, to our true self and spirit, where wisdom and enlightenment lie. Ayurveda is based on both experience and theory. Although modern medicine is basically an empirical science, it clearly favors theory, and thereby creates a greater distance between medicine and man. Ayurveda looks to tradition and the long-standing experience of many generations. Ayurveda teaches us all to do the right thing at the right time. There is a right time to meditate, eat, exercise, and sleep. When we follow this natural cycle, we achieve the best in life. ♦

## Democracy and pluralism in India

The Center for Indic Studies' panel discussion on "Democracy and Pluralism in India" featured a presentation by Neelam Deo, Consul General of India and distinguished scholar. The panel also included scholars Dr. Vanita Shastri, president, Meru Education Foundation and Center for Indic Studies adjunct faculty, and Dr. Michael Baum, chairman of the UMass Dartmouth Political Science Department.

Deo became Consul General in the Consulate General of India, New York, in October, 2005. She has a master's degree in economics from the Delhi School of Economics and taught at Kamala Nehru College, Delhi University.

She is a career diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service with over three decades in the Indian Diplomatic Corps, and has been India's ambassador to Denmark and Ivory

Coast, with concurrent accreditation to Sierra Leone, Niger, and Guinea. Prior to her New York assignment, she was head of the Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar Division in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, dealing with India's overall relations with these countries. Deo has also worked in India's Diplomatic Missions in Washington DC, Bangkok, and Rome.

India has been a home of multiplicity over a long period of time. Diversity is almost a second nature of India. Consequently, a democratic political structure suits India very well. India has 18 official languages, with hundreds of local dialects, varying religious practices and ethnicities, a wide variety of philosophical thoughts, and extensive variations in food and dress. The pluralistic approach modern India adopted after its independence in 1947 has provided a stable yet progressive



*Neelam Deo, Consul General of India*

path for its citizens, one that is becoming a model for many other countries.

India is a multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic country like the U.S. A unique culture, enriched by new ideas and by new people, evolved in India. During European colonization, racism was created with the advent of the Britishers; although they came in as traders, they still considered themselves rulers.

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Democracy (continued from pg 7)

English has become a language of discourse for communication. As a result of colonization, India's poor economy affected the textile industry and agriculture; social institutions like caste and dowry were attacked and destroyed. The religious differences escalated into conflict.

Willingly or not, India was brought into more contemporary times with the British entry and changes such as the introduction of rail. There was also intellectual ferment and the influx of new ideas.

We can see that the struggle for Indian independence was led mostly by lawyers who were trained in Britain. They were influenced by ideas of European enlightenment, parliamentary democracy, the American constitution, French ideas, and old socialist movements in Europe. But the guiding principle of India's independence was the Eastern principle of ahimsa or non-violence. Inspired by Gandhi, non-violence was accompanied by a commitment to truth, justice and love, and the belief that "truth is love."

The Indian constitution started to take shape after 1946. The Indian Constitution parallels that of the U.S., reflecting a belief in the concept "We the people," and in equality regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, and the social system of "caste."

It is quite interesting to see India continuing as a traditional, patriarchal society, which is provided by the constitution. There has been progressive legislation to effect the equality that our constitution promises to the different castes, to women, (and) to other disadvantaged groups of India. This includes affirmative action for castes and women, and has brought equality

status for tribal communities in India.

India's constitution has been flexible in incorporating the different interests that stem from linguistic and ethnic variations. India was reorganized on the basis of linguistic states as people have spoken different languages according to the region in which they live. This resulted in more states than the Indian union began with. Similarly, the large state of Assam was divided based on major ethnic groups, and there are now seven sister states. This is the way in which the Indian constitution reflects and incorporates the differing aspirations of multiplicity of identity that people of India have.

It is in this plurality of India that the constitution is flexible and is completely original. India approached the question of religion using its secular tradition, and the constitution calls for equal respect to all religions. It recognizes the importance of religion to one's identity. India has given birth to religions other than Hinduism, including Buddhism, Sikhism, Muslim (the second largest religion), Christianity, and more.

India chose to be a constitutional democracy. We have regular elections every five years to elect a parliament of the center and legislators for each state, as well as elections for municipalities. This enables individuals to express their concerns.

The broadening of political representation in India's institutions has occurred simultaneously with the devolution of powers to state governments, municipal bodies, and village governing councils. So the number of actors or players in India's development story has been constantly increasing.

Recalling 250 years, before the colonization by Great Britain, to the present, we see India has contributed

to the global economy. Today, India's contribution is only 4.5 percent, but last year we saw a historic growth of 9.6 percent and hope to sustain our relative growth between 8 to 10 percent. That would enable India to become almost equal to the U.S. gross domestic product by 2050. As a result of this high rate of growth, the number of poor people in India has fallen to just below 20 percent of the population.

How has India achieved this higher growth trajectory? In the first 30 years of independence, India has followed the policy of import substitution of self-sufficiency which actually served us quite well. We had no industry, no educational institutions for higher learning, and no larger class of industrialists.

From 1991, during an economic crisis, we began to reduce the import tariffs, dispense with the licensing of the industry, and extend deregulation to attract foreign investment and technology and strengthen best business practices. Thus, the growth rate has been able to reach today's level. It is also important, and reflects the democratic structure of Indian society, that growth has been propelled more by domestic demand than by direct foreign investment.

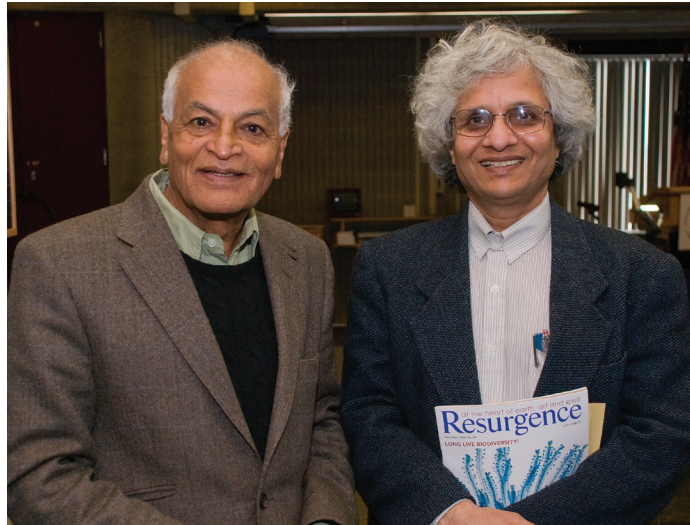
It's a model quite different from (that of) other countries and countries in Asia. There is a 35 percent rate of savings and approximately 36 percent rate of investment, and the largest segment of the impetus for growth in India is the domestic demand.

But what remains in question is who are the big players (and) entrepreneurs in India. Foreign direct investment has not played a significant role in India even though it is important. We welcome it and we know the importance of technology, knowhow, and best business practices. Indian



companies and corporations have taken over, and in the deregulation of the economy, have made the largest contribution to our growth.

India has become a young country. The young people are influenced by global trends, want to succeed, and believe in succeeding. Young Indians (are) connecting to technology and linking up through the Internet; telephone services are cheap and are linked up to the young people of the world. Time is not a linear concept rather a circular one. ♦



Satish Kumar presented a seminar entitled *Soil, soul, and society*. He is shown (left) with Dr. Bal Ram Singh, director of the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth.

## Soil, soul and society

**T**he seminar “Soil, Soul, and Society,” presented by Satish Kumar, was a joint effort of UMass Dartmouth, The Center for Indic Studies, Campus & Community Sustainability Office, and The Center for Teaching Excellence.

When he was nine years old, Satish Kumar renounced the world and joined the wandering brotherhood of Jain monks. At 18, he left the monastic order and became a campaigner for land reform, working to turn Gandhi’s vision of a peaceful world into reality. Inspired by the example of Bertrand Russell, he undertook an 8,000 mile peace pilgrimage, walking from India to America without any money, through deserts, mountains, storms, and snow. In 1973, he settled in England, and became the editor of *Resurgence* magazine, a position he has held over 30 years. In 1991, he became the director of programs at Schumacher College, a residential international center for the study of ecological and spiritual values. In addition to two honorary doctorates degrees, Satish Kumar is the recipient of the Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values

Abroad, given in November 2001. His autobiography, *No Destination*, and his three books--*You Are, Therefore I Am--A Declaration of Dependence*; *The Buddha and the Terrorist*; and his latest, *Spiritual Compass*--are published by Green Books.

The following is a synopsis of Kumar’s remarks.

The French Revolution produced a famous slogan--“Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.” It was a great social trinity. But it left out the natural world altogether. Also, it left out the spiritual and personal dimension. Then, in the ‘60s and ‘70s, the New Age movement came up with another slogan, a personal trinity: “Mind, Body, Spirit.” This too was a great trinity. But, again, it left out the natural world as well as the spiritual world.

The need for a new trinity which integrates the personal, the social, and the natural arises. “Soil, Soul and Society” could be that new, holistic trinity. In his lecture, Kumar elaborated on the importance of these three dimensions for a sustainable future, a healthy planet, and a just society.

Peace is more than an absence of war, far more than a way of life among human beings. The making of peace lies not only with neighboring

countries (and) with human society but (also) peace with ourselves. If we cannot make peace within ourselves, then how can we make peace with others?

A fundamental step in making peace with ourselves is to understand who we are. We must accept ourselves and pursue our path as it is given to us. The moment we realize that the universe is inherent in us, then we can see our connection to everything else in our environment. This total interdependence comes through self-realization of who we are and a prerequisite for making peace with the universe.

Human arrogance leads people to assume superiority over nature and to exploit the environment. Today’s problems of global warming, climate change, resource depletion, pollution, and population explosion are due to disrespect and irreverence towards nature. The soil, being the primary source of our very existence, demands of us a respectful and reverential relationship for the hope of human survival.

Human consciousness needs to undergo a change. Fear of disaster and the end of civilization is not conducive

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Soil, soul, and society (continued from page 9) to environmental conservation. The need for a different force and power is the elevated power of love for the human heart, nature, life, humanity, a love for everything. The moment we develop this sense of love, reverence and respect for humanity, then we can transform our consciousness and our lifestyle.

The compassion, the love, and the unity of all life manifest themselves through many forms. Today there is great emphasis on individualism, but it is in harmonizing and creating a balance between the individual and the society that we understand that they both belong to the one reality. There is no separation between you and me. If you and I are not connected, there is no life. Life cannot exist without mutuality, interdependence, connectedness, and reciprocity—they are essential to existence. ♦

## “Chandrasekhar’s legacy: black holes and gravitational waves”

**T**his seminar, conducted by Dr. Gaurav Khanna, briefly reviewed the life and contributions of the Nobel laureate, Subramanian Chandrasekhar, an Indian astrophysicist who made significant contributions in the areas of stellar evolution, such as the formation of neutron stars and black holes. The remaining portion of the seminar included a basic introduction to black holes and gravitational waves.

Dr. Khanna is an internationally recognized theoretical and computational astrophysicist, who studies such phenomena as black holes, gravitational waves, and

quantum gravitation. He completed his under-graduate education from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, India, in 1995. He graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 2000 with a PhD in gravitational physics and joined the faculty of Long Island University in New York. In 2003, he moved to UMass Dartmouth, where he is an assistant physics professor teaching both introductory and graduate level courses.

In his lecture, Khanna discussed the concept of a black hole which is based on Einstein’s theory of general relativity. He described these mystical, astrophysical objects as sources of gravitational waves. Khanna then

explained gravitational waves and their role in astronomy.

He detailed the various observational projects that are related to gravitational wave detection, i.e., the National Science Foundation’s LIGO project and NASA’s LISA mission. Khanna concluded by presenting some of his own theoretical work in gravitational wave astrophysics, and his novel use of Sony Playstation 3 gaming consoles for this research.

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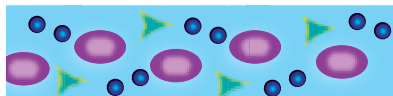
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## Holi, the Indian festival of spring



**T**he Center for Indic Studies and the India Students Association joined hands to conduct the colorful event of HOLI, the Indian festival of spring. Holi means the triumph of good over evil and the conquest of sensual values by spiritual values. Holi has different mythological connotations in different parts of India. Celebrated by throwing colors and colored powder into the air, the event serves to announce the arrival of spring and the passing of winter. It is a festival that establishes an atmosphere of social merriment. People “bury their hatchets” with a warm embrace and throw their worries to the wind. Students, faculty, and other members who participated presented a delightful, colorful sight.





## A mini sabbatical at the University of Melbourne

I recently returned from a 10-week mini-sabbatical at the University of Melbourne, Australia. My primary goal was to initiate collaborative research in environmental engineering between the Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering Department at the University of Melbourne and the College of Engineering at UMass Dartmouth. My stay at the University Graduate House provided an invaluable opportunity to meet students and visiting faculty and scholars from many countries. I will focus on discussions with a group from South East and Far East Asia.

Australian universities have been very successful in attracting undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from the huge swath of neighboring countries that are near the Pacific Rim and the Eastern Indian Ocean. Besides the expected—China and India—the countries with the highest academic population include Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the erstwhile Indo-China. What was surprising to me was that a significant percentage of these students were self-financed, as opposed to being supported by scholarships/assistantships. From their stories and glimpses of their lifestyles, I am convinced that there is a significant population of affluent Southeast and Far East Asians able and willing to spend substantial sums on education in foreign countries. Students told me that they chose Australia because it was close to home, safe, and friendly, and that they did not have to deal with onerous visa restrictions.

For this generation of students, knowledge of India is very superficial and does not extend beyond Bollywood, IT services, and being

Buddha's native land. Whenever I provided examples of India's strong cultural links with this region – be it that the national language of Indonesia, Bahasa, is a variant of the Sanskrit word for language; or that the ex-president of Indonesia, Megawati Sukarnoputri (Sukarno's daughter and of the clouds), was so named by Indian statesman Biju Patnaik at the request of her father Sukarno; or that the 11th century Buddhist temple in Preah Vihar that is at the heart of a recent border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia was built by Indians—I was met with amazement and by a sincere desire by these students to enrich understanding of Indic threads to their cultures. The best way to accomplish this is by staying and traveling in India while studying for an undergraduate/graduate degree. In the past, higher education was solely the preserve of the central or state government, but with private educational institutions mushrooming all over India, this is an opportune moment for recruiting foreign students, especially from Southeast Asia, if the quality of education is comparable to international benchmarks. I do not imply that this should be looked upon purely as a business: that India has a product that these potential students are willing to pay for. I sincerely believe that if India can create the infrastructure for recruiting students from neighboring countries, the exposure of the students to India's "soft power" will reap handsome dividends toward India's foreign policy. And that brings me to the second aspect.

The emergence of China as a regional superpower is unquestionable. But from many conversations with Japanese, Korean, Thai, Malaysian,

Indonesian, and Singaporean students, it was very clear that there is a growing unease within these countries about increasing Chinese dominance. I heard repeatedly that China has a strategic vision for economic and military superpower status in this region, but is attempting to achieve this goal bluntly and clumsily. It brooks no dissent and, more importantly, does not appreciate the social, cultural, or linguistic differences among countries, much less within each of these countries.

And in this respect India has a clear advantage. Historically, India has always been inclusive and assimilative, as expressed best by E. P. Thompson: "All the convergent influences of the world run through the [Indian] society.... There is not a thought that is being thought in the West or East that is not active in some Indian mind." Thus, India can demonstrate through example how various influences can be synthesized and harmonized in order to build a modern, pluralistic, and syncretic society. In the long run, this kind of "subscriptive influence," whereby groups of people choose what pathway suits them best after evaluating the available options, will be more lasting than the Chinese model of "prescriptive subjugation."

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