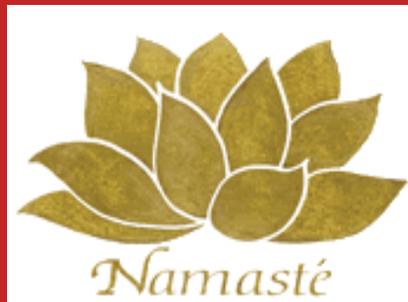




Teacher Training in Dharmic Studies



Bal Ram Singh, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Indic Studies
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Phone-508-999-8588

Fax-508-999-8451

Email-bsingh@umassd.edu



UMass

Dartmouth



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

Executive Summary

The Pilot project initiated after the first meeting of the Uberoi Foundation in Orlando, October, 2009, by Rajiv Malhotra of Infinity Foundation and Bal Ram Singh of UMass Dartmouth, was carried out with funding from Uberoi Foundation. With assistance of a national Advisory Committee (AC) and local Implementation Advisory Group (IAG), the program was developed in spring of 2010 with plans to develop teaching material on four Dharmic traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Sikh) by experts in the field. The written material was reviewed by experienced school level teachers, and at least some of the feedback was incorporated in the written material before the latter was provided to the trainees.

With the assistance of IAG, a solicitation was issued to recruit teachers, and six teachers from the New England area were selected, all from public middle and high school. With suggestion of the reviewers we introduced a day of presentations on India's history and geogra-

phy. Presentations on each of the traditions were carried out by practicing scholars, except in case of Buddhism for which we could not get scholars from the tradition.

The training program on each topic included slide presentation, hands-on activities, demonstrations, and lesson plan discussions. In addition, two documentaries, *Yoga unveiled* and *Raaga Unveiled* were screened with commentaries from its producer, Mrs. Geeta Desai. Evening programs included discussion on Indian culture, music, dress, family, etc., including trial of Indian dress by the trainees.

Interactive sessions were held with representatives of Uberoi Foundations, practitioners of traditions, and with a faculty from the UMass Dartmouth Department of Education. These interactions and feedbacks provided opportunities to work on lesson plans and assessments of the program.

On the Final day of the training program, teacher trainees were taken to a Hindu temple for firsthand experience and discussion on Dharmic practices, which



Sitar performance by Ms.Koyel Ghosal, a graduate student, for teacher trainees.

was very well received, and provided opportunity on interacting with practitioners in their own location to understand the meaning of the puja and mantras.

Introduction and Background

The project was an initiative from Rajiv Malhotra of Infinity Foundation and Bal Ram Singh of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. The project was carried out in two phases:

Phase I: Development of the training materials

- Form a committee or working team to finalize the list of topics. Write the standards for each module to follow. Identify the course developers for the various topics. There must be an overall project leader/editor of all the materials.
- Engage the developers with a time line, defined scope, and honorarium.
- Hold meetings (on-line to save travel cost) to go through the materials in order to ensure quality, avoid duplicates and contradictions across the developers.

Phase II: Delivering the course to one batch of teachers as a trial, in order to perfect the course.

The initiative of Uberoi provided resources to the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth resources to start this pilot program to prepare teaching material with the help of subject matter experts (SMEs), and organize a teacher training to a group of teachers.

The process involved in developing this program

included formation of two committees for planning, developing, and implementing the training program.

1. Advisory Committee (AC) of the following individuals to oversee the development of training material.

Bal Ram Singh, UMass Dartmouth
 Rajiv Malhotra, Infinity Foundation
 Anantan Rambachan, St. Olaf College
 Arvind-Pal Mandair, University of Michigan
 Pravin Shah, Jain Study Center of North Carolina

We were not able to identify a Buddhist scholar who could develop the material on Buddhism in the given period of time. However, Mrs. Kamlesh Kapur, a retired school teacher and author of 'History of Ancient India' was kind enough to provide the material on Buddhism, mostly from her book.

Advisory Committee helped plan and advise the implementation of the following:

- Finalization of the list of topics and writing of the standards for each module to follow.
- Identification of the course developers for the various topics.
- Engagement of developers with a time line, defining of scope, and examination of materials in order to ensure quality.

Mr. Gordon Goodfellow of Bristol Community College (a former high school teacher of social studies) helped evaluate the chapters for their suitability for teaching at middle and high school levels.

2. Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) for pilot teacher training. The Group consisted of the following individuals.

Bal Ram Singh, UMass Dartmouth
 Rajiv Malhotra, Infinity Foundation
 Maureen Hall, UMass Dartmouth
 Shukla Sengupta, New Bedford Global Public Charter School
 Steven Furtado, New Bedford Global Public Charter School
 Pandit Ramadheen Ramsamooj, 3 R's Foundation
 Vanita Shastri, Meru Education Foundation

This Group met parallel to the Advisory Committee, and provided inputs on the need of the topics, format for training and teaching, selection of teachers for training, and implementation of the teaching material in schools.



Solicitation and Recruitment of Teachers

The following letter of solicitation was publicized to different schools in the area and also through Association of Social Studies Teachers in the New England.

Uberoi Foundation Fellowship (UFF)
For Teaching Dharmic Traditions
Center for Indic Studies
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Preamble

Dharma traditions consist of traditions originating in Indian Subcontinent over several millenia, which have continued and evolved. Currently practised by over a billion people throughout the world, Dharma traditions are more than religious, and consist of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Coverage of Dharma traditions in American schools are limited primarily because of the lack of appropriate teaching material, and of course, teacher training.

Uberoi Foundation has provided the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth funding for Uberoi Foundation Fellowships (UFFs) to start a pilot program to prepare teaching material with the help of subject matter experts (SMEs), and organize a teacher training to a group of teachers (6-12 depending on the application pool) during the summer 2010.

Training Program

A total 11 applications were received from which six

teachers were selected based on their interest, experience, and potential for incorporating the training material in their classrooms. Following is the list of teachers who participated in the program.

1. **Donna Cordeiro**

Senior Honors English (World Literature) & Junior Honors English (British Literature)
 Fairhaven High School, Fairhaven, MA
 Email: dcordeiro@fairhavenps.org

2. **Heidi Eastman**

World History, Current Events, Art History, Film Studies
 French-Grades 9th-12th
 New Bedford Global Learning Charter School
 New Bedford, MA
 Email: heastman@glcps.org

3. **Jessica Ross**

World History I, English Language Arts-8th Grade
 New Bedford Global Learning Charter School
 New Bedford, MA
 Email: jross@glcps.org

4. **Anne Malmquist**

7th Grade Social Studies Teacher/Team Leader
 New Bedford Global Learning Charter School
 New Bedford, MA
 Email: amamlmquist@glcps.org

5. **Jay Alan Szaro**

5th~8th Computer & 7th~8th Social Studies
 Tiverton Middle School, Tiverton, RI
 Email: jszaro@tivertonschools.org

6. **John Oldham**

9th-12th Social Studies
 Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School
 Rochester, MA
 Email: johnoldham30@gmail.com

Teaching Material and Review Process

During the AC conference calls it was decided that the teaching materials will be prepared by experts listed below on Dharmic traditions in the context of pluralism. Other topics that were considered but not implemented this time were relationship with environment and sustainability, and treatment of women. It was decided to use such contexts to explain Dharmic traditions, because these contexts will provide students familiar perspectives



Uberoi Foundation officials interact with teacher trainees

from which to look at the Dharmic traditions.

- Hinduism** – Dr. Anantanad Rambachan
St. Olaf College
- Buddhism** – Dr. Richard Seager, Hamilton College
- Jainism** – Mr. Praveen Shah, Jain Study Center
North Carolina
- Sikhism** – Dr. Arvind Pal Mandair
University of Michigan

Because of his travels and business, Dr. Richard Seager was not able to complete his task. As a last resort, we invited Mrs. Kamlesh Kapur, author of the History of Ancient India (2010) to provide teaching material on Buddhism based on a chapter in her book. All the chapters were presented to Mr. Gordon Goodfellow of Bristol Community College, who has been teaching Social Studies at High School level for more than 20 years. His inputs were provided to authors, but there was not enough time for their incorporation in the material for Sikhism. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism materials were revised. On Buddhism, additional comments were received from Professor Claude d'Estrée of University of Denver, but it was too late incorporate them in the material for the training. Those suggestions are being now considered. The Table of Contents of the Materials on Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are provided below.

Hinduism

Introduction: A tradition of Plurality
 UNIT 1: A tradition of Plurality
 Other Sacred Texts

Discussion/Activities

UNIT 2: Nature of God and Creation

Creation is Cyclical
 Creation Exists in God
 God Is One
 Creation is Sacred
 Human Responsibility for Creation
 Discussion/Activities

UNIT 3: The four goals and four stages of Hindu life

Wealth (Artha)
 Pleasure (Kama)
 Virtue (Dharma)
 Liberation (Moksha)
 The Four Stages of Life
 Student
 Householder



Teacher trainees at the Lakshmi Mandir in Ashland, MA.

Forest-dweller
Renunciant
Discussion/Activities

UNIT 4: Karma and Samsara

Karma as Intentional Action
Results of Actions are not Always Immediate
Discussion/Activities

UNIT 5: Hindu Worship

Murtis (Icons)
Darshan (Sacred Seeing)
Puja (Ritual Worship)
Discussion/Activities

UNIT 6: Religion and Culture

Food
Dress
The Arts
Sexuality
Discussion/Activities

UNIT 7: The Cardinal Virtues

Ahimsa
Satya (Truth)
Asteya (Non-stealing)
Aparigraha (Generosity)
Brahmacharya (Self-control)
Discussion/Activities

UNIT 8: Pluralism

Geographical Diversity
Linguistic Diversity
Religious Diversity
Religions of India
Ways of Seeing (Darshana)
Limits of Language/Symbols
The Necessity and Value of Humility
Diversity and the Oneness of God
Diversity and Conversion
Discussion/Activities

Buddhism

Historical background
Siddhartha's encounter with the real world
The path of self realization and enlightenment
Teachings of Buddha



Professor Huang making his presentation on Buddhist architecture

Three wheels of Dharma
Four noble truths
Buddha's last Words
Religious practices and beliefs
Way of Life, Family Values
Impact of Buddha's teachings and the Spread of Buddhism to other countries
Unity and diversity in Buddhism-Divergent traditions
Pluralism
Debates, discourses
Buddhist holidays and festivals
Bhagvad Gita and the Buddhist teachings
Buddhism as compared with Vedic religion
Comparison chart
Buddhist literature
Buddhist Architecture
Encounters with the World's Religions
Case study of a Buddhist group
Summary
Questions:
Enrichment activities
Suggested readings and links

Jainism

I. Roots and History

A. Origins and History
B. Denominations and Demographics History (schisms, mergers, etc...)
C. Important Figures
Lord Rishabha (End of Stone Age to beginning of Agricultural Age)
Lord Pārshva (9th century BCE)
Lord Vardhamān Mahāvira (599 – 527 BCE)
Aryikā Chandanā (contemporary to Lord Mahāvira)
Āchārya Kunda-kunda (Second century CE)
Āchārya Hemchandra (1089-1172)
Ātmārāmji (1837-1896)
Virchand Gandhi (1864 - 1901)
Āchārya Shānti Sāgarji (1872-1955)

II. Articles of Faith and Tenets

A. Fundamental Beliefs of Jainism
B. Concept of God and Tirthankar
C. Universe and Its Nature - Jain Reality:
D. Jiva (Soul)
E. Pudgal (Matter) and Karma Particle
F. Doctrine of Karma Philosophy - Nine Tattvas



We have had many inputs from Uberoi Foundation through Professor Ved Nanda, Chair, Board of Trustees, who participated in conference calls of both AC and IAG. He was instrumental in getting scholars on Buddhism involved.

G. Path of Liberation - Jain Trinity

III. Rites and Rituals

A. Daily Life: Precepts and Restrictions

Jain Code of Conduct:
Cardinal Qualities of Lay Followers:

Eighteen Vices

Process of Spiritual Death (Santhärä)

B. Worship

Visiting a Jain Temple

C. Differences of Various Sects

D. The Calendar - Religious Holidays

Paryushan and Dash Lakshana

Parva

Mahävira Jayanti (Janma

Kalyänak)

Deepävali (Diwäli)

Jnän Panchami

Kärtik Purnimä

Mauna Ekädasi (Agiyäras)

Akshaya Tritiya (Varsitapa Pärnä)

IV. Jain Scriptures and non-canonical Literature

A. Ägam Sutras (Jain Scriptures)

Anga Ägam Sutras

Angabähya Ägam Sutras

Shvetämbar Literature

Digambar Literature

B. Secondary Sources

Shared texts by Both Sects:

Other Shvetämbar texts:

Other Digambara Texts:

V. Jainism in America

A. Important Dates and Landmark Events

B. Organizations and Houses of Worship

C. Governance and Authority

D. Social Service Organizations

E. Media and Communication

Resources

Sikhism

UNIT 1: Introducing Dharmic Traditions

UNIT 2: Who are sikhs? What is Sikhi(sm)?

Myths and Misconceptions

Historical Background

Early History

Later History

Emergence of Modern Sikhi(sm)

Sikh Literature

Sikh Philosophy (gurmat) and World

View

Practices, Festivals, Way of Life,

Family Values

The Gurdwara

Sikh Festivals

Demographics

Sikhs in India

Sikh Diaspora (USA, Canada, Europe and elsewhere)

Sikh settlement in the USA

Sikhs in America Today

PLURALISM

UNIT 3: Sikh Perspectives on and Responses to Pluralism

Diversity and Difference Within Sikh tradition

Encounters with Other Religions

(historical and contemporary)

Violence and Others Race, Caste and

Gender Politics

Secularism and Democracy as

Models for Pluralism

Sikhi(sm) as a 'Secular Spiritual Path':

Media, Blasphemy and Free Speech

Capitalism and Models of Global

Society

The teaching program implemented, August 16-20, 2010

In addition to speakers listed in the program, we had additional



presenters and participants in the teaching program who played significant role in the success of the program. These included the following.

1. Local families who prepared food, demonstration of sarees and other dresses, and participated in interactions with trainees.
2. Miss Deepti Mehandru, a graduate student at UMass Dartmouth, a practicing Buddhist (a Japanese style), demonstrated and participated in show and tell program.
3. Mr. Stephen Brown, a Tibetan Buddhist, who lives locally. He made a presentation on his experience during his stay in India.
4. Professor Yunsheng Huang of University of Virginia, an expert of Buddhist architecture, presented architecture in India during the Buddhist period.
5. Miss Harkiran Kaur Dhaliwal, a sikh girl, who is graduate student at UMass Dartmouth.

Local assistance was provided by Shwetha Bhat, Deepti Mehandru, and Maureen Jennings at UMass Dartmouth.

Special efforts were made by Professor Maureen Hall in coordinating this effort along with Shwetha Bhat. Dr. Steve Furtado with his experience as Superintendent of School took many troubles to spread the word for teachers to take advantage of this training program.

Teachers' Feedback

1. *Presentations ---What were most/least interesting presentations to you as a high school or middle school teacher?*

"It is with gratitude that I write these comments. It was a privilege to be part of the UFF training week. The pre-



Pandit Ramsamooj makes his presentation on Super Accelerated Learning Theory (SALT) education model.

sentations during the last two days were very rushed, yet extremely interesting. I loved that food, dress and jewelry were included as well as the visit to the temple in Ashland (excellent presentation). The introduction of SALT was too rushed yet very important"

2. *Interest level: What elements/experiences were most/least interesting to you as a high school teacher? Individual?*

"I really was interested in the hands-on experiences (music, food, saris, pujas, yoga) because I enjoy the subject matter and also because I know my students would like it so it gave me ideas to use with them. "

"The total immersion on the topic of religion was helpful to me as a teacher. The discussions gave way to some insight on ways to present the topic in the classroom without overwhelming students and alarming parents. The week spent at this program helped to improve my knowledge on the subject and increase my comfort level in the classroom. Again it is also reassuring that UMASS is down the road when any questions arise."

"The discussions with Prof. Ved Nada was very informative and helped one see the larger picture of the connections between the U.S., India and world events. His openness and eagerness to hear what local teachers thought about the program and work being done by the Uberoi Foundation was amazing, in light of how often the classroom teachers questions and ideas are ignored by school management."